

**Inter-institutional Collaboration in Ontario Higher Education: A Case Study of the  
Diploma-Degree Justice Studies Program at the University of Guelph-Humber**

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**Gary William Ellis**

**Department of Theory and Policy Studies in Education  
Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto**

**ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study examines the factors that led to, and are necessary to sustain into the future, a new option for higher education in Ontario through a joint venture of the University of Guelph and Humber Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning. The study looks at the joint venture, known as the University of Guelph-Humber, by primarily focusing on the Justice Studies program to answer a secondary question of its relevance to the future of policing. Collaborative frameworks developed by Boyter, Gates, Schroth, Vornberg, and Thompson (1999), Gray (1989), Austin (2000) and Andrulis and Hirning (2001) are used to frame the study and direct the research. This joint venture involves the creation of an institution with its own building, programs, and curriculum, though dependent on the shared governance, funding, staffing, services, and faculty of the two institutions involved. The melding of these two separate sectors in the higher education system offers students an opportunity to concurrently obtain an honours university degree and a two-year diploma.

Interviews were done with key people who were involved in the formation of this joint venture to gain their observations, experience, and insights as to what has happened

to bring this collaboration together, and what needs to happen to keep it relevant and sustainable into the future.

The study found that a strong emphasis and an ongoing commitment to a process of shared dialogue and building relationships around the expectations of both institutions is believed to be essential. The expectations of each institution and the political pressures they experienced acted as drivers for the collaboration, whereas, the relationships between the institutions and among the people involved has enabled the joint venture. Even though the research has discovered that many of the detailed and formalized administrative issues have not been finalized, the University of Guelph-Humber as an integrated institution opened its doors to students in the fall of 2002 and its first class of graduates will occur in 2006. The study also found that there is unanimous belief that the ultimate test of sustainability and relevance will be student success in satisfaction, employment, and acceptance in post graduate studies.

The Ontario government has promoted closer relationships between the university and college sectors. This study provides a better understanding of the issues involved in bringing the two higher education sectors together to work collaboratively and it also offers another option for police education in the Province of Ontario.