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PRESS RELEASE

Franco-Ontarians Request that Premier Kathleen Wynne Take Steps to Create A Provincial French-Language University in Ontario

Toronto - Tuesday, February 10, 2015 – Representatives from the *Regroupement étudiant franco-ontarien* (Franco Ontarian Student Association), the *Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario* (Francophone Assembly of Ontario) and the *Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne* (Franco-Ontarian Youth Federation) gathered during a press conference at Queen's Park today to formally request that Premier Kathleen Wynne commit to the creation of a French language university in Ontario.

This request is one of the main recommendations stemming from the *États généraux sur le postsecondaire en Ontario français* (Estates General on French-language Postsecondary Education in Ontario), a province-wide consultation held in several communities across Ontario since the fall of 2013. The final report from these consultations was published today.

As a first step towards the creation of this new institution, the three partner organizations have requested that the Premier and her government name a transitional Board of Governors before the end of the current parliamentary session. The Board's primary responsibility would be to ensure the foundation of a French-language university by 2018. This new institution would have the mandate to offer academic programming in French across the province and would open an initial in southern Ontario, a region where there is the widest gap between the francophone population and access to postsecondary education in French.

"For decades, Franco-Ontarians have worked towards gaining full governance over their education system. These efforts began with the creation of French-language elementary and secondary schools in the 1960's, and have since widened to independent French-language school boards in 1998 and two French-language community colleges in the early 1990s. The time has come for Franco-Ontarians to govern their own university programs and gain access to an independent French-language university", said Denis Vaillancourt, President of L'Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario.

"This year, as we celebrate the 400th anniversary of French presence in Ontario, we are also reminded of the important steps we need to take in order to curve assimilation rates amongst Franco-Ontarians, which is a direct result of limited access to postsecondary programs in French. As such, we ask that our Premier seize this anniversary to help us build an institution of 21st century that will insure a bright future for our community", added Geneviève Latour, Co-president of RÉFO.

According to Marie-Ève Chartrand, President of FESFO, "It is essential that this university be a place of research, innovation and prestige for all Franco-Ontarians, whether they be newcomers or descendants of Francophone migrations from long ago. Now is the time to act if we want to ensure that future generations can continue to flourish and to grow speaking French in this province. A Franco-Ontarian university is not only a dream, it is possible and necessary!"



The three partner organizations concluded the press conference by requesting a meeting with the Premier to discuss the next steps in the implementation of this collective undertaking.

Additional Information:

- To read the full text of the request addressed to Premier Wynne, [click here](#).
- [Click here](#) to read the report stemming from the Provincial Summit on French-Language Postsecondary Education in Ontario.
- To watch the press conference (in French), [click here](#).

- 30 -

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