

ANNUAL REPORT



2015/16

TOUCHSTONE

INSTITUTE

COMPETENCY EVALUATION EXPERTS

Contents

ABOUT TOUCHSTONE INSTITUTE	3
A MESSAGE FROM KEN HARRIS	5
A MESSAGE FROM STEN ARDAL	6
ASSESSMENT PROGRAM	7
IENCAP Administrations 2015/16	9
IGOEE Administrations 2015/16	9
NAC Administrations 2015/16	10
COMMUNICATION PROGRAM	11
OCECCA Implementation and Evaluation Project	13
Optometric English Language Proficiency Exam (OELPE)	13
Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN)	13
A 360° View of Culture and Communication	15
PERSPECTIVES SYMPOSIUM	16
EDUCATION PROGRAM	17
2015/16 Pre-Residency Program Participants	20
2015/16 Canadian Medicine Primer Participants	20
SIMULATION PROGRAM	21
PROGRAM SUPPORT	25
GOVERNANCE	27
FINANCE AND OPERATIONS	29



Ontario

Touchstone Institute receives financial support from the Government of Ontario

About Touchstone Institute

Touchstone Institute facilitates entry to training or practice for internationally educated health care professionals (IEHPs) through competency assessment and education. In collaboration with national and provincial government regulators, academic partners and subject matter experts, we work to support excellence in Canada's health professions.

Our programs perform a critical role in ensuring competent, safe and effective care for Ontarians. We provide regulators with an objective, valid assessment of their candidates' professional knowledge, skills and judgement. For internationally educated health professionals, our programs help illuminate pathways as they pursue licensure or bridging to other Canadian contexts.

Our Clients and Partners

We work in close association with key stakeholders, including regulators, educational institutions, government and service agencies, to facilitate entry to practice for IEHPs.

Regulatory Bodies

College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario (CPSO)
College of Optometrists of Ontario (COO)
College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO)
College of Dietitians of Ontario (CDO)
College of Respiratory Therapists of Ontario (CRTO)

Educational Institutions

McMaster University
Northern Ontario School of Medicine
Queen's University
University of Ottawa
University of Toronto
Western University

Government

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (MCI)
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC)

Other Organizations

Canadian Network of Agencies for Regulation (CNAR)
Canadian Resident Matching Service (CaRMS)
Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks (CCLB)
HealthForceOntario (HFO)
Medical Council of Canada (MCC)
National Nursing Assessment Service (NNAS)

Our Candidates

Many IEHPs are referred to Touchstone Institute by their provincial regulator as part of their journey toward professional licensure. Assessments ensure candidates meet Canadian standards, while education programs for international medical graduates help ensure a successful transition to professional practice in Ontario.

- Internationally educated dietitians (IEDs)
- Internationally educated nurses (IENs)
- Ontario nurse practitioners (NPs)
- Internationally graduated optometrists (IGOs)
- International medical graduates (IMGs)
- Visa residents and clinical fellows

HOW OUR PROGRAMS WORK



A Message from Ken Harris



When I accepted the role as Board Chair in 2012, Touchstone Institute was known as the Centre for the Evaluation of Health Professionals Educated Abroad (CEHPEA). The organization enjoyed a solid reputation of excellence in assessment and education programs for international medical graduates. That year, the board finalized a five-year strategic plan to define the organization's priorities and guide its activities to ensure we remained responsive to the needs of Ontario's health care system in its broadest sense.

Since that time, we have been actively pursuing the goals set out in the plan: we expanded our assessment offerings; launched a program focused on communication competency; optimized our transition programs to respond to emerging and changing needs of international medical graduates, visa residents and fellows; and invested in our staff, infrastructure and capacity to ensure continuous quality improvement.

The activities presented in this report represent a culmination of these goals. This year, we ventured into new areas of regulated health for internationally educated optometrists and dietitians and expanded our presence across Canada.

In June 2015, we welcomed Trudy Reid to our board of directors. Trudy brings with her over 40 years of experience in health care, including seven years as CEO of Winchester District Memorial Hospital and leading roles at Cancer Care Ontario and The Ottawa Hospital. Her expertise in adapting organizations to prosper in a changing environment will be invaluable to Touchstone Institute as we begin to chart a course for the organization.

Now, having largely addressed the vision laid out in 2012, the board is looking forward to refreshing our strategic plan and exploring the ways that Touchstone Institute can continue to support quality assurance through assessment and education in Canada's health care professions. These discussions will serve to guide us as we embark on a renewed and re-envisioned future.

Dr. Kenneth Harris, Chair, Board of Directors, Touchstone Institute

A Message from Sten Ardal



Three years ago, I was drawn to Touchstone Institute by the belief that this was an organization positioned in a unique space with considerable unrealized potential. This past year has clearly demonstrated that this belief was well founded; as Ken notes, we have taken on several new challenges, which are documented throughout this report.

We established our centre on Bloor Street in Toronto in 2006. Over time, our operations expanded to 78 assessment rooms and 6 classrooms spread over several floors. As we mark the completion of our first decade as an organization, we find ourselves with an evolved vision and an expanded scope. It became difficult to accommodate the new staff we needed within our office space on Bloor, and we were unable to ensure a renewed long-term lease as our site was targeted for re-development. This created an opportunity to re-prioritize our space requirements, improve our work environment, create more functional classrooms, rationalize the amount of space allocated to assessment rooms and establish a long-term stable home. After an extensive search, we identified a location that met all these requirements perfectly. We finalized an agreement in late 2015, started building our new environment in early 2016 and moved in – on time and within budget – on July 18, 2016.

As we prepare for our next decade, we do so with a great facility, upgraded infrastructure and a belief in a bright and busy future – one built by the phenomenal people working here, the sage wisdom of our consulting professionals and the dedication of our board members. I am privileged to be a part of this enterprise.

Sten Ardal, CEO, Touchstone Institute

Assessment Program

Our Assessment Program develops and administers written and clinical exams that reliably assess the competencies of internationally educated health professionals (IEHPs) and their readiness to pursue practice in Ontario. Exams are constructed and validated by our in-house experts, who work in collaboration with practising health professionals and experts in health care from Ontario's universities, professional colleges and regulatory bodies. Our standardized processes reflect our commitment to quality assurance at every stage – from program development, administration and reporting to review, maintenance and renewal.

Strong relationships with practising health professionals and experts in health care

PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP



ENGAGED DESIGN LIFECYCLE



Tested process includes blueprinting, item writing, field testing, pilot testing, launch and review

Ongoing development and renewal of all assessments



CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



VALIDITY & REPORTING

Psychometrics evaluate and validate the accuracy of testing procedures and calculation of results



Our Team: Alex Van Tran – Manager, Assessment Program • Samantha Foreman – Exam Coordinator • Simon Nguyen – Exam Technologist • Rae-Ann Iacucci – Exam Coordinator • Shawn Chisholm – Exam Coordinator • Laura Jamieson – Exam Coordinator • Debra Sibbald – Executive Director, Assessment Programs • Meng To – Exam Coordinator • Jocelyn Dilworth – Exam Coordinator

Touchstone Institute Assessments

Internationally Educated Nurses Competency Assessment Program (IENCAP)

MCQ and OSCE that assess the knowledge, skill and judgement of internationally educated nurses seeking registration in Ontario as compared to a recent graduate of a Canadian nursing program. A renewed version of the test reflecting 2014 competencies launched in January 2016. Candidates are referred by and results are submitted to the College of Nurses of Ontario.

IENCAP ADMINISTRATIONS 2015/16



EXAM ADMINISTRATION	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES
May 2015	154
August 2015	123
October 2015	94
January 2016	96
February 2016	91
TOTAL	558

Internationally Graduated Optometrists Evaluating Exam (IGOEE)

MCQ and OSCE that assess the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of internationally graduated optometrists as compared to a recent graduate of a Canadian optometric program. Candidates are referred by and results are submitted to the College of Optometrists of Ontario.

IGOEE ADMINISTRATIONS 2015/16



EXAM ADMINISTRATION	TOTAL NUMBER OF CANDIDATES
June 27 – 28, 2015	28

On Our Assessments

CANDIDATES

“Thank you for making a stressful experience as pleasant as possible.”

“Thank you for each and every effort taken by staff of Touchstone in providing a safe, academic atmosphere for performing OSCE.”

“I enjoy the way the day is run and I feel that there [is] always adequate staff for any questions.”

SUPPORT STAFF

“I feel exceptionally well taken care of and listened to by the people running the day and that’s the bottom line for me.”

Knowledge and Competency Assessment Tool (KCAT) for Internationally Educated Dietitians – in Development

Tablet-based exam that assesses the competency levels and foundational knowledge of internationally educated dietitians (IEDs), as part of the College of Dietitians of Ontario (CDO) Prior Learning Assessment. The results are expected to produce information that will direct IEDs along a pathway towards licensure in Canada. Candidates are referred by and results are submitted to the CDO.

National Assessment Collaboration Objective Structured Clinical Exam (NAC OSCE)

National OSCE developed by the Medical Council of Canada. This exam assesses the readiness of an international medical graduate (IMG) for entrance into a Canadian residency program. Candidates can take the NAC OSCE at one of six test centres across Canada. Touchstone Institute is the largest NAC administration site in the country.

NAC ADMINISTRATIONS 2015/16



EXAM ADMINISTRATION	NUMBER OF CANDIDATES
September 2015	486
March 2015	105
TOTAL	592

Nurse Practitioner Practice Assessment (NPPA) – in Redevelopment

OSCE that addresses the 2010 Canadian Nurse Practitioner Core Competency Framework. This exam is one assessment method in the CNO’s Practice Assessment as part of their Quality Assurance Program. NPs in Ontario are randomly selected by the CNO to participate.



Communication Program

The Communication Program provides communication and language resources, tools and services for regulators, government, employers and educators to support safe, effective practice in Canada's health professions.

With an emphasis on inter-professional collaboration and practice, the Communication Program explores issues associated with occupation-specific language competence and its impact on professional communication competencies. Our work focuses on IEHPs in Ontario as they traverse the pathway from registration to employment. We maintain relationships with a range of stakeholders – regulators, trainers, academics – who benefit from greater knowledge in this area to inform their policies and practices.

Resources and tools for regulators, government, educators and employers



COLLABORATION & KNOWLEDGE SHARING

COMMUNICATION & LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT



Administration of high-stakes occupation-specific assessments

Proven methods for review, development, renewal and validation of test content and procedures



EXAM REVIEW & DEVELOPMENT

STANDARDS & BENCHMARKS



Defensible, fair language proficiency and professional practice standards

Our Team: Lysa Le – Exam Coordinator, The CELBAN Centre • Stephanie Hooker – Senior Program Consultant • Dan Grossutti – Manager, The CELBAN Centre • Andrea Strachan – Director, Communication Program • Yzelle Duran – Exam Coordinator, The CELBAN Centre • Julie Gallo – Project Coordinator, The OCECCA Project • Emma Marcon – Program Assistant, The CELBAN Centre



OCECCA Implementation and Evaluation Project

In 2014, the Communication Program undertook the OCECCA Implementation and Evaluation project, which aimed to establish a hub for occupation-specific language assessments for health care professions. In 2015/16, we initiated several research projects and incorporated two specialized language and communication assessment tools into our service offerings: the Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN) and the Optometric English Language Proficiency Exam (OELPE).

Optometric English Language Proficiency Exam (OELPE)

Touchstone Institute's Communication Program has purchased the Optometric English Language Proficiency Exam. As part of building a research partnership, we have begun a test renewal project.

A technical review of OELPE was undertaken in 2015 to determine whether it had potential as a high-stakes exam (i.e., to screen applicants for the International Optometric Bridging Program at the University of Waterloo). Technical reports resulting from that analysis concluded that with some development the tool could be adapted for a higher stakes purpose. The OELPE test development project aims to upgrade the assessment based on results of two technical reports, which identified specific areas for improved reliability and validity.

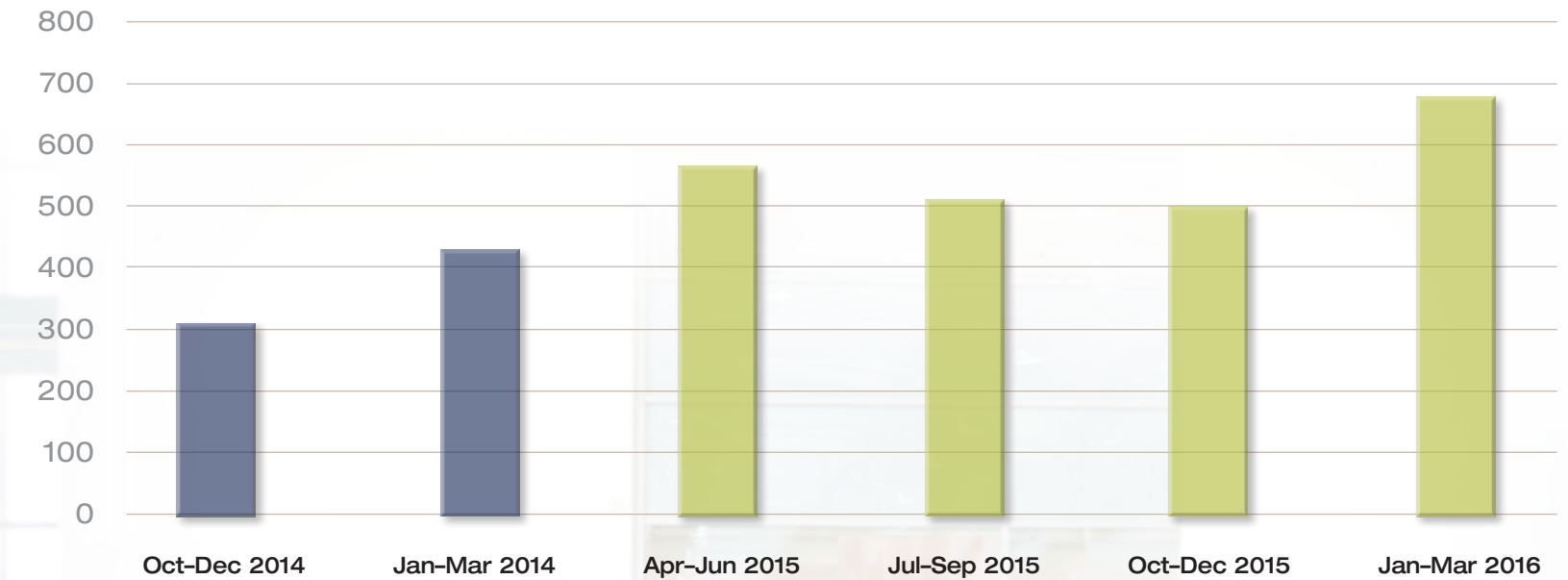
Canadian English Language Benchmark Assessment for Nurses (CELBAN)

The Communication Program oversees The CELBAN Centre, the national administrator for CELBAN. This OSLA for internationally educated nurses is one of two tests accepted by nursing licensing bodies across Canada as evidence of language proficiency and the most heavily subscribed occupation-specific language assessment in Canada.

The number of IENs who have completed CELBAN has risen steadily since The CELBAN Centre launched in fall 2014. In 2015/16, The CELBAN Centre increased testing capacity, with seven test sites across Canada, 94 trained assessors and a standardized assessor certification program.

In late 2015, The Centre released a revised edition of Institutional CELBAN, which is now being used by an estimated 32 universities, colleges and workplace programs across Canada to complement their programming for IEHPs.

CELBAN ADMINISTRATIONS



A 360° View of Culture and Communication

In early 2016, Touchstone Institute launched A 360° View of Culture and Communication, a project to consolidate existing sector expertise and build consensus around best practices related to culture and communication. In consultation with service providers and internationally trained individuals from a range of sectors, employers and workplace settings, we will be working to build a valid and reliable framework to inform future program development in a range of educational and workplace contexts. The framework will help with the integration of internationally trained individuals by creating a shared approach in programming, recruiting, hiring and retaining internationally trained individuals.



On CELBAN

"I'm so thankful that there is CELBAN. Taking IELTS ... was so difficult. I have recommended this test to all my friends with a medical background who need an English-language test."

"CELBAN is a very good way of determining communication skills, which is important in nursing."

"The whole crew of CELBAN in Edmonton was so wonderful and friendly."

"Taking CELBAN ... helped me to be assertive, to advocate for my future patients' rights. Nursing communication is a key factor to good communication with the client."

"The questioning techniques are relevant and helpful for an internationally educated nurse."

PERSPECTIVES SYMPOSIUM

We hosted our second annual Perspectives symposium on February 23, 2016. This year we explored the relationships, challenges and opportunities in communication competency. The experience was truly interdisciplinary, with attendees from diverse backgrounds, including linguistics, health care, education, regulation, assessment and government. Through presentations, a panel session, simulated scenarios and informal dialogue throughout the day, we all came away with a broader and deeper understanding of the nature of language proficiency and communication competence – both individual and collective.

Join us for our next symposium, Perspectives on Successful Transitions for Internationally Educated Health Professionals, on Thursday March 2, 2017.

"A very informative day with some top-grade presenters. Thanks for providing this learning opportunity!"

"Terrific speakers and very diverse topics. Lorelei's keynote was the best I have heard in a long time. The networking was excellent as well. The attendees were very diverse, and very interesting to talk to them about their activities."

"[G]reat cross-section of presenters / panelist and the even greater opportunity for the audience to ask questions."

"The clear distinction between language proficiency and communication competence has given me a whole new perspective on the issues of professional communication, competence and evaluation."

Featured Presenters

Helen Angus – Deputy Minister of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade

Lorelei Lingard – Founding Director, Centre for Education Research & Innovation (CERI), Schulich School of Medicine & Dentistry

Tim McNamara – Professor, School of Languages and Linguistics, University of Melbourne

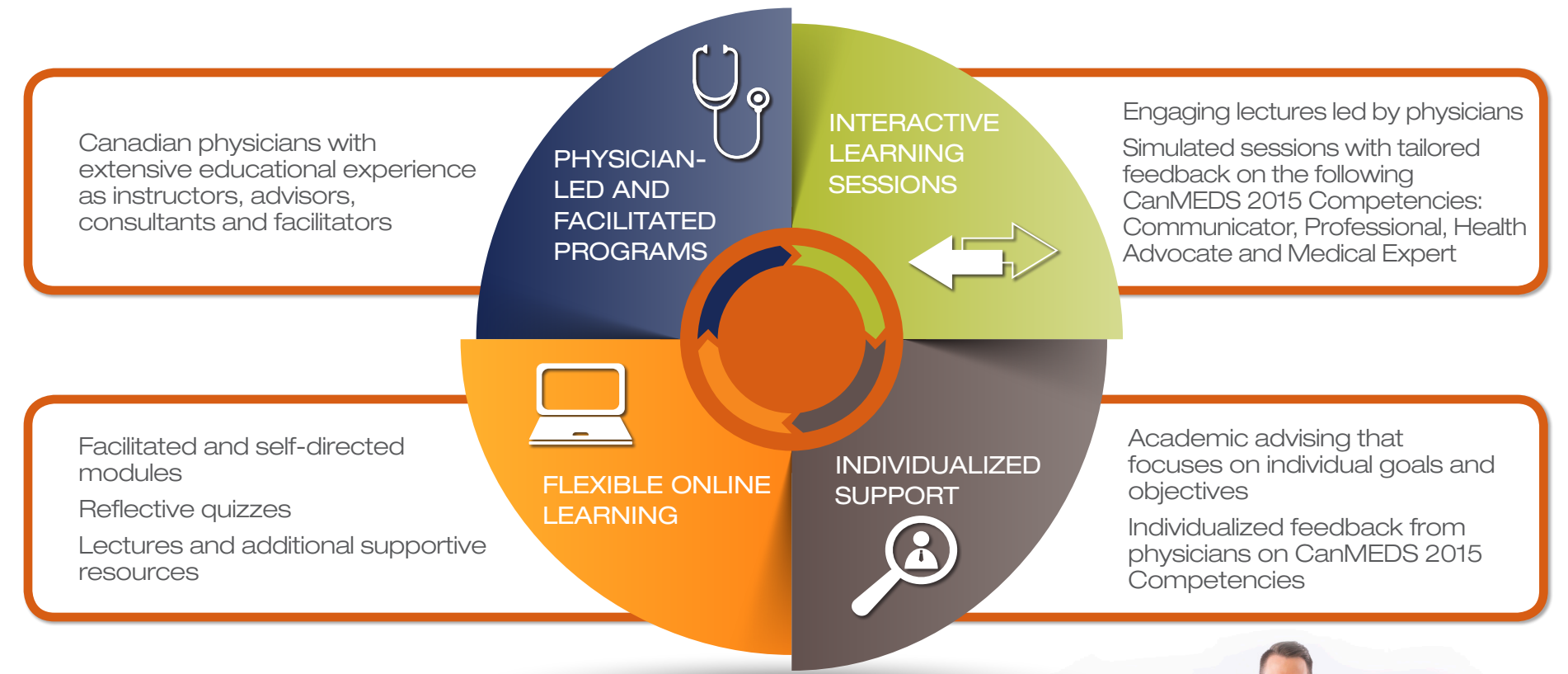
Susan Boshier – Professor of English and Director of ESL, St. Catherine University

Michael Kaufmann – Medical Director, OMA Physician Health Program



Education Program

Touchstone Institute education programs provide curriculum, orientation, supports and services to prepare international medical graduates (IMGs) for a successful transition to professional practice in Ontario. Programs are built around a core module comprising sessions on medical care in Canada and interactions with simulated patients, which focus on interprofessional dynamics and communication, in a learning environment that offers IMGs an opportunity to build relationships with peers and practising physicians.



Curricular Advisory Committee

Programming for our Canadian Medicine Primer and Pre-Residency programs is guided by our Curricular Advisory Committee, who provide medical and academic counsel to continually advance and improve course content and delivery. Members of the committee are practising physicians and academics from Ontario universities representing diverse expertise. Led by chair Dr. Eric Wong, the committee works with Touchstone Institute to identify the needs of learners and faculty, assess the appropriateness of curricula, interpret and integrate learner feedback, and evaluate the impact of curricular change.



Our Team: Hannah McLean – Education Program Coordinator • Umayangga Yogalingam – Program Assistant • Adrian Frisina – Manager, Education Program • Tania Gamage – Education Program Coordinator

2015/16 EDUCATION PROGRAMS

Pre-Residency Program (PRP)	Mandatory orientation program for IMGs who have been accepted into an Ontario specialty residency program.
Pre-Residency Program – Family Medicine (PRP-FM)	Mandatory orientation program for IMGs who have been accepted into an Ontario family medicine residency program.
Canadian Medicine Primer (CMP)	Optional program offered to visiting fellows and to residents studying in Canada under visa arrangements.

Touchstone Institute's education programs were developed with the support of Ontario's postgraduate medical deans and in consultation with a group of physicians from various specialties, medical schools and communities throughout Ontario. Sessions are delivered by consulting physicians and medical educators from across Ontario and supported by our simulated clients (SCs), who participate in daily encounters and simulations with learners.

In 2016, we introduced new sessions on First Nations and Rural Health, On-Call and Emergency Skills, as well as Consult Note and Evidence-Based Medicine. Former Pre-Residency Program (PRP) participants returned for resident support sessions to provide advice on getting the most from the PRP experience and transitioning successfully to residency in Ontario.

On Our Education Programs

"I had quite a formative and engaging experience interacting with the standardized patients and the variety of lecturers. I will carry many of the practical experiences (i.e. breaking bad news to an SP) with me into residency."

"The instructors were engaging, very knowledgeable, supportive, enthusiastic, and had a general love of teaching. It was a pleasure learning from them."

"Academic Advising was very helpful in providing great advice, resources and knowledge about the health care system in Canada."

"Although originally from Toronto, I feel the PRP system was still a great introduction to all the resources available to us as residents and how we can help our patients."

"The whole process was a tremendous help in preparing us for residency and what to expect as working physicians."

2015/16	PRP	PRP-FM
Number of cohorts	4	4
International medical graduates	45	26
Canadians educated abroad	81	52
Total number of residents	126	78

2015/16	Canadian Medicine Primer
Visa residents	29
Clinical fellows	8
Total number of participants	37

The Canadian Medicine Primer (CMP) continues to attract both visa residents and clinical fellows seeking an orientation to the Canadian health care system. Visa trainees attend simulated patient encounters and facilitated in-class sessions. Large- and small-group simulations provide an opportunity to practise and receive feedback on communication, professionalism, patient management skills and medical expertise. In 2015/16, the program was restructured to provide visa fellows with an opportunity to explore the theory and practice of providing feedback to residents in clinical settings, an expected role for clinical fellows in Canada.



Simulation Program

Since 2007, we have recruited and trained over 1,000 professionals to fulfill both standardized and simulated roles in assessments and education programs that support quality assurance for Ontario's regulated health professions.

In early 2016, the Standardized Patient Program was renamed the Touchstone Institute Simulation Program to recognize the pivotal role simulation – both standardized and non-standardized – plays in assessment and education. Our standardized patients (SPs) became simulated clients (SCs) to reflect the wide range of roles they fulfill – as patients, peers, and colleagues – in assessments and teaching scenarios for IEHPs.



Our Team: Amy Myers – *Simulated Client Trainer* • Sarah Kaff – *Simulated Client Trainer* • Karen Huszar – *Simulated Client Trainer* • Fergus O'Connor – *Manager, Simulation Program* • Helina Shebeshe – *Simulation Program Assistant* • Marion Roy – *Simulated Client Trainer*

Simulation in Education

Simulation provides valuable opportunities for learners to:

- Practise skills and increase confidence
- Reduce errors
- Improve teamwork
- Prepare for rare or unusual scenarios
- Enhance information provided in books or lectures
- Give and receive feedback

Simulation in Assessment

Scenarios can be designed to assess a candidate's professional competencies in defined areas, including:

- Problem-solving
- Decision-making
- Leadership
- Interpersonal and team-based skills
- Communication
- Technical or clinical expertise



On Our Simulation Program

"The experience with the simulated patients was amazing, and the whole process was a tremendous help in preparing us for residency and what to expect as working physicians."

"The patient encounters were amazing and helped me improve my communication skills."

"The standardized patient scenarios were the most useful to me because they allowed me to practise my communication and clinical skills in an effective way with helpful feedback."

Comments from Our Simulated Clients

"Touchstone Institute is a great company that I've enjoyed working with. All the employees have been fun, enthusiastic people who are thorough in their work and make the process smooth and enjoyable."

"Touchstone Institute is one of the nicest places I have worked outside of my work as an actor. Thank you for treating us so well!"

Program Support

The staff providing program support are enablers and specialists critical to the success of the organization. They provide administrative support, executive assistance, project management, communications and psychometric services for all program areas.



Our Team: Claudia Aldecoa – Program Assistant • Raffaella De Fazio – Administrative Assistant, Registration • Sara Cecchetto – Executive Assistant to the CEO • Cameo Allan – Project Coordinator • Sandra Monteiro – Senior Psychometrician • Sandra Braun – Corporate Communications Specialist

Finance and Operations

Touchstone Institute programs run smoothly and efficiently thanks to our finance and operations teams. These key staff members ensure our technical and financial systems support the organization and manage staff, procedures and facilities in a professional and seamless manner.



Our Team: Bill Quinn – Senior Finance Coordinator • Milan Milanovic – Manager, Information Technology • Suzanne Bambrick – Director, Human Resources and Operations • Venkata Marella – Director, Finance • Will Truong – Facilities Coordinator

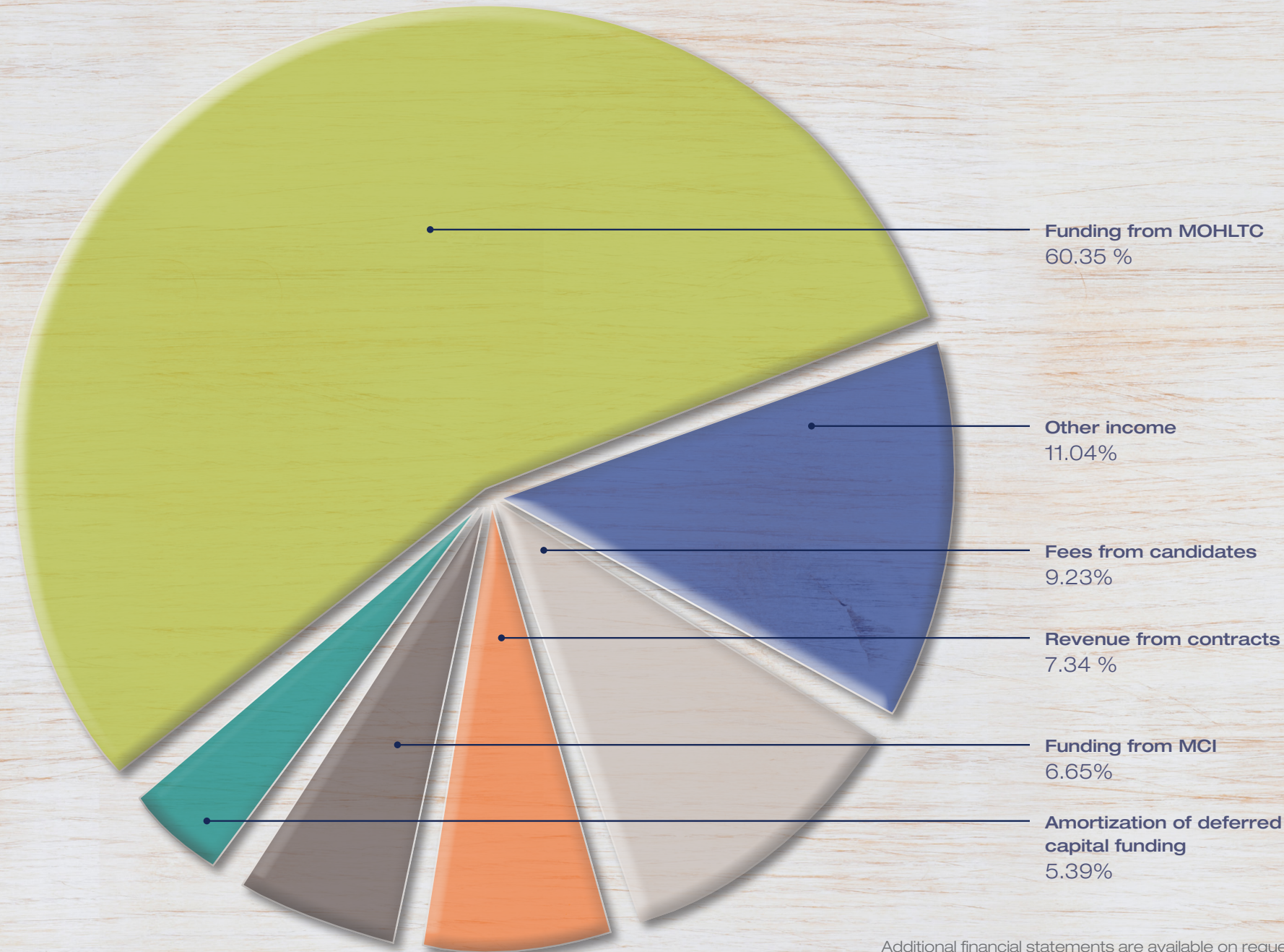
Governance

Board of Directors: *Left to Right:* • **Sten Ardal**, CEO, Touchstone Institute • **John McKinley**, principal, JMcKinley Consulting and CloudPHI • **Trudy Reid**, retired hospital executive • **Dr. Ken Harris**, board chair, Touchstone Institute; deputy CEO and executive director, Office of Specialty Education, Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Canada

Absent: • **Anne Coghlan**, executive director and CEO, College of Nurses of Ontario • **Steven Watts**, partner, KPMG LLP; chair, Touchstone Institute finance committee • **Rocco Gerace**, registrar, College of Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario • **George M. Thomson**, senior director, International Programs at the National Judicial Institute • **Mark Walton**, assistant dean, Post-Graduate Medical Education, McMaster University



TOUCHSTONE INSTITUTE Sources of Revenue 2015/16



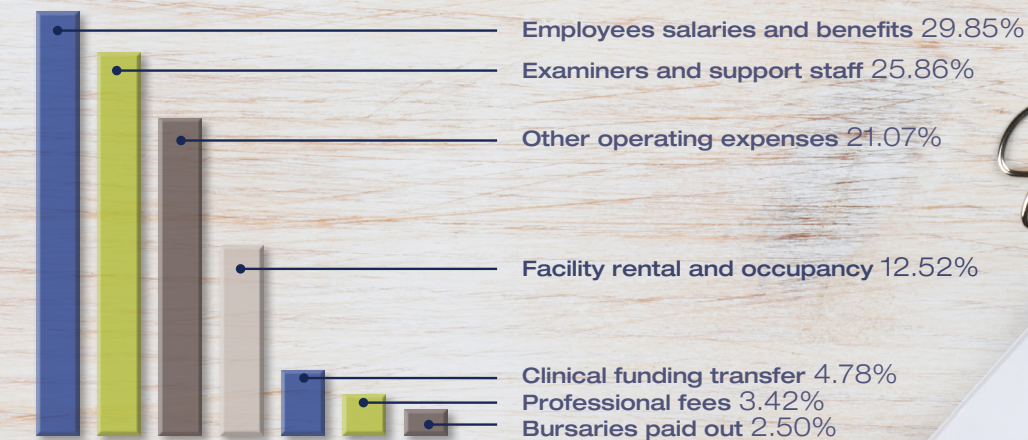
Additional financial statements are available on request.

Condensed Statement of Operations

Year Ended March 31	2016	2015
Revenues		
Funding from Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	7,544,749	7,997,881
Exam fees, development and application fees	2,920,388	2,552,930
Other revenues*	1,362,614	137,108
Amortization of deferred capital funding	673,817	391,985
	12,501,588	11,079,904
Expenses		
Examiners and support staff	2,793,688	2,560,506
Employees salaries and benefits	3,225,443	2,656,287
Facility rental and occupancy	1,352,552	1,334,962
Bursaries paid out	270,000	288,750
Clinical funding to medical schools	516,708	494,484
Professional fees	369,408	637,570
Other operating expenditures	2,277,117	1,804,624
	10,804,916	9,777,183
Excess of revenues over expenses	1,696,652	1,302,721
Repayable to Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care	(678,667)	(1,176,736)
Net excess of revenues over expenses	1,017,985	125,985

* Includes \$1,236,942 HST refund for current and previous years.

Expenses 2015/16





Annual Report 2015/16

145 Wellington Street West, Suite 600
Toronto, Ontario M5J 1H8

P 416-924-8622 • F 416-924-8921
touchstoneinstitute.ca

TOUCHSTONE
INSTITUTE
COMPETENCY EVALUATION EXPERTS