

## ***Too Cool for School Too – Facts and Highlights***

**Number of complaints to Ombudsman:** 14, beginning in May 2008

**Investigation launched:** September 2008

### **Cambrian College**

**Established: 1967 – Motto:** “Responsibility With Excellence”

**Public funding:** 2005-06: \$45 million; 2006-07: \$48 million; 2007-08: \$55 million

**Health Information Management (HIM) Program funding:** \$330,000 (2005-08)

**Number of HIM graduates:** 2007 – 8; 2008 – 11; 2009 – 18; 2010 – 21 (estimated)

**Tuition:** \$5,600 for four semesters plus two-month placement, plus cost of books.

*Note: Graduates were also offered a chance to take the Canadian Healthcare Association distance course to prepare them for the Canadian Health Information Management Association (CHIMA) exam, for \$1,700 tuition plus books – the tuition would be reimbursed by Cambrian upon proof of completion.*

### **Tuition for other Ontario college HIM programs (all CHIMA-recognized):**

- St. Lawrence College: \$3,000 (three semesters including placement)
- George Brown: \$5,500 (four semesters including placement)
- Sir Sandford Fleming: \$6,000 (four semesters including placement)

### **What went wrong? Key findings in *Too Cool for School Too*:**

- Cambrian’s program co-ordinator was never certified by CHIMA, as required for CHIMA recognition.
- In 2005 and 2006, Cambrian advertised its program as “based on requirements established by CHIMA,” failing to mention that the program was not CHIMA-recognized and its graduates could not write the CHIMA national certification exam. (This was removed in August 2008.)
- As late as Aug. 5, 2009, its brochure still said graduates would be “prepared for careers across Canada... including [in] hospitals” – despite no CHIMA recognition.
- Cambrian did not even submit an application for CHIMA recognition until 18 months after it first started admitting students into the program.
- When questioned by students, Cambrian repeatedly assured them it was seeking CHIMA recognition, and they should not worry, because it “would happen.”
- After its second failed attempt at CHIMA recognition, it stated that it was a value-added option that had never been promised as part of the program.
- The Ministry felt that monitoring college program quality was not its responsibility.

## **Cambrian's Health Information Management (HIM) program – Key dates**

**March 25, 2004:** Records and Information Technology Management program suspended due to lack of interest. Co-ordinator begins working on proposal for HIM program.

**October 14, 2004:** Roundtable discussions held re: development of HIM program. The importance of CHIMA recognition is stressed as the only way that students will get positions in hospitals as coders.

**November 3, 2004:** Cambrian's executive committee approves HIM program to start in September 2006; co-ordinator says it will meet CHIMA standards.

**November 24, 2004:** Cambrian's board of governors approves program to start HIM in September 2005, with next step to be apply for CHIMA recognition.

**Feb. 28, 2005:** Credentials Validation Service approves program.

**June 8, 2005:** Ministry approves program for funding. Application states: "An application for recognition will be submitted to CHIMA."

**June 29, 2005:** CHIMA provides Cambrian with draft application manual; warns of a 50% fee surcharge if submission isn't made six months before intake of students.

**September 2005:** Cambrian launches program; 15 students attend.

**September 2006:** One year into the program, Cambrian finally sends in deposit on first recognition application; CHIMA sends revised application manual.

**March 15, 2007:** Cambrian submits first application to CHIMA.

**June 2007:** First 8 HIM students graduate.

**July 5, 2007:** CHIMA rejects first application.

**Oct. 19, 2007:** Cambrian apologizes to HIM grads and students and says it is "working actively" to achieve recognition; offers to pay for any upgrades required if next application is not approved.

**February 2008:** Cambrian resubmits application to CHIMA.

**May 9, 2008:** CHIMA rejects application again, stating more than half of its "learning outcomes" are not met by Cambrian's program; students begin to complain to Ombudsman.