



## Ideas can... build Canada

Budget 2016 Consultations

Submission to the House of Commons Standing

Committee on Finance

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## Ideas can... build Canada

Canada's new government has already acted on important commitments to help Canadians meet the rising challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century by supporting knowledge production, innovation and evidence-based decision making. Recent steps, such as reinstating the long-form census and supporting the work of government scientists, are a promising beginning. Future developments—such as increasing support for Aboriginal students, securing the independence of Statistics Canada and appointing a Chief Science Officer—demonstrate a meaningful commitment to knowledge-based solutions.

Such policies are needed now more than ever. Canadians face a range of difficult challenges, including adapting to technological change, creating jobs in an increasingly knowledge-driven economy, reducing carbon emissions and building social inclusion. Meeting these challenges will require innovative, people-centered, evidence-based solutions. The [Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences](#) welcomes the opportunity to make recommendations to the Standing Committee on Finance on ways to help Canada meet these challenges.

The Federation has three key recommendations:

- 1. Invest in research:** Significantly increase investment in the granting councils (the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research) in order to ensure that Canada is as active as possible in the global supply chain of ideas. New commitments should be untied and designed to achieve growth in real dollars in these vital institutions—starting now, and building over the next four years. In particular, new investments should build better balance across disciplines to ensure Canada's research portfolio is more people-centred for a knowledge intensive society. Increased funding for research infrastructure through the Canada Foundation for Innovation is also key
- 2. Create opportunities for student mobility:** Canada must do more to encourage opportunities for internships and experiential learning for students through exchanges within and outside of Canada. Recent commitments by the government to support such programs in science, technology, math and business should be matched with equivalent opportunities in the humanities and social sciences. Canada's upcoming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary is an ideal time to create a visionary fund to encourage short and long-term inter-provincial and international study or internship opportunities across all disciplines. Such opportunities enrich the postsecondary experience and build connections that yield benefits for Canada far into the future.



- 3. Improve access to postsecondary education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and support research and programming for reconciliation:** The Federation welcomes the government's commitment to act on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The postsecondary education sector is vital for advancing reconciliation. This role can be enhanced by improving real access for Indigenous students to postsecondary education and boosting investments to expand research and institutional programming that promotes reconciliation across the educational sector.

## Ideas can... position Canada as a global leader

### Recommendation 1

**Invest in research:** Significantly increase investment in the granting councils (the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research) in order to ensure that Canada is as active as possible in the global supply chain of ideas. New commitments should be untied and designed to achieve growth in real dollars in these vital institutions starting now, and building over the next four years. In particular, new investments should build better balance across disciplines to ensure Canada's research portfolio is more people-centred for a knowledge-intensive society. Increased funding for research infrastructure through the Canada Foundation for Innovation is also key.

### Rationale

The global knowledge economy is increasingly important, and Canada is at risk of falling behind. Canada's spending on R&D as a percentage of GDP has been steadily declining for more than a decade and stood at 1.6 percent in 2013, well below the OECD average of 2.4 percent. What's more, Canada's spending on R&D is declining while that of most other countries is growing. In 2006, Canada ranked 16<sup>th</sup> in R&D spending as a share of GDP out of 41 countries. By 2013, we'd fallen to 24<sup>th</sup> place. Canada is one of only four of those 41 countries whose total spending on R&D declined between 2006 and 2013.

In the higher education sector, Canada is losing its once highly competitive position. Canada's higher education R&D spending remained flat between 2006 and 2013, while the average spending of other nations grew. Declining investments in research have affected humanities and social science knowledge areas hard. Social science and humanities scholars make up 52 percent of Canada's full-time professors, but receive only 15 percent of federal grant dollars.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) has experienced a decline in real-dollar funding of 9.4 percent between the high-point of 2009 and 2015—the biggest decline out of all three



granting agencies. During this time period, the proportion of social science and humanities researchers able to access grants has declined.<sup>1</sup>

In other words, a growing proportion of humanities scholars and social scientists are not receiving support for research into human thought, behaviours, cultures, and identities. This represents important missed opportunities. Human-focused innovations will arguably be the ones that matter most in the new economy, considering that service industries now make up 70 percent of Canada's economic activity. Research on the human condition is also central for building inclusive, tolerant and healthy societies. Better balance is required in Canada's research portfolio to enable Canadians to thrive and adapt in an evolving knowledge-intensive world.

## Ideas can... create opportunities

### Recommendation 2

**Create opportunities for student mobility:** Canada must do more to encourage opportunities for internships and experiential learning for students through exchanges within and outside of Canada. Recent commitments by the government to support such programs in science, technology, math and business should be matched with equivalent opportunities in the humanities and social sciences. Canada's upcoming 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary is an ideal time to create a visionary fund to encourage short- and long-term interprovincial and international study or internship opportunities across all disciplines. Such opportunities enrich the postsecondary experience and build connections that yield benefits for Canada far into the future.

### Rationale

The government has made meaningful commitments to support experiential learning opportunities, such as co-ops and internships—although it has limited this support to only a few disciplines. Experiential learning is a highly valuable part of the overall learning experience for all students, and we encourage the government to extend its support for such programs to all disciplines, including the humanities and social sciences.

Canada must also increase interprovincial and international mobility for our students. Currently only one in 10 students study outside their province, while less than three percent of Canadian university students leave the country for educational experiences each year. Canada has committed, through its International Education Strategy, to double the number of incoming international students by 2022 (to

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<sup>1</sup> The success rate for researchers applying for Standard Grants in 2009 was 37 percent. The success rate for researchers applying for Insight Grants in 2015 was 23 percent. (Insight Grants are the closest comparison available for Standard Grants, which were discontinued after 2011-12.)



450,000), but Canada’s own students in all disciplines need more opportunities to live and learn outside of their home province or the country as an integral part of their education.

Canada’s 150<sup>th</sup> celebration provides an opportunity to invest in activities such as these that lay the foundation for Canada’s future success. Boosting funding for student travel and exchange opportunities in another province or internationally will promote experiential learning, second language acquisition including official bilingualism, and students’ access to expanded professional networks. The benefits of these experiences are far-reaching including improved scholastic achievement, enhanced cross cultural and citizenship skills, and crucially, enhanced employability upon graduation.

## Ideas can... lead to real reconciliation

### Recommendation 3

**Improve access to postsecondary education for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples and support research and programming for reconciliation:** The Federation welcomes the government’s commitment to act on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The postsecondary education sector is vital for advancing reconciliation. This role can be enhanced by improving real access for Indigenous students to postsecondary education and boosting investments to expand research and institutional programming that promotes reconciliation across the educational sector.

### Rationale

Reconciliation remains a central challenge of our time. The Federation enthusiastically supports the government’s commitment to act on the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The Federation has committed to helping the postsecondary sector contribute to the process of reconciliation, recently adopting the “Touchstone Principles” to guide its own work in this area.

The higher education sector in Canada has a critical role to play. There are virtually no employment and income gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians with undergraduate degrees. Yet less than 10 percent of Aboriginal adults aged 25 to 64 have a university degree, while that figure is 27 percent for the rest of the population.

A growing proportion of Aboriginal students are successfully graduating from secondary school while many Aboriginal communities require workers with advanced skills in such key areas as teaching, business management, language, counseling and social

#### Touchstone Principles:

1. Recognizing Aboriginal self-determination;
2. The need to take a holistic approach to promoting reconciliation;
3. Respecting Aboriginal cultures and languages;
4. The need for structural interventions to address marginalization and historical wrongs; and
5. Non-discrimination: ensuring that non-Aboriginal staff and partners are supported in working in respectful ways.



services. Significant growth is required in direct financial assistance for First Nations, Métis and Inuit students such as via the Post-Secondary Student Support Program, given backlogged demand for postsecondary education and the critical opportunity costs for Canada's future. The Federation also notes the importance of investments in K-12 education systems to ensure Aboriginal students have an equitable opportunity to access the postsecondary level.

Investments should support new and innovative institutional programs, approaches and ways of learning to improve education outcomes for Indigenous students and support reconciliation objectives for all students and faculty. Partnerships between postsecondary institutions and First Nations, Inuit and Métis organizations should be enhanced to develop multiyear action plans.

Investments in research will also be key to advance understanding. Recommendation #65 from the TRC is particularly instructive, calling for the establishment of a multiyear national research program through SSHRC, working with post secondary institutions and Aboriginal people's organizations.

The Canadian higher education sector should also focus on opportunities for non-Aboriginal Canadians to increase their understanding of Indigenous histories and cultures, and help create a welcome space in Canadian society for Indigenous knowledge, which has been undervalued and overlooked throughout Canada's history.

## Conclusion:

The research, teaching and community work undertaken at Canadian universities is vital to the wellbeing, productivity and prosperity of Canada. We welcome the federal government's commitment to support science and research, reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples, and evidence-based public policy.

But greater investments and new approaches are needed to support innovation, collaboration and exchange across some of the most important components of our research infrastructure, including the research granting councils, the Canada Foundation for Innovation and postsecondary institutions.

These key actions—investing in new, discovery-based research in all disciplines, enhancing student mobility, and strengthening the capacity of the postsecondary sector to advance reconciliation—will help Canada build the dynamic, resilient and inclusive knowledge systems it need to compete in the new global knowledge economy.



The **Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences** works to promote the value of research and learning in the humanities and social sciences. Its membership comprises over 80 scholarly associations, 79 postsecondary institutions and six affiliate organizations, representing 85,000 researchers, educators and students across Canada.

In advancing equity, diversity, knowledge, excellence and innovation, the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences contributes tangibly to a free and democratic society.

The Federation:

- Organizes Canada's largest annual gathering of academic researchers, the **[Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences](#)**
- Brings leading scholars to Parliament Hill to discuss public policy and public relevance in our ***Big Thinking*** lecture series
- Supports the publication and sharing of new ideas through our **[Awards to Scholarly Publications Program](#)**

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