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Presidential Address and Highlights from 2013 at the Annual Conference

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Bonjour chers collègues. Good morning. Je m'appelle Antonia Maioni, et je suis présidente de la Fédération des sciences humaines.

I want to say how pleased I am that we are here at McGill University, where I teach in the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Medicine. Je tiens à remercier la Principal de McGill pour son allocution d'ouverture ainsi que l'accueil chaleureux que McGill donne à la Fédération aujourd'hui. Je tiens en particulier à remercier Sarah Stroud, Vice présidente adjointe à la recherche, pour rendre possible notre conférence annuelle à McGill.

We have planned an ambitious agenda for today:

- Engaged discussions on transformations in undergraduate studies and the PhD
- We also have workshops on the future of Congress, Big Data and SSHRC programs
- Later in the day we have a Big Thinking lecture from Kevin Kee called 'Borders without boundaries' about the field of digital humanities
- At our reception we will present you with our ASPP jurors and reveal our Canada Prizes shortlisted authors, and their publishers
- Today's programming is organized under the theme of Transformations.

Transformations and seeing the forest for the trees

We selected the theme of Transformations because we are in a time of change. A time of change not only in the university community, but also in our approach to research, and in society's perception of the role of humanities and social sciences at large. Now, many of you must be secretly —or not so secretly — rolling your eyes right now: we are always in a time of change. However, what is unique to our time is the pace, the level of uncertainty, the open skepticism about the value of liberal arts, and the way that digital technologies are changing both the landscape of teaching and research. The pressure and the stress that many of us are living do not mean that the humanities are in crisis. In fact, the language of crisis is self-defeating by creating a siege mentality. I would encourage us to shape and grasp the myriad of opportunities that do exist while recognizing the significant and real threats that the post secondary education world is facing.

For example, there are concerns about post secondary education (PSE) funding across much of the Western world and about the gap for per capita public investment for an undergrad student in Quebec compared with the rest of Canada. There will be a healthy range of views in the room



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and across our community on how to address these challenges. This vibrant diversity and pluralism about the tough questions we must ask and often critical perspectives that we bring constitute a necessary foundation for a liberal and democratic society.

Pour qu'il en soit ainsi, nous devons regarder au-delà de nous-mêmes afin d'avoir une vision complète. Nos membres sont engagés dans des secteurs très différents et fascinants de l'enseignement et de la recherche. Tout ce travail est porteur de transformations. Grâce à sa capacité à rassembler et à nouer des liens, la Fédération peut contribuer à convaincre les décideurs de créer des conditions propices à la mise en valeur de ces potentialités. Au minimum, la Fédération peut instaurer un dialogue à l'échelle nationale. Elle s'y emploie de plusieurs manières :

- Nous sommes présents sur le terrain de la sensibilisation aux positions politiques; et en effet, nous nous entretenons régulièrement avec des ministres, des parlementaires de toutes les formations politiques et des responsables politiques influents. Nous présentons des mémoires et encourageons certains des meilleurs penseurs au pays à prendre une part active aux consultations sur des questions particulières.
- Nous nous faisons un devoir de nous familiariser avec les travaux de nos membres dans les institutions d'un bout à l'autre du pays et de les faire valoir – depuis la Royal Roads University sur l'île de Vancouver jusqu'à la Memorial University de Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador. Notre rôle en tant que Fédération est de veiller à ne pas laisser l'arbre nous cacher la forêt et à projeter une image complète dans tout ce que nous faisons.

Recap of last year

This time last year I assumed the role of President of the Federation. It has certainly been a busy, yet personally rewarding 12 months.

The highlight of the year was certainly Congress, where nearly 8,000 delegates gathered at the beautiful University of Victoria campus. Last year's Congress theme was “@ the edge”, which provided an excellent platform for unique conversations, thoughtful dialogue and new initiatives. We had 68 scholarly associations present and 60 exhibitors at Expo. Congress typically brings an infusion of \$9-12 million dollars to the local economy, and Congress 2013 was no exception. Engagement with the community was exceptionally good, with the local programming featuring exceptional Big Thinking speakers and concerts, including one by singer-songwriter Buffy Sainte-Marie. Our programming efforts were rewarded by excellent media attention. We saw coverage of Congress in 164 media stories and our new Congress hashtag trended in Twitter in Canada.



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À côté du Congrès, la Fédération poursuit une foule d'activités au cours de l'année. La série *Voir grand* qui se tient sur la Colline du Parlement, sur la route et au Congrès est une initiative des plus intéressantes qui a permis de réunir une somme de connaissances remarquables. En cumulant six conférences par an et à l'approche du 20^e anniversaire, la liste des orateurs que nous avons eu l'honneur d'accueillir est véritablement impressionnante. Vous allez vous régaler, car nous avons inclus dans le programme d'aujourd'hui une causerie *Voir grand*. Je n'en vous dirai pas plus pour l'instant!

Another area of work for the Federation is the long standing Awards to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP). Through the ASPP, the Federation tangibly supports research dissemination and encourages excellence in humanities and social science scholarship through 180 awards of \$8,000 and five Translation Grants of \$12,000 each year, contributing a total of \$1.5 million annually to the dissemination of Canadian research. Funding for ASPP is generously provided by SSHRC.

Flowing from the ASPP is the Canada Prizes program, which awards four prizes annually to the best scholarly books in the humanities and social sciences that have received funding from ASPP. You will hear more about that at tonight's reception, when you will also have the pleasure of meeting attending jurors and shortlisted authors for this year's prizes. There are four prizes: Canada Prize in the Humanities for a French and an English book, and Canada Prize in the Social Sciences for a French and English book.

Bilingualism and communications

Cet équilibre entre le français et l'anglais est manifeste non seulement dans l'attribution des Prix du Canada, mais également dans la composition du conseil d'administration de la Fédération, ses adhérents et dans toutes les initiatives de l'organisme et son travail d'élaboration des politiques. Au cours de mon mandat, j'ai pu constater l'attachement de la Fédération au bilinguisme. Nous offrons, aujourd'hui des services d'interprétation simultanée pour nous assurer justement que l'auditoire participera pleinement à cette journée et aura l'occasion d'interagir dans l'une et l'autre des langues officielles.

In the area of communications, the Federation has taken important strides in 2013 to improving communications with our various audiences. Over the past year, the Federation has ramped up communications by publishing a monthly Communiqué newsletter, a bi-weekly blog and daily tweets — all initiatives that markedly improved our online and social media presence. Today we are proudly presenting our 2013 annual report to all of you. And for those or those who simply want to know a bit more about our successes in 2013, we have created a short video to accompany the 2013 annual report which we will show at the AGM at lunch time for the first time. It will be uploaded on our web site on Monday.



Transformations in 2014

Looking ahead to 2014, again in the context of Transformations, I want to outline the vision of where I would like to lead the Federation in the second and final year of my presidency. The Federation is guided by its five-year Strategic Framework, which is set by the Board of Directors. We are currently working to the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, but 2014 is the year in which we begin to shape the next one. I look forward to this exercise — reviewing what we have accomplished, what remains to be done and what we lay out for ourselves as goals for the next five-year cycle. An essential element of the planning process is member involvement. Your contributions will shape the future of the Federation. I encourage all of you to take the time to become involved through the formal consultations in the coming year but also through frank and informal conversations

Un autre événement vers lequel je me tourne avec impatience est le Congrès 2014 qui se tiendra dans huit semaines (à peine!) à Brock University, du 24 au 30 mai. Le thème du congrès de cette année est « Frontières sans limites ». La Fédération a concocté une programmation splendide, Brock a mis au point de son côté une programmation locale de premier ordre, le chiffre des inscriptions est excellent et nous espérons vous retrouver tous à St. Catharines.

Comme beaucoup d'entre vous savent déjà, nous avons eu ces derniers mois le plaisir d'annoncer deux sites qui accueilleront les prochains congrès. En novembre, nous avons annoncé que le Congrès 2016 se tiendra à la University of Calgary. Et il y a trois semaines, nous avons rendu public que Ryerson University avait été retenue pour 2017.

Tout en travaillant à l'aboutissement de ces deux annonces importantes, nous sommes d'ores et déjà fort occupés à préparer le Congrès 2015 qui se tiendra à l'Université d'Ottawa du 30 mai au 5 juin 2015 sur le thème « Des idées capitales ».

Forward momentum

Securing Congress dates and arranging interesting programming is but part of our task, though. Part of the consultation on our new strategic plan will focus on Congress. What can we achieve together to ensure that Congress truly fulfill its ambition of being a key moment in the intellectual life of the country? To do so, we must become more than a conference of conferences. How do we bring Canadians interested in ideas into our conversations? How do we strengthen multi-disciplinarity? How do we more effectively engage international colleagues? Jean-Marc, our Executive Director, will be leading a participatory workshop later this morning and I look forward in hearing the creative ideas that will come out of it. The Federation firmly believes that we have a role to play in shaping and creating space for discussions on issues that



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cut across the humanities and social sciences. It is for this reason that we have launched two major projects last fall.

Open access

One project is investigating the issue of open access for the ASPP. Through its history, the Federation has supported the publication of more than 6,000 books that have helped to enrich the social, cultural and intellectual life of Canada.

The Federation has been a supporter of the principles of open access and the Berlin Declaration since 2011. To date, most open access discussions have focused on research published in academic journals and have not included scholarly books in the HSS. However, the Federation is looking at the issue of open access for scholarly books funded through ASPP that would make publicly funded research more readily and widely available while encouraging a dynamic and innovative Canadian academic publishing sector. We are currently crafting a draft policy which we will release for consultation before Congress.

The impact of research

Le deuxième projet se propose d'établir un cadre permettant de mesurer l'impact de la recherche en sciences humaines. Nous savons que notre travail dans le monde des idées et du savoir a des incidences multiples sur nos étudiants, nos communautés, l'économie au sens large et les Canadiens et exerce son influence sur l'enseignement, les mesures budgétaires et les politiques publiques. Mais prendre la mesure de ces répercussions représente un défi énorme, car le langage, les concepts et les indicateurs communément utilisés dans les disciplines techniques et scientifiques — tels que les citations, le nombre de brevets et les revenus tirés des licences— ont une relevance limitée dans nos disciplines.

In an era of ranking, outcomes and impact measurement, it is increasingly important to appropriate the language of measurement — after all, it is prevalent in poetry. We need to develop sets of indicators that make sense for our community, for telling our stories. This second project is still in its infancy, but we expect it to be of international interest once released.

Both of these projects have the potential to be transformative. And that is what we strive to be.

Together, we can be transformative

We fully acknowledge that bringing about transformation comes with its own set of challenges. These range from resistance/aversion to change, to skewed public perceptions, to media oversimplification, to the reality of budgetary constraints. But the Federation is well positioned



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to address these challenges head-on. In fact, Jean-Marc and his staff do this on a daily basis. They strive to represent us —institutions and scholarly associations alike —in the corridors of Parliament, in the media, in public and private meetings year-round. But we need your ideas, your engagement and your energy to do better, to achieve our aspirations, to demonstrate that Ideas can... be transformative.