

The Coalition for Canadian Research

October 5, 2023

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, P.C., M.P.
Prime Minister of Canada
Office of the Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

The Honourable Chrystia Freeland, P.C., M.P.
Deputy Prime Minister of Canada and Minister of Finance
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister
80 Wellington Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A2

Dear Prime Minister Trudeau and Deputy Prime Minister Freeland:

As research advocacy organizations, we represent the combined voice of post-secondary institutions, research hospitals, leading life sciences companies, university and hospital-based researchers, university faculty, health charities, student leaders, graduate students, post-doctoral fellows, and early career researchers across Canada. We are passionate believers in the importance of a healthy and vibrant research and innovation ecosystem which shapes highly talented thinkers and equips Canada with the ideas and knowledge it needs to build a more prosperous, sustainable, and inclusive future for us all. We can all be proud of the sizeable achievements that have come in the past from Canadian governments choosing to invest in science and research.

In recent years, however, Canada has been falling behind peer countries, and we are writing to you today at a time of urgent need and mounting international competition to call for a major new investment in research to correct this decline. Countries like the United States, Germany and Japan have committed substantial new funding to make research a central component of their industrial vision and their solution to problems from climate change to future pandemics.

In contrast, Canada's funding for research is stagnating at a time when new insights and highly-qualified talent are needed more than ever to meet the emerging challenges of our time. In real terms, funding levels are declining and will worsen in the years ahead without immediate action.

Canada must respond now with an ambitious agenda for success in research that matches the ambition of our peers. Such an investment is needed to reflect the industrial efforts of our global competitors who are investing heavily in research, and to secure the top talent and international investments Canada will need for a productive and prosperous future.

Without action, a brain drain of top talent is a growing concern. Stagnant federal funding and ongoing high levels of inflation are weakening the ability of our research and innovation ecosystem to secure global investments and attract, retain, and develop highly-qualified talent. In addition, investments in early-career researchers, when implemented with consideration towards equity, diversity, and inclusion, can enable a more diversified scientific workforce with the multitude of perspectives needed to generate and implement effective and innovative solutions to Canada's biggest challenges.

The health of the research and innovation ecosystem depends therefore on a renewal of the core funding of the federal granting councils, alongside competitive funding through graduate level scholarships and post-doctoral fellowships. Renewing support for the granting councils is central to ensuring that Canada is an attractive place for graduate students, post-doctoral fellows and early career researchers to study and work and for industry and entrepreneurs to invest and develop innovations. An ambitious reinvestment can make Canada a place where researchers can pursue their ideas and innovations with sufficient funding for their work.

Moreover, an ambitious reinvestment would reflect the urgent need for increased funding recommended in your government's own Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System, known as the Bouchard Report. We echo their appeal for a major reinvestment as the minimum needed to maintain Canada's research and innovation ecosystem amid high inflation. The panel's findings clearly outlined the need for a significant increase to the base budgets of the granting councils (NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR) and CFI, as well as an increase to graduate scholarship and post-doctoral fellowship award amounts which have remained frozen for two decades. The government must step up to meet the call for action expressed in the Bouchard Report.

Canada needs the best and brightest researchers, both domestically and internationally, if we are to succeed in the years ahead. This talent development and the ability of Canada to compete and attract investment in emerging fields is a guaranteed return on investment in research. It will enable our emerging leaders to drive success in the fast-growing, innovative sectors of the knowledge economy and provide solutions to many of our most pressing challenges. Now is a crucial moment to secure these opportunities.

We urge your government to take immediate and significant action to ensure that science and research can successfully underpin Canada's prospects to build a sustainable, prosperous, and just society in the turbulent 21st century.

Yours sincerely,

Association of Faculty of Medicines of Canada



Canadian Alliance of Student Associations



Canadian Association of University Teachers



Evidence for Democracy



Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences



HealthCareCAN



Health Charities Coalition of Canada



Research Canada



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U15 Canada



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