

August 4, 2017

Standing Committee on Finance
Sixth Floor, 131 Queen Street
House of Commons
Ottawa ON K1A 0A6

University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT) was pleased to see the strong support for innovation and skills outlined in the most recent budget. We also welcomed the Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund (SIF). These investments in post-secondary institutions allow us to help deliver on the government's mandate of economic growth and international competitiveness.

Thanks to the support from the Strategic Investment Fund, we will be opening our [Software and Informatics Research Centre \(SIRC\)](#) in September, 2017, that will deepen the university's capacity in information and communications technology and entrepreneurial business incubation. We are also working to support Canada's economic competitiveness through the completion of our [Centre for Advanced Research, Innovation and Entrepreneurship \(CARIE\)](#). Further to the \$26.9 million federal funding announcement supporting this building, we are working with our provincial, municipal, corporate and philanthropic partners to fully leverage this commitment and begin construction.

UOIT is also proud of our role as a founding member of the [Incubate-Innovate Network of Canada \(I-INC\)](#). This initiative is a pan-Canada business incubator and accelerator network to connect partner universities' strengths in digital technologies and to create an entrepreneurial ecosystem that will drive technology-enabled innovation, productivity, and job creation. I-INC has been extremely successful and further investment would allow for an increase in scope, reach and impact of the network and its ability to build a new generation of globally competitive businesses in Canada.

Universities play a fundamental role in the Canadian economy due to their teaching and research mandates, as well as the significant economic impacts from their operations. Universities impart upon their students the skills, knowledge and experiences they need to directly contribute to Canada's economic growth and productivity. They are at the heart of the discovery and innovation agenda. Through partnerships with industrial and community partners, universities leverage their assets and resources to improve the

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quality of life for all Canadians. We help advance Canada's long-term economic growth and prosperity and can help achieve many of the objectives outlined in the mandate letters to Cabinet Ministers.

Since inception, the University of Ontario Institute of Technology has embedded research, innovation, technology and entrepreneurship into everything we do. We are a STEM-intensive institution that integrates extensive work experiences into the curriculum of our programs with a majority of our upper-year students participating in work-integrated learning. We have had success as evidenced by our job ready graduates of which a significant majority are employed shortly after graduation in a field related to their area of study.

Research is a key mechanism by which UOIT imparts the knowledge and skills our students need to become innovative citizen leaders. New investments into research ultimately lead to the creation of new jobs and economic stability.

UOIT's recommendations for the 2018 Federal Budget support those of Universities Canada and address the focus of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance's consultations on measures that will improve Canada's productivity and competitiveness.

UOIT endorses Universities Canada's recommended strategic focal areas of:

1. **Improving competitiveness through discovery research:** with the priority put on increased financial support of discovery research, better support for Canada's next generation of research leaders, enhanced opportunities for early- and mid-career researchers and advancing Canada's efforts to improve gender equity and diversity in science.
2. **Global competitiveness through international research collaboration:** a preference is felt for new support and robust mechanisms for international research collaborations, global university engagement, as well as a call for dedicated funding to strengthen international partnerships in discovery and innovation.
3. **Building on world-class research infrastructure:** including regularized support for research infrastructure and its operation and maintenance with an annualized budget allocation for CFI.

Discovery Research Recommendation:

1. That the federal government provide significant increases in direct support for discovery research through federal granting councils.

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International Research Collaboration Recommendations:

1. That the federal government invest in a dedicated support fund for international research collaboration to capitalize on Canada's global moment and strong position as a research partner of choice.
2. That the federal government provide greater support to Canadian students studying abroad as a means to increase the global competencies necessary to help international trade relationships succeed.

Canada Foundation for Innovation Recommendation:

1. That the federal government invest in stable and predictable funding for the Canada Foundation for Innovation to support long-term research infrastructure planning, development and operations.

Conclusion

Maintaining and improving Canada's research and innovation competitiveness is key to ensuring a healthy, prosperous and innovative society. Research and innovation are the mechanism by which increased productivity is achieved, new markets are opened, new products created and society enhanced resulting in thriving economics.

Reliable, sustainable, long-term funding for the university research enterprise will ensure Canada's international competitiveness for years to come. Through this funding, more students will gain valuable research skills; our research community will employ state-of-the-art infrastructure needed to attract and retain top researchers from around the globe; universities will continue to invest in the supports needed for a high-quality, research-enriched environment; private sector will be encouraged to partner, and Canada will prosper in a globally competitive world.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit these comments for your consideration in developing the 2018 Budget.

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