

Standing Committee on Finance (FINA)
Pre-budget consultations 2012

Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

Responses
<p>1. Economic Recovery and Growth</p> <p><i>Given the current climate of federal and global fiscal restraint, what specific federal measures do you feel are needed for a sustained economic recovery and enhanced economic growth in Canada?</i></p> <p>Investing in the knowledge economy is critical to strengthening Canada's resiliency in austere times and ensuring sustained economic growth. Budget 2012 included several investments to support Canada's research enterprise, but more is required to fully capitalize on the economic advantage we enjoy compared to most countries. Canada is positioned to become a global leader in the knowledge and creative economy. New federal investments in research and learning will lead to jobs and prosperity now, and enhance the future for our children. The impact of past and ongoing investments in research and training can be seen across the country. Knowledge generated in Canada's post-secondary institutions and shared with Canadians in communities across the country, international partners, not-for-profits and businesses is driving innovation. It also improves our understanding of economic cycles and how best to take actions that sustain growth, foster effective social policies and ensure prosperity. Increased funding for university and college research and knowledge mobilization is key to job creation and economic growth. A cohesive matrix of policies, institutions and programs that extend the range of research and intensify learning activities are essential for anticipating, adapting to, and shaping productive change. To this end, the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, which represents Canada's 85,000 social science and humanities researchers and students, recommends that the federal government: 1. Increase funding to the three federal research granting agencies and the Canada Foundation for Innovation, to protect and bolster Canada's world-renowned learning and research enterprise—a critical driver of innovation in Canada. 2. Invest in graduate and post-doctoral fellowships and internships in Canada and abroad to nurture the next generation of highly qualified Canadian employees and leaders. 3. Building on the investments for industry-academic partnerships in Budget 2012, deepen and extend its support for cross-sector collaborations between academic institutions, governments, communities, and not-for-profits in Canada and abroad.</p>
<p>2. Job Creation</p> <p><i>As Canadian companies face pressures resulting from such factors as uncertainty about the U.S. economic recovery, a sovereign debt crisis in Europe, and competition from a number of developed and developing countries, what specific federal actions do you believe should be taken to promote job creation in Canada, including that which occurs as a result of enhanced internal and international trade?</i></p> <p>Action: Help in the transition of post-secondary education graduates to the workforce. To create jobs, Canada must first develop a diverse, adaptable and highly educated workforce to drive product, service and policy innovation. Short-term job creation is important, but insufficient for long-term prosperity. Canada needs more knowledgeable graduates able to connect with organizations, sectors and jurisdictions to apply their creativity and skills. Graduates in the humanities, arts and social sciences are highly valued by innovative businesses and the public sector precisely because of their ability to adapt, acquire and situate knowledge within broad and changing contexts. A recent study, Labour Market Outcomes of Social Science and Humanities Graduates, showed that two-thirds of humanities and social</p>

sciences graduates work in professional, management or supervisory occupations across sectors and fields. It also showed that these graduates are remarkably successful in self-employment, an important reality to leverage as Canada strives to promote entrepreneurial activity to spur job growth. Investment in graduate training is especially important as higher education contributes to knowledge creation and creates more employment opportunities. Only 4.6% of Canadians with a graduate degree are unemployed (9.1% for a high school diploma). Yet according to OECD comparisons, Canada lags in graduating Master's and Doctoral students, an important indicator of a creative knowledge economy. We need to increase enrolment in graduate studies and help graduate students build professional networks outside of academe, identify multiple career avenues, and smooth their transition to the workforce. Additional investments to support SSHRC's Canada Graduate Scholarships and their Talent and Connections programs can help provide these opportunities to Canadian students. Extending the Mitacs Industrial Research and Development Internship funding envelope to include social organizations and not-for-profits is also important. That would simultaneously provide unique and valuable training opportunities for humanities and social sciences students and support the critical research needs of SMEs and other organizations in the health, arts and educational sectors. Similarly, support for the Mitacs-Accelerate InDev program, currently being piloted, will open more doors for graduate students from sociology, communications, business and the digital humanities.

3. Demographic Change

What specific federal measures do you think should be implemented to help the country address the consequences of, and challenges associated with, the aging of the Canadian population and of skills shortages?

Action: Bolster research funding and support student mobility and workforce transitions. Creating sound policies to offset demographic challenges first requires an investment in research on a wide array of topics from healthcare to immigration to social security. Increased support to Canada's social science and humanities community will enhance the vital pool of expertise needed for increasing national productivity and well-being in the face of demographic challenges. For example, at the Nova Scotia Centre on Aging, Janice Keefe helps to develop policies and programs to support Canadians who are caring for aging parents while balancing a full-time job. José Domene, Canada Research Chair in School to Work Transition, is exploring the challenges youth face entering the workforce by developing strategies for degree completion and full-time employment following graduation. Support for these and other humanities and social sciences researchers must also necessarily include ensuring adequate access to data (from digitized books, newspapers, and music to transactional data like web searches) on which forecasting and analyses depend. The government can help create the new digital research infrastructure needed for 21st century scholarship. Alongside bolstering our public policy-making capacity, the federal government must also provide higher education and research opportunities for underrepresented and rapidly growing groups, notably Aboriginal Canadians. According to Statistics Canada, 8% of Aboriginal Canadians have completed a university program, compared to 23% of the non-Aboriginal population. Specific funding initiatives to enhance post-secondary success for Aboriginal Canadians will yield immense dividends in terms of participation in all areas of the economy.

Capitalizing on Canada's attractiveness to foreign students is also essential. As the OECD June 2012 Economic Survey of Canada states, "Immigration can provide an important source of knowledge diffusion while improving labour-supply flexibility; it is likely to become increasingly important as the workforce ages." Canada's international scholarship programs provide a pathway for immigration. Many international students remain in Canada, diversifying the labour market and providing access to personal and professional networks abroad. Likewise, developing signature mobility programs that support Canadians' study and research abroad is integral to building thriving knowledge networks and economic partnerships in a global environment.

4. Productivity

With labour market challenges arising in part as a result of the aging of Canada's population and an ongoing focus on the actions needed for competitiveness, what specific federal initiatives are needed in order to increase productivity in Canada?

Action: Improve cross-sector collaborations across a number of critical areas. Multi-faceted, inter-sectoral collaborations increase economic productivity and promote innovation. According to the expert panel that reviewed federal support to research and development, these collaborations improve productivity and connect research with users who need it most. Canada can and must do better. Strengthening our research base, while establishing cross-sector connections, can address the knowledge infrastructure deficit that organizations face on their own. While Budget 2012 bolstered industry-research partnerships, there is also increasing demand for research collaborations with academic institutions, not-for-profit organizations, governments, and communities in Canada and abroad. More support is required to sustain these innovative and creative hubs so they can play leading roles internationally across a number of fields (gaming, IT, health, forestry, education, energy, agriculture). Closing the knowledge infrastructure gap also includes support for the federal research granting agencies and CFI, but also for those programs, organizations and resources upon which researchers rely. For example, access to data, research and ICT networks is essential for research excellence and international collaborations. Going forward, the federal government can play a leadership role on a national approach to research data that ensures Canadian students and researchers can leverage existing data for specific applications and challenges that apply to the Canadian context. Increasing productivity entails taking a holistic view of innovation. Without innovative solutions to current challenges, we risk losing our competitive edge. Richard Hawkins, Fellow at the University of Ottawa's Institute for Science, Society and Policy, notes in Looking at Innovation from a Uniquely Canadian Perspective that innovation goes beyond technological advances. Innovation must include exploring how people function in the workforce and understanding the human and organizational dimensions of productivity and the labour market. Here, social scientists and humanities researchers can contribute their understanding toward policy responses to productivity challenges. Thus, increased funding for research and cross-sector collaborations through SSHRC and other granting councils is essential.

5. Other Challenges

With some Canadian individuals, businesses and communities facing particular challenges at this time, in your view, who is facing the most challenges, what are the challenges that are being faced and what specific federal actions are needed to address these challenges?

Action: Invest in campus-community collaborations. Rising inequality has been shown to be correlated with negative impacts on Canada's growth and social fabric. Many Canadians face deep challenges on a daily basis—mental illness, poverty, crippling personal debt and a lack of affordable housing. Aboriginal Canadians in many parts of the country are particularly disadvantaged. These are precisely the issues that humanities and social sciences researchers study every day. Canadian researchers are developing comprehensive, meaningful policy options to help those facing the greatest challenges in our society. Janine Brodie, Canada Research Chair in Citizenship and Social Governance, explores how an urban living wage can ensure Canadians' well-being in our cities. At the University of Ottawa, Tracy Vaillancourt is developing policies to help our children who are victims of bullying. And Canada Research Chair in Mental Health Epidemiology Ian Coleman is seeking out supportive and preventative approaches to depression and other common mental illnesses. Research is also being mobilized to improve communities and increase the well-being of all Canadians. The Community-Campus Collaboration Initiative, endorsed by Governor General David Johnston, at the CFHSS's 2012 Congress of the

Humanities and Social Sciences, brings together university, business and not-for-profit partners to address community issues. Successes are already evident: a Toronto children's hospital partnered with OCAD University to build ScreenPlay, an interactive digital gardening game. The innovation is yielding positive results in alleviating stress in children needing treatment. All sectors of Canadian society benefit from social sciences and humanities research, including the most vulnerable members.

Continued federal support for research through the federal research granting agencies and for cross-sector collaborations will ensure that policies and programs for those in need are founded on cutting-edge research. In particular, not for profit agencies should have a level playing field in accessing funds currently available for collaboration with researchers. Through these measures, we can build a Canada where well-being for all citizens is of utmost priority across governments, sectors and communities.