



August 3, 2018

Office of the President

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The Hon. Wayne Easter, P.C., M.P.
Chair, House of Commons
Standing Committee on Finance
House of Commons
Ottawa, Ontario
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Via Email: Finapbc-cpb@parl.gc.ca

Dear Mr. Easter,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide our submission to the House Standing Committee on Finance's consultations on the Government of Canada's 2019 Budget.

York University recommends that the 2019 federal budget continue to make bold investments in Canada's postsecondary education system to ensure that Canada remains an internationally competitive jurisdiction and to become one of the most educated and prosperous countries in our global community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rhonda L. Lenton".

Rhonda L. Lenton, PhD
President & Vice Chancellor

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Encl: York University's 2019 Pre-Budget Submission

Recommendations:

- ***Support experiential education by incentivizing businesses and NGOs to partner with universities and by matching investments made by provincial governments for development of experiential education opportunities. In addition, increase the number of public sector work-integrated learning placements and enhance the Canada Incubator and Accelerator program.***
- ***Provide significant, multi-year increases to the Research Support fund and continue to offer project-specific funding for infrastructure through an additional SIF round.***
- ***Bring investment for scholarships and fellowships in-line with increases to graduate student enrollment, index funding to inflation to avoid eroding research investment, harmonize tri-council funding streams and expand the Undergraduate Student Research Awards to other councils.***
- ***Establish a program with dedicated funding for supporting student international learning experiences. Support faculty research collaboration by eliminating the restrictions on international portability of scholarships and fellowships.***

**York University
Pre-Budget Submission to the House Standing Committee on Finance
August 2018**

York University is Canada's 3rd largest university with 52,000 students including nearly 6000 graduate students, one of the largest graduate student cohorts in the country. York is ranked among Canada's top 10 Canadian research universities for Sciences, Engineering, Social Sciences and Humanities when measured by impact. York shares the view that Canada's prosperity is supported by prudent use of resources in a manner that best leverages Canada's many strengths. By combining excellence in research and teaching with careful stewardship of public funds, York is equipping the next generation for success in an increasingly globalized and knowledge-based economy while also delivering world-class research with real-world applications and impacts. York University's successes include its Centre for Research in Earth and Space Science, a key NASA and Canadian Space Agency partner and major scientific contributor to recent Mars Exploration missions and related discoveries; and its Canada First Research Excellence Fund supported Centre for Vision Research, Canada's pre-eminent vision research centre, ranked among the Top 5 in the world, merging techniques in human psychophysics, visual neuroscience, computational theory and augmented reality with applications from health care to robotics to the entertainment industry. Another success is our Health Ecosphere Project funded by FedDev, which has supported over 60 businesses and organizations in their R&D activities, contributed to the creation and retention of 150 skilled jobs, and enabled the commercialization of nine new digital health technologies, five of which have been deployed in Europe, Australia, and the Middle East.

Canada's productivity and competitiveness, as well as, current and future economic success, relies heavily on research in fundamental and applied science at universities to support Canada's innovation engine, as compared to other OECD countries. At the same time, research and innovation do not occur in a vacuum. With 2/3 of all emerging jobs needing higher education, it is important that Canada encourages greater participation of Canadians in university education and to invest in the development of globally skilled talent providing both experiential education and international research and learning opportunities. Experiential education is increasingly one of the most defining characteristics of successful new graduates in the workplace and is crucial to helping students build real-world experience that contributes to their competitiveness as graduates in the global labour market. Supporting international student mobility leads to strengthening and diversifying our trade links abroad and increasing our opportunities for international collaboration in impactful research areas. Together, investments in these areas complement government funding in fundamental research as well as research infrastructure, unlocking the full potential of investment in Canada's universities.

Encouraging Experiential Education by Incentivizing Partnership and Matching Funding

While experiential learning opportunities have continued to become more prevalent, not all disciplines have experienced the growth of experiential education equally. The Canadian Alliance of Student Association's recent Abacus student survey found paid work placements related to a student's field of study are the best form of experience to get a good job upon graduation.

At York, 26% of our students participate in experiential learning opportunities. We see this as an area in which we must continuously improve to be at the leading edge of experiential education compared with other research-intensive universities around the globe. We have already made progress in bringing experiential education into the arts, humanities, social sciences and general sciences at both the undergraduate and graduate levels by hiring Experiential Education Coordinators at our YU Experience

Hub to work directly with faculties, but more can be done to integrate experiential education opportunities into our programs. We are also a founding partner in Venture Lab, a technology accelerator for the York Region, Simcoe and Muskoka. Through Venture Lab and our work as the academic lead for the microelectronic component of the Advanced Manufacturing Supercluster, we have potential to offer unparalleled opportunities to study and research beside innovative start-ups, leading practitioners and global-scale companies.

The federal government has an important role in supporting universities' pursuit of additional experiential education opportunities. Currently, York University has committed to growing experiential learning at a rate of 2-3% annually, or 250 new opportunities over the next two years, with programming made possible through Ontario's Career Ready Fund. Matching funds from the federal government for these types of programs would enable York to capitalize on investment already being made by the province and increase the overall impact of our experiential learning activities, maximizing the utility for both the University and the Province.

In addition, while recent investments in MITACs and the Student Work Integrated Learning Program (SWILP) are important steps, the SWILP program is currently limited to students studying science, technology, engineering, math and business. Over 43% of York undergraduate students are studying social sciences and humanities. Canada cannot afford to leave half of its talent behind while other jurisdictions are making investments in experiential education. Expanding the SWILP program to include all disciplines – and the non-profit sector - will mean more students from underrepresented groups, independent of area of study, have an opportunity to benefit from the program.

Recommendation:

Support experiential education by incentivizing businesses and NGOs to partner with universities and by matching investments made by provincial governments for development of experiential education opportunities. In addition, increase the number of public sector work-integrated learning placements across all sectors and disciplines and enhance the Canada Incubator and Accelerator program.

Continue to Support Research Competitiveness by Investing in World-Class Research Infrastructure

Investment in cutting-edge research infrastructure is a continuing priority and the funding announced in Budget 2018 was greatly appreciated by Canadian universities. Through the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) and programs like the Strategic Infrastructure Fund (SIF) and the Canada First Research Excellence Fund, the Government of Canada enables universities to further their mission to produce and mobilize high-impact research, attract the best and brightest researchers from around the world, train the next generation of discoverers at leading-edge facilities, and translate knowledge into opportunity and social value for Canadians. For Canadian universities to catch-up to their international competitors with respect to research and for Canada to maintain a competitive advantage over other international jurisdictions, sustained and dedicated funding of research infrastructure is crucial.

Past SIF funding has enabled York to modernize the Faculty of Science infrastructure, providing innovative research and teaching spaces, as well as, the construction of a Graduate and Research building as part of our internationally-acclaimed Schulich School of Business. These investments will help to attract world class faculty and students. As York continues to become more comprehensive, there remains a need for additional infrastructure investment.

The Fundamental Science Review laid out a clear and compelling case for increased investment in the Research Support Fund: if research and innovation are the heart of Canada's ability to differentiate itself in a competitive global economy, investments covering the full costs of research will allow Canada's universities to compete internationally. Sustained increases ensure that universities continue to actively contribute research findings that will positively impact the social, economic, cultural and environmental well-being of Canada.

Recommendation:

Provide significant, multi-year increases to the Research Support fund and continue to offer project-specific funding for infrastructure through an additional SIF round.

Developing Highly Skilled Talent through Investments in Graduate Scholarships and Fellowships

Advancing Canada's research competitiveness requires that universities receive financial support that allows for the growth of the pipeline of diverse and highly qualified personnel. According to the Fundamental Science Review, the number of core graduate awards has not changed since 2007 despite a 32% increase in the number of master's students and a 38% increase in doctoral students entering universities, and their real value has remained at 2003 levels. A priority for Budget 2019 is following through on the recommendations from the Fundamental Science Review in this area, by investing in enhanced provision of scholarships and fellowships to match graduate student enrollment and maintaining those investments by tying funding increases to inflation.

The support for research delivered by the Government of Canada through the three federal granting councils (SSHRC, NSERC, CIHR) is vital to the success of Canada's researchers. With stable funding and effective processes, tri-council support is an essential resource for helping Canada's universities fully realize their world-leading research potential. Importantly, this can only be achieved with an appropriate balance of curiosity-driven and targeted support. While York applauds the multi-year increases to tri-council funding from Budget 2018, providing additional individual awards to match the rise in graduate student enrollment and harmonizing funding across the granting councils is necessary for Canada to continue to be a leader in the international research community.

Recommendation:

Bring investment for scholarships and fellowships in-line with increases to graduate student enrollment, index funding to inflation to avoid eroding research investment, harmonize tri-council funding streams and expand the Undergraduate Student Research Awards to other councils.

Investing in International Opportunities for Research and Learning

York is one of Canada's most diverse universities – more than 70% of our undergraduates claim their ethno-cultural background is non-white compared to 50% for the rest of the sector. We understand the value of globally educated graduates as they play a crucial role in expanding Canada's talent network with the rest of the world while bringing home new ideas, concepts and best practices to improve our domestic market's productivity and efficiency. The international character and global leadership of York's research is reflected through collaboration in publication. York leads Ontario Universities with 54% of our publications including an international co-author.

The Schulich School of Business' Hyderabad campus is a great example of our diversity at work -- it is the first major business school to deliver an internationally recognized two-year MBA program in India, with

the first year in India and the second year in Toronto. Supporting this kind of global outreach is crucial to maintaining Canada's competitive edge internationally while continuing to attract foreign direct investment from abroad. While other international jurisdictions have invested in international mobility for their students, Canada has fallen behind. For instance, at York only 2% students have an international learning experience during their undergraduate degree, primarily those students who can afford it. By creating a dedicated funding stream to support opportunities for international learning, the federal government could improve Canada's competency in this regard.

To equip young Canadians to compete with global peers and build valuable international networks, Canada should mandate and fund programing with the goal of ensuring 25 percent of all postsecondary student go abroad during their undergraduate studies.

Recommendation:

Establish a program with dedicated funding for supporting student international learning experiences. Support faculty research collaboration by eliminating the restrictions on international portability of scholarships and fellowships.