

University of Manitoba:  
Pre-Budget Submission 2020



**University  
of Manitoba**

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1:** Increase direct student financial support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners including a new pan Tri-Agency scholarships program to support Indigenous graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to build a cohort of Indigenous faculty.
- **Recommendation 2:** Provide sustained financial support for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation to ensure continued reconciliation efforts with Canada’s Indigenous peoples by implementing the TRC’s calls to action.
- **Recommendation 3:** Continue investments in the Research Support Fund to address the full cost of research.
- **Recommendation 4:** Invest to provide students with greater access to work-integrated learning experiences during their post-secondary studies, and expand federal work integrated learning programs across sectors and disciplines.
- **Recommendation 5:** Increase annual scholarship and fellowship funding for graduate students by \$140 million by 2022-23, with priority given to women, Indigenous peoples, visible minorities and peoples with disabilities.
- **Recommendation 6:** Expand the NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards as a means to increase the number and diversity of students pursuing graduate studies.
- **Recommendation 7:** Continue to invest in infrastructure to attract and retain talent that will drive discovery and the economy.
- **Recommendation 8:** Continue to dedicate funds to universities to upgrade and replace aging infrastructure specifically through the creation of a Green Campus Investment and Innovation Fund. This \$2B Fund would support projects such as the University of Manitoba’s Central Energy Plant Renewal project that will increase the percentage of renewable energy use, reduce fossil fuel based emissions and decrease our carbon footprint.

## INTRODUCTION

The University of Manitoba welcomes the opportunity to provide recommendations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance as part of the 2019 pre-budget consultation: “Economic Growth: Ensuring Canada’s Competitiveness.”

Our university plays an integral role in the competitiveness of Manitoba, generating \$1.8 billion in economic activity annually, supporting more than 20,000 local jobs and educating future leaders.

Currently, close to 30,000 students are enrolled. New learning experiences give them the tools to take their place as leaders in their chosen fields. Graduate scholars and researchers are making discoveries that expand the economy and improve lives around the world.

Building on the significant investments in research made in Budget 2019, the University of Manitoba is making recommendations that will further support our role in driving Canada’s competitiveness, bringing more Canadians into the research eco-system, and developing the talent that our economy will depend on in this changing economic landscape.

## INDIGENOUS ACHIEVEMENT

In Canada, only 11 per cent of Indigenous people aged 25 to 34 have a university degree, compared to 33 per cent of non-Indigenous Canadians in the same age group. As a result, Indigenous peoples on average earn less, occupy fewer managerial and professional jobs, and are more likely to be unemployed.

To ensure our competitiveness globally, measures to better support Indigenous peoples to pursue post-secondary studies—and encouraging their success—is critical.

The University of Manitoba welcomes the federal government’s commitment to post-secondary education and skills training for Indigenous peoples, to preserve and protect Indigenous languages and cultures and to support Métis Nation priorities, including post-secondary education. Supporting Indigenous Achievement is a strategic priority for the University of Manitoba. Through tutoring, mentoring, health and healing programs, we are working to empower students to succeed. Programs aimed at improving Indigenous achievement are varied and include:

- **Ongomiizwin – Indigenous Institute of Health and Healing** will lead the response to the health-related calls to action made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). Its work is

guided by Knowledge Keepers and Elders and helps to achieve health and wellness of Indigenous peoples.

- **Indigenous Business Education Partners (IBEP)** provides academic and financial support to Indigenous students pursuing a Bachelor of Commerce degree at the I.H. Asper School of Business. Since 1995, over 100 students have received their degree. IBEP graduates hold key positions at major corporations and non-profit organizations, and have started their own businesses across Manitoba, Canada, and the world.
- The **Engineering Access Program** is the country's most successful program of its kind, having graduated more than 100 Indigenous engineers.

The University of Manitoba is also home to the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). The NCTR is the permanent national institution that emerged from the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement and the TRC. It is dedicated to preserving the truth of Residential Schools and advancing reconciliation. With a mandate in the areas of archives, education, research and community engagement, the NCTR is a leading voice in conversations of Truth and Reconciliation in the country.

Indigenous peoples will represent an estimated 18 per cent of Manitoba's population by 2026—with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit youth the fastest-growing group—and ensuring their success in post-secondary education, through increased financial support and other forms of support and through continued efforts at reconciliation, is key to our collective enhanced competitiveness.

**The University of Manitoba recommends:**

- Invest in new pan Tri-Agency scholarships program to support Indigenous graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to build a cohort of Indigenous faculty.
- Increasing direct student financial support for First Nations, Inuit and Métis learners; and enhancing institutional programs that promote Indigenous student success throughout the post-secondary education continuum.
- Providing sustained financial support for the NCTR to ensure continued reconciliation efforts with Canada's Indigenous peoples by implementing the TRC's calls to action.

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Continued and increased federal support for research and development, support for undergraduate research, support for indirect costs of research and support for work-integrated learning opportunities is critical. Increased and sustained research funding will enhance opportunities for early and mid-career researchers, and will advance efforts to improve gender equity and diversity in science.

Students and faculty at the University of Manitoba are using research to learn, train, contribute to the economy and to improve outcomes in numerous areas. Examples of research excellence include:

- Major global public health initiatives led by University of Manitoba researchers that are saving and improving lives in more than 20 countries. Initiatives in south Asia, Africa and Ukraine include programs to improve maternal, newborn and child health, studies on the epidemiology and evaluation of HIV prevention programs, and mathematical modeling to explain HIV transmission dynamics and impact of different interventions.
- Internationally renowned programs of research in Arctic science, climate change and its effects on sea ice. The Churchill Marine Observatory, currently under construction, will enhance research capacity in this area, while the Amundsen research vessel is a platform to conduct research in ice-covered waters.

Complementing research excellence, work-integrated learning opportunities further enhance the student experience, benefit industry and ultimately drive increased economic competitiveness. There are many examples of work-integrated learning at the University of Manitoba and we will continue to develop these opportunities. Expanding programs like the Student Work-Integrated Learning Program (SWILP) across sectors—both for-profit and non-profit—would provide more students and employers with an opportunity to access the benefits of a work integrated learning opportunity.

Undergraduate students who participate in research projects are more likely to pursue graduate studies than those who do not. Each year, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) supports about 3,000 undergraduates in research activities through their Undergraduate Student Research Awards program, however the other funding councils do not have similar programs.

Graduate students at the University of Manitoba are contributing their own research discoveries to real-world problems. The Three Minute Thesis competition, for example, showcases graduate student research ranging from

climate change and the Arctic, to transformative changes to healthcare. Expanding access to undergraduate research awards will ultimately support more students pursuing graduate studies with more opportunity to pursue solutions to some of today’s greatest challenges.

Finally, a world-class research environment requires support for institutional costs of research, such as facility costs and technology transfer supports. Budget 2019 did not increase the proportion of funding for these costs and increased investment in the research support fund will recognize and address the true cost of research.

**The University of Manitoba recommends:**

- Continued investments in the Research Support Fund to address the full cost of research.
- Investments to provide students with greater access to work-integrated learning experiences during their post-secondary studies, and expand federal work integrated learning programs across sectors and disciplines.’
- Increase annual scholarship and fellowship funding for graduate students by \$140 million by 2022-23, with priority given to women, Indigenous peoples, visible minorities and peoples with disabilities.
- Expansion of the NSERC Undergraduate Student Research Awards to other councils, as a means to increase the number of students pursuing graduate studies.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

The University of Manitoba represents an extensive network of teaching and research labs, classrooms, residences and offices. Federal support has helped the University of Manitoba to expand this network and develop modern, green facilities. The University of Manitoba welcomed the government’s commitment to a sustained plan to fund state-of-the-art infrastructure through the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) in Budget 2018. Significant investments made through CFI helped propel the University forward with the construction of the Stanley Pauley Engineering Building, Smartpark Innovation Hub and the Churchill Marine Observatory.

Canadians are and will continue to benefit from these meaningful investments through world-class research, ongoing job-creation, developing a highly skilled workforce, creating opportunities for partnerships and knowledge exchange with Indigenous organizations, and advancing climate change mitigation efforts.

The benefits of these strategic projects and others are further supported though investments in the maintenance and renewal of existing infrastructure. The University of Manitoba has been working at greening older facilities, but the reality is that there are still many opportunities for significant energy efficiency upgrades. These upgrades are necessary to continue attracting and retaining internationally renowned researchers, fostering collaboration across disciplines and sectors, supporting business innovation and promoting long-term planning.

**The University of Manitoba recommends:**

- Continued investment in infrastructure to attract and retain talent that will drive discovery and the economy.
- Continue to dedicate specific funds to universities to upgrade and replace aging infrastructure projects.
- Create the Green Campus Investment and Innovation Fund. This \$2B Fund would support projects such as the University of Manitoba’s Central Energy Plant Renewal project that will increase the percentage of renewable energy use, reduce fossil fuel based emissions and decrease our carbon footprint.

## CONCLUSION

Federal investment in post-secondary education, innovation and research drives economic competitiveness, provides opportunities for young people and addresses the most urgent issues of our time, such as climate change, global population health, infectious disease, Arctic system science, food security and reconciliation. Only through investments in post-secondary education do we have the potential to solve these critical challenges while simultaneously training the workforce of the future and shaping the economy. There can be no better investment in Canada’s future.

We thank the Committee for its consideration.