



University of Manitoba:
Federal Pre-Budget Submission 2021

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Recommendation 1:** Increase direct student financial support for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, to help remove financial barriers to post-secondary education. Specifically, create a new Tri-Agency scholarship program for Indigenous graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to build a cohort of Indigenous faculty.
- **Recommendation 2:** Provide sustained federal financial support for the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR), which is now under the leadership of the University of Manitoba's first-ever Vice-President, Indigenous, Dr. Catherine Cook. Sustained funding will help the NCTR reach its full potential under this new leadership and ensure reconciliation efforts continue with Canada's Indigenous peoples by implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- **Recommendation 3:** Implement measures to support the safe arrival of international students, offset lost international tuition revenue due to decreased enrolment, and invest in regaining and diversifying markets.
- **Recommendation 4:** Continue sustained and meaningful investment in fundamental research, building on the \$450 million in funding allocated for the academic research community during the COVID-19 pandemic, to address the full costs of research and to support knowledge mobilization and commercialization.
- **Recommendation 5:** Increase availability and funding for work-integrated learning opportunities for post-secondary students across sectors and disciplines. This will help align post-secondary programs with current workforce needs to better prepare students for their future careers post-graduation.
- **Recommendation 6:** Create a \$2 billion Green Campus Investment and Innovation Fund to finance shovel-ready projects that, as part of the COVID-19 economic recovery response, will help refurbish campuses to be more environmentally sustainable and resilient. This will fund initiatives like UM'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. It will also be used to re-service our failing and end-of-life electrical distribution on the Fort Garry campus.
- **Recommendation 7:** Work in partnership with provincial governments to accelerate its commitment of \$6 billion in investments to improve broadband in rural and Northern communities over the next five years to bring broadband internet to all Canadians. Investments in digital infrastructure will ensure that students are able to receive a quality post-secondary education whether they are on campus or learning remotely. This infrastructure will also allow people to work remotely and allow many digital companies to locate and flourish in remote areas, thus reducing urbanization.

INTRODUCTION

The University of Manitoba (UM) welcomes the opportunity to provide recommendations to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance as part of the 2021 pre-budget consultation: “Economic Restart and Recovery.”

As the country comes out of this pandemic and we adapt to our new circumstances, post-secondary institutions will play an essential role in the recovery process, both in terms of preventing this from happening again and for economic stimulus. Accordingly, UM plays an integral role in the competitiveness of Manitoba, generating \$2.4 billion in economic activity, supporting over 15,000 local jobs, and educating future leaders and innovators.

The government’s commitment to science and research, including the \$741.6 million toward COVID-19 research and support for the continuity of Canada’s academic research system during the pandemic, has helped Canadian post-secondary institutions compete with their globally, and positions Canada to tackle the economic, health, and social challenges to come.

INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

UM welcomes the federal government’s commitment to ensuring post-secondary education and skills training for Indigenous peoples, to preserve and protect Indigenous languages and cultures, and to support Métis Nation priorities, as outlined in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s (TRC) Calls to Action. Not only does UM have one of the largest Indigenous student populations in Canada, with approximately 2,500 First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, our university is committed to increasing our cohort of Indigenous faculty and number of Elders and Knowledge Keepers on campus.

In addition, the University of Manitoba is proud to host the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR). It is dedicated to preserving the truth of Residential Schools, advancing reconciliation, and is a guiding voice in conversations of Truth and Reconciliation in the country. Under the leadership of UM’s first ever Vice-President, Indigenous, Dr. Catherine Cook, and with sustained federal funding, we believe the NCTR can reach its full potential as a place of learning and dialogue where the truths of survivors are honoured and kept safe for future generations.

The University of Manitoba recommends:

- Increasing direct student financial support for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit students, to help remove financial barriers to entering post-secondary education.
- Investing in new Tri-Agency scholarships program to support Indigenous graduate students and postdoctoral fellows to build a cohort of Indigenous faculty.
- 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.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International students bring new perspectives, ideas, and valuable networks to Canada. After graduation, international students become highly trained individuals who contribute to their local Canadian economies, revitalizing regions of the country struggling with outmigration and population decline. They are also a crucial source of revenue for universities and a huge contributor to the Canadian economy; international students contributed an estimated \$21.6 billion to the Canadian economy in 2018 and sustained close to 170,000 jobs for Canadians in 2016, including \$6 billion per year in tuition. To ensure the stability of the post-secondary education sector, universities seek a federal support to offset lost revenue because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Looking toward recovery, COVID-19 has highlighted the need for investments in recruitment and diversification. Disruptions to the international student market, including the staggered re-opening of international borders, presents an opportunity for Canada to rebuild markets and to diversify its immigration and international student recruitment efforts to non-traditional sources. The International Education Strategy (IES), announced in Budget 2019, was a first step toward diversification. However, to outpace our competitors and take advantage of a post-COVID context, expanded funding will be needed to accelerate this work. These investments will bring new students and potential immigrants to regions of Canada hard-hit by the pandemic and will help stabilize Canadian universities while protecting against future disruptions.

The University of Manitoba recommends:

- Implementing measures to support the safe arrival of international students including cost-sharing safe arrival and quarantine measures with universities.
- Offsetting international student tuition losses with a dedicated federal transfer to universities to compensate for a drop in international student enrolment.
- Investing in recruitment and visa processing to support regaining and diversifying markets.

RESEARCH AND INNOVATION

To ensure the global competitiveness of Canada, sustained and meaningful federal support for research and innovation, undergraduate research, and work-integrated learning opportunities is imperative. The \$450 million in funding to sustain the academic research community during the COVID-19 pandemic was a welcome recognition of the importance of fundamental research and an acknowledgement by the federal government that the full cost of research far exceeds the current amount of funding provided. Investment in research and innovation at post-secondary institutions is critical to the economic, social, and cultural recovery and growth of Canada.

The University of Manitoba's Partnerships and Innovation Office facilitates connections with industries, the community, and UM. The office works to increase knowledge mobilization and commercialization between these groups, bridging the gap between industry and academia. Canada needs to create stronger

and deliberate opportunities for connecting our highly qualified talent with business and community organizations to drive innovative economic recovery through investments in knowledge mobilization.

To promote and expand these types of partnerships, investing in the creation of Regional Innovation Hubs will help engage post-secondary education research and expertise to benefit and improve upon local economic development priorities. Work being done at UM's Smartpark Innovation Hub, including the development of new apps and online platforms to plant breeding technologies, is helping to grow the Manitoba start-up community and create economic stimulus by bringing new products and services to markets. Agreements like the Manitoba Industry-Academia Partnership initiative, funded by Western Economic Diversification, help create training and career opportunities for students and researchers, address workforce shortages, and ensure students are being trained not only for current jobs, but also for the jobs of the future.

Subsequently, preparing for careers of the future necessitates more work-integrated learning opportunities. Increasing availability and funding for experiential learning for post-secondary students across all sectors and disciplines should be a priority, as it teaches students practical skills that cannot always be replicated in a classroom. This will help align post-secondary programs with current workforce needs to better prepare students for their careers post-graduation.

The University of Manitoba recommends:

- Sustained and meaningful financial support for fundamental research to support the full cost of research and to support knowledge mobilization and commercialization.
- Investing in the creation of Regional Innovation Hubs, like UM's Smartpark Innovation Hub, to strengthen cities and communities across Canada by helping regionally important industries innovate and adapt by engaging with post-secondary education research and expertise to benefit local economic development priorities.
- Increasing funding and availability for work-integrated learning opportunities for post-secondary students across all sectors and disciplines to help prepare students for their careers post-graduation and meet workforce demand.

GREEN AND DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURE

As a member of U15, UM is committed to supporting clean technology innovation through infrastructure projects which will create jobs and revitalize spaces; a meaningful and effective way to stimulate the economy after a recession. Under our *Sustainability Strategy 2019-2023*, UM has already created sustainable transportation options like carpooling and active transportation routes, decreased energy and greenhouse gas demand, and has achieved a gold rating through the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Sustainability Tracking, Assessment and Rating System (STARS). Furthermore, the hydro-electric power used on our campus is renewable and virtually carbon-free.

While this is an excellent first step, UM requires sustained federal funding to support initiatives like UM's Central Energy Plant Renewal project that will increase the percentage of renewable energy use, reduce

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fossil fuel-based emissions, and decrease our carbon footprint. Importantly, it will fund re-servicing failing and end-of-life electrical distribution on the Fort Garry campus. UM has also identified additional shovel-ready projects focused on energy retrofits and replacements, resiliency, accessibility, and health and hygiene.

The COVID-19 pandemic has made the importance of access to quality broadband connectivity more evident than ever. The quick transition to online and remote delivery of classes has exposed the gap in the quality and access to internet and digital infrastructure in Indigenous and Northern Manitoban communities. UM encourages the government to work in partnership with provincial governments to accelerate its commitment of \$6 billion in investments to improve rural broadband over the next five years to bring broadband internet to all Canadians. These investments in digital infrastructure will ensure that students are able to receive a quality post-secondary education whether they are on campus or learning remotely. This infrastructure will also allow people to work remotely and allow many digital companies to locate and flourish in remote areas, thus reducing urbanization.

The University of Manitoba recommends:

- Creating a \$2 billion Green Campus Investment and Innovation Fund to invest in shovel-ready projects focused on energy retrofits and replacements, resiliency, accessibility, and health and hygiene, helping to refurbish campuses to be more environmentally responsible and create jobs.
- Working in partnership with provincial governments to accelerate its commitment of \$6 billion in investments to improve rural broadband over the next five years to bringing broadband internet to all Canadians. Investments in digital infrastructure will ensure that students are able to attend post-secondary institutions and receive a quality education whether they are on campus or learning remotely. This infrastructure will also allow people to work remotely and allow many digital companies to locate and flourish in remote areas, thus reducing urbanization.

CONCLUSION

Federal investment in post-secondary education, Indigenous education, research and innovation, and green infrastructure are essential as we begin the recovery and rebuilding process post-pandemic. Funding for research universities drives economic competitiveness, provides opportunities for young people, and will be crucial to coming out of this pandemic and economic recession stronger and more sustainable than ever.

We thank the Committee for its consideration.