



ACUFC

ASSOCIATION DES COLLÈGES ET UNIVERSITÉS
DE LA FRANCOPHONIE CANADIENNE

**Increasing Productivity and Competitiveness
for Businesses and for Canadians
*The Added Value of the Colleges and Universities of the
Canadian Francophonie***

Brief

presented to the

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance

by the

Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne (ACUFC)

for the

Pre-Budget Consultations in Advance of the 2018 Budget

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1. INTRODUCTION

The House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance is inviting Canadians to participate in its pre-budget consultations process in advance of the 2018 federal budget on the topics of productivity and competitiveness. Specifically, submissions should focus on answering the following two questions:

- What federal measures would help Canadians to be more productive at work and in their communities?
- What federal measures would help Canadian businesses to be more productive and competitive?

2. THE COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES OF THE CANADIAN FRANCOPHONIE

The 21 colleges and universities of the Canadian Francophonie are all located in Francophone minority communities, i.e. outside of Quebec. They play an essential role in the vitality and sustainability of the communities they serve and of Canada overall, by training a strong highly qualified bilingual workforce. These francophone or bilingual postsecondary institutions, including many small institutions located in rural areas, offer more than 1,150 study programs in French that serve more than 42,600 students and produce more than 10,000 graduates each year.

The demographics of the student population of these institutions have changed significantly over time and are now highly diversified. Their students are all individuals who want to pursue their post-secondary studies in French, including young graduates from Francophone schools and French second language programs, immigrants and international students, and adults in continuing education and in the labour market.

While the aging of the population affects the entire country, this demographic pressure is even stronger in Francophone minority communities. These communities are at risk of not having enough workers available to consolidate a modern, technology-based digital economy.

Internationalization is therefore an issue of paramount importance for the colleges and universities of the Canadian Francophonie that want to do more in international education and immigration to support the socioeconomic development of their communities. However, to succeed, Canada's Francophone and bilingual colleges and universities need more financial support from the federal government to adapt their services to the needs of these groups of students, who make up as much as 25% of the student population in some institutions. These students enrich their communities with their wide variety of language skills and cultures.



3. CONTRIBUTION TO THE PRODUCTIVITY OF CANADIANS AND TO THE PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS OF CANADIAN BUSINESSES

The colleges and universities of the Canadian Francophonie are pillars of their communities and contribute to the development of their human capital, to their cultural development as well as to their economic growth. They serve as ambassadors for official languages, Canadian identity, inclusion, the dynamism and vitality of these communities.

Bilingualism

It is a well-known fact that bilingualism enhances Canadians' productivity in the labour market in Canada and internationally. Moreover, according to a research by Rodrigue Landry, stronger French education leads to greater bilingualism.¹ Mastering both official languages, as well as the French and English professional terminology of a given field, also enables Canadians to take advantage of opportunities in the development of Francophone-dominated foreign markets. According to a recent study by Professor Kai Chan of the European Institute of Business Administration, French is the world's third largest language of business and will be among the most widely spoken languages in the world by 2050, with 750 million speakers.² The contribution of the colleges and universities of the Canadian Francophonie is undeniable in this area. They train a strong highly qualified bilingual workforce in Canada. The success of their graduates provides excellent proof of the added value of French and the strength of bilingualism in the labour market.

Education and research – Jobs and innovation

In addition to offering high-quality post-secondary education, the institutions of the Canadian Francophonie are research and innovation hubs, thanks to the basic and applied research they conduct. In this way, they contribute to the productivity and competitiveness of Canadian businesses and citizens, both in Canada and internationally. The graduates and researchers of these institutions are producing breakthroughs for the future and are contributing to the Canadian innovation landscape. We know that communities with knowledge-based economies are the most prosperous. Job creation in Francophone minority communities is therefore directly linked with the growing research capacity in these institutions.

¹ LANDRY, Rodrigue and ALLARD, Réal. 2000. "Langue de scolarisation et développement bilingue : le cas des acadiens et francophones de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Canada." *Diversité Langues*.

² Kai L. Chan, PhD. *Power Language Index - Which are the world's most influential languages?* May 2016.

In light of this, it is worth highlighting the high level of collaboration between post-secondary institutions and businesses of all sizes in their regions and provinces. The plethora of university-college-business partnerships helps to train bilingual professionals who meet the needs of these businesses and promote the transfer of technology, knowledge and innovation from the post-secondary institutions toward the private sector.

Moreover, learning by experience (internships) allows the acquisition of skills for students (youth and adults) and helps to solve the issue of recruiting qualified bilingual staff. This is a key factor in strengthening economic foundations, productivity and competitiveness, and in supporting the retention of graduates in Francophone minority communities throughout the country.

Finally, the post-secondary institutions of the Canadian Francophonie are economic drivers that create jobs and buy goods and services. The most recent economic impact studies on these institutions demonstrate the effects of their thousands of employees, students and graduates, estimated in hundreds of millions of dollars for their respective provinces and for Canada as a whole.

4. RECOMMENDATION

We propose that the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance include the following recommendation in its report to be presented to the House of Commons in December 2017 and examined by the Minister of Finance in preparation for the 2018 federal budget.

Need

In recent years, the federal government has noticeably increased its investments in Canadian infrastructure, particularly in strategic infrastructure. Our official languages and the education of a bilingual workforce are part of the country's strategic infrastructure. The erosion of the French language in Canada, while it expands globally, therefore has a serious effect on the productivity and competitiveness of Canadian businesses and citizens. For this reason, the federal government must demonstrate greater commitment and support for official languages and for training a bilingual workforce throughout the entire country.

Recommendation

To meet this need, we recommend that the federal government increase its investments in the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023, specifically in support of the following:

- Expanded offer of and access to safe, high-quality French language health services
- Equal access to legal services in both official languages

- Post-secondary and continuing education programs in French in these two areas and in all disciplines
- Increased access to placements in Francophone and bilingual environments for learning by experience (internships)
- Basic and applied research

This investment should be included in the 2018 federal budget. Required investments in these areas are presented in Appendix 2.

5. CONCLUSION

It is clear that the colleges and universities of the Canadian Francophonie occupy a unique and structural place and play a critical leadership role in the communities they serve and in Canada overall. However, they can only fulfill their mission in partnerships with other stakeholders, including the federal government, provincial governments and businesses.

The post-secondary institutions of the Canadian Francophonie, via the ACUFC, offer the Government of Canada innovative solutions for the structuring effects under the Action Plan for Official Languages 2018-2023, which will enable them to significantly expand their capacities and their impact.

By increasing the capacities of the colleges and universities of the Canadian Francophonie, the federal government can achieve the **productivity and competitiveness** goals set out in the 2018 budget and fulfil its vision of official languages that prioritizes bilingualism and community vitality. The post-secondary institutions of the Canadian Francophonie would thereby be able to produce bilingual graduates, strengthen the French language and expand its use throughout Canada and internationally.

The ACUFC and our member institutions would like to reiterate our commitment to collaborate in this matter, with the federal government, with provincial and territorial governments, with Canadian businesses, and with all Canadians.

APPENDIX 1

ABOUT THE ACUFC

The ACUFC is a group of **21** Francophone and bilingual colleges and universities located in Francophone minority communities, i.e. outside of Quebec, that offer more than 1,150 study programs in French in various disciplines. The ACUFC works to expand access to post-secondary education in French throughout the country, thus offering a full continuum of French language education, from early childhood to post-secondary. The ACUFC coordinates the Consortium national de formation en santé (CNFS) and the Réseau national de formation en justice (RNFJ), initiatives that have demonstrated the culture of collaboration, agility and flexibility of a pan-Canadian institutional group of organizations and institutions that share common goals. These initiatives are founded on clearly defined deliverables and effective partnerships between Francophone minority communities and the majority community, and local, provincial and national institutions. The ACUFC thus helps to carry out pan-Canadian collective projects, share resources, and, consequently, achieve significant economies of scale. These projects would never get off the ground without the Association and without the support of the federal government.



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APPENDIX 2

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT'S ACTION PLAN FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES 2018-2023

THREE PRIORITY REQUESTS FROM THE ACUFC

- Expand and enhance the offer of **initial and continuing education** for **health care** professionals in all disciplines and at more post-secondary institutions across Canada.
- Enhance the offer of **initial and continuing education** for **legal** professionals able to provide legal services in both official languages in all areas of law.
- Strengthen and enhance the **study programs**, the **research**, and the **networking** initiatives of the post-secondary institutions of the Canadian Francophonie to improve the **accessibility and flexibility** of **French language** post-secondary education throughout the country.

REQUIRED INVESTMENTS FOR 2018-2023

FEDERAL DEPARTMENT*	REQUIRED AMOUNTS
Health Canada	\$ 130 million
Justice Canada	\$ 76,5 million
Canadian Heritage : Collaborative framework to enhance post-secondary education in French	\$ 17,6 million

*Comprehensive proposals were submitted to the three relevant Departments in November 2016, presenting the objectives, expected results, detailed actions and the distribution of required investments in each field. These documents can be provided to the Standing Committee on Finance if needed.