



The Honourable Tony Clement
Minister of Industry
House of Commons
Ottawa.

February 2, 2009

Dear Mr. Clement,

The Canadian Political Science Association welcomes the government's investment in infrastructure for postsecondary institutions in last week's budget. However, we are seriously concerned that the temporary increase in the allocation to doctoral and master's scholarships at the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) is directed to business-related degrees.

Our association represents over 1,400 political scientists in Canada and abroad, including doctoral students. We believe that research - including research projects proposed by graduate students - should follow a curiosity-driven agenda, and not a government agenda. Granting councils rely on peer review, and accord scholarships on the basis of merit, not on the basis of discipline. This approach is fundamental to academic freedom and integrity in research, as well as to the quality of research in the long run. The disciplinary distribution of awards should follow the independently generated flow of applications. Past experience suggests that attempts to prioritize particular areas of research, especially in the critically important area of graduate training, risks unbalancing SSHRC's mandate.

The Canadian Political Science Association requests that the government remove the condition that directs these new monies to students completing business related degrees.

In addition, our Association supports strong and stable research funding for SSHRC. Our members, including full and part-time faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and graduate students, benefit from SSHRC's many programs. For faculty, core funding for the standard research grant program is essential to research success and we urge the government in the strongest possible terms to increase this support.

Sincerely,

Miriam Smith
President, Canadian Political Science Association
Professor, Law & Society Program
Division of Social Science
York University.

cc. Right Honourable Stephen Harper

Hon. Vic Toews

Hon. John McCallum

Hon. Dan McTeague

Marc Garneau, M.P.

Jack Layton, M.P.

Megan Leslie, M.P.

Pat Martin, M.P.

Thomas Mulcair, M.P.

Gilles Duceppe, M.P.

Robert Bouchard, M.P.

Robert Carrier, M.P.

Jean-Yves Laforest, M.P.

Richard Nadeau, M.P.

Chad Gaffield, President, SSHRC

Nathalie Des Rosiers, President, Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences