

Social Sciences and Humanities Research: Canada's Opportunity

Statement to the Standing Committee on Finance

Noreen Golfman, President
Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences
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- Good Morning Mr. Chairman, honourable members, ladies and gentlemen.
- I might add it is a pleasure to recognize some of the people I have had the opportunity to meet with in the past.
- Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to bring forward the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences' ideas for Canada's 2010 federal budget.
- Au cours de cette présentation, nous parlerons bien sûr de l'immense potentiel de la recherche en sciences humaines mais aussi des opportunités accrues qu'elle permet d'offrir aux Canadiens.

- As you may know, the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences represents over 50,000 researchers, graduate students and practitioners through 69 scholarly associations, 75 universities and colleges, and 7 affiliate members. Together we represent the bulk of the Social Sciences and Humanities research community in Canada.
- Today, I would like to talk about the contribution of social sciences and humanities research to innovation, and to our nation's ability to compete globally and be an effective partner in the international community.
- But before doing so, I will mention that our community appreciates the difficult job you are facing.
- Despite encouraging economic signs in recent weeks, the road to full recovery and a balanced budget will be slow and demand tough choices from Canadians.
- As we emerge from this recession, there is one thing we know: successful economies will be transformed and driven by the ideas generated in the full range of research disciplines, from the natural and health sciences to the human sciences.

- The knowledge generated in the social sciences and humanities enables social and economic progress in a number of ways.
- These disciplines are the source of many of the concepts and ideas that inform our understanding of the world. They also help to build knowledge about people, their ideas and behaviour, whether as individuals or as members of groups.
- The application of this research provides society with the nimbleness, flexibility and adaptability it needs to flourish
- The research performed by our community helps improve service delivery, governance practices and business models. It also helps our industries understand the social, cultural and economic dynamics of the world - opening new doors for Canadian innovations in the global marketplace.
- As arts and the humanities fuel the cultural life of our country and the creative industries that are becoming the trademark of Canadian entrepreneurship, research in the social sciences generates the knowledge that underpins our democratic institutions.
- In a world driven by ideas, the opportunities afforded to Canadians are directly correlated with the education and training we can offer them.

- The social sciences and humanities are essential to train the global citizens, strategic thinkers, and experts we need to compete in the world and respond to complex challenges.
- We have a remarkable source of talent in our universities - ready to mentor, train and educate the next generation of Canadians - ensuring that they have the resilience, adaptability, skill, perspective, tolerance and creativity needed for the 21st century.
- Social sciences and humanities research and training is essential to create the entrepreneurial, knowledge and people advantages Canada needs at this critical juncture.
- Whether it is research at the University of Toronto's Munk Centre for International Studies that helps cities determine how they can best attract the creative talent they need to thrive, or work at Carleton University that is helping the Canadian Federation of Municipalities visualize urban zones with increasing risk of homelessness, our disciplines are responding to the critical questions of our time.
- Research in our disciplines serves an important strategic function whether faced with severe economic dislocations or the outbreak of H1N1. Much of the work of government deals with health, security, economic, poverty, inequality and environmental issues that are deeply rooted in the social sciences and humanities

- A healthy reservoir of knowledge in our disciplines ensures that, no matter what the political, social, cultural or economic challenge, Canada has the expertise it needs to confront the unexpected.
- Canadians already benefit from world-class research infrastructure and programs to nurture talent at the highest levels of excellence. With Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (known as SSHRC in our circles) and the Canada Foundation for Innovation, support for maintenance and repair projects on campuses across the country, the Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships and the Canada Excellence Research Chairs Program we have the foundation in place to succeed.
- The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences is calling on the federal government to commit to a strategic investment totalling \$100 million over the next three years through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.
- Our objective for this investment is to better connect research with Canadian policy makers, businesses and the public – providing them the knowledge capital they need.
- **First and foremost** – our concern rests with the next generation of scholars and researchers. They are the future collaborators and partners for Canada’s NGOs, social and cultural entrepreneurs, business leaders and decision makers in our public institutions.

- We are recommending an investment of \$50 million to increase support for new researchers and help seed the next generation of excellence in the social sciences and humanities.
- According to data from the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, by 2016, Canadian universities are expected to hire 30 to 35,000 new faculty in all disciplines. Given the proportion of full-time faculty in the humanities and social sciences, this suggests that 15 to 17,500 new scholars will be required in our disciplines.
- These young, talented people in every province and territory represent a tremendous opportunity for Canada.
- Technology-savvy, they have a strong desire to make an impact not only in the world of research but beyond the academic realm. They are also more inclined to engage in interdisciplinary and emerging modes of research – responding to the complex demands of today’s world.
- **Secondly**, we need to do more to ensure that our best Canadian researchers are able to compete and collaborate internationally.
- Today’s complex issues transcend borders and nations, requiring global collaborations. The Federation is recommending \$25 million to enhance the international competitiveness of Canadian senior scholars who are - in many fields - among the best in the world.

- Adequate support at home for our researchers is a critical first step to ensure they can participate fully in the international arena.
- **Finally**, we are calling for an additional \$25 million in funding to put to work the knowledge generated by our disciplines for the benefit of Canadians and to build capacity for knowledge exchange and translation.
- This is an area of great opportunity for Canada. The purpose of this funding is to maximize the economic and social value of investments in research by fostering the transfer, exchange and co-creation of knowledge involving academia, business, government and the not-for-profit sector.
- In other words, bridging disciplines, sectors, needs and opportunities for the benefit of all Canadians.
- The funding would help to expand and build on a number of SSHRC pilot initiatives already underway. The activities supported would serve to enhance the capacity of researchers and graduate students in the social sciences and humanities to develop and manage collaborations with the users outside academia.
- We are recommending these modest investments be made through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

- SSHRC plays a critical role as a guardian of excellence in our disciplines. SSHRC ensures independent peer-review for the allocation of funds and provides our community with the leadership required to seize the opportunities arising from discovery, innovation and creativity.
- Our members believe that investing in the social sciences and humanities research is a sound investment in Canada's future.
- Thank you for your attention and I will be pleased to address any question you may have.