House of Commons
Chambre des communes
Canada

House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance – Pre-budget Consultations 2013

This brief is submitted by:

(•) **an organization** **Organization name:** McGill University

or

( ) **an individual** **Name:** _____

Topic: Innovation and commercialization

*Recommendation 1: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

To ensure that Canada remains a magnet for talent and an important global partner in innovation, McGill proposes that the Government build on existing successful investments in excellence (Vanier scholarships, Banting fellowships, Canada Research Chairs, Canada Excellence Chairs, Networks of Excellence). In the context of international competition, we propose new funding to enhance Canada's innovation capacity, based on peer-reviewed, proven performance in federal programs, a multi-year phase-in, measurable excellence and institution-specific accountability.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$100 million -$499.9 million

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

McGill appreciates the Government of Canada's commitment to excellence in research and innovation, especially in this context of fiscal austerity. Canada has led the way among nations in recognizing that investments in the knowledge economy are crucial for ensuring global competitiveness. We recommend increases in overall funding for science, technology and innovation, with the creation of a new fund to support and sustain the activities of universities that perform at the highest levels.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Adding to the existing framework of programs that support excellence in university research, a new fund would enhance competitiveness, better student research experiences, and foster partnerships and international opportunities. Students, researchers, and partners from all sectors would benefit, as would universities. The fund would also benefit all Canadians, by strengthening the overall R&D capacity of our country, providing universities with the resources necessary to build on key institutional strengths, and ensuring Canada's continued global leadership in areas of national priority.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Universities have significant impact on all Canadians as centers of research, teaching, and innovation, and as employers. McGill alone contributed over $5.2B to the Quebec economy in 2008, and contributes even more today.
Other jurisdictions – China, India, Germany, France and the U.S.A. – are investing heavily in their top-performing universities. Canada has excellent foundational elements on which to build; additional investments for research, talent, and partnerships would allow Canada's top-performing universities to have continued success in a highly competitive global environment.

Topic: Innovation and commercialization

Recommendation 2: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

We recommend additional, predictable and non-targeted support for the three major research funding councils of Canada (NSERC, CIHR, SSHRC). Through existing council programs, and in keeping with the recommendations of the Advisory Panel on Canada's International Education Strategy, we also recommend making additional funding available for internationalization initiatives, providing nimble and flexible research funding for inter-disciplinary, inter-sectoral and international research partnerships, and for international student mobility.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$100 million -$499.9 million

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

Research, development, and innovation are the keystones of a strong, productive economy. The 2012 State of the Nation Report notes, “Science, technology and innovation underpin and animate virtually every aspect of modern life, driving economic growth and prosperity and fuelling advances that enhance health, environmental and social well-being.” Continued and new investment in the federal research councils will help keep Canada’s universities competitive and Canada’s economy prosperous.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

Sustainable, responsive and internationally benchmarked research funding supports the transformative work of world-class researchers and bright, highly-qualified students.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Canada competes with other countries for the best and the brightest students, postdoctoral fellows, researchers, and professors. We must ensure that we build on the foundational programs that already support research excellence at internationally competitive levels, and which connect Canadians with their peers abroad, across key sectors. These partnerships and the resulting research and knowledge will promote Canada as a whole to the rest of the world, and have the potential for economic and social benefits both nationally and globally.

Topic: Infrastructure

Recommendation 3: Please provide a short summary of your recommendation.

Access to cutting-edge infrastructure is a key element of R&D. Two existing programs are crucial in this regard:
Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI): More predictable funding would allow the CFI to sustain high-performing equipment and facilities, seize new opportunities, contribute to the operations of facilities, and strengthen cyber infrastructure.
Building Canada: We look forward to competing for the Provincial-Territorial Infrastructure funds, and recommend a dedicated funding envelope of 10%, or $1B, for universities, as well as flexibility in identifying partners and funding sources.

Expected cost or savings: From the pull-down menus, please indicate the expected cost or savings of your recommendation to the federal government and the period of time to which the expected cost or savings is related.

$100 million -$499.9 million

5 or more years

Federal funding: Please provide a precise indication of how the federal government could fund your recommendation. For example, indicate what federal spending should be reallocated, what federal tax measure(s) should be introduced, eliminated or changed, etc.

CFI: Because of the structure of the program, which requires that each dollar awarded by the CFI is matched at a minimum of $1.50 by universities or their partners (e.g. provincial governments, private sector), funding for the CFI is a proven investment that warrants continued support.
Building Canada: The Government of Canada has already identified funding for the Building Canada Program in the federal 2013 Budget Plan.

Intended beneficiaries: Please indicate the groups of individuals, the sector(s) and/or the regions that would benefit by implementation of your recommendation.

In addition to benefitting, attracting and retaining top student researchers and faculty, as well as enhancing our country's research capacity, the research that results from access to cutting-edge infrastructure has the potential of impacting all Canadians.

General impacts: Depending on the nature of your recommendation, please indicate how the standard of living of Canadians would be improved, jobs would be created, people would be trained, etc.

Infrastructure is a necessary component of innovative research and development, and for training the next generation of scientists and researchers. In addition, infrastructure has a proven impact on communities – for example, a Government of Canada audit notes that the Knowledge Infrastructure Program provided economic stimulus to over 190 communities across Canada, related construction activities maintained or created jobs during the projects, and the increased capacity created at post-secondary institutions led to an increase in administrative, technical and faculty positions.

Please use this page if you wish to provide more explanation about your recommendation(s).

McGill looks forward to working with the Government of Canada in maintaining our nation's research, innovation, and talent capacity, and enhancing its economic productivity. The Government has, with its many investments over the past years, clearly recognized the importance of supporting research and talent.

Canadian universities have demonstrated that they can compete with the best in the world. This has been possible through Government support for the foundational elements of innovation:
• a competitive framework of research programs (federal research granting councils, Genome Canada, Indirect Costs Program);
• state-of-the-art scientific infrastructure (Knowledge Infrastructure Program, Canada Foundation for Innovation, Building Canada Program);
• leaders of today and tomorrow (Canada Excellence Research Chairs, Vanier Scholarships, Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships, Canada Graduate Scholarships, Canada Research Chairs); and
• key strategic partnerships across institutions, sectors and nations (Networks of Centres of Excellence, international missions, MITACS)

These investments are necessary for Canada's continued international success, but they require constant attentiveness. The 2012 State of the Nation Report notes that, "while Canada has much to celebrate in terms of our knowledge and talent base, we still have much work to do before we can truly 'run with the best' and realize Canada's full STI potential."

China, India, France, Germany and the U.S. among others are all investing in their top-performing institutions of higher education, and they are taking advantage of improved learning environments that are training the next generation of innovators, producing top-flight research, and providing international knowledge and reputational leadership that comes from such investments.

The three recommendations we have advanced (sustaining excellence, increasing research funding, supporting knowledge infrastructure) will position Canada to remain among the world leaders in innovation, completing the framework needed for optimal research productivity, global competitiveness, and world-wide impact.

*Please note that at least one recommendation must be provided