Statement – U15 welcomes significant investments in Budget 2021

April 19, 2021 (Ottawa, ON) — The U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities welcomes Budget 2021, presented by Minister Chrystia Freeland today. “We congratulate Minister Freeland and the government on today’s budget,” said Dr. Santa J. Ono, President and Vice Chancellor of the University of British Columbia and Chair of The U15. “In the early days of the pandemic the government made substantial investments to keep Canada’s university community strong, including investments supporting students, supporting the research enterprise, and significant supports for pandemic-related health research. Today’s significant investments build upon that foundation of research, innovation and talent development by bolstering the contributions that our research community will make in fostering a sustainable, equitable and prosperous Canada through the recovery.”

The U15 notes particularly the following investments:

Health Research/Bio-Innovation:

- $250M over 4 years to the federal granting councils to create a new biomedical research fund.
- $59M over 3 years to VIDO-Intervac to improve Canada’s vaccine and bio-innovation capacity.
- $500M over 3 years to the Canada Foundation for Innovation for laboratory upgrades related to bio-innovation.
- $45M over 3 years to the Stem Cell Network.
- $1B over 7 years to the Strategic Innovation Fund to support promising bio-science and manufacturing firms.
- $28M over 5 years for research on antimicrobial resistance.

Targeted Research Investments:

- $360M over 7 years in support of a national Quantum strategy.
- $443M over 10 years in support of renewing the pan-Canadian Artificial Intelligence Strategy.
- $400M over 6 years in support of Genomics capacity including research.
- $250M over 3 years to CIHR to support clinical trials.
Skills/Training:

- $708M over 5 years to MITACS to offer training opportunities to graduate students and build bridges between university research and the private sector.
- $239M in 2021-22 to the Student Work Placement Program to create work integrated learning opportunities for students.

“We were pleased to see the government’s focus on research as a pillar of the economic recovery and of future prosperity. Investments in bio-innovation and genomics will ensure Canada is better prepared for the next pandemic, and other public health challenges in the future. The significant investments in cutting edge areas like artificial intelligence and quantum technology will pay dividends for all Canadians in the future. The continuing investments in skills training will ensure better outcomes for employers and future employees in the Canadian workforce. We look forward to continuing to work with federal and provincial governments to ensure our research-intensive universities are a source of great strength for Canada.”

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