



Statement - U15 Canada is deeply concerned about lagging research investments in Canada, sees hope in Bouchard Report

March 28, 2023 (Ottawa, ON) —U15 Canada notes with dismay that today’s Federal Budget contained no new investments in research funding for universities offered by the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, and the Canada Foundation for Innovation. This marks the second consecutive year that the government has frozen research funding, which in an era of high inflation amounts to cuts to Canadian research. Scholarships and Fellowships will remain at levels set years ago, inflation will continue eroding research grant funding, and initiatives to innovate across the private, public, and non-profit sectors will continue facing a serious talent gap.

While governments internationally are fighting inflation, peer countries like the United States, Germany, and the UK are making game-changing investments to advance knowledge and develop the highly qualified talent that underpins all efforts to build a better future. “We are increasingly concerned as Canadian federal research investments are not keeping pace with our peers. Canadians as well as others around the world have noticed. We are already seeing that some of our best and brightest go elsewhere,” said Chad Gaffield, CEO of U15 Canada.

U15 Canada does draw hope from the recently released Report of the Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System, chaired by Dr. Frédéric Bouchard of the Université de Montréal. We note that Budget 2023 states that “The government is carefully considering the Advisory Panel’s advice, with more detail to follow in the coming months on further efforts to modernize the system.” Dr. Peter Stoicheff, President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Saskatchewan and Chair of U15, emphasized that “The Bouchard Report makes important recommendations to enhance the research and innovation ecosystem, including an urgent call for investments of 10% per year for 5 years. We urge the Government to take the earliest opportunity to act on these recommendations.”

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