

Universities welcome federal budget pledge to sustain momentum in research

OTTAWA (Feb. 23, 2005) — Canadian universities welcome the federal government's pledge in today's budget to sustain the momentum of its research investments. The new funding announced today is important, says the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada. Further investments will be needed in future to ensure that universities can continue to be strong contributors to Canada's productivity and quality of life.

"Universities are pleased that today's budget recognizes the need for increased funding for federal granting councils and for the indirect costs of research," says Claire Morris, president of the 92-member AUCC. "Investing in new ideas and innovation is crucial in a globally competitive economy. Other countries are investing substantially in research and innovation, and Canada will need to continue to do the same."

Today's budget contained a number of research investments that will boost university research, including funding for the three federal granting agencies (the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council) and an increase for the indirect costs of research, which include such costs as the operation of university equipment and research labs, technology transfer and commercialization services, and ensuring compliance with regulations in areas such as ethics and environmental protection.

Also receiving funding in today's budget were Genome Canada, which received an additional \$165 million to cover its operations over the next three years in funding basic research in universities and research hospitals; the Tri-University Meson Facility or TRIUMF, a nuclear and particle physics research laboratory located at the University of British Columbia and managed as a joint venture by a dozen Canadian universities, which received new funding of \$126 million over five years; and the Canadian Academies of Science, a new organization which brings together scientific experts to assess the state of knowledge in key areas, which received \$30 million in funding to be used over the next decade.

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Funding was also announced for postsecondary scholarships for Aboriginal students through the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation, for international science and technology research collaboration, and to the Atlantic Innovation Fund to support university research, commercialization and innovative companies in the Atlantic provinces.

AUCC says it is pleased that the government has chosen to add to its investments in the direct costs of research through the granting councils as well as related indirect costs of research. The Association notes that the additional \$15 million annually in funding announced today for indirect costs of university research, while welcome, will in fact see the average rate of indirect costs funding received by universities drop.

“Across the country, Canadians tell us that they understand the real and lasting value of the research and education that universities provide,” says Claire Morris. “Our future as a country depends on ensuring that we have strong universities providing high-quality education and conducting world-class research.”

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada is the voice of Canada's universities. It represents 92 Canadian public and private not-for-profit universities and university-degree level colleges.

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