

News Release: Budget Falls Short on Support for Basic Research and Post-Secondary Education

For Immediate Release
March 30, 2012

OTTAWA - At a time when government recognizes that investment in research is necessary to fuel Canada's growth and prosperity, the Canadian Consortium for Research (CCR) is disappointed that the government has directed the Canada's research granting councils to pursue internal savings of \$74 million phased in over 2012/13 and 2013/14. Although \$37 million in savings are being reallocated within the granting councils in 2012/13, these are targeted to industry-academic research partnership initiatives.

Basic research is a crucial driver of innovation and the reinvestments in targeted research do not reflect this importance. This is why CCR's 2012 budget brief called for the federal government to augment the Granting Councils' budgets by 7%, with the whole increase directed to the portion of their budgets that supports basic research. Accounting for inflation, there is a net cut to the base budgets of the Councils.

Relative to our population, Canada produces 35% fewer graduates at the doctoral level than the OECD average or the U.S. This was recognized by the federal government in past years through the expansion of the Canada Graduate Scholarships Program. It appears from this budget that the additional scholarships for masters and doctoral students have not been maintained. Further, the budget did not announce any new financial relief for students.

The CCR had hoped that, in the face of government spending cuts, the government would classify public science-related programs as part of "core" services and exempt them from further spending reductions. CCR is concerned that departmental cuts will significantly impact science-related activities and programs which, ultimately, affect the health and safety of Canadians and their environment.

The CCR is pleased to see the significant increase in investment in applied research such as the Industrial Research Assistance Program, and in infrastructure such as CANARIE and the Canada Foundation for Innovation.

The Canadian Consortium for Research (CCR) is the largest umbrella organization in Canada primarily concerned with the funding of research in all disciplines and support for post-secondary education. Established in 1976, CCR consists of 18 organizations representing more than 50,000 researchers and 500,000 students in a wide range of disciplines across Canada. While the majority of these researchers are based in universities, the constituent organizations have numerous members in government laboratories and in private sector research centres.

For more information:
Canadian Consortium for Research
Contact: 613-240-8375
www.ccr-ccr.ca

