

November 9, 2009

SSHRC MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

Better Research for Better Business: The Expert Panel on Management, Business, and Finance Research

On May 25, 2009, the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA) released its report, **Better Research for Better Business**, which provides an assessment of “management, business, and finance” research in Canada in order to identify opportunities where strategic investment could result in a significant impact.

The report and its findings are significant and represent one of several studies and consultations that SSHRC has undertaken in order to further develop its management, business, and finance investment strategy. Others include: **A Decade of Canadian Research in MBF**, an analysis of 1,175 research grants in MBF funded by SSHRC, a program evaluation of the Initiative on the New Economy, and an on-line consultation with SSHRC Leaders and the research community. Consultations were also undertaken with the Canadian Federation of Business School Deans (CFBSD) as well as with other scholarly Associations and our sister research granting councils. In addition, outreach took place with a range of associations such as: the Canadian Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS), the Canadian Council of Chief Executives (CCCE), and the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC). Evidence gathered from these studies and consultations as well as the recent National Forum on Management hosted by HEC Montréal, provided valuable advice in developing SSHRC’s long-term strategy for the use of MBF targeted funds.

Specifically, the findings of the CCA report offer an informative and useful overview of the state of research in Canadian universities and provide solid foundation for SSHRC to understand the Canadian research landscape better in the aforementioned research themes. SSHRC is pleased to learn about evidence that demonstrates Canada’s solid international research profile in these thematic areas, as well as the positive finding that related Canadian research production ranks well above the world average in many fields.

The findings demonstrate a clear need to strengthen Canada’s competitiveness and prosperity through greater collaboration between academic and non-academic sectors, in particular, the private sector. The panel’s specific recommendation was the creation of an initiative referred to as the Business Excellence through Transfer of Research (BETToR) program, which would improve the competitiveness and performance of Canadian business by supporting large, multi-year, collaborative projects with demonstrated potential for relevance and knowledge transfer. The focus on increased collaboration between sectors is well aligned with the priorities set out by SSHRC in the last few years for the Budget 2007 funds. This approach is also detailed in its partnership and knowledge mobilization strategies and will inform our renewed program architecture where the principles of the proposed BETToR initiative will be ensconced.



SSHRC recognizes that increased collaboration has become an essential element of the changing landscape of research, and our core objectives set forth in *Framing our Direction* emphasize the need to recognize and strengthen the intellectual, social and economic impact of social sciences and humanities research by supporting meaningful connections, and by fostering the two way exchange of knowledge for mutual benefit. The Government of Canada's Science and Technology Strategy also articulates the importance of multi-sectoral partnerships involving business, academic, and public sectors, at home and abroad, in accelerating the pace of discovery and commercialization in Canada.

Based on the evidence gathered to date, SSHRC has decided to focus the research theme, Management, Business and Finance (MBF) on Innovation, Leadership and Prosperity (ILP), as a way to reflect the range of themes that contribute to Canada's competitive advantage and speak to outcomes. The use of targeted MBF funds, as outlined in Budget 2007, will support ILP as a priority theme in SSHRC's renewed program architecture.

The findings and recommendations presented by the expert panel align with SSHRC's "campus-community" approach thus far, and will be carefully measured in ongoing renewal of SSHRC's program architecture. For example, in 2009-10 available ILP funds have been invested into a general public outreach grant competition with ILP indicated as a priority theme.

Finally, SSHRC's long term strategy will be to continue to investigate means by which it can add value in strengthening this research theme, especially in ways that are bold and transformational, including:

- Opening doors with private, public and not-for-profit sectors and increase international collaborations to amplify campus-community impact
- Advancing knowledge and building capacity in niche areas, especially for new scholars in emerging fields, e.g., small to medium enterprises (SMEs), public sector management, social innovation, e-finance, Aboriginal businesses, manufacturing, service industries
- Mobilizing research to inform policy and decision making
- Supporting large-scale and multi-year collaborative projects via new partnership funding mechanisms and other partnered activities to mobilize knowledge transfer with some funds reserved for bi and tri-agency collaboration
- Considering funding Fellowships in Innovation, Leadership and Prosperity
- Playing a leadership role in advancing inter-disciplinary research with other granting councils e.g., green business, climate change, rural economies, technology transfer

This approach was endorsed by our Standing Committee on Programs and Quality in late September 2009.

The CCA report highlights emerging opportunities in the 21st century's changing research landscape, and the new approaches necessary for conducting research, engaging in dialogue, and developing new talent. The Government of Canada's Budget 2007 investment in Management, Business, and Finance sought to improve the quality of the research in these areas. Embracing the principles of complexity, diversity and creativity, SSHRC's broad range of programming including those programs in the Management, Business and Finance theme, reflect the new knowledge paradigm of the 21st century, both in building the skills and knowledge through social sciences and humanities research that are key to Canada's success as a country and a society and, in training the next generation of Canadian business leaders.