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Budget 2016: Important new investments in research and a science culture for Canada

(Ottawa, Ontario) March 23, 2016 — The Canadian Consortium for Research (CCR) applauds the Liberal Government's commitment to invest in research funding, student support, and research infrastructure as announced in Tuesday's federal budget.

The CCR's pre-budget submission recommended: 1) increases, in a more equitable manner, to the base budgets of the granting councils; 2) increased support for students through graduate scholarships, internships, and fellowships; and 3) investments in the building blocks of Canada's national research capacity and public science that support research.

The CCR was particularly pleased that the budget included increases for discovery research to the tri-council funding agencies in the amount of \$95 million per year beginning in 2016/17. Of this, \$30 million each will go to the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), and \$16 million to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC); although not on par with funding to CIHR and NSERC, the CCR was pleased to see SSHRC get a significant increase in its annual funding.

"Science advances and innovations happen when researchers from all disciplines across the health, social and natural sciences, are supported in fundamental research that isn't driven by specific industry needs or interests," says Canadian Consortium for Research Chair, Dr. Lisa Votta-Bleeker.

The budget also included support for research infrastructure, in the form of \$19 million to support indirect costs of universities doing federally supported research and up to \$2 billion over three-years to support eligible costs of infrastructure projects at post-secondary institutions. It also provides support for students in the form of additional grant funding for post-secondary students from low- and middle-income families, reforms to Canada Student Loans repayments, and elimination of education and textbook tax credits.

Over the coming year, the CCR welcomes the Minister of Science's review of all elements of federal support for fundamental science. The CCR looks forward to consulting with the Minister of Science in this review, and to discussions about future increases for tri-council funding and post-graduate fellowships. As we approach restoration of research funding to 2007 levels, we look forward to further progress in improving Canada's research funding to internationally-competitive levels.

"Increased investments by the current government in core funding for research, students, and infrastructure position Canada as a leader in knowledge production and innovation, and a country that cultivates a strong science culture, domestically and internationally", added Dr. Votta-Bleeker.

The CCR is the largest advocacy coalition in Canada, focusing on research funding in all disciplines and support for post-secondary education. CCR includes 20 organizations that represent more than 50,000 researchers and 500,000 students across disciplines.

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