

WRITTEN SUBMISSION PRE-BUDGET CONSULTATIONS IN ADVANCE OF THE UPCOMING FEDERAL BUDGET **BY SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY**

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RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation One:

Invest in diverse talent, both undergraduate and graduate, domestic and international, to respond to an increasingly competitive global environment.

Recommendation Two:

Expand investments in Canadian research to globally competitive levels, including support for fundamental research through federal granting agencies, knowledge mobilization, and international research collaboration.

Recommendation Three:

Invest in green, digital, accessible, and cyber infrastructure that helps build and refurbish campuses to be safe, digitally enabled, accessible and environmentally sustainable.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on Canadian society as a whole. While Canadians are working to reopen and return to normal in light of increasing vaccination rates and declining cases, Canada still has much work to do to recover from the societal impacts of the pandemic. As Canada's Engaged University, Simon Fraser University (SFU) is committed to supporting that recovery, by leveraging our educational, research, and other capacities to develop stronger communities in pursuit of meaningful recovery.

Fortunately, Budget 2021 made critical investments that support Canadians and develop critical economic sectors in Canada's diverse economy that will support new talent growth and create global economic leadership.

Budget 2021's investment of \$360 million over seven years for the creation of a National Quantum Strategy is a critical contribution to economic development in this emerging field in and supporting emerging clusters across Canada. British Columbia is the site of one such quantum computing cluster, which is being led by local start-up and multinational quantum computing companies, and leading quantum research programs at B.C.'s largest research universities.

Budget 2021's renewal of the Pan-Canadian Artificial Intelligence Strategy is another such critical investment that will have a positive impact on Canada's recovery. Vancouver is home to one of the most significant clusters of AI activity in the country. The research universities, the digital technology supercluster, and local industry have been working together to build a vision for Vancouver as an AI commercialization hub. The federal investment of \$443.8 million over ten years will support bringing cutting-edge innovation to market, while also supporting developing crucial skilled talent that will further make Canada into an Artificial Intelligence leader.

Lastly, the \$60 million over two years towards in Budget 2021 to the Innovation Superclusters Initiative will have a positive impact on furthering the important research and partnerships the Superclusters are fostering across Canada. Research universities have been working closely with Canada's Innovation Superclusters on a wide range of projects and research that bring innovation to the economic sectors they support. This additional funding will help create innovation, train new talent, and continue to create jobs across Canada.

SFU applauds the Government of Canada for these investments in Budget 2021. Building upon these successes, Canada has the opportunity to ensure that budget will continue to support research and innovation, growing and training talent, and growing the economy with other strategic investments.

Canada is fortunate to have access to its post-secondary sector that can supply the resources and knowledge that drive recovery in a way that supports transformative economic development that builds human capital, promotes social equity and mobility, and generates the research and innovation we need to create a more prosperous, environmentally sustainable, and inclusive society. As such, SFU would like to echo the recommendations being made by Universities Canada in their 2022 Pre-budget consultation submission.

Recommendation one: Invest in diverse talent, both undergraduate and graduate, domestic and international, to respond to an increasingly competitive global environment.

The most valuable assets of any country are the skills and talents of its people. In a world in which knowledge is the main currency, building human capital must be the central pillar of a successful COVID-19 recovery plan.

That is why SFU would like to echo Universities Canada's recommendation to target the investments in skills and talent support an inclusive recovery; advance equity, diversity and inclusion; and advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Through education we can help those most affected by the pandemic – especially women, Indigenous peoples, and youth – develop the human capital Canada needs to build a more prosperous, sustainable and inclusive future. Additionally, targets investments towards diversifying our international student pools, remove barriers to permanent residency, and increase access to post-graduate research will help meet the needs of Canada's future labour market.

Once such example of the great work already being done in this area is with the successes Canadians are finding with reskilling and upskilling platforms. Initiatives such as Palette Skills, which is training Canadians for new careers and opportunities in the knowledge economy, are one such example of how the Government and Post-Secondary institutions can build Canada's human capital. SFU looks forward to any future support from the Government of Canada in funding initiatives such as these.

Recommendation two: Expand investments in Canadian research to globally competitive levels, including support for fundamental research through federal granting agencies, knowledge mobilization, and international research collaboration.

Owing in large part to sustained federal support, Canada's universities and institutes are research powerhouses. However, lack of national commitment and program support makes it difficult for universities to transform their research into marketable innovations that create jobs, grow our economy, reduce environmental impacts, improve our quality of life, and collaborate with researchers on the international stage.

SFU supports Universities Canada's recommendation to create additional investments the development of knowledge mobilization, strengthen international research collaborations, and support research and development through the federal grant agencies. This support for these efforts will enable the federal government to help universities maximize the economic and social benefits of their knowledge, discoveries, and inventions to help build a more robust, resilient, and green economy.

Recommendation three: Invest in green, digital, accessible, and cyber infrastructure that helps build and refurbish campuses to be safe, digitally enabled, accessible and environmentally sustainable.

Canada's post-secondary sector has proven its ability to utilize federal-provincial infrastructure programs to create vital facilities that enhance Canada's capacities to advance knowledge, research, and innovation. However, the need remains for a multi- year sustained infrastructure investment in Canadian Post-Secondary Institutions to allow them to keep pace with Canadian growth.

SFU would like to indicate its support for Universities Canada's third recommendation to support the development of critical university infrastructure that supports combating climate change, making campuses more accessible and securing our cyber infrastructure. These investments will go a long way in creates jobs and drives regional economic growth; and supports the development of programs and research capabilities that address pressing economic, social and environmental priorities.

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