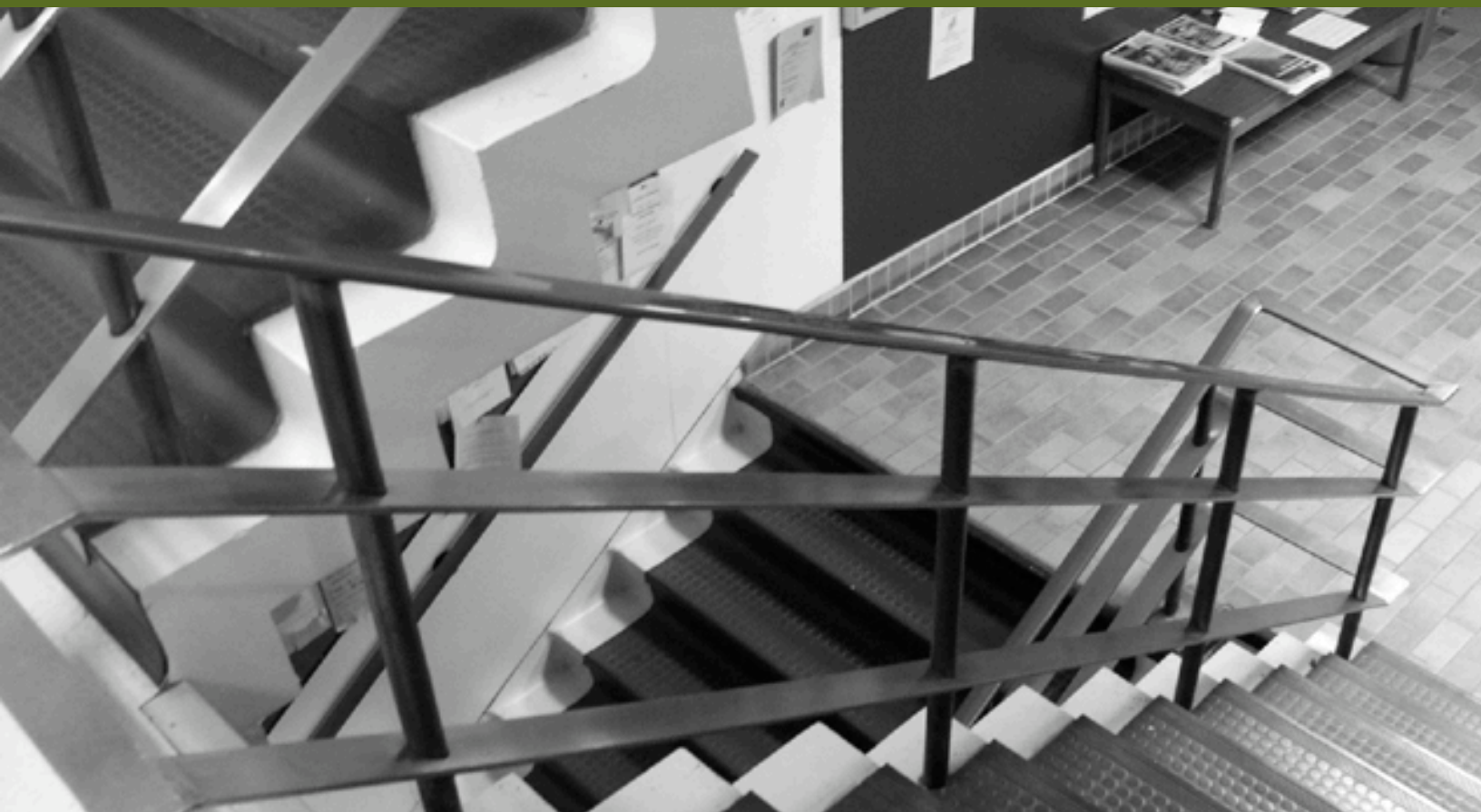


**Canadian Alliance  
of Student  
Associations**



# GRADUATE STUDENTS & INNOVATION



**NOVEMBER 2011**

**CASA-ACAE.COM**

## CASA RECOMMENDS

- The Government continue to fund the Canada Graduate Scholarships beyond 2011, with an additional \$92M in Budget 2012, and for funding to be indexed to inflation and the size of Canada's graduate student enrolment.
- The Government, through Governor in Council, appoint two students to each of the NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR governing councils, establishing precedent for such spaces and opening discussion for further student accountability. Each appointee should be a student at the time of their appointment, but not necessarily throughout their term, and their appointments should be staggered.

## FACTS

- The Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) were introduced in February 2003.
- 4,200 doctoral candidates earned degrees in 2005.
- Canada graduates 1.2% doctoral students among those in the appropriate age range. This is among the lowest in the OECD, at 25<sup>th</sup>. By comparison, the United States is ranked 13<sup>th</sup>, and the United Kingdom 7<sup>th</sup>.
- Canada has one of the highest human resources growth rates in science and technology, particularly in the services sector, ranking 6<sup>th</sup> in the OECD with a growth rate of 4.2%.
- Canada's growth in domestic expenditure in R&D has increased only 0.13% to 1.92% of GDP between 1999 and 2009, ranking 27<sup>th</sup> in the OECD. We have stayed at EU27 levels during this time, while the United States invests nearly a full percentage point more at 2.79%.
- Scholarships to student-researchers compose between 12.5% to 21% of the NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR budgets, while grants and awards reach upwards of 80%.
- Student participation on university boards and committees is common in the provinces, but not at the federal level.
- A student board member would share the same avoidable conflicts of interests as other faculty board members.

## FUNDING FOR CGS

The Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) program provides annual funding for 2,000 Masters and 2,000 Doctoral scholarships across the three granting councils. Master's CGS recipients are awarded \$17,500 for one year of study. Doctoral CGS recipients are awarded \$35,000 annually for up to three years of study. The program is still relatively new, having only been launched in 2003.<sup>1</sup>

The CGS program has proven valuable for two main reasons. It provides an opportunity for students to continue their education without relying too heavily on debt. Scholarship recipients have shown a reduced dependence on earnings income and on student debt, allowing them to pursue scholarly research without fear of financial penalty for having done so. Award recipients are four percentage points more likely to enroll in graduate studies than non-recipients, at both the master's and doctoral levels.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gauthier, Benoit, 2009. Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) Program and Related Programs Review. Retrieved on 20 September 2011 from <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/39996.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

Secondly, the program creates and retains the R&D labour force Canada needs domestically. The recent report Innovation Canada: A Call to Action (Jenkins Report) detailed how the Canada-USA business innovation gap has been widening since 2003.<sup>3</sup> Today, the USA spends double what Canada does on business expenditure on research and development. This is despite Canada's gross expenditure on research and development being about the OECD average. As the country begins to focus on domestic innovation, the need for more highly trained researchers follows. As Canada current graduates among the lowest number of PhD's in the OECD<sup>4</sup>, our ability to foster research-intensive industry domestically lags behind.

For a national program, the level of support for the CGS is relatively low. There are over 190,000 students pursuing graduate studies in Canada, meanwhile there are only 4,000 Canada Graduate Scholarships available.<sup>5</sup> CGS funding is often looked upon by graduate students as the ideal source of funding for a graduate degree. For many students, funding is the deciding factor for whether or not to go on.

The Economic Action Plan recognized the importance and value of the CGS program by investing an additional \$87.5M that provided for an additional 500 Doctoral awards and 1,000 Masters awards from 2009 to 2011. Renewing this funding, however, was not mentioned in Budget 2011.

**CASA recommends the government continue to fund the Canada Graduate Scholarships beyond 2011, with an additional \$92M in Budget 2012, and for funding to be indexed to inflation and the size of Canada's graduate student enrolment.**

## GRANTING COUNCIL ACCOUNTABILITY

A best practice in many Canadian universities is to include students in the decision making process at every level. It has become a tradition that Canada's student bodies take very seriously. It is generally expected that, by statute, students will compose approximately 10-15% of the governing board, with an even greater share on the academic board, if it exists. This makes both symbolic sense, that students as academics are acknowledged as valued participants in the academy, as well as business sense, that the organization is ultimately accountable to its stakeholders.

[CIHR will accomplish its objective by] ensuring transparency and accountability to Canadians for the investment of the Government of Canada in health research.

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research Act, SC 2000, c 6

[NSERC is] enriched by the diversity of people with whom we work and interact, and continuously learn and grow through these interactions.

- NSERC's Statement of Values and Goals

While student membership is the law in the provinces, it is not found at the federal stage. Student involvement in the granting councils is presently ad-hoc. The Governor in Council appoints the governing councils of the agencies, and those councils are empowered to appoint committees and administer other affairs. Neither NSERC nor CIHR have students on their councils or on any committees. SSHRC has no student on their council, but does have one student on its Programs and Quality Committee. It is not clear that the position is reserved for a student.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> [http://rd-review.ca/eic/site/033.nsf/vwapj/R-D\\_InnovationCanada\\_Final-eng.pdf/\\$FILE/R-D\\_InnovationCanada\\_Final-eng.pdf](http://rd-review.ca/eic/site/033.nsf/vwapj/R-D_InnovationCanada_Final-eng.pdf/$FILE/R-D_InnovationCanada_Final-eng.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> Canada ranks 24<sup>th</sup> in the OECD in terms of doctoral graduates. OECD Science, Technology and Industry Scoreboard 2011 <[http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/oecd-science-technology-and-industry-scoreboard-2011\\_sti\\_scoreboard-2011-en](http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/science-and-technology/oecd-science-technology-and-industry-scoreboard-2011_sti_scoreboard-2011-en)>

<sup>5</sup> Gauthier, 2009.

<sup>6</sup> SSHRC (2011). Programs and Quality Committee. Retrieved on 9 October 2011 from [http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/about-au\\_sujet/governance-gouvernance/committees-comites/programs-programmes-eng.aspx](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/about-au_sujet/governance-gouvernance/committees-comites/programs-programmes-eng.aspx)

### 3 CANADIAN ALLIANCE OF STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS

Masters and Doctoral students rely on the agencies' decisions every day of their academic career. Professors can only enroll students provided they have the grants to fund their research, chiefly funded by the agencies.

Students can only attend if they have access to scholarships and stipends, also provided by the agencies. These funds are not insignificant either. Scholarships to student-researchers compose between 12.5% and 21% of the agencies' budgets, while grants and awards reach upwards of 80%.<sup>7 8 9</sup> A single agency decision can decide the future of a student's career.

There is no conflict of interest greater than that of any other council member either. Executives, administrators, faculty and deans all serve on these councils, which have rigorous conflict of interest bylaws and regulations—beyond those required by their appointment to a public board. Furthermore, it should not be made a requirement that the student remain a student while on a governing council, but should not be reappointed in that capacity upon the expiration of their term.

Such an initiative would cost the government no money, and is under the discretion of the Governor in Council.

**CASA recommends the government, through Governor in Council, appoint two students to each of the NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR governing councils, establishing precedent for such spaces and opening discussion for further student accountability. Each appointee should be a student at the time of their appointment, but not necessarily throughout their term, and their appointments should be staggered.**



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<sup>7</sup> "Budget." *Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council*. 12 February 2010 <http://www.sshrc.ca/site/about-crsh/stats-statistiques/budget-eng.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> "Current Budget." *Canadian Institutes of Health Research*. 12 February 2010 <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22953.html>

<sup>9</sup> "NSERC Budget 2008-09" *Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council*. 12 February 2010 [http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/\\_doc/FactsFigures-TableauxDetailles/2007-2008Figures\\_e.pdf](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/_doc/FactsFigures-TableauxDetailles/2007-2008Figures_e.pdf)