

VOLUME 1

→ From Granting Council to Knowledge Council

RENEWING THE SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HUMANITIES IN CANADA

Consultation Framework on SSHRC Transformation
January 2004



Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

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A Message from SSHRC's Council

The purpose of this document is to facilitate collective discussion about how to chart the future of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) and thus, in important ways, the future of the social sciences and humanities research enterprise in Canada.

Humanities and social science research contributes in vital ways to wealth creation, forward-looking institutions, civic engagement, sustainability and geopolitical balance. It is scholars in these diverse branches of the research world who ask questions that inform understanding and decisions about issues such as immigration, education, monetary policy, the environment, justice and human rights, and culture. Human sciences knowledge is fundamental to creativity, innovation and to developing the skills of the next generation of Canadians—as workers, citizens and leaders, as people who can think critically, communicate effectively, synthesize complex information, and who have the flexibility and leadership to adapt to change and implement new ideas. Human sciences research helps forge strong media, nurture democratic debate, and inform policy. And, at a more personal level, it helps us engage and answer questions about the meaning of life itself.

The social sciences and humanities provide the missing link between a technologically advanced society and a successful one. In a world increasingly shaped by technology and global trends, these diverse disciplines help deliver social innovation and basic understanding. Human sciences research actively contributes to creating and sustaining a prosperous and creative society with a well-educated population and an engaged citizenry.

A key question that SSHRC must address is: “How can the humanities and social sciences ensure that technology and global change truly serve the common good and that our social organization gives us the means to pursue both prosperity and quality of life?” As Council members, we have a duty to ask whether SSHRC in its present form has the right structures, programs and responsive agility to meet the dramatically changing needs of both researchers and society.

A new spirit is taking hold: one more at ease with our linguistic duality, our diversity, our pluralistic society, indeed with the whole of the experiment we have taken so much further than any nation in the world. From this new and easier sense of self flows the exciting possibility of Canadians working together as never before.

Paul Martin, *Making History: The Politics of Achievement*, April 2003

In the academic world of the 1970s, the role of a university professor working in the human sciences was to teach and write books. Nobody observed, or foresaw, that a huge part of the job would be to get grants, find money for graduate students, stimulate discussions with external audiences, participate in national research teams or to work with other disciplines. Faculty certainly did not see sponsored research as a *sine qua non*.

By contrast, in the academic world of the 21st century, the responsibilities of university faculty extend well beyond students and postsecondary institutions. They are faced with new pressures. Two fundamental questions they must address are: “What difference does human science research make? Are the human sciences organized and

equipped to help our social structures innovate in tandem with technology in order to create a society that is successful in all its dimensions?”

The role of researchers is not only to develop knowledge, although this is very important in and of itself. They must become far more proficient at moving the knowledge from research to action and, in the process, at linking up with a broad range of researchers and stakeholder-partners across the country. However big the challenges, researchers have to add new and different connections to those they have already built.

At the same time, SSHRC must revisit its own role and responsibilities. For 25 years, the Council has focused on its granting function and on researchers and students as its primary, if not sole, clients. It must now take a much larger view and examine its place in a complex system that includes other organizations that fund research, students, universities, scholarly and professional associations, governments, business enterprises, and community and other voluntary, non-governmental organizations.

To use a cliché, what does it mean for us, as Canadians, to live in a “knowledge society?” And what does it mean for SSHRC to be a federal public institution serving the collective interest?

In this context, we ask stakeholders from all quarters to give us their input on and suggestions for what must be SSHRC’s role and responsibilities—as well as their own—in helping this knowledge society take shape.

Our dream is for this consultation to be at once visionary and pragmatic. There are two things, however, that the Council will not put on the table for negotiation. First: SSHRC, however transformed, will continue to support research excellence—from the most foundational to the most applied—as assessed through a competitive, peer-review process. Second: a transformed SSHRC will continue to provide a home for all scholars across the full range of social sciences and humanities disciplines.

Council hopes this framework document will spark a structured discussion around specific challenges and options that will lead to some basic agreements on the central role of human sciences research in this century and on how to heighten its excellence and impact.

SSHRC has made some real headway in Ottawa over the past several years. In fact, excluding the Canada Research Chairs Program, our budget has nearly doubled over the last five years, increasing from \$99 million in 1995-96 to \$197 million in 2003-04.

We all agree that there is a need for significantly more investment in social sciences and humanities research. With a bold plan and strong consensus across the country, the Government of Canada will continue to substantially increase its support for social sciences and humanities research. That said, there will never be unlimited money available for this or any other kind of research. In other words, SSHRC cannot be all things to all people. We will need everyone’s help to make wise choices.

Thank you in advance for your personal contribution and commitment.

Sincerely,



Marc Renaud, President, SSHRC on behalf of:

Marcel Boyer, Département de sciences économiques, Université de Montréal

Tim Brodhead, President and Chief Executive Officer, The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, Montréal

Sean Caulfield, Canada Research Chair in Printmaking, University of Alberta, Edmonton

Richard Cloutier, École de psychologie, Université Laval

Jean-Douglas Comeau, Directeur, Écoles d'immersion, Université Sainte-Anne

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Vianne Timmons, Vice-President, Academic Development, University of Prince Edward Island

Catherine Wilson, Department of Philosophy, The University of British Columbia

THE CONSULTATION PROCESS: FEBRUARY-OCTOBER 2004

We will carry out the consultation process in several phases, starting in February 2004 with a "campus dialogue" at Canadian universities. Here are some key dates:

January	Meeting in Toronto of SSHRC campus representatives
February-April	Consultation on university campuses and with partners
March	National meeting of heads of scholarly associations
April	Meeting of holders of Canada Research Chairs
May	Consultation reports to SSHRC by universities and partners
June	Open meetings at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences and ACFAS to review consultation outcomes
October	Final report and recommendations to SSHRC Council

In addition, SSHRC will organize face-to-face or electronic meetings with the public, para-public, voluntary, business and media sectors, as well as with think tanks. We are in the early stages of planning. For instance, we are also considering one or a series of roundtables with non-academic organizations that have a mandate to conduct social, economic and/or cultural research and that have demonstrated broad influence. Suggestions concerning these or other meetings are welcome.

Check our Web site (www.sshrc.ca) regularly for contact information, for a list of events and updates, and for background papers that we are preparing as complements to the Consultation Framework Document and its annexes.

At all times, individual comments can be sent directly to president@sshrc.ca

A National Partnership for a National Consultation

SSHRC is pleased to be joined in these consultations by partners with invaluable perspectives on social sciences and humanities research in Canada. Their active engagement, along with that of our individual university partners, makes this a truly national undertaking.

Each partner has offered a public statement of support for these consultations and outlined their own involvement in the process (see pages 23-26).

Association of Universities
and Colleges of Canada



Association des universités
et collèges du Canada



Canadian Federation for the
Humanities and Social Sciences
Fédération canadienne
des sciences humaines



Canadian Association
for Graduate Studies

Association canadienne
pour les études supérieures



Association francophone
pour le savoir

Acfas

Introduction

Canada is blessed with an impressive and growing cadre of researchers and scholars in the human sciences.¹ Evidence of this fact includes rising student enrolments in those disciplines, the high quality of the research proposals internationally peer reviewed each year for SSHRC grant competitions, and an increasing research appetite that SSHRC just cannot fill. According to a Canadian study recently cited in the U.K., Canada ranked third in the world, after the US and Britain, in absolute number of research publications.²

The purpose of the present document is to inform an intensive reflection and consultation process about the future of SSHRC as the primary federal funding agency for the human sciences.

In this context, the document discusses the changing circumstances, current context and challenges for human sciences research in Canada. It describes and assesses the related pressures and challenges that are driving SSHRC to transform itself from a granting to a “knowledge” council. The document proposes a guiding vision for a new council and its core values, then presents specific ideas and suggestions for programs, approaches and structures. Finally, the paper concludes by suggesting a series of questions to spark further discussion and input from all interested stakeholders.

By transforming itself into a knowledge agency, SSHRC can help Canada break the “knowledge barrier” by renewing human sciences research.

When the first plane broke the sound barrier in 1947, scientists learned something surprising: the controls didn’t work as expected. Flying faster than the speed of sound required new understanding, a new approach to aerodynamic design and controls. Failure to adjust would risk loss of control and endanger pilots’ lives.

Today, the exponential rate of technological, political and cultural change is driving society at incredible speed towards a promising but daunting future. Major upheavals in the wake of globalization, terrorism and new technologies pose a challenging human dilemma: do existing social arrangements still work? How can we make sense of clashing traditions and world views?

These are questions for the humanities and social sciences to help answer.

SSHRC: One Part of a Larger System

With a mandate and funding from Parliament as an arm's-length granting council, SSHRC has been a mainstay of support for university-based research for the past 25 years. Its grant and scholarship programs have helped produce a wealth of good research, research expertise and innovation. With the multitude of changes occurring—in the world, in the research environment and in universities—SSHRC's traditional support mechanisms remain necessary, but are no longer sufficient.

To answer the question of what would be both necessary and sufficient, we must engage the issues from a systems perspective that takes into account the multiple players and stakeholders who are concerned with various dimensions of knowledge creation and use. SSHRC is one part, albeit an important one, of a much larger system. The funding of research cannot be separated from the rethinking of the roles of universities or from debates about how Canada can best benefit from more emphasis on research as it strives to improve society in a world that is much different from 25 years ago. In this context, SSHRC has a huge, heretofore untapped, potential to intensify connections among people, research, and the sharing and application of knowledge.

New world, new needs

Globalization and the knowledge economy, coupled with rapid and powerful technological change, are shaking the very foundations of society, culture and family. Numerous world leaders, including several Nobel laureates, argue that the explosive growth in knowledge and technology is profoundly

changing the economic, social and cultural fabric of our societies, locally and globally. They assert that problems that lie ahead are socio-cultural more than anything else. September 11, 2001 has taught us that the only lasting “antidote” to terrorism is a continually renewed understanding of the complex world in which we live. These events have re-emphasized fundamental questions that have always been at the heart of the human sciences: What makes a vibrant civil society where people trust each other? What allows institutions to adapt well? How can global citizenship and tolerance become entrenched in human values everywhere? Under what circumstances do cultural differences enrich societies rather than pulling them apart?

From the computers on our desks to the light weapons used by terrorists, techno-logical change is racing ahead, leaving our social institutions and policies far behind. We are in dire need of advanced social scientific knowledge to manage our affairs in an increasingly complex and unpredictable world, and SSHRC plays a vital role in fulfilling this need in Canada.

Thomas Homer-Dixon, SSHRC Annual Report, 2002

It is no coincidence that 2003's “Most Newsworthy” lists highlight not bio-tech breakthroughs, but principally social innovations such as court-sanctioned same-sex marriage, reform of cannabis laws, reconstruction of so-called failed states, and so on.

Rapidly evolving circumstances increase pressure on the research community to build new knowledge to help Canadians understand and move to action, on universities to adapt their incentive systems, on policy makers to develop effective receptor capacities for new knowledge; and on

SSHRC, as the primary federal funder of human sciences research, to influence how research is understood and carried out.

A new university landscape

These and other developments are pushing universities to rethink their role in society. They cannot be “ivory towers,” disengaged from their community or the knowledge economy. They are called upon to be at the heart of both. As public trusts, universities are wrestling with the following questions:

- How to link scholarship with human needs, while treading the fine line between being too much a part “of the activities of the world” and being too “aloof” from them?
- How to meet government and public demands for accountability while preserving academic freedom and the primacy of intellectual curiosity as the mainstay of research?
- How to ensure that research enriches the education environment and education practice?
- How to strike the right balance, for faculty members, among teaching, research and service?
- How to train students through research for careers that are most often outside academe?
- How to make sure Canada’s entire postsecondary system (small, medium and large universities plus colleges) functions cohesively and offers equality of opportunity for Canadians?
- How to ensure that career incentive structures appropriately recognize new kinds of faculty contributions, including service to the broader society?
- How to help surrounding communities thrive and prosper?

Added to this situation are several new trends:

- an unprecedented wave of faculty retirements—one-third of approximately 35,000 full-time professors will leave over the next decade;
- rising student enrolments and pressures on universities to expand the total number of faculty in a highly competitive market;
- pressures on younger academics and their different expectations about the proper balance between teaching and research, and between work and family.

In sum, universities have to rethink their “contract” with society and how they organize themselves as corporate entities and institutions of higher learning.

A new research environment

In the past five years, the environment for research in Canada has dramatically altered as a result of renewed investments and the establishment of significant new funding initiatives by the federal government. In roughly chronological order, these measures include:

- establishment of the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI);
- consolidation of the Networks of Centres of Excellence (NCE) program;
- restoration of the pre-Program Review base budgets of all three federal granting agencies;³
- creation of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR);
- launch of the Initiative on the New Economy, developed and administered by SSHRC;
- launch of the Canada Research Chairs Program;
- new funding committed to support the indirect costs of research; and
- launch of the new Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) program.

At the same time, the nature as well as the culture of research and research training is transforming:

- There is an explosion of research activity across all university departments and outside the university walls (e.g., planning bodies, government departments, museums, non-governmental, and not-for-profit organizations). At SSHRC, there has been a relentless upswing of demand from growing numbers of university-based researchers,⁴ as well as an overall expansion of the human sciences research community, both within and without postsecondary institutions.⁵
- Team research and networking have become more important aspects of the research enterprise than ever before.
- There is a continuing increase in problem-driven research. More and more disciplines are working together—sometimes in collaboration with partners from the natural and health sciences—to get at the multiple dimensions of these problems. In the process, existing disciplines change and new ones may appear.
- A new collective culture of “research entrepreneurship” is emerging as an important dimension of research activity in Canada. New research data centres have opened on nine Canadian campuses. New collective projects are underway to archive and access research data at the national level. New community-university research partnerships are creating new approaches to social and economic development.
- Sophisticated technology is proving increasingly important, in the humanities and social sciences alike, for accessing material and for manipulating large amounts of information. In addition, leading-edge research in several disciplines is itself shaping, even generating, new technological applications.

In sum, thanks to groundbreaking research, new ways of collaborating, access to new technologies and strong market demand for graduates, the

human sciences in Canada are making inroads that are every bit as exciting, innovative and important as those made by the “hard” sciences.

SSHRC as a Knowledge Agency

SSHRC has addressed these new challenges and trends to the extent possible within the context of its budget, its mandate and competing pressures.

Over the years, SSHRC has become proficient at supporting excellent investigator-driven research funded through rigorous and fair peer-reviewed competitions. SSHRC has also developed new programs, new models of research, new models for partnership, and strategically targeted research initiatives that alter how research is framed and the way it is carried out. For example, the Initiative on the New Economy, the Metropolis Project, Community-University Research Alliances, Major Collaborative Research Initiatives, Research/Creation Grants in the Fine Arts, and the forthcoming program to support research on Aboriginal issues all address complex social and economic issues, and are designed to have impacts outside the walls of universities. These programs forge new connections between researchers and knowledge users, between disciplines, sectors and regions, and offer outstanding new research training opportunities. They have taught us that things can be done differently and bring important new returns, including improved policy formulation and implementation.

These new programs also challenge SSHRC to go beyond current approaches to rethink its mandate to support research, scholarship, and graduate training in the human sciences. We cannot hope to address changing circumstances by tinkering around the edges, modifying a program here and adding a new one there. There are things that SSHRC is just not well equipped to deliver.

Radical change in the rest of the world calls for a willingness to consider radical measures. SSHRC must contemplate major transformations in order to engage the full range of stakeholders and satisfy the nation's growing needs for knowledge and skills.

What we are aiming for is a new council—one that remains in charge of delivering grants awarded through peer review, but one that also directly supports and facilitates the sharing, synthesis and impact of research knowledge. In short, we are aiming for a knowledge agency. We need to work out concretely what it means for the human sciences to contribute to a knowledge society. Everyone has to take stock, both those who produce knowledge and those who rely on it to do their work effectively.

SSHRC's Core Values

For 25 years, SSHRC has been committed to the following core principles:

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE → SSHRC funds excellence in research to international standards as determined by a rigorous, transparent peer-review process that is balanced by region, language, gender, discipline, and university size.

COMPETITIVE FUNDING → SSHRC awards can only be obtained through a competitive process at arm's length from any political or bureaucratic pressures.

INCLUSIVENESS AND OPENNESS → SSHRC offers a home to all fields and types of research within its mandate, from foundational through applied scholarship. SSHRC is committed to the sharing of information and the free marketplace of ideas.

INNOVATIVE CONTINUITY → SSHRC fosters the constant renewal of Canada's research capacity through training and institutional grants.

ACCOUNTABILITY → SSHRC is committed to the good stewardship of public funds and open reporting.

These core values will not change. We must, however, reassess how best to continue delivering on these core values under changed circumstances.

Transformation: Reaching Beyond

Above all, we must make sure that research is transformed into shared knowledge. To address the demand for knowledge, and not just the supply of research, SSHRC's core values must expand to include two others:

INTERACTIVE ENGAGEMENT → The Council systematically supports larger, ongoing linkages and interactions through a mix of partnerships that span a diverse range of researchers, students, fields of activity, institutions, communities, regions, countries, etc.

MAXIMUM KNOWLEDGE IMPACT → The Council works with a range of interested parties to build greater capacity for understanding research and its applicability—and thus for maximizing the impact of knowledge—in government, business and elsewhere, in both the short and long term. As a corollary, the new council invites and takes up challenges for human sciences research that come from the non-academic sectors.

Interactive engagement: national and international

Canada is a will against geography. It has a relatively small population, mostly scattered across more than 5,000 kilometres. It is a federation of ten provinces and three territories, with numerous individual regions, a diverse range of First Nations peoples, two official languages, a multiplicity of cultures, 90 universities, and . . . the

list could go on. It has no centres equivalent to Paris or London that naturally draw the best minds and greatest talents from intellectual, cultural, financial or other circles to meet and interact on a regular basis. It does not have the numerous institutions (academies, think tanks, foundations) the Americans have to move people and ideas around.

The net result for the Canadian human sciences community is that it is hard for people to know each other well, to trust each other and to work together over time and distance. Researchers and students working intensively on a given topic in one part of the country are often unaware of others who are tackling very similar or complementary issues in another part of the country. This is even true within some disciplines, contrary to the common but erroneous assumption that people should and do know each other without any particular effort.

This situation stands in sharp contrast to 20-year-old trends in the natural and bio-medical sciences, where systematic policy and financial support have made it possible for networking, shared material infrastructure, and high impact, widely shared, knowledge-delivery systems to become the norm. For instance, in the 1980s, NSERC

site visits across the country fostered personal linkages, gave a first-hand sense of how disciplines were evolving, and facilitated the development of research clusters around major equipment and facilities. More recently, programs such as the Network of Centres of Excellence (NCE) and the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) have provided additional momentum.

Creating equivalent approaches for the human sciences would dramatically increase their intensity, flexibility and capacity to address wickedly complex issues such as economic equity, wealth creation and redistribution, an increasingly fractured world, racial and ethnic discrimination, environmental sustainability, balancing of work and family, and so on. In many cases, larger and longer-term grants—but not necessarily team grants—will be necessary. There will always be a role for individual scholars. But “individual” does not mean “isolated.”

In fact, not only do human scientists need to network better throughout this country, they also have to connect more and more effectively with researchers in the rest of the world. Canada is affected by many situations, events and discoveries beyond its borders. Canadian researchers must establish an effective presence in the great

CANADIANS WANT MORE THAN NEW TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR FUTURE. THEY WANT KNOWLEDGE AND INNOVATION OF OTHER KINDS, INCLUDING:

- schools, universities and colleges that help young people acquire the digital literacy and cross-cultural fluency that the global knowledge economy demands;
- companies that are competitive internationally, rewarding places to work, and meet high ethical standards;
- a health care system that is innovative, caring and available when people need it;
- governments that plan for the short- and long-term using evidence obtained through research;
- safe neighbourhoods and prosperous communities;
- sustainable development and a pollution-free environment;
- a civil society that reflects their values and diverse heritages.

In short, Canadians want a society where rapid technological and commercial innovation is matched by responsive, compelling and effective social and cultural innovation in order to create not just wealth, but a better quality of life.

research centres of the world and in those international organizations (e.g., UNESCO, WHO, the World Bank, OECD) that make constant use of human science knowledge. Too much of the world's population and too many of the world's resources are at work beyond our borders for us to sit idle in this respect. The issues are often global in scale. We must take a proactive approach to becoming globally connected in research and discovery.

In this day and age, meaningful, intensive and fruitful connections—between researchers and students across disciplines, institutions, communities of all kinds, sectors and international borders—are a *sine qua non* for pushing back the boundaries of knowledge, building understanding and taking informed action.

Maximum knowledge impact

For more than two decades, SSHRC has supported the dissemination of human sciences research findings through traditional vehicles such as conferences and congresses, academic journals, scholarly books and meetings of academic associations. Notwithstanding some changes, SSHRC's approach to supporting these efforts has remained fundamentally the same.

The assumption has been that as long as SSHRC supports excellent researchers and research projects, then "the system"—peer-reviewed journals, scholarly conferences, academic books and textbooks, as well as the mass media, think tanks, and students—will take care of disseminating research results. In other words, many or most of us have taken for granted that the knowledge produced will automatically trickle through to the rest of society.

This assumption does not hold. For example, as important as peer-reviewed journals continue to be, as vehicles for expert discussion, they cannot meet the needs of lay audiences. Similarly, the mass media, driven by time and market pressures, often lack awareness about what is going on in university-based research. By comparison with other countries, Canada is under-developed with respect to the kind of knowledge-brokering capacity supplied elsewhere by a range of think tanks, foundations, governmental councils, national academies and other vehicles.

[O]ur failures in the social realm stem from a failure of understanding based on informed inquiry. We cannot truly achieve the idea of a civil society until we possess the kind of deep, extensive knowledge born of research that would enable us to better understand ourselves, identify our values, define the problems, apply the solutions and construct the prosperous and humane society we all seem to aspire to.

Dr. Martha C. Piper, "Building a Civil Society: A New Role for the Human Sciences," Annual Killam Lecture, October 24, 2002

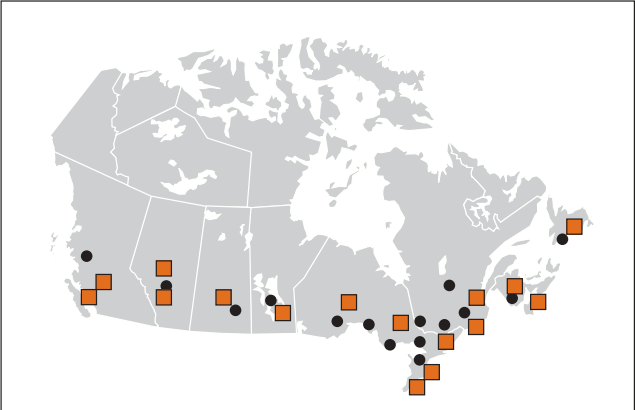
The net result is that the human sciences in Canada are a paradox of ubiquity and invisibility: present everywhere but, for all intents and purposes, visible almost nowhere. If Canadians are to see, understand and value what these disciplines do, what they contribute, then researchers, when they define their research questions, must listen to the concerns of their fellow citizens. Researchers must also use new and different ways to share what they learn. This "two-way street" is a central requirement for enabling thoughtful public discussion, enhancing appreciation of cultural richness, and maintaining a democratic, civil society.

In its present form, SSHRC is not equipped to support the full "knowledge cycle," from processing

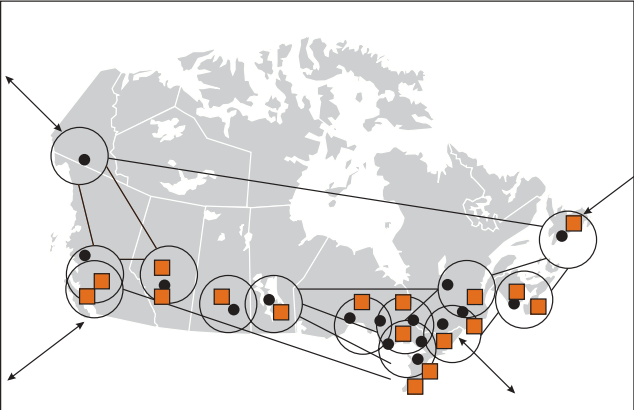
requests for funding, to financing research and graduate study, to assisting knowledge take-up and use. To address the “new world, new needs” reality, SSHRC must concern itself directly with maximizing the impact of knowledge from the human sciences.

Expressed in graphic terms, there is a need for the human sciences to move:

Disconnected



Connected



From . . .

- geographically scattered research effort
- disciplinary silos
- disconnected from users
- fragmented knowledge-building
- isolated research agendas

To . . .

- ongoing connections across geography, institutions, and sectors
- integrated across disciplines
- integrated with decision-making, policy and practice
- synergistic research agendas
- fully connected to the world

Making this shift requires building a comprehensive understanding of the range of players and complex processes involved in using research results to generate broader understanding, more informed decision-making, enhanced wealth creation and better quality of life.

In a thought-provoking essay, “Helping Research in Education to Matter More,”⁶ one prominent Canadian researcher identifies a series of actors and processes through which research can make a difference to how people think and act. He distinguishes between research production (what research gets done, by whom, how and why),

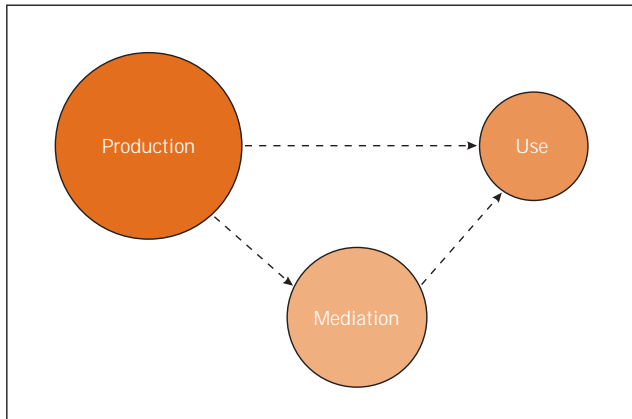
research use (who uses research, why and how) and the mediators that help in knowledge take-up (mass media, think tanks, scientific journals, lobbyists, policy entrepreneurs, Web-based communities, etc.). He emphasizes that connecting the three is far from being a simple or linear process.

As noted above, research does not automatically find its way to those who can apply and benefit from it. The situation calls for the creation of better, more systematic relationships or interfaces among producers and users of research knowledge. This includes circumstances where users would work directly with researchers to

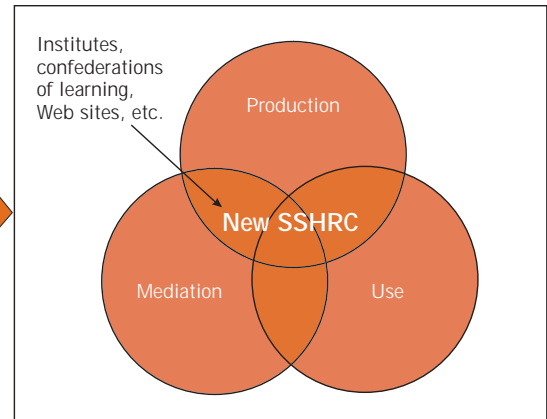
produce knowledge, and where researchers and others, including knowledge mediators, interact regularly either informally or as members of a collaborative institution of some kind.

Again, in graphic form, we have to move:

From happenstance



To permanent interfaces



In this context, what the Canadian human sciences research enterprise needs—and what SSHRC and others can develop—are programs and structures that would for the first time fully support the knowledge cycle by securing a cohesive and sustained movement from research to action and from action back to research. Examples of potential programs and structures are given below.

Avenues for Solutions

There are two distinct sets of issues that need to be examined. First, this consultation is an occasion to discuss the transformation of SSHRC into a knowledge agency and the new structures and approaches that will best enable the human sciences to play their full role in the Canada of the 21st century. Second, we need to consider changes to existing approaches.

Inventing new structures and approaches

We have argued that Canada needs to get better at connecting people and at creating more, and more effective, interfaces among producers, mediators and users of knowledge.

Some of SSHRC's current programs have already begun to do this. In particular, the Community-University Research Alliances (CURA) program has been a spectacularly successful incubator and enabler of applied research projects that address the preoccupations of a wide variety of community organizations (including museums, municipalities, social service organizations, planning bodies, Aboriginal groups).

Several other possibilities exist:

1. CONFEDERATIONS OF LEARNING → groupings of people who share research interests beyond their disciplines, their scholarly associations, their universities or their regions. Such confederations would allow 20 to 30 researchers to interact regularly, for a certain period of time, amongst themselves as well as with various knowledge mediators, under

the guidance of a scientific director. The Canadian Institute for Advanced Research is the best example we have found of how such a confederation might work. For almost two decades, its various programs have assembled, for varying lengths of time, highly talented students and faculty to focus on complex problems—for example, the determinants of health, human development, economic growth, law and society, determinants of successful societies—and all of this in interaction with various “knowledge mediators,” private sector experts, journalists, civil servants, and so on. Confederations of learning would support people’s systematic and recurrent interactions, not their research.

2. MORE FORMAL INSTITUTES → that focus on cross-cutting issues of major and immediate social or political importance (e.g., cities, governance, environment and sustainability, Aboriginal peoples). Institutes would typically provide a “home” to large groups of researchers (200-300) working on a given topic, would be headed by an academic director with some budget for strategic activities and would be supported by an expert council that brings in interested parties, researchers, knowledge mediators and knowledge users. Institutes would be created by SSHRC’s Board for a certain period (e.g., eight years), with explicit “sunset” provisions. SSHRC’s sister agency, CIHR, has adopted this as a model for all its activities. While the extreme diversity of disciplines and interests that fall within SSHRC’s mandate makes such a “wall-to-wall” approach impossible, with its Initiative on the New Economy, the Council is already experimenting with such a model.
3. KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION UNITS → in universities, dedicated to the human sciences. Universities have experimented a lot over the last decade with “tech-transfer” offices in

order to better commercialize the results of natural sciences research. There is no human sciences equivalent to date, only limited efforts to showcase particular researchers or research projects to the media. Yet, the array of “receptors” for human science expertise is huge. Dedicated knowledge mobilization units could look at all active researchers and work to make sure that research expertise is “made use of” in the best possible ways by organizations and groups outside of academia (e.g., school boards, museums, private companies, municipalities, government departments, media). There are several existing models available for consideration, notably Québec’s experimental Centres de Liaison et Transfert and the Université du Québec à Montréal’s Service aux collectivités.

4. WEB-FACILITATED COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE → such as those so successfully developed by the World Bank in its efforts to become a “knowledge bank.” Using new Web-enabled technologies, the bank is able to leverage the knowledge of its employees in some 195 offices around the world and has reduced response time from nine months to as little as two days. SSHRC is already experimenting with such technology in the creation of a Web-enabled knowledge network to increase synergies among the large research teams funded through its Initiative on the New Economy (INE).
5. A CLEARINGHOUSE FOR ADVANCED EXPERTISE → that, in collaboration with the above-mentioned knowledge mobilization units, would operate along the lines, for example, of the Brookings Institution in Washington. Such an organization could undertake as small a task as inviting a few researchers to discuss pressing issues with parliamentarians, or as large a task as staging an electronic multilingual “town hall” debate in CBC’s new facilities in downtown Ottawa.

This clearinghouse could also play the role of a speakers' bureau. But above all, it would be an organization that would facilitate evidence-based decision making.

6. EXCHANGE/MOBILITY PROGRAMS → that will dramatically increase, on the one hand, the number of scholars having direct, current experience of government and policy-making matters, and, on the other hand, the number of civil servants directly familiar with the latest developments in academe. Such programs could, for example, help scholars make arrangements to do postdoctoral work or spend a sabbatical in a federal, provincial or municipal government office, and encourage more civil servants to spend limited periods of time working in universities or colleges. Other programs could support ad hoc travel to working groups and establish internship programs to place graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in non-academic settings that would benefit both the students and the host institutions. The programs could operate as joint ventures between SSHRC and institutions such as the Privy Council, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC) or the Conference Board of Canada.
7. ENRICHED AND CONNECTED POSTSECONDARY TRAINING ENVIRONMENTS → funded competitively for a certain period of time. Presently, SSHRC supports graduate students through an effective but complex system that involves both universities and national assessment committees. Existing procedures focus on selecting the best and brightest applicants, but do not consider the research environment at their chosen institution. Long experience has shown, however, that performance in university departments varies a lot from one place to the next in terms of time to graduate degree completion, drop-out rates and employment prospects after graduation. The American National

Science Foundation has for many years awarded "training grants," by competition, to university departments and centres that offer the most effective training environments. The institutions that obtain such grants are then able to provide scholarships to recruit, retain and connect the best students. This approach acts as a system-wide incentive for improving graduate research training. CIHR is experimenting with a model along similar lines.

8. A HUMAN SCIENCES FOUNDATION → funded through one or more endowments, would focus on increasing Canada's capacity to "broker" or "mobilize" knowledge in the human sciences. Such a foundation would go some distance toward rectifying the current Canadian deficit of broad-spectrum think tanks and other organizations that are able to synthesize new ways of thinking and research breakthroughs for governments, businesses, voluntary sector agencies, media and the general public. The Trudeau Foundation and the Canada Health Services Research Foundation are two examples of independently managed organizations that have started to address these needs. A substantially endowed human sciences foundation with a broad mandate would go a long way towards creating the synergies needed to meet the country's knowledge needs.
9. SCHOLARLY-BASED JOURNALS FOR LAY AUDIENCES → to serve as Canadian equivalents of the New York Review of Books and the Harvard Business Review, both periodicals that render highly specialized knowledge into accessible prose for citizens and stakeholders. Producing this type of publication requires a significant stable of professional writers. Which audiences should be targeted? At least two such publications have been recently launched in Canada, but will market forces alone supply what is needed? Does SSHRC have a role to play here and, if it does, what kind of role?

Improving current programs

For such a knowledge council to become a reality will require new structures and approaches. Inevitably, any discussion of SSHRC’s transformation must also include a review of existing programs and how they can contribute to this larger goal.

Table 1 below summarizes SSHRC’s program structures. It shows that, over the years, SSHRC has evolved programs to accommodate junior and senior researchers, working individually or in teams or networks, in disciplinary or interdisciplinary modes, to answer pressing knowledge needs or to pursue matters of individual curiosity; to support doctoral and master’s students; and to facilitate research dissemination and capacity building. These programs have been managed through straightforward adjudication and administrative processes at a reasonable cost.

In discussing SSHRC’s transformation, we have to place several questions on the table:

1. SMALLER “OPERATING” GRANTS TO MORE PEOPLE? → Some people have repeatedly argued that SSHRC should handle the Standard Research Grants (SRG) program much as NSERC does its Discovery Grants program. The idea is to provide successful applicants with seed money—say \$10,000 to \$15,000 annually for three or more years—on the basis of the researcher’s track record rather than on his or her proposed program of research. Such a “seed funding” approach would allow SSHRC to support up to 60 or even 70 per cent of current applicants—compared to 40 per cent at present—within the existing budgetary envelope. Moreover, this approach would address the perennial problem of the “4A” category—proposals that are recommended by selection committees but not funded owing to SSHRC’s budgetary limitations. It would provide all recommended applicants with stable base funding to support research and research-related activities. Researchers who required additional support would have to apply for additional grants through other competitive programs.

Table 1

<p>THE RESEARCH BASE</p>	<p>TRAINING</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard Research Grants • Major Collaborative Research Initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctoral Fellowships • Postdoctoral Fellowships • Canada Graduate Scholarship program
<p>TARGETED PROGRAMS</p>	<p>RESEARCH COMMUNICATION AND INSTITUTIONAL GRANTS</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initiative on the New Economy • Strategic Themes • Joint Initiatives • Research Development Initiatives • Community-University Research Alliances 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conferences & Congresses • Research and Transfer Journals • SSHRC Institutional Grants • Aid to Small Universities • Aid to Scholarly Publications

2. LARGER RESEARCH GRANTS TO FEWER PEOPLE? → Others have argued almost exactly the opposite: that the Council should support, but with more money, only the most obviously excellent programs of research. This could mean, for instance, that much more money would go into the MCRI (Major Collaborative Research Initiatives) program and less into Standard Research Grants (SRG). This would mirror the direction CIHR has been taking, which has the advantages of internationally competitive levels of funding, extremely favourable training conditions for elite students, and the consolidation of world-class expertise in certain nationally recognized centres.
3. SPECIAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG SCHOLARS? → Sustaining the excellence of human sciences research over time depends directly on the continuous recruitment of new talent. Unlike the Fonds québécois de la recherche sur la nature et les technologies (previously FCAR), SSHRC has no program dedicated to supporting young scholars at the beginning of their careers nor does it have a specific program to provide research training opportunities for undergraduates during the summer months. Likewise, SSHRC has no mentoring programs for young faculty such as the Capacity for Applied and Developmental Research and Evaluation (CADRE) program of the Canadian Health Services Research Foundation. Should focused programs of this sort be introduced to boost the careers of talented new researchers or to encourage young people to plan a research career in the human sciences?
4. PROMOTE GREATER RELEVANCE, SYNERGY AND IMPACT OF STRATEGIC GRANTS? → Under current arrangements, SSHRC's individual strategic grants programs operate in isolation from each other and from the Council's other funding programs. Strategic programs are incubators for:
 - New research intended to inform decision making on issues of importance to society (e.g., literacy, the new economy, the environment, Aboriginal people).
 - Development of new research approaches and tools (e.g., CURA, Research Development Initiatives, Research/Creation Grants in Fine Arts) that change the way research is done.

Priority issues are usually identified by SSHRC's Board, with the grants awarded, typically, to larger, usually multidisciplinary team projects. Some of SSHRC's past joint initiatives have had demonstrable impact on policy making and capacity building. And the number of requests from organizations interested in partnering with SSHRC in this way has been steadily increasing. Should SSHRC invest more in targeted research? What can be done to build more far-reaching synergies that will link researchers funded under these strategic programs with researchers working on complementary topics funded under the Standard Research Grants program? How can SSHRC promote more stakeholder involvement in deciding priority areas for strategic investments?
5. DIFFERENT/NEW SUPPORT FOR RESEARCH COMMUNICATIONS? → Over the last decade, SSHRC's programs for supporting research communications have remained essentially the same, with the same funding allocation. SSHRC provides limited, partial funding that helps successful applicants leverage additional support from other sources. The current system appears to work reasonably well, but may need revisiting to ensure its continuing effectiveness. For example, to what extent do current approaches take proper advantage of new communications technologies? What new approaches are there to organizing conferences and congresses that could increase their effectiveness and

impacts? What, if any, alternative structures or strategies could make the annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences a more effective vehicle for communicating research knowledge? Are the existing scholarly associations the best vehicles for this purpose?

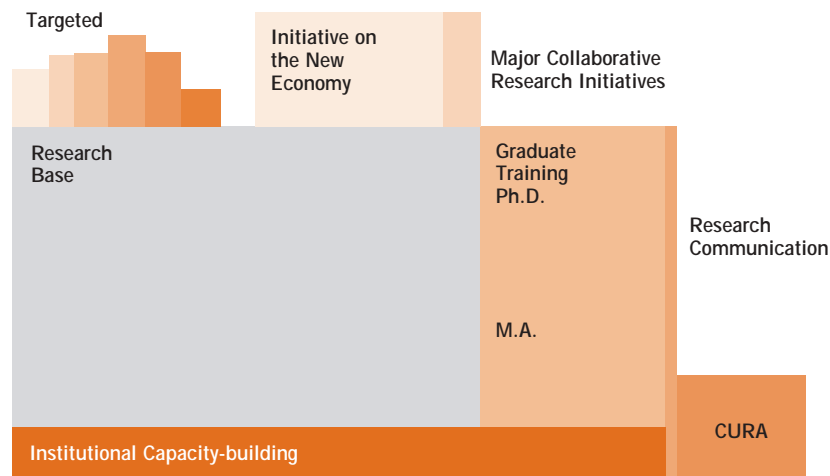
6. NEW OR DIFFERENT SUPPORT TO INSTITUTIONS? → At present, there are two programs that help Canadian postsecondary institutions develop their research capacity: SSHRC Institutional Grants (SIG) and Aid to Small Universities (ASU). SSHRC is the only federal granting council that offers such programs. What, if any, role should such programs continue to play? Should they be targeted to help universities overcome particular local or other barriers? Should they be restructured as “matching” programs that would require an equal contribution from provincial governments? Should they be phased out entirely? Should SSHRC devolve to universities more responsibility for deciding what activities receive funding?
7. DEVELOPMENT OF MORE COLLECTIVE TOOLS FOR RESEARCH? → With the assistance of the Canada Foundation for Innovation, a number of collective tools for human sciences research have been developed

over the last few years, where almost none existed before. The best known are the Research Data Centres that allow decentralized access to Statistics Canada longitudinal survey data, but there are others. Researchers are now asking SSHRC to play a role in developing additional collective tools and to look for new opportunities where such tools could be useful. For example, what about encouraging more “editorial projects” to apply to CFI? What about, in the context of an emerging culture of “secondary data analysis,” SSHRC establishing a pan-Canadian research data archiving system? The key question is: should SSHRC, in partnership with other institutions, do more to promote the development of collective tools and if so, how?

A New, More Flexible Knowledge Council

Over the past 25 years, SSHRC has responded to evolving needs much as a growing family might add to an existing house a room at a time to accommodate new family members. SSHRC

SSHRC Today



SSHRC Tomorrow



started out by offering essentially two funding programs: Standard Research Grants and Doctoral Fellowships. Thereafter, the Council added new programs and subtracted others, so that today it resembles a somewhat gerrymandered building that lacks overall coherence.

Continuing the architectural metaphor, what Canada needs today is a SSHRC that is more organically structured, that is “wired” for interactive engagement and maximum knowledge impact, and that offers adaptable “rooms” that can be readily “renovated” and adapted to accommodate changing circumstances.

The true extent of transformation into a knowledge agency would become apparent only over time. Imagine a new SSHRC five years after the beginning of its expanded mandate: by then, in addition to regular research funding support, the agency could have fostered the development of:

15-20 CONFEDERATIONS OF LEARNING → on topics as diverse as medieval history, science as a human construct, trade within the Americas, cultural diasporas, election reform, evolution of

minority rights, synergies between humanities and social sciences methodologies;

5-8 INSTITUTES → dedicated to, for example, Aboriginal issues, language acquisition, governance and the polity, the future of cities, globalization and free trade, environment and sustainability;

2 OR 3 SCHOLARLY-BASED JOURNALS → on issues of interest to lay audiences in such sectors as government, business, social economy and education;

A PAN-CANADIAN CLEARINGHOUSE → for advanced expertise in the human sciences; and

MORE STABLE FINANCING → for a larger proportion of the human sciences research community.

SSHRC is commissioning “focus” papers to explore in greater detail some of the questions and possibilities outlined above and their implications for all stakeholders. We will publish these papers on SSHRC’s Web site as they become available.

Suggested Questions for Discussion

We would like to hear your views about and thoughtful reactions to the issues presented in this paper. To help spark spirited and creative discussion, we ask that you consider the following questions. You are free—and indeed encouraged—to provide additional comments and feedback on any other issues and questions that you think need to be addressed. Dare to think big!

BASIC GOALS AND VALUES → To what extent does the vision of a knowledge agency presented here—including its basic goals and values—resonate with your own sense of what Canada requires to strengthen human sciences research and training for the challenges of this century? We have suggested that such trends as problem-focused, multidisciplinary approaches, increased and more effective dissemination, mobilization and transfer of knowledge, increased “partnering,” a greater public presence for human sciences researchers and scholars, and knowledge brokering, are all fundamental for the future. How can researchers and their disciplines engage these trends most proactively and productively?

NEW PROGRAMS AND APPROACHES → What advantages and disadvantages do you see in the new adaptive structures that this paper outlines for a transformed SSHRC—the confederations of learning, institutes, knowledge mobilization units, Web-facilitated communities of practice, clearinghouses for advanced expertise, exchange/mobility programs, the human sciences foundation, enhanced training environments and popular scholarly journals? What alternatives can you suggest? What importance do you attach to SSHRC investing in the full value chain of research—from the most upstream to the most downstream, from the most foundational to the most applied, from the most disinterested (knowledge for knowledge’s sake) to the most market- or client-driven, and from knowledge creation to knowledge brokering and mobilization?

IMPROVING CURRENT PROGRAMS → What do you think about funding a greater number of scholars through ongoing but small operating grants? Larger research grants for fewer researchers? Collective research tools? Research communications? Special support for young scholars? What kind? New synergies around strategic grants? How? New or different support for capacity building within institutions?

INCREASING LINKAGES AND KNOWLEDGE FLOWS OUTSIDE UNIVERSITIES → To what extent does the research with which you are familiar involve new kinds of research partners outside the university? What is working well and what isn’t? What kinds of support, financial or otherwise, could make these relationships optimally productive? What groups or institutions should the new knowledge agency partner with? What roles should be taken on by the various players: SSHRC, universities, disciplines, publishers, the voluntary sector, labour, business, think tanks, government organizations and the media? How can SSHRC help develop a greater receptor capacity for human science knowledge? What strategies and approaches could help to get better “mileage” and larger impact from the annual Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences and from the ACFAS congress?

NEXT STEPS → Assuming establishment of a full-spectrum knowledge agency, what new structures should it create first? And what should be the sequence of priorities thereafter?

Getting Your Ideas to Us

If you are working at or formally associated with a university:

Please convey your thoughts concerning the issues raised in this consultation document, as well as any additional issues you may wish to raise, through the SSHRC representative that your university has named to integrate all input from your campus. You can also write to us at president@sshrc.ca.

If you are an individual or group not associated with a university:

Please write to us with your input at president@sshrc.ca or contact SSHRC's Corporate Policy and Planning Division (613) 992-5128 to organize a meeting. Check SSHRC's Web site (www.sshrc.ca) for additional information and other opportunities to participate in the consultation.

How We Will Use Your Input

In summer 2004, SSHRC will undertake a synthesis of all the input received from university administrators, researchers, and students, as well as community organizations, government and all other institutions that look to human sciences research to inform their thinking, understanding and decision-making. Check SSHRC's Web site (www.sshrc.ca) for news and reports about transformation developments.

For more information on SSHRC and the human sciences research community, please refer to *Background Facts for the Consultation on SSHRC's Transformation*, available on the SSHRC Web site.



Canadian Federation for the
Humanities and Social Sciences

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January 12, 2004

To the Members of the Humanities and Social Sciences Community:

The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences is pleased to partner with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada in this very important consultation with the community. Through its members – 69 scholarly associations and 71 universities and colleges – the Federation represents over 30,000 researchers, practitioners and students in the human sciences and has advocated on their behalf since the 1940s.

We believe that the transformation of SSHRC, our primary granting agency, is one of the most important moments in the collective history of the human sciences in Canada. Without excellence in the human sciences, we cannot meet the needs of the next generation of Canadians. To achieve excellence we must have both the resources and the structures that will allow us to succeed. The Federation looks forward to working closely with our member associations, SSHRC and other bodies to cultivate an environment that enables research based on qualities of breadth (inclusiveness and flexibility), depth (sophistication and excellence), curiosity (foundational knowledge) and effectiveness (outcomes) – in short, research that makes a difference.

The manner in which the consultation evolves will have a profound impact on our research and pedagogy. This consultation must be transparent and open to the divergent ideas that will likely arise. It must also be inclusive and inviting to all women and men of varying race, ethnicity, disability and sexual orientation. Most of all, though, the consultation must be constructive and focussed on the end goal – effective levels of support via a variety of programs that produce leading-edge research. While the Federation will be consulted throughout the entire process, our specific role will be to lead the consultation with scholarly associations across the humanities and social sciences. This will include a meeting of association presidents in March as well as sessions at Congress. The Federation's work with the community thus complements the SSHRC campus-based consultation and brings a distinctive and important perspective on the overall issue.

From the earliest discussions on the subject the Federation has been committed to two things. First, we strongly advocate that the federal government round out its significant investment in the post-secondary area by increasing the funds allocated to the humanities and social sciences. Second, we recognize that we must develop the structures to ensure that our community can make the most effective contribution to knowledge and culture possible. We have a vital role to play in Canada's future and, as a community, we must discuss how best to fulfil that role in the 21st century.

Yours truly,

Doug O'wram, FRSC
President
Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

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**Breakfast on the Hill
Petit déjeuner sur la colline**
✉ fedcan@fedcan.ca

**Women's Issues Network
Réseau des questions féministes**
✉ win@fedcan.ca



January 22, 2004

To the Members of the Humanities and Social Sciences Community

As the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada embarks on the national consultation phase of its process to transform into a knowledge council, the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada is pleased to support SSHRC's effort to engage a broad array of stakeholders in this important dialogue. Social sciences and humanities researchers make crucial contributions to a prosperous, innovative and caring society. Scholars in the human sciences explore questions of social, cultural, economic and political significance, which give Canadians the critical tools they need to make informed decisions in an era of constant change.

AUCC has consistently recognized the value and impact that this research has in helping Canadians understand and adjust to the changing world around them. Indeed, it was an AUCC member, Dr. Martha Piper, who catalyzed the discussion around the transformation of SSHRC through her 2002 Killam Lecture entitled "Building a Civil Society: A New Role for the Human Sciences". Her widely read speech drew attention to the fact that increased research and scholarship in the social sciences and humanities is essential if we are to build a civil society.

Through this transformation exercise, SSHRC seeks to foster a culture of collaboration and interaction within and across academic disciplines and among researchers, communities and knowledge users, and to become an active player across the full cycle of knowledge. University administrators, as the strategic coordinators of research on their campuses and in affiliated institutions, will play an important role in helping SSHRC to realize these goals. As partners in the consultation process, AUCC members will facilitate innovative and interactive campus dialogues, whereby university researchers, administrators and local communities can discuss and debate the opportunities and challenges of transforming SSHRC into an active promoter of knowledge transfer and a catalyst for relationship-building.

AUCC looks forward to the results of this consultation process and will continue to underscore the importance of a properly funded social sciences and humanities council. We strongly believe that Canada must support and encourage human sciences research as it is vital to our understanding of ourselves, our communities, our country and our place in the world.

Yours sincerely,

Robert J. Giroux
President



Canadian Association
for Graduate Studies

Association canadienne
pour les études supérieures

January 26, 2004

To the Members of the Humanities and Social Science Community:

The Canadian Association for Graduate Studies (CAGS) looks forward to being an interested and active partner in the consultation process to be undertaken by SSHRC as it renews its support for research and scholarship as well as graduate training in the human sciences. As an association dedicated to the growth of knowledge through the development of future generations of researchers, CAGS has followed the national discussion on the transformation of human science research from the moment Martha Piper introduced the concept in her Killam lecture delivered at the annual 2002 CAGS conference until today. We are strongly committed to Canada's national agenda of producing highly qualified scholars and researchers who will move this country's cultural and social agenda forward, today and for years to come.

Carving out a new and dynamic role for the human sciences in Canada will and, CAGS believes, must include a place of priority for the education of graduate students and the training of post-doctoral researchers. We encourage SSHRC to place issues surrounding graduate funding and graduate education centrally in the discussions that lead to its transformation. Among central issues for the future of the human sciences in Canada are various types of graduate student funding, new and innovative graduate training that leads to both cutting edge research and timely completion rates, and modalities for developing graduate student mobility. Our association encourages Canadian universities to engage CAGS members in the SSHRC campus-based consultation process so that we may together create this future in the most meaningful way possible. As an association, we will strongly encourage the involvement of our membership in the consultation process.

We anticipate that SSHRC's consultation and renewal will stimulate a vigorous exchange of views and will lead to innovative ways of undertaking and utilizing research and scholarship in a peer-reviewed and knowledge-based context. To this end, CAGS has supported and continues to support appropriate levels of funding to the human sciences; levels that will permit both research students and researchers alike to help this nation assume social and cultural leadership on a world wide level. We believe the meaningful transformation of SSHRC has the potential to propel Canada forward into assuming such leadership at the highest levels.

Yours sincerely,

John Lennox,
President
Canadian Association for Graduate Studies



Association francophone
pour le savoir

A c f a s

Montréal, 27 janvier 2004

To all ACFAS members in the social sciences and humanities:

The Association francophone pour le savoir is pleased to support the extensive consultations that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council will be conducting with stakeholders in the social sciences and humanities.

For 80 years, ACFAS has been fulfilling its mission of fostering scientific activity, encouraging research and disseminating knowledge. Because it is well aware of the key role research plays in developing our society, ACFAS wishes to contribute to the process and give it added impetus and meaning by backing the SSHRC initiative.

In our view, the results of the consultations will have major impact on the continued existence and development of the knowledge-based society. Accordingly, in a spirit of partnership, ACFAS will make an information forum available to SSHRC during its annual conference.

The discussions and information sharing that are critical to the future of SSHRC will, we hope, focus on the challenges that must be met by all stakeholders in the social sciences and humanities in Canada.

Christine Martel
Directrice générale

Endnotes

1. The expression “human sciences” is used here as sciences humaines is used in French to capture both the social sciences and humanities disciplines. In doing so, we are reclaiming the definition of “science” as a structured way of knowing, rather than limiting it to a particular set of methods such as those used in the “natural sciences.” On this topic, see *Open the Social Sciences: Report of the Gulbenkian Commission on the Restructuring of the Social Sciences*, Stanford University Press, 1996. The term “human sciences” also provides a concise way to refer to all SSHRC-eligible disciplines
2. Godin, Benoit, 2002. *The Social Sciences in Canada: What Can We Learn from Bibliometrics?*. Working paper no. 1, as quoted in *Commission on the Social Sciences: Great Expectation: The Social Sciences in Britain*, March 2003, p.56. This study has been criticized for a number of methodological problems, including that the Social Science Citation Index does not fully capture citations and other indicators for publications in languages other than English. Moreover, it does not capture data on humanities disciplines.
3. In addition to SSHRC, the other two federal granting agencies are the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC) and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the latter of which was preceded by the Medical Research Council of Canada (MRC).
4. SSHRC now supports around 25 per cent of the 18,000 faculty members in human sciences. This is up from 15 per cent five years ago. With increases of 10 to 15 per cent a year in the number of applications to the Standard Research Grants program, SSHRC’s budget cannot fund the increasing number of high quality researchers.
5. With each new program introduced by SSHRC, it has been striking to see applications from whole new groups of academics and diverse clusters of non academics. The Initiative on the New Economy has been a major catalyst for an intensified research culture in business schools and faculties of education. The program in fine arts has enlarged SSHRC’s community to include artist-researchers. Our forthcoming targeted theme on Aboriginal people will similarly enhance research participation. The CURA program has made it possible for a range of research-oriented community organizations to participate, along with university researchers, in the SSHRC-supported research enterprise.
6. Ben Levin, “Helping Research in Education to Matter More,” unpublished paper, August 2003.