

Ottawa to hand off R&D money to businesses, leaving behind discovery-driven research

For immediate release

(Ottawa - April 21, 2015) Today's federal budget represents another missed opportunity to set Canada's science and research right, says the organization representing the country's university and college academic staff.

"When it comes to supporting university-based research, the federal government has an unbalanced approach," said David Robinson, executive director of the Canadian Association of University Teachers. "This budget, by directing new funding to specific industry-related projects, confirms this. The government continues to miss the fact that real innovation and scientific advancements are driven by long-term basic research, not short-term market demands."

The federal government will only invest \$10 million of new money to advance research and innovation in 2015/16. The bulk of new spending comes only in 2017/18 with new investments to the Canada Foundation for Innovation. Most of the investments announced today supporting advanced research will be spent on politically-driven research and targeted initiatives.

"The investments announced both today and in last year's budget are not enough to drive innovation," adds Robinson. "The government's approach to date has failed, even by its own standards."

The federal government announced an extra \$46 million per year to the research granting councils, starting only in 2016/17. Almost all new funding allocated to the research granting councils will be directed to politically-driven research initiatives. Canada continues to fail by international standards in research and development, despite generous corporate subsidies and targeted research funding. Canada now ranks 22nd out of 34 OECD countries for business investments in R&D, down from 16th in 2006.

Robinson concluded, "Canadians deserve a new direction in science policy, one that supports the basic research that benefits us all."

The Canadian Association of University Teachers is the national voice of 68,000 academic and general staff at more than 120 universities and colleges in the country.

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