

**Statement of endorsement and support for the report of the Advisory Panel  
on Federal Support for Fundamental Science.**

**April 28, 2017**

The Maple League of Universities would like to thank the Advisory Panel on Federal Support for Fundamental Science on the release of its comprehensive report, *Investing in Canada's Future: Strengthening the Foundations of Canadian Research*. The Panel of accomplished Canadians, led by Dr. David Naylor, offers a blueprint for sustained excellence in university-led research across disciplines and throughout the country.

We are pleased with, and strongly support, the Panel's primary recommendation that annual Federal Government spending across the main four research funding agencies be increased from approximately \$3.5 billion to \$4.8 billion to re-balance federal research funding towards investigator-driven research projects across the full diversity of disciplines and areas. We also support the Panel's recommendation that this re-balancing of federal funding should be maintained going forward. We are pleased that many of the Panel's recommendations speak to better coordination of efforts, processes, and programming across the major Federal funding agencies.

The Advisory Panel's recommendations place a strong emphasis on supporting early career researchers, and call attention to early-mid-career researchers who are frequently vulnerable in the current federal research funding system. The report emphasizes the need for greater diversity and equity in the federal funding of fundamental research, particularly with respect to gender and career stage. It also raises the need for much greater attention to Indigenous research. The Panel notes concerns with unconscious bias in peer review, which we would argue disproportionately affects research applications from smaller, primarily undergraduate universities. The report recommends steps to address this issue.

In our submission to the Advisory Panel, the Maple League of Universities endorsed the core principle that federal support of fundamental research in Canada should be expected to meet a threshold of research excellence at a national level. We remain assured of the exceptional research occurring within the Maple League Universities and expect that this is occurring at most other small, undergraduate universities in Canada. We strongly urge the Government

to address the Panel's recommendations aimed at recognizing and valuing university research excellence in its diverse forms across the country, as well as ensuring greater diversity and equity in federal research funding decisions.

The Advisory Panel expressed concerns that "the recent erosion of Canada's research competitiveness . . . has been exacerbated by a policy shift in favour of new programs that focus resources on a limited number of individuals and institutions." We would encourage the Government to take actions to ensure that fundamental science in Canada be supported by a level playing field across the country for awarding funding to universities, regardless of their size or location. Further, we strongly support the Panel's call for a much stronger return to smaller, curiosity-driven research that does not require large matching fund commitments, and for major partnership programs (like the Networks of Centres of Excellence) to become more inclusive of diverse fundamental research capabilities across Canada.

Overall, we are very happy with the findings of the Advisory Panel. Our member universities look forward to working with the Government of Canada as it acts upon recommendations from the report to improve the fundamental research enterprise in universities of all sizes and in all parts of Canada.

Ray Ivany, President, Acadia University  
Michael Goldbloom, Principal, Bishop's University  
Robert Campbell, President, Mount Allison University  
Kent MacDonald, President, St. Francis Xavier University