



Canadian Federation for the
Humanities and Social Sciences

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Hon. Tony Clement
Minister of Industry
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dear Minister Clement,

The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences strongly supports promoting research excellence. The appointment of 19 Canada Excellence Research Chairs will strengthen Canada's capacity to innovate and compete in targeted areas of science and technology, and will make Canada an even more attractive international destination for research and investment. As a national organization, we are pleased to note the distribution of CERCs across Canada and salute the universities that were successful in this competition.

At the same time, we would be remiss if we did not convey the concerns we are hearing from our broader community about two aspects of these CERCs.

First, it is our firm belief that we can do better in mobilizing world class talent critical to Canada's future. Conspicuously missing from the illustrious list of new Chairs is any obvious human and organizational dimension critical to the implementation of the research priorities in the S&T agenda. Social scientists and humanists in Canada and elsewhere are heavily engaged in leading-edge research that better the lives of Canadians. Their work directly relates to the S&T strategy by focusing on aging, improving health services delivery, adaptation strategies to climate change, and enhanced access by all Canadians to a digital society¹. Social science and humanities researchers are essential partners to finding trans-disciplinary solutions to today's complex issues. Therefore, we strongly endorse the recommendation by the *Ad Hoc Panel on CERC Gender Issues* that "greater emphasis should be placed on ensuring multidisciplinary approaches and consideration should be given to having an "open" category for projects outside of the identified priority areas for the competition".

Second, we believe that the pursuit of excellence in research is, and should be compatible with a strong commitment to diversity. The Canada of 2010 must attract leading edge researchers of diverse backgrounds who reflect our country's changing demographics. We endorse the *Ad Hoc Panel's* recommendation to "...require universities to report on their

¹ I congratulate you for recently launching a consultation on Canada's digital economy. We are assembling some of the best Canadian scholars from several disciplines to provide ideas and suggestions by July 9th.

proactive outreach to potential female candidates...". But we also believe it is important to go further and recognize that meeting the challenge of diversity is partly a question of imagination and design, of recognizing the enormous potential to contribute to this program by casting a wider net in defining the selection criteria and search process. Here, too, we agree with the Panel's recommendations that the "...CERC Program design be changed to create two program evaluation "streams" within the competition process: (i) one for rising stars; and (ii) one for established leaders".

Working with the leadership at Canadian universities, we would be pleased to meet with you to discuss the benefits of rapidly expanding the CERC program and exploring how the program design could better support the government's vision of Canada as a country of competitive and leading edge research.

Again, we congratulate you on promoting a culture of research excellence in Canada, and hope to discuss how we can better connect this culture of excellence in the humanities and social sciences with the Government's research priorities.

Sincerely,



Noreen Golfman
President

c.c. Hon. Minister Goodyear