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International Research Collaborations Tackle the World's Toughest Challenges

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The complex challenges facing society in the 21st century characteristically transcend national boundaries while also calling for multi-dimensional solutions. From poverty and inequality to sustainability and cyber security, such challenges defy simple fixes or cookie-cutter approaches that ignore the local specificity of global issues. For this reason, post-secondary institutions are increasingly collaborating with community organizations, businesses and governments, and at all levels, to develop new insights and effective strategies for enhancing quality of life both locally and globally. One result has been the flourishing of what Canada's Governor General David Johnston calls 'a new diplomacy of knowledge' involving the rich flow of ideas and people, research findings and policy recommendations, around the world for the benefit of individuals, families and communities. Our continued prosperity in Canada depends upon our effective international collaboration in supporting global efforts to make a better future.

One major component of the flourishing international research-based collaborations is the increased mobility of graduate students who leave Canada to contribute internationally or who come to Canada from other countries around the world. Two recent initiatives are the Government of Canada's Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarships (CGS) for doctoral students and the Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships, both of which welcome domestic and foreign applications. Moreover, Banting Fellowships can be held by Canadians at institutions world-wide. These initiatives build upon established federal research agency programs that support international graduate student recruitment and mobility while also adding to their prestige and impact by, for example, including leadership as a criterion for evaluating both achievement and promise.

They are also complemented by the CGS Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplements that help Canadian master's and doctoral students participate in international collaborations through research activities in other countries; in just five years, this program has supported almost 1300 students.

Just as Canada has been increasing support for the international mobility of graduate students, the federal research agencies have been working to enhance and facilitate international partnerships among leading scholars and scientists as well as research partners across the private, public and non-profit sectors. As the federal agency that promotes and supports post-secondary research and training in the study of human thought and behaviour, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) has developed strong working relationships with other national funding organizations in order to increase support for international research collaboration. Last year, SSHRC took a lead role in the development of a proposal to the European Commission to build a Trans-Atlantic Platform (T-AP) to support international research collaboration between Europe and both North and South America. Now under construction, T-AP is a global first, representing an international collaborative effort of key humanities and social science funders on an unprecedented scale. This Platform will enhance the national agencies' ability to fund international collaborative research including that focused on the societal challenges identified in Horizon 2020 - the largest EU Research and Innovation program ever with nearly €80 billion of funding available over seven years (2014 to 2020).

Recent evidence assembled by Budd Hall (Canada) and Rajesh Tandon (India) in the new *Higher Education in the World Report 5: Knowledge, Engagement and Higher Education: Contributing to Social Change* provides further insights into the benefits of international collaboration to addressing societal issues. We are indebted to all the contributors to this report and congratulate them on enhancing our knowledge of how to work together to build prosperous, resilient and just societies in the 21st century. SSHRC's own Imagining Canada's Future initiative has reinforced the importance of collaborative approaches to better understanding and meeting the opportunities and challenges of the coming decades. Canada has a strong reputation for research excellence on the world stage; and what better way to leverage the talent at our post-secondary institutions to build a better world for future generations.