

Liberal Party of Canada  
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Jody Ciufu  
Executive Director  
Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences  
415 - 151 Slater St.  
Ottawa, ON K1P 5H3

Dear Ms. Ciufu,

Enclosed, please find the Liberal Party response to your questionnaire.

For more information on the Liberal Party of Canada's vision for Canada, please take a moment to review our platform online at [www.liberal.ca](http://www.liberal.ca). This document provides details on Liberal goals and priorities.

On behalf of our Leader, Stéphane Dion, and the entire Liberal team, thank you for writing to identify the major concerns of your membership. We appreciate your interest in the Liberal Party's policies as they relate to the issues which affect you.

Sincerely,

Doug Ferguson, President  
Liberal Party of Canada



## **A Liberal Response to the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences**

### ***Question 1***

***Context:*** *The federal granting councils - NSERC, SSHRC and CIHR - are the prime source of ongoing research support for most university-based researchers. Over the years, university research has provided the foundation on which a large portion of our current economy and our standard of living is based. The importance of applied research is self-evident, but international studies also suggest strongly that a nation's basic research is crucial to its strategic position in the world economy and that no nation can free-ride on the world scientific system.*

*International reviews find the granting councils' programs to be effective and well administered, yet their budgets still fall far short of those needed to take advantage of the full research potential of Canada's academic research community.*

*If your party forms the next government, what is your strategy for ensuring that the federal granting councils are funded to the extent that Canada's full university-based research potential, both applied and basic, can be met?*

The Liberal Party values the role of Canada's granting councils, which play an instrumental role in supporting public-sector research in Canada.

A new Liberal government will increase the annual funding levels of CIHR and NSERC to \$1.275 billion from their current levels of \$960 million. We will also increase the annual funding level of SSHRC to \$450 million from the current level of \$320 million.

### ***Question 2***

***Context:*** *The Government of Canada is currently supporting various national scientific facilities, which have significant economic and scientific impact on Canadians and which greatly contribute to Canada's prestige in international science. Yet, at the present time, the Government appears to have no overall policy for the long-term funding, maintenance, and decommissioning of these facilities, or the establishment of new ones.*

*If your party forms the next government, what sort of national policy will be put in place for the establishment, long term funding, and management of large-scale scientific facilities?*

The Liberal Party agrees that long term funding for research facilities is important. That is why a new Liberal government will be putting forward long term funding in all sectors of research development and innovation to form a comprehensive plan. We also understand that funding the facilities themselves is an issue that should be at the forefront of any long term policy.

### ***Question 3***

***Context:*** *The Science and Technology Strategy released in 2007 is the primary policy document driving federal spending on issues relating to science and technology research in*

*Canada. The humanities and social sciences are largely absent from the document; yet, the strategy itself could not exist without the underpinning of various human science disciplines. Indeed, as society becomes more multifaceted and more sophisticated, it will require multidisciplinary communities of scholars to advance knowledge and to solve the complex problems shared around the globe.*

*If your party forms the next government, will you commit to formulating funding policies for post-secondary research that encompasses the broad spectrum of science, including the humanities and social sciences?*

A Liberal government will increase support for the indirect costs of university-based research to \$500 million a year, which at full implementation will represent a more than 50 per cent increase over current levels.

For researchers and graduate students, a Liberal government will increase the budgets of the three granting councils by 34 per cent over four years. Support for the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) will both increase to \$1.275 billion a year from the current levels of \$960 million. Funding for the Social Sciences and Humanities Council (SSHRC) will be increased to \$450 million a year from the current level of \$320 million.

We will also create an Interdisciplinary Sustainability Fund of \$100 million. This Fund will be available to scientists, researchers and graduate students for projects that reach beyond the barriers of their discipline. Interdisciplinary research is the way of the future. It is how we will address complex scientific challenges – like adaptation to the climate change crisis – that affect our economy and our society.

A Liberal government will also extend the tax credit for research and development through the Scientific Research and Experimental Development Tax (SR&ED) Program, so that 25 per cent of SR&ED tax credits received will be refundable. This means that all innovative companies in Canada will be rewarded, not just those that are already making a profit and paying taxes in the short term.

#### ***Question 4***

***Context:*** *A significant amount of Canada's scientific research effort is currently based at federally-funded laboratories. The Government of Canada's 2007 Science and Technology Strategy initiated a process of developing alternative management arrangements for non-regulatory federal laboratories.*

*If your party forms the next government, what role will non-regulatory federal laboratories play in Canada's science and technology effort?*

The Liberal Party wants Canada to be an international leader in research and for that we cannot exclude any laboratories providing serious research data.

### *Question 5*

***Context:*** *The Office of the National Science Advisor was terminated in March, 2008, and the government now refers questions on scientific matters to the Science, Technology and Innovation Council (STIC), which was established as an element of the government's 2007 Science and Technology Strategy. STIC does not have a mandate to initiate studies or reviews on its own, nor does it usually provide advice to the government in a publicly accessible format. This way of operating limits the effectiveness of the strategy by restricting the input of the broader research community and limiting the independence of the committee to seek the wide range of perspectives needed for a strong, innovative Canada.*

***If your party forms the next government, will you commit to expanding the mandate and independence of the Science, Technology and Innovation Council to consult the research community, report publicly, and provide independent advice directly to the highest levels of government on major science and technology issues?***

The Liberal Party respects the advices and opinions of the scientific community and has no intention of muzzling any scientists. That is why we are open to any suggestions the Science, Technology and Innovation Council can have related to subjects in which it has expertise. The Council will always find an attentive ear to what they have to say in a Liberal government.