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Budget 2017: Commitment to science, but no new funding for fundamental research

(Ottawa, Ontario) March 23, 2017 — The Canadian Consortium for Research (CCR) supports the government's continued commitment to fundamental science via the science review and chief science advisor, but was disappointed that this budget failed to build on the government's initial investments in fundamental science by not providing any new funding for the granting councils. The CCR has called on the government to increase, in an equitable manner, the base budgets for the granting councils by 5% per year for each of the next 3 years so as to restore fundamental research funding to 2007 levels when adjusted for inflation.

The CCR was pleased to see the government's commitment to creating the Chief Science Advisor and accompanying office. It was also pleased to see the government's acknowledgement of Canada's Fundamental Science Review; the CCR offered its input to the panel overseeing the Review, and eagerly awaits the report and subsequent changes that will arise.

The budget included support for students in the form of new investments for Indigenous students pursuing post-secondary education. While it also expanded eligibility for the Canada Student Grants program to more part-time students and those with dependent children beginning in 2018-19, it neglected to expand the eligibility criteria to include graduate students.

"Science advances and innovations happen when students and researchers from all disciplines and sectors across the health, social and natural sciences, are supported in fundamental research, graduate scholarship, and career development opportunities. Although disappointed to see no new funding to the base budgets of the granting councils, we await the report from the Fundamental Science Review, as well as the appointment of the Chief Science Advisor," says Canadian Consortium for Research Chair, Dr. Lisa Votta-Bleeker. "The CCR will welcome the opportunity to work with the government on moving these files forward."

The CCR is the largest advocacy coalition in Canada, focusing on research funding in all disciplines and support for post-secondary education. CCR includes 20 organizations that represent more than 50,000 researchers and 650,000 students across disciplines.

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