



## Competing to Win: Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance

December 8, 2006

The Report of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance has some sections relevant to psychology. These include science, granting councils, support for students, support for university infrastructure, a national mental health strategy and a mental health commission. These are all points supported by CPA.

The Association was represented through our membership on four consortia; the Canadian Consortium for Research (CCR), the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada (HSSF), the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) and the Chronic Disease Prevention Alliance of Canada (CDPAC).

The highlights are presented below beginning with science, education and training followed by practice.

Based on the content of the Report and the recommendations, many of the issues important to psychology and CPA were addressed. Now we have to see what action the Federal Government will take.

The Report can be found at:

[http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/committee/391/fina/reports/rp2577724/391\\_FINA\\_Rpt08\\_PDF/391\\_FINA\\_Rpt08-e.pdf](http://cmte.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/committee/391/fina/reports/rp2577724/391_FINA_Rpt08_PDF/391_FINA_Rpt08-e.pdf)

### SCIENCE, EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Here are some highlights of the Finance Committee pre-budget consultation report. The Canadian Consortium for Research is cited three times.

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Association for Graduate Studies, among others, recommended that funding of the three federal granting councils — the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC), the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) — continue to increase significantly. The Canadian Consortium for Research noted that increases to the budgets of the federal granting councils at or below the rate of inflation will not allow Canada to keep pace with competitors.

The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences advocated increased funding for

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the federal granting councils by amounts exceeding the rate of inflation. The NSERC argued that it requires more funding to realize fully the benefits of Canada's existing human and infrastructure resources for research, and believed that, by 2009-2010, an additional \$400 million per year in funding will be required. The National Council for Graduate Studies urged funding increases of \$110 million for the NSERC and of \$75 million for the CIHR in 2007-2008.

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Moreover, the Canadian Consortium for Research told the Committee that the majority of research funding from federal programs is allocated to the natural, engineering and health sciences rather than the humanities and social sciences. The Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences informed us that nearly 90% of the almost \$5 billion in direct federal investment in university research is allocated to the natural, engineering and health sciences.

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A number of witnesses emphasized the need for enhanced federal transfers to the provinces. The Canadian Alliance of Student Associations, the Canadian Consortium for Research, the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and the Social Sciences, the College Student Alliance, the National Council for Graduate Studies and the Ontario Undergraduate Student Alliance, among others, argued for increased levels of transfers for post-secondary education through a dedicated fund; other witnesses advocated increased federal transfers to the provinces to meet other social objectives.

Some recommendations relating to post secondary education and research (note there are others relating to scholarships and student funding not included in my excerpt):

### **Recommendation 7**

The federal government — in conjunction with the provincial/territorial governments and such stakeholders as educational institutions, student associations, employers and groups representing employees — review the full range of federal measures that support students, educational institutions and their physical infrastructure, employees and employers engaged in post-secondary education and training in Canada. This review should be undertaken with a view to ensuring that the measures are coordinated in a manner that maximizes outcomes for Canadians.

Moreover, on a priority basis and bearing in mind the review of federal measures that support post-secondary education and training, the government should — with the aim of eliminating economic barriers to post-secondary education — provide direct funding assistance to postsecondary students through a comprehensive system of needs-based grants and loans. These grants and loans should be available to students enrolled in university, college and qualified training programs. As well, the province of Quebec should be permitted to opt out of participation in this system of needs-based grants and loans, with full compensation. This system should be developed and funded no later than 31 August 2007.

Finally, the government should extend the mandate of the Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation and expand the Canada Access Grants program to finance the cost of tuition for all years of undergraduate education. The province of Quebec should be permitted to opt out of participation, with full compensation.

The Committee believes that greater transparency and accountability must exist with respect to the manner in which post-secondary education funds are spent. We feel that a separate education transfer is needed and that guidelines, principles, responsibilities and accountabilities for the federal and provincial/territorial governments would help to meet the intended goals. From this perspective, and bearing in mind the Minister of Finance's comments to us on 23 November 2006 about stable and predictable funding for post-secondary education and training, the Committee recommends that:

### **Recommendation 8**

The federal government, once a long-term strategy for federal support of post-secondary education and training has been concluded among the federal and provincial/territorial governments, divide the Canada Social Transfer into a post-secondary education transfer and a social assistance and services transfer.

Once the Canada Post-Secondary Education Transfer has been created, the government should introduce guidelines, principles, responsibilities and accountabilities with respect to post-secondary education.

### **Recommendation 28**

The federal government increased its support to research through all federal granting councils and research agencies and ensure that the indirect costs of research are funded at a minimum rate of 40% for every dollar of federally sponsored research. As well, the government should increase the base budget of the Canadian Institutes of Health Research by \$350 million over three years.

The government should ensure that the federal granting councils and research agencies consider the concerns of smaller universities and colleges when disbursing funds, with a view to ensuring that they do not face discrimination. Moreover, institutions in all regions of Canada should have meaningful access to funds, and the role that could be played by colleges — particularly with respect to applied research — should be recognized through the allocation of an appropriate share of research funds to them. The feasibility of Canada Research Chairs for colleges in Canada's northern territories should also be considered.

The summary on science, education and training was prepared by:

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## PRACTICE

The Report discusses a number of issues germane to psychological practice which include health human resources. There is a section dedicated to mental health which appears on page 16 of the report and Recommendation 2 on page 20 explicitly recommends the development of a national strategy for mental health and a commission. The Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health (CAMIMH) is quoted a number of times. CAMIMH was represented by CAMIMH National Executive Director, Phil Upshall and CAMIMH Past Chair and CPA Executive Director, John Service.

### Mental Health

The Committee was informed that 20% of Canadians will experience an episode of mental illness in their lifetime and that 3% of Canadians live with a serious, persistent mental illness. Witnesses also noted that the direct and indirect costs of mental illness and addiction in Canada are approximately \$33 billion per year. In May 2006, the Standing Senate Committee on Social Affairs, Science and Technology released its report, entitled *Out of the Shadows at Last: Transforming Mental Health, Mental Illness and Addictions Services in Canada*, which received support from a number of witnesses.

Noting that Canada is the only Group of Eight (G8) country without a national mental health strategy, the Canadian Mental Health Association, the Canadian Mental Health Association — Central Region and the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health were among the witnesses that supported the establishment of a mental health commission to develop and implement a pan-Canadian strategy for mental health and mental illness, as recommended in the Senate report. In addition, the British Columbia Alliance for Accountable Mental Health and Addictions Services encouraged a federal investment of \$5.36 billion over 10 years to establish a mental health transition fund, comprising a mental health housing initiative, community services and other strategic investments. Some witnesses supported certain elements of this proposal. Other suggestions included the development of an anti-stigma campaign and initiatives to promote mental health literacy.

To facilitate a better understanding of the incidence and burden of mental illness in Canada, the Canadian Alliance on Mental Illness and Mental Health recommended an annual federal investment of \$25 million for research into clinical, health services and population health aspects of mental health, mental illness and addiction.

The Alliance to End Homelessness urged amendments to the *Canada Health Act* to uphold the portability clause to include urgent, out-of-province/territory mental health care provided in a psychiatric hospital or institution.

### Recommendation 2

The federal government, in conjunction with the provincial/territorial governments, help to develop a national mental health strategy. This strategy — which should include the creation of a Canadian

mental health commission — should address the mental health needs of all Canadians, but particularly those who are determined to be at higher risk. The strategy should be completed no later than 31 October 2007.

#### **FOLLOW UP TO THE REPORT**

The Report makes recommendations to the Government and Parliament regarding the 2007 Federal Budget. If you want to help, contact the Prime Minister and your local Member of Parliament in support of any of the recommendations.

Canadian Psychological Association  
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