Brief to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research

Study of the Government of Canada's Graduate and Post-doctoral Fellowship Programs.

Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, McGill University

July 2023

Recommendation 1

An increase in the value of federal graduate and post-doctoral fellowships, virtually stagnant since their inception, is desperately needed. Although other funding agencies, such as Québec's Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ), have helped alleviate the lack of funding at the federal level, overall support for graduate students remains inadequate.[5] Graduate students and postdoctoral fellows are key contributors to research in Canada, full-time researchers working on questions highly relevant to Canada's future prosperity. As a recent opinion piece in the Ottawa Citizen from Sarah Laframboise and Senator Stan Kutcher puts it, "People in these positions are knowledge creators, not simply knowledge receivers. They are today's 'emerging experts,' upon whom Canada will rely to create the society of tomorrow."[6]

We echo the other briefs submitted to this Committee: inflation over the last 2 decades, including exceptionally high current levels of inflation, means that funding for graduate students and post-doctoral fellows is sorely insufficient. This has a widely acknowledged negative impact on the productivity and mental health of this population and reduces the competitivity of Canadian universities in attracting top graduate and post-doctoral talent.

As the Bouchard Report acknowledges, despite federal government investment in Budget 2018 ($925 million over five years and $235 million ongoing) to increase Tri-Agency research support, Canada continues to lag behind its peers. The report cites ambitious investments internationally, including the US CHIPS and Science Act ($200 billion over 10 years), Japan's creation of a US$ 87 billion fund to support research and promote economic growth, and the UK's commitment to increase annual investment in research and development to £20 billion by 2024-2025. s t 0 9 . 8 9 (p) 0 8 (m g . 8 . . m . 0 0 2

formal training that they need to compete in our globalized and knowledge-based society, increasingly reliant on a highly-educated and highly-skilled workforce.

McGill's results in the 2022 Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS) provide evidence of the impact of

- Considering only the period of 2011-2021, graduate student enrolment at McGill grew from 7144 in 2011 to 9038 in 2021, a 26.5% increase[14].
- In 2021, 23 243