

To all members of CATTW,

Now available on our website (<http://io.uwinnipeg.ca/~agoldric/CATTW-ACPRTS/CATTWNewindex.html>) is a document in .doc and PDF formats, providing information about the restructuring of SSHRC. I have highlighted the most pertinent issues for our Association.

The restructuring process is being carried out through a series of consultations with academic and research communities across Canada. Many of you will be having information sessions about this process on your own campuses. Universities and scholarly associations are being invited to express their views on the orientation and implementation of new policies.

Many issues of importance to the future of our Association are to be discussed. As the Association President, I will be preparing a written report on the views of our members concerning these issues. I will also be attending a meeting in Ottawa, at the end of March, where I will be reporting the results of the survey of our members.

I need your cooperation. I would appreciate answers to any questions you wish to address. I don't expect an opinion on every question from each of you. I know how busy everybody is, but in order to have a good idea of the needs of the Association, I must have answers from as many of you as possible.

If you can download the .doc version without difficulty, I suggest you answer those questions directly in the document, using a different colour or font, and then e-mail the newly saved file as a .doc attachment back to me. Otherwise, please respond to relevant sections of the read-only PDF document and email your answers to me. My address is--  
[Celine.Beaudet@USherbrooke.ca](mailto:Celine.Beaudet@USherbrooke.ca)

Please send your answers to me before March 15.

I would like to stress the importance of receiving as many answers as possible from you. We live in many places across the country and face different realities that should be reflected in our report.

I will be working on a synthesis with Natasha and Amanda. If anybody wants to help with the final content and the revision of our report to SSHRC, please let me know.

Céline Beaudet  
President, CATTW



# SSHRC Transformation: Consultation Document for Scholarly Associations Prepared by the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences February 2004

## Introduction

**The consultation launched by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, and extended by the Federation to scholarly associations, is being undertaken with a view to changing the way that research in the human sciences is organized, developed and supported.** As the SSHRC document ('From Granting Council to Knowledge Council: Renewing the Social Sciences and Humanities in Canada') outlines, the context for our research and research support is evolving: globalization and the knowledge economy, the changing public role of universities and an altered research environment fuelled by major new government funding initiatives are all having an impact in our work as scholars.

Consequently, this consultation represents an obligation and an opportunity for our community to address not only the future organization of the Council and its programs, but also the future of research in the social sciences and humanities. With this, we must consider the ability of our scholarship to have an effect across the world and throughout our country, in our institutions, disciplines and fields of knowledge, and with our colleagues and students.

While we need to address these larger issues collectively, **it is necessary for every association, as the representative for its discipline or field of study, to put forward a vision of its own research** -- for Canada, for Canada's place in the world, in relation to other fields in the humanities and social sciences, and in relation to students and others who are interested in and benefit from this scholarship.

**We are thus asking every association to consider the broader issues as outlined in the SSHRC document.** To facilitate your consideration, we have summarized the main issues below, along with some specific questions that might assist in your formulating a response. **What is most important is to receive a clear statement from you on the overarching issue, as these responses will be the basis of formulating a collective response by the Federation to be formally presented to SSHRC.**

## I. The SSHRC Proposal

In its discussion document, SSHRC has presented a vision where the values of **interactive engagement** (i.e. breaking down disciplinary barriers, involving policy and cultural communities in research development, increased international collaboration, etc.) and **maximum knowledge impact** (i.e. developing research that is targeted more generally and not necessarily for peer audiences) are suggested to be vital additions to existing values (e.g. excellence, inclusiveness and openness) -- for the Council and for the community. **In this way, SSHRC would transform itself into a knowledge agency that 'supports and facilitates the sharing, synthesis and impact of research knowledge' and would build greater connections between research and its dissemination and use.** 'In this day and age, meaningful, intensive and fruitful connections -- between researchers and students across disciplines, institutions, communities of all kinds, sectors of international borders -- are a sine qua non for pushing back the boundaries of knowledge, building understanding and taking informed action.'

**To what extent does this vision support or hinder the vision and goals held by your association and by researchers in your discipline or field?**

*Within this response, you may wish to address the following questions:*

- a. What is your vision for the future of the social sciences and humanities in Canada?
- b. What is your vision for the future role of SSHRC?

**II. Research Networking and Linkages**

The diagnosis in the SSHRC document is that research in the social sciences and humanities is not adequately linked -- across geography, disciplines and fields, and with those who use or apply the research. To address this issue, a number of new structures and approaches are put forward, including Confederations of Learning (on the model of the Canadian Institute for Advanced Research), more formal institutes (on the model of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research), and web-facilitated communities of practice.

**To what degree do you agree with the diagnosis made and response suggested by SSHRC?**

*Within this response, you may wish to address the following questions:*

- a. How do existing structures, notably the associations and the Federation, serve this function already and how could these issues be better addressed through these existing structures?
- b. Does your association currently include members from outside academe? If so, please specify which sectors? Can or should this participation be increased? How?
- c. Does your association have links – formal or informal – with international associations? If so, how are these links organized and would you like them to be strengthened?

**III. Research Promotion**

The document challenges the academic community, and SSHRC itself, to consider whether existing research communication programs sufficiently disseminate scholarship in Canada. Questions are raised on the efficacy of learned journals, of scholarly associations, of printed books, and of the Congress as means of sharing research results. For example, should new technologies, for journals, books and conferences, be supported instead or what is the best balance between new and traditional means?

**How does your association respond to this challenge?**

*Within this response, you may wish to address the following questions:*

- a. How does your Association promote research in your discipline or field, including to the scholarly community and to the public? How could your Association increase the profile of research in your discipline or field to these audiences?
- b. What tools would you suggest to more widely disseminate research to scholars and students? To interested public audiences? To the public at large?

**IV. SSHRC Programs**

In the document, several questions have been raised related to SSHRC Programs. Some of these are new concepts of support (e.g. smaller operating grants to more people, larger research grants to fewer people, scholarly-based journals for lay audiences), while others raise questions about existing support programs (including for associations, journals, books and conferences, as well as for young scholars).

**What priorities would you place on current and/or proposed SSHRC support programs?**

*Within this response, you may wish to address the following questions:*

- a. Which existing programs at SSHRC are most significant to your Association and discipline or field?
- b. What new programs, including those suggested in the document, would best serve your members' research interests?

## **V. Collaborative Research and Tools**

A significant theme in the SSHRC proposal is a greater emphasis on collaborative research and tools (e.g. confederations of learning, formal institutes, web-facilitated communities of practice, strategic grants, research-data archiving system). These approaches 'would dramatically increase (the human science) intensity, flexibility and capacity to address wickedly complex issues.'

### **Do you agree that more collaborative research will respond to research needs?**

*Within this response, you may wish to address the following questions:*

- a. Within the past 5 years, what has been the relative balance among the members of your Association of: large-grant projects with multiple researchers versus smaller individual grants? Strategic versus general research grants?
- b. Do you consider the research in your association to be disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, interdisciplinary, sub-disciplinary or some combination thereof? Has this categorization changed in recent years? Do you see this categorization changing in the next decade?
- c. How can Associations and the Federation facilitate the development of interdisciplinary and multi-disciplinary research?

## **VI. Student Support and the Next Generation of Scholars**

Implicit in this discussion is the necessity to address research needs for the next generation, including support for graduate students and strengthening scholarship as it is now being produced in innovative ways by new members of the academy.

### **Does the plan outlined by SSHRC address the most important and pressing matters for new scholars in your discipline or field?**

*Within this response, you may wish to address the following questions:*

- a. What new modes of research and research dissemination, if any, are new scholars pursuing that should be reflected in SSHRC organization and programs for the future?
- b. How would you strengthen research training in your field?

## **VII. What general remarks would your Association like to make on the future organization of SSHRC?**

### **Additional Questions**

In addition to the six major issues above, we would appreciate your additional consideration to the following questions, which are useful in the context of this discussion and in the general context in which we are all operating:

- a. What kind of changes can you envision in your own Association structure (e.g. new modes of organization across disciplinary areas, new umbrella organizations, ways of involving new scholars, improved means of promotion and dissemination, etc) that will help create a more robust research environment in the humanities and social sciences in Canada?
- b. What, historically, have been the most significant scholarly contributions from the discipline or field you represent? What are the historical and current contributions from your area in the public arena?
- c. How would you rate the contributions of Canadian scholarship in your discipline or field internationally?
- d. How can SSHRC, the Federation and Associations more successfully promote the value and impact of research in the humanities and social sciences?
- e. How should SSHRC relate, if at all, to the Associations?