

**AUCC Statement on  
the Final Report of the Competition Policy Review Panel  
July 24, 2008**

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada welcomes the final report of the federal government's Competition Policy Review Panel and its recognition of the major contribution of postsecondary education institutions to strengthening Canada's competitiveness.

The panel's report, *Compete to Win*, notes that "having a world-class education and training system should be a top priority for Canada." The panel made the following recommendations on the ways Canada can improve its educational performance to enhance its competitiveness:

- Governments must continue to commit to and invest in education and training;
- Our educational institutions must make choices in order to focus on achieving world-class expertise and pursuing excellence through greater specialization;
- Postsecondary education institutions must collaborate more closely with the business community; and
- More use should be made, where appropriate, of postsecondary co-op programs, because they provide a vital link between the campus and the workplace.

AUCC strongly supports the panel's views that high-quality university education and cutting-edge research are necessary if Canada is to compete in the global economy. Universities are central to the country's success in the years ahead, and Canada's competitive advantage must be in the quality of its talent and research. As one of the largest producers of research in Canada, the university sector is a major contributor to the country's competitive innovation agenda. Universities conduct more than 35 percent of Canada's research, exceeding the OECD average.

Canada's universities are collectively committed to pursuing research excellence across a broad range of disciplines while individually identifying areas in which they can specialize and develop world-class excellence. They have made many strides over the past decade in attracting world-class expertise to Canada. AUCC welcomed the federal government's announcement in the 2008 budget of the Vanier scholarships and the Canada Global Excellence Research Chairs to further universities' ability to attract and retain top research talent.



Innovative and productive business-university partnerships already play an important part in fueling Canada's economy. Universities serve as an important platform for private sector research in Canada. In October, AUCC plans to release *Momentum: the 2008 report on research and knowledge mobilization*, highlighting successful research partnerships that universities have with the private sector, as well as with the not-for-profit sector and governments in Canada and abroad. *Momentum* is AUCC's periodic public report to Canadians on university research and knowledge mobilization.

Universities also have a number of innovative co-op programs and internships that give postsecondary students valuable experience to make a smooth transition to the workforce. In its submission to the federal government on the development of the federal S&T strategy, AUCC called for more incentives for research internships and research-based research co-op placements, and welcomed the announcement in Budget 2007 of a new Industrial R&D Internship program.

AUCC strongly supports the panel's call for more internationalization at Canadian universities, both by increasing opportunities for Canadian students to study abroad and recruiting more international students to Canadian campuses. AUCC has long been a strong proponent of sending more Canadian students on international study and research exchanges and attracting more international students to study in Canada. International experiences are key to providing future young leaders with a global understanding and networks which ultimately enhances Canada's trading and global relations.

In the area of immigration selection and integration, AUCC supports the panel's recommendation to fast-track applications for permanent residency from foreign students who have degrees or diplomas from Canadian institutions. This would assist universities in recruiting top-flight international students to their campuses – a benefit to Canada whether these students choose to return home when they graduate or put their knowledge to work in Canada.

The competition review panel also recommends a possible model for expediting commercialization of intellectual property (IP) developed through university research. AUCC notes that IP policies are unique to each institution and have been tailored to best fit their own environments.

The panel's call for a balanced approach in new copyright legislation is welcome. As both substantial creators and users of copyright works, including those in digital format, Canadian universities recognize the importance of balancing the desire of creators and other rights holders to receive fair remuneration for the use of copyright works and the public interest in maintaining reasonable access to copyright works for purposes such as research, education and the dissemination of knowledge.

Should the government decide to establish a Canadian Competitiveness Council, as recommended by the panel, AUCC would urge the inclusion of members of the university community on such a council, given the vital role that higher education and university research play in Canada's competitiveness in the global economy.

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