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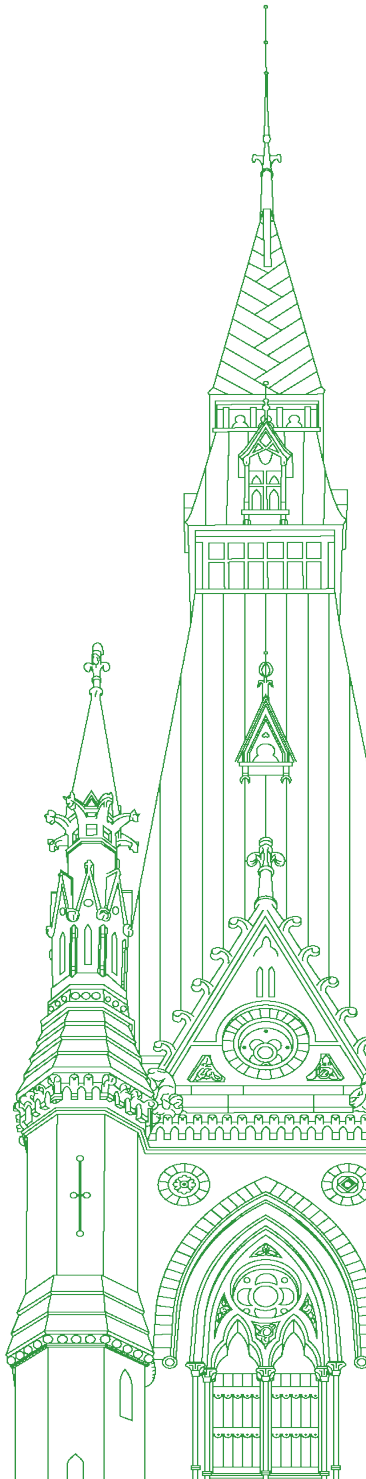

Chair: Salma Zahid

Standing Committee on Science and Research

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● (1105)

[*English*]

The Chair (Salma Zahid (Scarborough Centre—Don Valley East, Lib.)): I call this meeting to order.

Welcome to meeting number 27 of the Standing Committee on Science and Research. The committee is meeting to study governance and accountability of federal science policy and institutions.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the witnesses, as well as the members.

Please wait until I recognize you by name before speaking.

For those participating by video conference, click on the microphone icon to activate your mic, and please mute yourself when you are not speaking.

For those on Zoom, at the bottom of your screen, you can select the appropriate channel for interpretation: floor, English, or French.

I remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair.

I would like to welcome our witnesses for the first panel.

Today, we are joined by Sheila Jasanoff, professor of science and technology studies from Harvard University. She is joining us by video conference.

Welcome.

We are also joined in person by Martin Normand, president and chief executive officer for Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne.

We are joined by video conference by Dugan O'Neil, vice-president for research and innovation from Simon Fraser University.

Welcome to all of the witnesses. Thanks a lot for appearing before the committee.

All of you will have five minutes for your opening remarks, and then we will proceed to the rounds of questioning.

We will start with Professor Jasanoff.

Professor Sheila Jasanoff (Pforzheimer Professor of Science and Technology Studies, Harvard University, As an Individual): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you very much for inviting me to speak to this committee.

Your meeting comes at a crucially important time in the evolution of public support for science. My hope is to contribute insights from some 40 years of studying federal science policy in the U.S., informed by my discipline of science and technology studies, STS.

To begin, in democratic societies, the public has a right to ask that policies for science and innovation are being made for the benefit of the public as a whole. Therefore, in principle, we must have procedures to ensure the accountability of federal science and institutions. The question is not whether such a function should exist, but how it should be institutionalized and implemented.

This is not a new issue. How to hold publicly funded research accountable has been a topic of recurrent debate in the U.S. ever since the 1946 Administrative Procedure Act asked federal agencies to be answerable to the public for their uses of expert evidence.

In this century, the U.S. debate has often centred on the efficacy and integrity of federal science policy in areas of high public concern, such as health, environment and security. Is the government funding research that is reliable, useful, innovative and productive of public benefit? Are the funding policies and the researchers themselves properly answerable to the public?

Three points stand out from these debates that this committee may wish to consider.

First, accountability comes at a cost. A significant fraction of the costs of oversight are passed on to investigators, and they consume time, money and resources that could otherwise be dedicated to research. In my own experience, reporting burdens are continually ratcheted up and seldom relaxed. While the goals are often laudable, one-size-fits-all measures, such as the U.S. National Science Foundation's broader impacts criterion, can be onerous for early career researchers, inconsistently administered and too routinized to serve their original purpose.

Second, transparency can be a double-edged sword. In principle, the public has a right to know what public money is being used for. As Justice Brandeis famously put it, in government, sunshine is the best disinfectant, yet the principle of transparency has always been subject to limits when it comes to scientific data. Most obviously, data that could put vulnerable subjects at risk or violate their privacy should not be in the public domain. Even a presumption of full disclosure can prove detrimental in some contexts, such as public health epidemiology, because it shifts the burden of justifying non-disclosure to the researcher. As U.S. experience illustrates, transparency demands can be politically leveraged to discourage research that might otherwise be of great public benefit.

Transparency also presupposes that those to whom data is being disclosed are qualified to assess what is being shown. This is a risky presumption in the case of highly technical information, for which some level of baseline familiarity is needed to make sense of flaws in the research design or research results. In general, transparency provisions are most effective when the process of disclosure attends to how and by whom the research will be evaluated. Mandated data dumps rarely produce public benefit and may discourage important research from being undertaken. By contrast, well-structured review processes that include a diversity of viewpoints, such as the reviews conducted by the U.S. National Research Council, tend to yield higher-quality results.

Lastly, the committee has been asked to consider the establishment of an independent body or function to ensure the accountability of federal science policies. In my estimation, such centralization would be a mistake. It is reminiscent of the demand in the early years of the Reagan administration to centralize the capacity for risk assessment in the U.S. federal government. An influential National Research Council report concluded that such centralization would impose a conceptual straitjacket on research in diverse fields designed to meet widely varying public purposes.

● (1110)

While the analogy is not perfect, some arguments from that example remain highly relevant today. Science, despite flaws and occasional wrong turns, remains one of the most effective self-correcting human institutions, partly because, as the sociologist Robert Merton pointed out in the 1940s, scientists depend on the reliability of each other's work.

Further, science is not unitary, and criteria for responsible research vary widely across fields. As recent U.S. experience shows, centralized agencies, such as our Office of Management and Budget, are more readily captured by bias and ideology than the decentralized institutions of science, and hence can lose their independence.

In sum, well-designed, open and responsible review processes tailored to specific institutional contexts can do more to ensure—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. Your time is up. Can you please wind up in the next 10 seconds?

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: I'm in my last sentence.

They can do more to ensure good governance and accountability than a centralized audit system that is insensitive to the need for flexibility and evidence-driven course correction in scientific research.

Thank you again for your attention.

The Chair: We will proceed to Mr. Normand.

Please go ahead. You have five minutes for your opening remarks.

[*Translation*]

Martin Normand (President and Chief Executive Officer, Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne): Thank you.

Canada's research excellence has been nurtured in a science and research ecosystem where a wealth of ideas stems from anglophone, francophone and indigenous scientific traditions. Both at home and abroad, the French-speaking scientific community contributes to the growth of Canadian innovation, the progress of communities and the vitality of the Canadian identity.

However, as noted in our report from the summit conference on post-secondary education in francophone minority communities and in a 2021 Acfas report, the science and research ecosystem in francophone minority communities faces complex challenges, structural inequities and precarious conditions. Despite the government's optimism about the granting councils' measures to promote research in French, particularly in its responses concerning scientific research and publication in French and the distribution of funding among post-secondary institutions, the measures taken aren't enough to overcome the ongoing inequities.

To promote an ecosystem where the scientific communities of each official language participate equally, federal science policies must adhere to clear principles of transparency and accountability. An independent body can serve this type of purpose. However, we would like to make it clear that, in terms of science governance and accountability, the Official Languages Act provides all the necessary tools for French-language research to flourish.

Part VII of the act sets out the federal government's commitments and the obligations of its institutions to enhance the vitality of francophone communities, to promote and protect French in Canada and to advance lifelong French-language learning. These commitments are implemented through mechanisms for dialogue and consultation, analysis, evaluation and monitoring, positive measures and reporting. The part VII regulations will also guide these procedures at all stages of government decision-making. The institutions have clear guidelines for a liberal, equitable and restorative consideration of the government's actions to boost research and innovation in the country.

As we told this committee earlier, the federal granting councils must uphold their responsibilities by fulfilling all their obligations under the Official Languages Act. While the act explicitly recognizes the precarious situation of French, this recognition should consistently result in measures to create and disseminate information in French that contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge in any discipline. A number of federal institutions have already brought their activities in line with language obligations. The federal institutions responsible for science policy must follow suit.

In terms of scientific governance, we recommended mandatory francophone representation in research decision-making agencies in our brief to the External Advisory Panel on the Creation and Dissemination of Scientific Information in French. This francophone representation also stems from the Longfield report, which called for the creation of a French-language science office. The external advisory panel's report will hopefully be published at the end of March. Its recommendations will play a key role in modernizing the French-language science and research ecosystem. This study's consideration of the report would help to pinpoint shortcomings in governance, responsibility and reporting with regard to French-language research.

In terms of reporting, the main challenge concerns the collection, distribution and analysis of data on francophone minority communities. The act already provides for analyses, evaluation and monitoring mechanisms and the publication of results and data. By ensuring the full implementation of federal institutions' language obligations, we would have the data needed to closely monitor funding, measure the progress of French-language research and concretely assess its local impact.

The Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages' report entitled “Breaking Down Language Barriers in Health Care”, published a few days ago, provides a concrete example of the current shortcomings and a consistent implementation of the act. A number of recommendations were made to support health care research and training by applying French-language lenses, building data collection capacity and implementing consultation and reporting procedures. The Official Languages Act gives us all the tools that we need. The federal institutions just need to implement it.

● (1115)

That's why we recommend that the federal institutions responsible for implementing science policies in Canada adopt a robust implementation plan for their language obligations under the Official Languages Act.

Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we will proceed to Mr. O'Neil for five minutes.

Dugan O'Neil (Vice-President, Research and Innovation, Simon Fraser University): Good morning.

Thank you, Madam Chair and the committee, for the opportunity to address you today.

Before I begin, I'd like to acknowledge that I'm speaking to you today from the traditional and unceded territory of the Musqueam, Squamish, Tsleil-Waututh and Kwikwetlem nations.

I welcome the chance to speak about the governance and accountability of federal science policy and institutions.

As many of you know, Simon Fraser University is a leading research university based in British Columbia. SFU has more than 35,000 students across three campuses in Burnaby, Surrey and Vancouver, some of Canada's most diverse communities.

For nearly six decades, SFU has participated in Canada's federal research ecosystem through granting councils, national research infrastructure programs, research chairs and collaborative innovation initiatives. It's through this lens that SFU sees first-hand how governance choices affect accountability, risk management and research outcomes.

SFU strongly supports robust parliamentary oversight of science policy. My remarks today focus on two areas where governance design matters, particularly for protecting public trust and maximizing the value of federal research investments.

I will first address the governance of major research and the security of sensitive data.

Canada has invested in world-class research. In the process of their work, Canadian researchers collect particularly sensitive information, including information on sexual orientation or disability status that individuals may not have consented to disclose. Canada's granting agencies already have the capacity to conduct relevant analyses internally and to provide aggregated data in response to committee requests or questions placed on the Order Paper. Additionally, each agency already has specific mechanisms that allow them to evaluate specific risks, legal obligations and the feasibility of appropriate de-identification. This allows Parliament to receive meaningful system-level insight while avoiding unnecessary risks to personal privacy or to the integrity of the peer review process, both of which are essential to maintaining public confidence in federal funding decisions.

Second, oversight mechanisms are most effective when they're aligned with the time horizons and risk profiles of the programs they assess. In the case of scientific research, impacts often unfold over decades, which poses challenges for traditional audit and evaluation models. This does not mean that long-term scientific investment should escape scrutiny. Rather, it suggests that accountability mechanisms must be designed to reflect long-time horizons, uncertainty and cumulative impact, using portfolio-level evaluation, expert review and forward-looking performance indicators, rather than retrospective judgment of individual funding decisions.

In closing, effective science governance is about ensuring that oversight mechanisms strengthen public trust, protect individuals and support long-term national interests.

I welcome questions from the committee on how accountability frameworks can best achieve these goals.

Thank you.

● (1120)

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. O'Neil.

With that, we will start our first round of questioning.

We will start our first round of six minutes with MP DeRidder.

Kelly DeRidder (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Thank you, Chair.

I want to thank all the witnesses for being here today.

Through you, Chair, my questions will be to you, Mr. O'Neil, as the vice-president of research and innovation.

Given that we hold only about 12% of the patents generated here and that roughly 80% of our Canadian-developed IP is foreign-owned, from an accountability perspective, do you think that federal research funding should be more directly tied to ensuring that economic and societal benefits remain here in Canada?

Dugan O'Neil: Yes, it is true that we have to do work in Canada to ensure that the intellectual property that is created through Canadian research provides the maximum benefit to Canadian citizens and Canadian taxpayers.

The numbers that you quoted are concerning. I would point out, however, that the breadth of research in the Canadian system means that there's research that's being supported by the federal government that is not on the edge of becoming intellectual property and of financial benefit to Canadian companies. It's very early-stage research that somewhere down the line will potentially lead to something with long-term economic benefit.

We do need to strengthen our system to support the translation of the knowledge we create into products, policies and societal change that benefit Canadians, but there's a whole spectrum of research that's part of that system that needs to be supported well if it's going to provide the final benefit that we want for our citizens.

Kelly DeRidder: I agree wholeheartedly that there is the early research, but it's when it comes to the point of commercialization that we're missing the economic impact for Canadians.

Would you agree that there is not a strong system in Canada to turn research into commercialization, where we would see the economic benefit?

Dugan O'Neil: I can't say that I agree fully with that. I think we can do better, but we have many examples, including examples out of my own university, of university inventions being turned into innovations and being turned into companies that employ many Canadians, and over a long history, over decades.

There are areas we should definitely strengthen, but I would not agree that the system is failing Canadians in general, if that's your question.

Kelly DeRidder: I'm not suggesting that we're failing in general, but it is clear that right now, it's costing up to $75 billion yearly—2.7% of our GDP and $5 billion of lost tax revenue—for not commercializing here in Canada.

While I can agree that there are some jobs created, what I'm seeing is that we have 20 Canadian universities that have partnered with Huawei on hundreds of patents. These patents are going to foreign companies whose technology we've banned, and our research is paying for that.

Where is the accountability to ensure that our IP and our innovation remain in Canadian ownership today?

Dugan O'Neil: In terms of accountability, it can be very difficult to trace where everything comes from over a long period of time and to apply it, but I would say that something we haven't been great at in Canada is making the technologies we create.

The words we tend to use in the system are “to make them sticky”, to make them stick to Canada, to make them have the maximum benefit here before they're purchased and potentially moved to another jurisdiction.

If you ask me what part of the system needs the most help, it's probably investment to make Canadian technologies sticky. That includes infrastructure and it includes venture capital funding. It includes all sorts of things that would help Canadian researchers translate their discoveries into IP that stays here.

● (1125)

Kelly DeRidder: You touched on something that I agree with, which is the infrastructure piece. When we're funding infrastructure for research, we have to also ensure that it's not going to foreign companies.

For example, we had an IP lawyer give recent testimony about the U.S. CLOUD Act and other American laws that put our digital sovereignty at risk. Right now, we're not prioritizing our public funding around data infrastructure to ensure that it remains sovereign when the data is here on Canadian soil and is generated by Canadian companies.

Where do you think we can do better with governance in research to ensure accountability and ensure that our data is sovereign and secure?

Dugan O'Neil: Simon Fraser University runs Canada's largest academic supercomputing centre. It hosts sensitive and less sensitive Canadian data for researchers right across the country. There are 17,000 researchers that access our systems from coast to coast, so we're strong believers in creating sovereign infrastructure. We also collaborate with large companies—for example, from the U.S.—on various things. We do that as well.

However, having a sovereign infrastructure, including data storage that is both secure and sovereign—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. The time is up. Thank you.

We will now proceed to MP Deschênes-Thériault for six minutes.

Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): I would like to thank our three witnesses.

For this first round, I'll put my questions mainly to Mr. Normand.

Today's motion focuses on science policy analysis and accountability, particularly given the recommendation to create a new independent body. However, I gather from your remarks that the French-language research ecosystem, in principle, already has the necessary tools to meet the needs of the sector, particularly through the robust implementation of the Official Languages Act. Part VII of the act calls for positive measures to support the creation and dissemination of information in French.

However, I noticed that you used the conditional tense in your remarks. Can you explain what's missing? If we have the necessary tools, especially since we're studying draft regulations for the implementation of part VII, what should we improve?

Martin Normand: I used the conditional tense for a number of reasons. First, as you said, the Standing Committee on Official Languages is currently studying the draft regulations. We have many concerns about this draft, which I can share in another forum later today.

In addition, we detect a long-standing reluctance on the part of federal institutions responsible for science policy to implement measures to make progress towards substantive equality in French-language research. This committee published some reports with specific recommendations concerning French-language science. The government's responses showed that the institutions were brushing aside the concerns raised by French-speaking researchers in particular.

Moreover, our network's member institutions filed a complaint with the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages regarding the granting councils. Even though a number of years have passed and ample opportunities have arisen to implement these recommendations, we're now confronted with the commissioner's findings. These findings show that nothing has been done to ensure the robust implementation of the recommendations and the language obligations of these institutions.

The infrastructure is in place. However, the institutions seem reluctant to recognize that these obligations also apply to the granting councils and the other federal institutions responsible for funding research. Hence our call for a robust implementation plan for the Official Languages Act. We hope that the part VII regulations will bring this approach to all federal institutions. It doesn't seem to be the case at the moment. However, the regulations require federal institutions to measure the possible negative impact of their decisions. This calls for better data production infrastructure in each institution.

Given these obligations, with robust regulations, the federal institutions responsible for science policy must acquire the tools needed to fulfill their obligations under the Official Languages Act.

● (1130)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: In your response, you referred to the external advisory group's upcoming report on the creation and dissemination of scientific information in French. You must have taken part in the consultations held on this topic.

What are your expectations? Why did you refer to the significance of this report, particularly with regard to governance and accountability in science policy?

Martin Normand: First, we hope that this report will be published as quickly as possible so that we can all get down to work. The panel was set up with funding made available under the action plan for official languages. If we want the next action plan, 2028–2033, to include new measures to implement the panel's recommendations, we need to get started quickly.

Second, for me, it's also the culmination of a whole series of consultations on French-language science and research. I referred to the summit conference on post-secondary education held by the Association des collèges et universités de la francophonie canadienne three years ago. I also referred to the 2021 Acfas report on French-language research conditions in minority communities. This committee also carried out a study on the challenges of publishing and carrying out research in French.

We don't lack information on the structural inequities when it comes to support for French-language research in the country. We hope that this panel set up by the federal government will provide the catalyst and the tool to propel us forward and to imagine how we can take collective and innovative action to overcome the inequities documented over the years.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: You also referred in your remarks to your recommendations for governance, particularly within the current structures.

Can you talk a bit about these recommendations, particularly for granting agencies, in terms of what has been implemented and what could be done?

Martin Normand: A number of us hope that, with the creation of a new common structure for the granting councils, for example, a French-language research office will be set up within this institution to continuously monitor the required measures and the data made available. We would like to see this initiative if we move in this direction.

We also think that the official languages should be integrated throughout the decision-making apparatus, and not just in a dedicated office with an advisory mandate. There must be francophones or a francophone lens used throughout the federal institution, not just in an office dedicated to the official languages.

In short, we're calling for francophone representation in the decision-making apparatus and the creation of new tools for reporting and generating data on the French-language research ecosystem.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you. The time is up.

We will now proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for six minutes, please.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski—La Matapédia, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to extend my greetings to the witnesses who joined us for this important study.

Ms. Jasanoff, in *The Fifth Branch*, you show that scientific expertise serves as a form of structuring power in democracies. In a Canadian parliamentary system, how should institutions regulate this function in order to preserve both its independence and its democratic responsibility?

[*English*]

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: Thank you for that question, and thank you for paying attention to my now decades-old work.

I think representation and recursion are the two variables that I consider most important. One of the things we have discovered is that when scientists get together and decide what is relevant to their review processes, often a set of blinders descends. There's disciplinary narrowing of the field of vision of the review process. One of the ways in which the National Research Council has tried to get away from that kind of narrowing is to ask somebody to coordinate the review process who is not specifically a member of the group producing the results.

In broad public review processes, Parliament or Congress can serve that purpose, to some extent. As you know, all our agencies are accountable for showing up before relevant congressional committees. That breadth of representation, which, for example, in the Canadian context would take language sensitivities and minority position sensitivities into account, would be one way of ensuring representation.

The other point is that the perfect should not be made the enemy of the good. No review process will be guaranteed to produce truth positions. Having recurrent review processes that come back—for example, when there's a large centre grant, having it reviewed with site visits at various points during its operations—and keeping that in mind will take care of some of the temporality issues mentioned by Dr. O'Neil in terms of science's ability to deliver. It doesn't happen all of a sudden, where yesterday you didn't know the truth and tomorrow you know.

● (1135)

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: The government funds, produces and assesses scientific expertise within a single administrative apparatus. In your opinion, could this lead to a concentration of functions? If so, is institutional separation necessary to ensure the credibility of the system?

[*English*]

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: As you probably know, the question of what is independence is itself being heavily debated in the U.S. at the moment. Certain matters are before the courts and in the docket of the Supreme Court. We won't know what some of those answers are. From my academic point of view, independence is often a rhetoric and not a reality. Better than independence is seeking an internal diversity of views in whichever forum will have the ultimate say. We in America are in the unfortunate position at the moment of having polarization rather than representation across the spectrum. These are things we have to deal with.

I believe your problems in Canada are not quite the mirror of ours, fortunately. Perhaps you have procedural ways of getting around the black and white “this is right and this is wrong” position into which we have managed to start some of our research evaluations.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: You argued that accountability can't necessarily be limited to formal audits. In your opinion, what criteria would help assess whether a federal scientific agency is really acting in the public interest?

[*English*]

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: This is a very difficult question. Normally, if you go to a surgeon and you want surgery done, you come away with the problem cured or not. In federal science policy and in regulatory science policy, the results are seldom that quick to emerge.

I think one has to have a multipronged criterion. Emergency response cannot be held to the same standards as whether or not cancer research policy delivers the goods. This morning we've already talked about different kinds of criteria, and there was a question raised: Is research getting from bench to bedside? It is one kind of indicator, but it would not be the right kind of indicator for measuring whether emergency responses are working or whether climate change policies are working. I think one has to settle for a somewhat sector-specific approach to accountability issues. These are continually being revisited.

This is a point that I would make: It's not that in a thriving democracy like Canada the research policies have been sitting still, with no attention to these matters. One should pay attention to the historicity of these processes and what is being learned along the way.

The Chair: MP Maxime Blanchette-Joncas, you have 10 seconds.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: If you could provide a written answer, Ms. Jasanoff, we would appreciate it.

If you had to identify a priority institutional reform to strengthen public confidence in science over the long term, what would it be?

[*English*]

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: I would not presume to state “one” thing, but I think what we need is simultaneous education of the public and openness by science to open itself up. I am a member of—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. The time is up. If you can say it quickly, I can give you five or six seconds.

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: Public education about the process of science has to happen at the same time as accountability procedures are being developed.

The Chair: Thank you.

● (1140)

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, is it possible to ask the witness for a written response, please?

[*English*]

The Chair: Professor Jasanoff, would it be possible to provide a written response to Mr. Blanchette-Joncas' question?

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: I would be delighted to follow up.

The Chair: Okay. Thanks a lot.

We will now proceed to MP Holman for five minutes.

Please go ahead.

Kurt Holman (London—Fanshawe, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to all the witnesses who are here today and are speaking before the science and research committee.

My first question is for you, Professor Jasanoff. A recent report from the Council of Canadian Academies notes declining living standards in Canada. If residents in places like London—Fanshawe do not see measurable economic benefits from federal research spending, does that signal a governance gap?

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: I think my colleague Dr. O'Neil has to some degree addressed this question of the gap. To the extent that I have done comparative research, it's clear that the venture capital system in the United States stands apart in the degree of risk it's willing to take and the degree of independence it has from supervision, in and of itself. It's not surprising for me to learn that American venture capitalists are jumping on Canadian IP, for instance.

I think it would be presumptuous of me to talk about how that gap should be addressed. You will probably know, on this committee, that the U.S. took a major step in 1980 by enacting the Bayh-Dole Act, which laid a responsibility on universities receiving public benefit to disseminate the results of their work and to actively seek out intellectual property ramifications from publicly funded research. Now, 40 years later, people are discerning pathologies in the systems. It turned universities to some extent into rent-seekers.

This is why I think one has to take a historical attitude to these things and recognize that the solution of today may need to be revisited 20 years from now, or even 10 years from now, because it will undoubtedly have unintended consequences.

Kurt Holman: Canada was an early leader in artificial intelligence research, and yet we lag in AI commercialization. From your international perspective, is this primarily a governance failure, a market failure, or both?

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: I believe it's a governance failure and a market failure. We've already touched on the market failure in the sense that we have a corporate culture in America that allows risks to be publicly shouldered, whereas benefits are privately distributed. I think that creates a different kind of market from countries in which there is a commitment from the beginning that both risks and benefits should be more publicly distributed. I would be glad to provide additional information, but the constraints of time prevent me.

In terms of the governance failure, we're seeing in America the consequences of widespread, unregulated development of social media. We're coming back to some of these questions about how it affects health, particularly in vulnerable tranches of the population. The governance failure is not just that one is not encouraging the research. The governance failure could equally be that one has allowed research and application development and commercialization to run forward without foreseeing the consequences in time.

Kurt Holman: You offered to give additional information to the committee that you don't have the time to give right now. If you could give that additional information to the committee, it would be greatly appreciated.

Mr. O'Neil, Canada excels at discovery but struggles to scale companies. Is this primarily a funding design problem or an incentive problem with academia, or is it a broader policy failure?

Dugan O'Neil: I think there's a little bit of each of the items you mentioned. It does start inside academia. We do have work to do to create the right internal incentive structures to have people strive to get their research out into the world in various ways. Universities are working hard on that now. Maybe traditionally, as my colleague Professor Jasanoff mentioned, the cultural conditions created by legislation 40 years ago in the United States created different conditions from what we have in Canada. There has been some university transformation happening in Canada in order to optimize the flow of ideas out of the university and into society, but we have found gaps in the ability of society to accept that flow.

What we find is that often the goal of entrepreneurs in Canada is to get big enough to sell their company to a large U.S. investor—

● (1145)

The Chair: I'm sorry, Mr. O'Neil. The time is up for MP Holman.

MP Noormohamed, you have five minutes. Please go ahead.

Taleeb Noormohamed (Vancouver Granville, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Professor Jasanoff, I wonder if you could touch a little bit on your comment about the importance of the public receiving benefit from the innovation it helps to support. Could you talk a little bit more about that and why it's important, when investments are being made by the public sector into private sector corporations, that the public sector should see a return on that investment?

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: In a sense, you've answered your own question. I mean, we are paying tax dollars to fund the public till. We're doing that because we have entrusted the government to look after the public good. If, for instance, we're devoting $40 billion to biomedical research and it's not producing improvements across the board, then what are we doing with that funding?

Now, that said, one has to be extremely careful in how one calculates the benefits of scientific research, partly because of questions of time—research results are not immediate—but also partly because the focus may be erroneous. In the U.S. there has been an ongoing debate about whether we're funding researchers or research. That is, are we actually funding frontier knowledge that will be distributed across the board? Are we even funding the right sorts of things? If we have an overemphasis on silver bullet science, we are not investing in palliative care, but it may be that in the health care system, palliative care is the more important set of goals.

The solution to that is that the public has to have a role, because they often see things that the scientists themselves are too targeted and too tunnel-visioned to see.

Taleeb Noormohamed: We had a previous witness who talked a little bit about the importance of ensuring that we don't see research as something that is delivered in the immediate; we have to think about the long term. You know, when colleagues opposite make comments, perhaps well intended, that sort of imply that if Canadians don't see a short-term ROI on their investments in research, and perhaps that money would be better served elsewhere, I think it negates the fact that sometimes investments in research.... We talked about quantum mechanics at our last meeting. Investments in quantum mechanics a decade ago, or a decade and a half ago, have allowed Canada to become a global leader in quantum computing.

What caution would you provide, when people are looking at the evaluation of research grants and so on and so forth, in looking at things in a short-term manner versus the opportunity to have the long-term strategic benefits that come out of investments today and that allow stepping stones and building blocks to be built? What caution would you provide us as we think about regimes that seek to consider how those funds might be distributed?

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: I think the reason for having a Parliament and parliamentary committees is that you are in a position to interpret for the people in a way that they perhaps cannot themselves.

This question of short term versus long term depends on the representatives of the people having a portfolio...understanding that, in certain areas, we had a vaccine response during the COVID crisis that was geared to an extremely short-term delivery, and it is counted as one of the big successes of “Trump one”. That was a time when an emergency response was needed, and a very quick ramp-up with a timeline that was very different from normal vaccine development seemed appropriate. However, one should keep in mind that one of the reasons the public has come to distrust vaccines is precisely that this trajectory violated their expectations of timing, and we haven't undertaken the conversational approach with our democratic public to explain why that happened.

● (1150)

Taleeb Noormohamed: Let's dig into this a bit, because I think you've hit on something very interesting. The politicization of vaccine hesitancy, as you point out here, comes perhaps as a result of the fact that people were used to a particular research trajectory and things happened more quickly. That has obviously led to skepticism, and it's led to people now fuelling that skepticism.

What caution would you provide to politicians who start to think they should dabble in determining what's good and not good research, given that most of us in this room don't have Ph.D.s in many of the areas that researchers are doing research on?

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: The first caution I would provide is that it doesn't take a Ph.D. in the research to supervise the research. The smart questions about how research should be done, I would say, almost demand that you should not have a Ph.D.—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting.

Please give a quick 10-second answer.

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: The cautionary note is much more steadiness on the part of the government in maintaining a policy direction to be able to explain to the public why this is necessary.

Taleeb Noormohamed: Thank you.

The Chair: We will now proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for two and a half minutes.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Normand, in the 2022 report entitled “Building the French-language post-secondary education of the future together”, which you helped to draft, you recommended the creation of a mechanism to measure progress towards substantive equality in post-secondary education in francophone minority communities. Is a consolidated mechanism in place today to concretely measure the development of French-language scientific capacity?

Martin Normand: No. This type of mechanism doesn't exist yet. At the association, we're continuing to devise our own tools for monitoring the progress of the sector as a whole towards substantive equality. We don't currently have any mechanisms or infrastructure for producing data specifically on research funding or the impact of research.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: As you said, the Official Languages Act now requires positive measures and substantive equality. However, we don't have any public indicators. We don't have any longitudinal monitoring. How can we show that this obligation is actually being fulfilled if we don't measure the objectives that we want to put in place?

Martin Normand: It seems that you read my brief on the part VII regulations in advance. This is exactly one of our criticisms of the regulations. We're calling for more analyses. Yet, ultimately, we aren't being told how to carry out these analyses. The government also isn't making any commitment to release the analyses to the public. Data must be produced. However, if we don't provide tools to stakeholders trying to make progress towards substantive equality for both of Canada's official languages, I believe that we're bypassing one of the obligations of the act. This obligation is to make all information that promotes scientific progress available in both of Canada's official languages. I think that a number of pieces of the act fit together here to call for better data infrastructure.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: We gather that the regulations governing the implementation of the Official Languages Act could be improved, as you said. Shouldn't we have an independent analysis and accountability function, which seems necessary, in particular to ensure credible, consistent and sustainable monitoring of this substantive equality?

Martin Normand: We aren't opposed to a separate and independent mechanism. However, we believe that this data infrastructure should have been in place since 1988, meaning since the current version of the act. Whether the mechanism is separate or integrated with the current functions, a mechanism is required under the language obligations. An independent function could certainly produce data on other types of diversity that we seek to highlight in the funding or in the impact of science policies in Canada. Data on official languages would give us the chance to take action in our sector and to advance the language obligations of federal institutions.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now go to MP Baldinelli for two and a half minutes. Then we will end the panel with MP Deschênes-Thériault for two and a half minutes.

Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Thank you to the witnesses for being here.

Mr. O'Neil, welcome back. It's good to see you again. You appeared here on an earlier study, when we were looking at private sector investment in research and development. At the time, you were talking about all the great things that had been going on at SFU. Congratulations on those. You mentioned the VentureLabs accelerator. At the time, you talked about more than 1,400 technology companies contributing over $600 million in capital formation and job creation across the country.

Our study right now is looking at governance. The government, for example, has undertaken an AI strategy and a defence industrial strategy. We're spending over $10 billion in research dollars. What kind of governance steps can we take to ensure that those monies stay in Canada? For example, of the 1,400 technology companies, how many have stayed in Canada? How many are headquartered here in Canada? How much of that IP has been retained here in Canada? From an accountability and governance framework, are there suggestions you can make to ensure that the dollars we invest stay and are to benefit of Canadians and Canadian SMEs?

● (1155)

Dugan O'Neil: Yes. I think some of this can be addressed through regulation. People often think of regulation as the constraint, as what you can't do, but I would think that the number one thing we can do in Canada is to create the conditions for those companies to succeed in Canada. Make the money want to stay. Create the environment and incentive structures and infrastructure that make this the right place to do that kind of development rather than have people start their companies, feel like they can't grow beyond 50 employees unless they leave the country, and re-headquarter somewhere else because that's where the money is.

I think governance-wise, there are probably some things we can do. How do you create the right incentives in the system to keep people here and have them want to stay here? If the conditions aren't right, it's really hard to make them stay if they don't want to stay.

Tony Baldinelli: Would you have tangible examples? You mentioned the 1,400 technology companies. Would you know, or does Simon Fraser know, what numbers are still here in Canada—for example, headquartered here in Canada?

Dugan O'Neil: I don't have those numbers with me. I can see if we can do an analysis of how many have stayed and how many have gone.

Tony Baldinelli: Please; that would be helpful.

Dugan O'Neil: We have great examples of ones that have stayed. I could provide those as well.

Tony Baldinelli: Fantastic. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

We will end this panel with MP Deschênes-Thériault for two and a half minutes.

Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Professor O'Neil and Professor Jasanoff, I didn't ask you any questions in the first round. Now it's your turn.

The motion refers to the hypothetical creation of a new organization. Of course, we all support transparency, accountability and evidence-based decision-making. However, we must also pay attention to certain limits, such as peer review. We must also avoid politicizing funding decisions.

Ms. Jasanoff, in your opening remarks, you spoke about a double-edged sword. I gather that you're urging us to exercise caution before suggesting the creation of a new agency, as proposed in the motion. Perhaps it would be more appropriate to focus on the current governance mechanisms and to look at ways to improve them if necessary. We don't necessarily need to create a new agency.

Is that right?

[*English*]

Professor Sheila Jasanoff: I think I was probably brought up sufficiently in the pragmatic Anglo-American tradition to like incrementalism over radical change. In that sense, from that standpoint, I do think improvement of the existing institutions is a surer bet than instituting something new and different, especially if it's a centralized body that could be swayed by practices that are very different from the ones that exist now.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Mr. O'Neil, what's your perspective on this issue?

[*English*]

Dugan O'Neil: I think there have been recommendations in Canada to create an agency to help bridge in particular multidisciplinary research across the existing councils. To me, that question is quite different from a recommendation to have an oversight or enforcement mechanism for violations of scholarly integrity, for example.

I agree with Professor Jasanoff that the differences between the way we do research across different sectors and across different types of research really benefit from expert knowledge that is more in the social sciences and humanities for that kind of research, in natural sciences and engineering for that kind of research and in health for that kind of research. Anything that can be done in common to share—expense, infrastructure, etc.—makes sense. Creating a central oversight body for something other than coordination and the flourishing of multidisciplinary research is less promising to me.

● (1200)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

The Chair: You have 14 seconds.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Do you have any final comments, Mr. Normand?

Martin Normand: In terms of a governance and data production mechanism, one thing worries me. We have blinders on when it comes to all the research that should be commercialized, even though a whole component of research can have a significant social impact that we aren't trying to commercialize.

The focus on commercializing research products masks an entire segment of research carried out in our network in particular in order to generate a direct and local impact on the communities that can benefit from the results of this research.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, this panel comes to an end.

I really want to thank our three witnesses for appearing before the committee.

With that, the meeting will be suspended for a few minutes so our witnesses can leave. Then we will go to committee business.

The meeting is suspended.

● (1200)

(Pause)

● (1205)

The Chair: I call this meeting to order.

For this portion of the committee, we are in committee business.

The first item of committee business is to approve the study budget on the mandates of the Minister of Industry and the Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation. The clerk sent all members a draft budget on Friday, February 20. The committee would need to adopt a budget for this study in the amount of $1,000.

Is everyone in agreement?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: The next topic for committee business is about the next study. The committee adopted motions to initiate studies on our last meeting in committee business on Monday, February 9. We need to determine what study will come next and a deadline to submit a list of witnesses so that we can organize the next meeting.

As per the rotation, I understand that it will be a Conservative study.

Tony Baldinelli: My hope, Madam Chair, is that my colleagues will undertake the EV study.

The Chair: Is everyone in favour?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: We would need the list of witnesses.

I will pass this on to the clerk to let us know about the timeline for the witness list to be submitted.

The Clerk of the Committee (Cédric Taquet): As I always say, and as all of you know already, the sooner the better, because some witnesses are sometimes concerned by a short notice or by the time frame they have to prepare. Most of the time, these are very important topics for them. I would say the sooner the better for any list of witnesses to be submitted to the clerk.

● (1210)

Tony Baldinelli: I have a point of clarification, Chair.

The Chair: MP Baldinelli.

Tony Baldinelli: For our clerk, with the remaining meetings that we have scheduled for the current study, that will take us to when, do you suppose? When do you think we'll get to the EV study?

The Clerk: The next meeting after March 23...

Tony Baldinelli: Okay.

The Clerk: Depending on if the committee decides to do consideration of draft reports in between.

Tony Baldinelli: I was going to ask if that takes into account some draft reports as well.

The Chair: Yes. We have some coming soon.

We have the draft report on AMR, which has been sent to all the members. Would members like to go through that before we proceed with the next study?

Tony Baldinelli: I believe we'll need to schedule, as part of one of our next meetings, some time to go through that clause by clause.

The Chair: Yes, for consideration of the report.

We have the calendar here. Next week, we are not sitting.

After today's meeting, we will be back on the 9th. On the 9th, we will have the governance and accountability of federal science policy and institutions study. That week, on the 12th, we will have that meeting, and then again there is a break week. In March, we are on and off. We are back on the 23rd. We will have one hour left for that, because we will have done one and a half hours. If the members want, we can go through it in the second hour. On the 23rd, we will have one hour on the governance and accountability of federal science policy and institutions study, and that will complete the four meetings. Then we can do the consideration of the draft report on AMR.

Tony Baldinelli: On the 23rd, we'll go through the draft report on AMR.

The Chair: Yes.

What should be the deadline to submit the list of the witnesses so that we can start preparing and getting in touch with the witnesses?

Is there any date you have in mind, Mr. Clerk?

Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Chair, the plan is for that study to begin on the 26th, right?

The Chair: Yes.

Taleeb Noormohamed: I'm sorry. Let me go back.

Next week, we're not sitting. The week after that, we have—

The Chair: The next week we are sitting is the week of March 9. Both of these meetings will be on the topic of governance and accountability. Then, again there is a sitting week. We come back on the 23rd. We will have the last one hour on this study. That will complete four meetings. The second hour, as we decided, will be for consideration of the draft report. Then we come to March 26.

Taleeb Noormohamed: For witnesses, I think looking at March 10 would probably be a good time. It gives the clerk two weeks.

The Chair: Is March 10 okay, Clerk?

The Clerk: Yes. Again, it's the committee's decision, and the sooner the better. If I may, sometimes even two weeks is not enough for them to prepare, because they have to prepare their opening remarks, their travelling schedules and everything.

Tony Baldinelli: We'll try for earlier, but the deadline will be the....

Taleeb Noormohamed: We'll do a deadline of the 10th. That gives us all of next week to come up with witnesses.

The Clerk: It's the committee's decision to decide on a deadline.

The Chair: The deadline for all parties to submit their witnesses for the EV study will be March 10 at 5 p.m. It's before the end of the day. Is that good with everybody?

Tony Baldinelli: Excellent. Get to McMaster before I do.

The Chair: Okay.

We will go through AMR on the 23rd.

The next question is on the translation of documents received from the three agencies. On Tuesday, February 17, the clerk sent you a letter from the translation bureau regarding the translation of the documents received from the order adopted by this committee on October 20, 2025.

Is there any discussion on this?

Yes, MP Noormohamed.

Taleeb Noormohamed: We passed the motion on the funding councils on October 1. We asked for the materials. We received a letter back, saying the cost would be what it was. The translation bureau came back to all of us on February 16 and said the cost of the 88 million words we were asking them to translate would be somewhere between $4.9 million and $16.5 million, and it would take approximately 400 business days.

I think it would be helpful for us at this committee to claw that back and see if there's a way we can put a motion forward that effectively says we withdraw this data request. If we don't, frankly, we all need to be able to step out there and say to taxpayers we're prepared to put $15 million or $16 million on the table to translate these 88 million words. If that's what we want to do, that's great, but I think most reasonable people would look at us and say, "You guys are bananas."

My suggestion is that we put forward a motion that reads:

> Notwithstanding the motion adopted on October 1 and amended October 20, given that the translation bureau has written to all members of the committee sharing that the translation of the 88 million words required by the motion would cost between $4.9 million and $16.5 million, and could take up to 400 business days, the committee withdraw this data request out of respect for the Canadian taxpayer, and because it is fundamental that any information received by the committee is available in both official languages.

Stuff has to be available in both official languages. To me, it is grossly irresponsible for us to say we can have it in English, but not in French. We have to weigh out the cost of making sure that it appears in both official languages for our consumption.

I leave it to my colleagues and I'll see what their views are on this.

● (1215)

The Chair: MP Baldinelli.

Tony Baldinelli: Madam Chair, I'm comfortable with the language that's been provided.

In fact, talking to our colleagues, we thought we disposed of this issue at the last meeting, but I guess we did not present a formal motion to actually decline it. In fact, the reason we're doing the current study was to create that governance framework to avoid situations where we would need to ask for materials like that.

I'm fully on side with us adopting that motion. Spending that amount of money is not required.

The Chair: MP Noormohamed.

Taleeb Noormohamed: If I may, Madam Chair, to my colleague's point—and I have to figure out procedurally what may or may not have happened—my understanding was that the whole purpose of undertaking this study was so that we would not have to do this. I thought this had been dealt with. I'm pleased that we're dealing with it now, but I want to make sure that, from a process standpoint, we understand what happened for the future such that we can avoid having to do this in this way.

I don't know who has the right answer for that.

Tony Baldinelli: Yes, it probably happened during those discussions that we would have had when we were determining to say, "Yes, okay, we'll do this study now, and because of it, we no longer require that type of material." In fact, we just never came to moving a formal motion.

I believe there's consensus here so that we can dispose of this quickly.

The Chair: MP Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'm just trying to understand the current discussion. When did you receive this information about the amendment?

[*English*]

The Chair: Have you seen the letter that the clerk sent on Tuesday, February 17? That is when we got that information from the translation bureau.

This is the letter dated February 16, 2026. It is from Annie Plouffe, vice-president, service to Parliament and interpretation, translation bureau. That is when the information came about this situation, and then the clerk sent out a letter to all of the members on February 17.

MP Noormohamed.

Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Chair, just to be clear, I am moving that motion. I'm not suggesting it; I'm actually moving the motion that I read out. If it has not been already, it will be distributed in both official languages.

The Chair: The motion that MP Noormohamed has moved has been distributed, in both official languages, to all of the members through email.

We'll have the debate on that motion.

The floor is with MP Blanchette-Joncas.

● (1220)

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, could we suspend the meeting to analyze the motion?

[*English*]

The Chair: The meeting is suspended.

● (1220)

(Pause)

● (1220)

The Chair: Can I request that all of the members please take their seats? I call this meeting to order.

We have the motion by MP Noormohamed. Is there any debate?

MP Blanchette-Joncas.

● (1225)

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like my colleagues to explain their exact position. I gather that the delays aren't the issue, but rather the costs.

I would like my colleagues to clarify their view of the issue. I want to ask for information. As a parliamentary committee, our job is to carry out studies based on information, particularly data. We're asking for access to data. I understand that the legislation requires us to have it translated. I gather that people agree with this. I'm just trying to understand the exact issue. That way, we can do our job and access data to help us prepare the most accurate reports possible and then make recommendations to the government with a view to developing the best possible public policies.

[*English*]

The Chair: MP Noormohamed.

Taleeb Noormohamed: The whole purpose, as we understood it when we discussed this previously, was that I think we all recognized that information at this committee must appear in both official languages. That's a guiding principle. When we had the discussion, I think we all agreed that producing this material in English and French would be an unreasonable financial burden. We agreed, in my understanding, that we would have this study to ensure we had the right mechanisms in place so as to avoid this problem entirely.

This motion is simply to address formally what we had agreed to do, which was to have the study on how we should be governing this going forward. As per your recommendation, we have the tri-council and everyone else coming to be part of the conversation about what is the best mechanism we might use to solve the problem that I think you were very rightly trying to solve with the original motion.

I don't think there's any dispute at all in respect of what we're trying to accomplish. I think we agree. The issue we all agreed to was that in order to produce these documents in both official languages, which is the right thing to do.... The unreasonable financial burden on the system is the reason that we went down the path that we did. I'm very comfortable with being able to defend that position. I think we all would be.

I think the purpose of the study that we are in right now gives all of us comfort, I think, in ensuring that what comes out of it is a good, quality recommendation on the basis of everything and every witness we've had, including the tri-council, rather than just basing it on one particular collection of data and then leaving it to us, 400 business days from now—whatever the makeup of this committee will be—to determine what should happen. I think that in order to get to what you want more effectively, more expeditiously and in the most thoughtful way possible, this study is supposed to accomplish that.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Noormohamed.

MP Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I just want to clarify things, Madam Chair.

When we amended this initial motion, it was asking for disaggregated data. We then asked for aggregated data. That's what we agreed on. That's the first thing to note.

We now have a big problem here. We first had a government that didn't want to provide disaggregated data, citing privacy concerns. We then made an amendment. This is my colleague's motion, which I encourage you to look at, since it's public. He asked for aggregated data.

We're now faced with another problem. We're told that it would cost too much to obtain access to the data in order to have it analyzed and included in a report. That's what I'm trying to understand. We're getting everything mixed up.

First, I want the government to show transparency. I want the government to give parliamentarians, such as the members of this committee, access to this data. I would like to remind the people who are with us today or who are keeping up with our work that the granting agencies have an annual budget of $4 billion. We're talking here about $4.9 million, which I can understand may seem high. However, calculate the percentage. We're talking about $4.9 million out of a $4 billion budget to ensure transparency and equity in research funding. That was the original goal.

I would like my colleagues to respond today. Do they agree that we should show transparency and ensure that we can provide the best possible study reports? We need data for this. We're now faced with a fait accompli. We're told that access to this data costs money. Just imagine. It's our job to have access to the data. I think that, if we want to correct errors—if there are any, first of all—we obviously need access to this data. If there aren't any errors, so much the better. However, to do our job, we first need access to the data.

● (1230)

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you.

I have MP Baldinelli and then MP McKelvie.

MP Baldinelli.

Tony Baldinelli: I'm going to follow up on some of the comments of my Liberal colleague.

If members recall, when we undertook this study, it was about the impact of the criteria for awarding federal funding on research excellence in Canada. I believe it was a robust study, and I imagine committee members would agree. We heard from numerous witnesses. My Conservative colleagues would agree with me that there's nothing precluding us from working on a report based on the testimony that was provided. For the cost of the material required and the data requested, I believe the cost-benefit analysis precludes us from even wanting to proceed on that additional material that my Bloc colleague is asking for. There's nothing that precludes us from working on having a draft report prepared and presenting to the House a robust report on the criteria and the issues with research excellence and funding in Canada.

If anything was an error on our part, it was not adopting a formal motion earlier, because I think there was consensus in this room that we would not proceed to spend that amount of money.

We undertook a Bloc study, which we are currently doing now, that talks about the notions of transparency, governance and a framework to talk about those issues that my Bloc colleague has an interest in, and that I think we should all have an interest in. We're currently getting some excellent testimony.

I think we should just proceed, pass and adopt this motion and then get on with other business that we have. I know my colleague here has another motion for a study he'd like to proceed with.

That's my recommendation to my colleagues here today.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Baldinelli.

MP Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'll mark this on my calendar. Today, February 26, 2026, we no longer have an official opposition here in Canada. The official opposition, which should be holding the government to account, is saying that it costs too much to retrieve the data. This is totally ridiculous. Our job is to have access to data for study reports. The official opposition is now saying that it costs too much and that the committee has agreed on something else.

First, this isn't what we agreed on. I'm not surprised to see Conservative Party members crossing the floor to join the Liberals. They aren't doing their job as the official opposition. At this point, the Bloc Québécois members are the ones obligated to hold the government to account.

I'm embarrassed for my Conservative colleagues today. They're telling us that $5 million out of a federal budget of over $500 billion costs too much for accountability purposes. We'll calculate the percentage for them if they don't know how. It's 0.006%.

I'll make a note of this. I'll also make a point of reminding them that the people who placed their trust in me want to feel confident in the proper investment of their money. Yet here we have a government that wants to move a motion to prevent the committee from accessing the data and analyzing these investments. Moreover, the Conservative Party supports it. Do you realize this?

I encourage my Conservative colleagues to do some soul-searching today and to ask themselves why three consecutive members of Parliament joined the Liberals in three months. Did some of them not want to lose their seats in the next election? Did some of them want to take a little trip? I think that it's all well and good.

Today, I'm genuinely and thoroughly questioning the willingness of certain committee members to do their job. They tell us that accountability matters. Yet when the time comes to make decisions to ensure accountability, they aren't there. They refuse to do it.

I find the following quite objectionable. We're basically saying that we stand for values and that we agree with asking the government to avoid spending money foolishly. Today, however, the Conservatives are in agreement with the Liberals in refusing access to the data because they consider the amount too high. It's unbelievable. We're talking about 0.006% of the federal budget. Yet they deem this amount too high for the government to do its job and for us to obtain access to the data. Today, I would like to understand the Conservative values. Is it to let the government operate without accountability? The Conservatives are saying just that.

The Conservatives moved a motion this week in the House of Commons to tell us that asylum seekers are too expensive. Today, we want to analyze the data from funding agencies. We want to know whether the funding granted in this area is being invested properly and distributed equitably. Our recent study focused on this. We carried out a study on the criteria for excellence in research funding.

I'm currently questioning the validity of the position taken by the Conservatives. They're refusing to let us use a specific amount to verify certain public expenditures. I repeat that this accounts for 0.006% of the federal budget, a budget of over $500 billion.

Do you know what worries me even more? We've just had a record deficit in Canadian history to the tune of $78 billion. Yet we have a financial expert at the head of the government. How can we really trust a government that refuses to provide data and tells us that it costs too much to do so?

The Bloc Québécois has nevertheless been a good sport. On December 3, we moved a motion with the support of all parties. Ultimately, the government funding agencies didn't really agree to implement what we wanted. We called for mechanisms to ensure equitable funding, access to data through a secure and confidential gateway and ethical mechanisms. We're talking today about a translation bureau analysis showing that we need to invest a certain amount to access this data and to ensure that the money is being invested properly. I find it hard to understand how we can carry out a study without having the data.

To make matters worse, this study has brought some shocking revelations to light. Witnesses came forward and told us they didn't have access to the data needed for scientific analysis. These are credible researchers. They have even received government funding. The government that refuses to provide access to data is funding these researchers. Imagine the inconsistency. That's the first thing. The second thing concerns the situation. This researcher had access to data, including disaggregated data, from one of the three granting agencies. The inconsistency is twofold. First, the government funds a researcher, but won't provide access to the data. While the government should trust this researcher, it doesn't want to provide the data across all its funding agencies.

The Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council granted access to the data. However, the Canadian Institutes of Health Research and the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council refused to provide the data. This disaggregated data made it possible to carry out a comprehensive analysis of whether research funding in Canada is truly equitable.

● (1235)

Normally, a government that claims to operate transparently won't hide this data, especially not from a qualified researcher. I moved an initial motion in October so that we could obtain this data and do our job. Once again, I would like to reassure people. I didn't want to obtain the data for myself. I wanted to have it analyzed by qualified and, of course, trustworthy people. That was the main goal of the motion.

We also understand that a movement of people didn't want this data shared, for various reasons. I can understand them. We came back to the committee to adopt a motion on disaggregated data. We're talking about this motion today. On February 17, we received a response from the translation bureau stating that obtaining access to this data would cost money. However, some colleagues seem confused by the fact that we also agreed to ask the granting agencies whether they could implement a mechanism to give researchers actual access to this data.

Just imagine. In Canada, people fund a research system. Yet when researchers need data to carry out their work, the government refuses to give them access to it. Normally, if you're doing something right, you don't need to hide it. That's what my mother taught me, anyway. When you do good things, you can be happy to say so. Yet we currently have a government that refuses to grant access to data to credible and qualified individuals who are supervised by an ethics committee and who, of course, even receive government funding. They even have the support of their peers and the credibility to publish scientific papers in internationally recognized magazines.

Do you understand that we're now facing a serious problem? How can we, as parliamentarians, ensure that public funding is actually being invested wisely when, first, researchers who want to carry out this analysis don't have access to the data and second, when researchers want to know why they don't have access, the government hides behind privacy protection protocols? I think that it's a lie that one of the three government granting agencies has already submitted its data. We wonder why a government that claims to operate transparently allows one of these three organizations to share its data. Is the organization in the wrong? I don't know, but I would like to find out. Are the other two organizations that don't want to hand over their data, for very likely reasons, afraid that access to this information will give rise to certain analyses and reveal certain issues?

I'm proud of my current fight for government transparency and accountability to ensure that Canada's science policies are overseen by people who have both expertise and credibility. I've been a member of this committee since its creation in 2021. When researchers are forced to speak out publicly to report a situation as serious as the inability to access the data needed for scientific research, can we say that we live in a democracy here?

When researchers ask for access to public data funded by public money, and if they can't obtain that data even though they themselves receive government funding, I think that this poses serious problems. It raises questions and points to a serious problem with the governance of this data. That's why I moved the motion.

● (1240)

This motion is necessary, because a researcher is unable to access this data through the normal channels. A parliamentarian has to ask the government to provide the data.

● (1245)

[*English*]

Taleeb Noormohamed: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

I now count the fourth time that the same argument has been made, so either my colleague opposite might make some new arguments or perhaps you might consider cutting him off.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Noormohamed.

I request that you not repeat, please.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

What we often see in politics is that we have to repeat things so that people understand, especially when we are in the presence of government people. In political communication, the important thing is to repeat it so that people understand the information. Today, some colleagues said that they thought the problem was solved. However, it couldn't be resolved, since we hadn't discussed it—

[*English*]

The Chair: Excuse me. There's no translation.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: This is repetition. This is repetition. Is it working now?

[*English*]

The Chair: Yes.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: The word "repetition" is important, because it's something I'm working on here today. I think it's necessary for people to understand that it's fundamental to have access to data in the research world.

Having worked with many researchers, I saw that people had questions, for specific reasons and based on their ideologies. It's up to them. However, my role as a parliamentarian with respect to the motion we are discussing today is to tell you that it is completely incomprehensible that a government would not agree, for ideological reasons, or perhaps out of precaution, to share data with someone who has expertise, credibility—

[*English*]

Taleeb Noormohamed: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

With all due respect to my dear friend, we're now starting the fifth cycle of the same argument. He's acknowledged that he's repeating in order to be able to make a point.

Madam Chair, perhaps you might consider....

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Blanchette-Joncas, that's a valid point. If you have made your point, please don't repeat.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would be pleased to take the time to explain to my colleague exactly what I am talking about today.

I would like to read a letter dated February 16 that was sent to you. The subject reads as follows: "Request for the translation of research documents submitted as part of the motion filed in the context of the study on the 'Impact that the criteria for awarding federal funding have on research excellence in Canada'."

I'll read it, because it's a matter of transparency for the people who follow our work, the scientific community and honest taxpayers:

> Madam Chair:
>
> On October 1, 2025, the Standing Committee on Science and Research (Committee) adopted a motion for the production of documents further to its study on the Impact that the criteria for awarding federal funding have on research excellence in Canada. In response to the motion, the Committee received a total of about 88 million words that were then sent by federal organizations (the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council [SSHRC], the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada [NSERC] and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research [CIHR]) to the Translation Bureau (Bureau), for translation.
>
> The service agreement between the Bureau and the House of Commons administration provides for the translation of an annual volume of approximately 35 million words. Since the Committee's request exceeds the agreed-upon annual volume and the documents are from three federal institutions, we had to conduct a number of verifications, discussions and consultations to provide a comprehensive response. As a comparison, the Bureau translates more than 325 million words annually, including about 60 million words for Parliament as a whole.
>
> Since the documents are from SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR, these institutions are responsible for providing the Committee with the translations. Section 8 of the Official Languages Act says that "any document made by or under the authority of a federal institution that is tabled in the Senate or the House of Commons by the Government of Canada shall be tabled in both official languages." We confirmed this interpretation with the appropriate authorities.
>
> The budget allocated to the Bureau to provide Parliament with translation services cannot be used to translate these documents. However, the Bureau can provide these federal institutions with translation services through the linguistic services it offers on a cost-recovery basis.
>
> Over the past few months, the Bureau has worked closely with the Clerk of the Committee to prepare the documents received and resolve the quality issues related to the content (bilingual documents) and formatting. This considerably slowed down the final stages of assessing the documents. Then, we worked with digital imaging experts to prepare a quote that included various options for translating the project's documents, which total more than 88 million words, including 42 million from specialized research fields, specifically biomedicine, chemistry, astrophysics and engineering.
>
> In the appendix, you will find a few options to consider, with or without the use of artificial intelligence, including the assignment of a dedicated team of 40 full-time translators for a period of 6 to 18 months.
>
> We kindly ask that you send this information to the institutions in question. My Linguistic Services colleagues will then be able to begin discussions with these three institutions so that the Committee can receive the documents in both official languages. I am available if the committee requires any additional information.
>
> Yours sincerely,
>
> Annie Plouffe
>
> Vice-President
>
> Service to Parliament and Interpretation
>
> Translation Bureau
>
> Public Services and Procurement Canada

● (1250)

I would like to explain the details of the appendix to those following our work today.

In the appendix, you will find option 1, which involves machine translation followed by a 100% comparative review. After the machine translation, there are two elements. There is the option of a 100% comparative review of the translated text to ensure consistency in both languages.

● (1255)

In the appendix, under option 1, we can see that there is a low risk of errors. It then states that the estimated total cost is $16.5 million—

[*English*]

The Chair: MP Blanchette-Joncas, I'm sorry for interrupting.

We are at 12:55. The meeting has to end at 1 p.m. If this is not resolved or if we are not able to vote on the motion, then I will have to suspend the meeting. We will have to come back to this on the 9th.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would, of course, like to continue so that those following our proceedings understand the magnitude of the situation.

[*English*]

Tony Baldinelli: Madam Chair, I have a point of order.

To clarify on coming back on the 9th, will we be picking up the filibuster? In essence, that is what my colleague is doing. He will be blocking a study. It is his own study, which we had agreed to undertake to avoid the situation of spending the money that we all agreed did not need to spent.

The Chair: I'm sorry. That is not a point of order.

Tony Baldinelli: We agreed to it weeks ago. We're doing a study that he had asked for to resolve the situation, and now he's filibustering his own meeting request.

The Chair: That's not a point of order.

Thank you, Mr. Baldinelli.

Tony Baldinelli: It's a point of clarification.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

What is clear, as you know and as people know in practical terms, is that the Conservative Party has recently lost three MPs to the Liberal Party. That is clear, and I think that continuing like this—

[*English*]

Taleeb Noormohamed: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

[*Translation*]

My colleague is saying the same thing for the fourth time.

[*English*]

Madam Chair, at some point the rules allow you to cut off the member if he's repeating himself—

The Chair: There is no repetition, as I've indicated previously.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, as you know, I am not particularly fond of repetition either. However, we see that one thing keeps happening: the Liberal Party comes to the rescue of the Conservative Party, as is the case today. It is a recurring pattern, as you can see.

[*English*]

Taleeb Noormohamed: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The member has now acknowledged that he is repeating himself. On the basis of the rules, I think you are now within your rights to cut him off.

The Chair: Thank you.

Please, no repetition.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, I said I didn’t like repeating myself, but that does not cause me to repeat myself. So I shall continue anyway. What is truly incredible today is seeing people from the Liberal Party coming to the rescue of the Conservative Party. If I were in their shoes, I would be embarrassed. Furthermore, I wouldn’t be surprised if there were other—

[*English*]

The Chair: You have emphasized that point previously.

Please make sure that there is no repetition. This point has been emphasized previously.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I’ll move on to another topic, Madam Chair.

I would not be surprised to see other Conservative MPs cross the floor in the coming months. Madam Chair, you will understand that this is not a repetition.

[*English*]

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): I have a point of clarification.

I just want to understand this in regard to the next steps.

If this filibuster from our Bloc colleague continues, we will be eating into the next meeting. I know we're running out of time—

The Chair: Yes. I made that point as well.

Vincent Ho: I just want to understand. Right now, we have some studies from the different parties that we want to get through, to do the work that Canadians are expecting us to do—

The Chair: Thank you.

Vincent Ho: If there are no studies, then it collapses. What happens to the committee? I want to understand—

The Chair: I have indicated that. Thank you. That's not a point of order.

MP Blanchette-Joncas.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I would nevertheless like to continue with the main point. I was interrupted rather abruptly.

I am referring here to the appendix to the important letter sent to us by the translation bureau. Following on from option 1, I had reached the point of evaluating option 2 for those listening to us. It involves machine translation followed by comparative revision. As I understand it, we are talking about a 50% margin of error, because the translation would be machine-generated. Then, there is a comparative revision of 50% of the translated text, and a rereading of 50% of the translated text. This represents a moderate risk of errors. The estimated total cost is $7.6 million and the estimated time required is 185 business days.

Next, there is option 3, which involves machine translation followed by rereading. The appendix states that machine translation can be improved by correcting minor errors, such as checking formatting and spelling, amongst other things. This option includes rereading 100% of the translated text without comparing it to the source text. However, the risk of errors is high. The estimated total cost is $4.9 million and the estimated time required is 120 business days.

In the definitions—

● (1300)

[*English*]

The Chair: MP Blanchette-Joncas, the time is one o'clock. We have come to the end of the time of the meeting. I will have to suspend the meeting, and we will have to come back.

As previously indicated, we will not be able to get back to the study and have the third meeting, which was scheduled with the witnesses. We will have to continue with this committee business. We will have to come back on the 9th on this.

The meeting is suspended.

[*The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m., Thursday, February 26*]

[*The meeting resumed at 3:32 p.m., Monday, March 9*]

● (27930)

The Chair: I call this meeting to order.

Welcome back to meeting number 27 of the Standing Committee on Science and Research.

When we suspended the meeting on Thursday, February 26, the committee was debating a motion moved by MP Noormohamed regarding the translation of documents received by the committee. The motion reads as follows:

> Notwithstanding the motion adopted on October 1 and amended October 20, given that the translation bureau has written to all members of the committee sharing that the translation of the 88 million words required by the motion would cost between $4.9 million and $16.5 million, and could take up to 400 business days, the committee withdraw this data request out of respect for the Canadian taxpayer, and because it is fundamental that any information received by the committee is available in both official languages.

MP Blanchette-Joncas was speaking to this motion when we suspended.

As such, MP Blanchette-Joncas, you have floor. Please go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Allow me to continue the discussion on the important request we made for data. I would like to share with you the work of Professor Julien Larrègue, associate professor in the department of sociology at Laval University and a member of the Centre interuniversitaire de recherche sur la science et la technologie, who appeared before the committee.

By way of introduction, Mr. Larrègue discusses the stratification of the academic world, which is a central theme in the sociology of science. A minority of universities and researchers concentrate the bulk of resources in the scientific field, whether defined in terms of symbolic, economic or social capital. In addition to this unequal distribution, a well-known Matthew effect is also at work, as Harriet Zuckerman demonstrated empirically in her classic study of Nobel Prize winners, and as Robert K. Merton also demonstrated by expanding on the issue. Researchers and institutions that have accumulated more scientific capital tend to be disproportionately rewarded for their work, whilst those less advantaged receive less reward than their actual contribution would merit. In other words, early success increases the likelihood of future success, which further reinforces existing hierarchies.

Although a growing body of work shows that research funding is also subject to concentration phenomena and a Matthew effect, the precise extent of institutional inequalities in the distribution of research grants remains relatively difficult to establish. A significant limitation in the literature lies in the fact that most studies only take into account accepted grant applications, which makes measurements and explanations imprecise at best.

To date, only a few studies have had access to comprehensive data from funding agencies—you will appreciate that this touches on the issue of the initial motion. Yet this is essential because, without a clear understanding of the total initial number of applications, whether accepted or not, it is simply impossible to determine the cause of any disparities in the distribution of grants among researchers and institutions. In particular, it is not possible to determine whether the observed inequalities are due to the fact that certain groups submit fewer applications in proportion to their size, whether they result from the practices of evaluation committees, or whether both are true. This data is also necessary to make an analytical distinction between success rates and the size of the grants awarded. Inequalities may stem not only from the number of grants awarded to researchers at different levels of the academic hierarchy, but also from the amount of the grants obtained.

Another significant limitation lies in the analytical disconnect between quantitative and qualitative approaches to scientific inequalities. Quantitative analyses of funding distribution tend to treat science as a homogeneous space from which generalizations can be drawn, whereas we know it is fragmented and marked by struggles. Whilst such macro-level studies are important for documenting general dynamics, it is absolutely crucial to understand how these dynamics vary across disciplines. Although this aspect has been extensively studied from a qualitative perspective, further research is needed to understand how the evaluative culture of disciplines relates statistically to the reproduction of funding inequalities.

In this article by Professor Larrègue, an original dataset comprising 56,680 grant applications submitted to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada between 2000 and 2021 is combined with 43 interviews with former council members to analyze funding inequalities among Canadian universities.

There are three main questions. Firstly, how does the success of funding applications vary across institutions? Secondly, do the amounts awarded vary accordingly? Thirdly, are these trends consistent across disciplines?

University affiliation plays a predominant role in the allocation of funding, even when controlling for other factors. Researchers employed at more prestigious and larger institutions are more likely to secure grants and receive higher amounts.

● (27935)

It is important to emphasize that the study's findings demonstrate that this effect varies across scientific fields. Whilst disciplines such as management or economics exhibit clearly elitist patterns, academic hierarchies play a somewhat less significant role in disciplines closer to the humanities, such as history, anthropology or fine arts. Drawing on the sociology of science and the sociology of quantification, the study argues that evaluators use academic affiliation as a judgmental tool to mitigate the uncertainty inherent in the assessment of grant applications.

This uncertainty manifests itself at two levels: at the applicant level, where the proposed research involves promises that are difficult to verify, and at the committee level, where evaluators may be uncertain about the limits of their own expertise in judging proposals. In this context, university affiliation reflects not only symbolic capital, but also a set of easily interpretable and institutionally recognized signals. Consequently, applicants affiliated with more prestigious institutions receive higher scores for their CVs, which improves their overall chances of securing funding. This dynamic is particularly pronounced in disciplines with strict and consensual definitions of scientific quality, such as economics, where university affiliation closely corresponds to other recognized signals of value.

Furthermore, focusing on generic characteristics of applications such as university affiliation, the number and type of publications, and previous funding, among others, also allows evaluators to ensure the comparability of applications. Faced with the challenge of ranking unique and seemingly incomparable projects, committees rely on cross-cutting indicators of past success as predictors of future performance. Much like credit ratings in the financial sector, these appear to be seemingly disinterested, impartial and objective measures.

We now come to point two: the work of evaluating grant applications. Much research has been devoted to understanding the factors that influence the peer review process in the context of scientific funding. A famous experiment conducted at the National Science Foundation in the United States demonstrated that outcomes depended largely on chance, and in particular, on the individual appointed as the reviewer. Although chance clearly plays a role in funding outcomes, structural mechanisms such as cumulative advantage often reinforce and amplify initial inequalities over time.

As DiPrete and Eirich explain, a strict process of cumulative advantage implies that current resources, such as past publications or previously obtained grants, increase the chances of securing new ones. Conversely, a cumulative disadvantage may result from prolonged exposure to a position of lower status, leading to direct and interactive effects on outcomes throughout one's career. For example, individual characteristics and institutional affiliations, such as a university's prestige or gender, can influence both initial opportunities and the long-term returns on acquired resources.

A researcher affiliated with a less prestigious institution may be penalized not only because of perceptions regarding the institution's quality, but also due to material constraints such as reduced research time or less administrative support. A study of research grants from the U.S. National Institutes of Health showed that working at an institution receiving more funding increased the probability of securing a grant by 9.7 percentage points. Although each application may be viewed as a one-off assessment, over time, the symbolic capital, procedural knowledge and institutional support accumulated by certain individuals and organizations create a system that structurally favours them in grant competitions, a dynamic that clearly reflects the operation of cumulative advantage mechanisms.

Furthermore, the literature clearly shows that disciplines and research fields influence and shape evaluation processes. This is particularly evident in studies on gender inequalities in funding.

● (27940)

For instance, professors Larrègue and Nielsen have studied the working of an interdisciplinary social sciences committee to show how gender inequalities in scientific funding are partly reproduced and mediated by knowledge hierarchies. Compared to other projects, tendentially feminine research topics and methods had more chances of being discredited by reviewers. Similarly, while women are significantly less likely to be funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the extent of this disadvantage varies across research domains. A natural experiment indicated that this gender gap might be most consequential when evaluators focus on applicants' CV instead of their project.

The capacity of some disciplines to develop their own, autonomous definitions of scientific quality plays an important role in how peer review separates the wheat from the chaff. For instance, the so-called superiority of economists, which translates into a strict ranking of journals and institutions as well as in widely shared views on the unequal worth of different methods and research areas, leads to very clear outcomes: Projects and scholars that deviate from this orthodoxy are much less likely to be funded. Hence, funding distribution is not only a material mechanism but a symbolic process through which scholars and fields of research are ranked and given a certain value.

Because such orderings are context-dependent and may vary across disciplines, it is unclear how generic factors like university affiliations and their associated prestige factor in these processes. While some studies report clear correlations, others do not find institutional prestige to be a decisive factor in grant outcomes. In Canada, it has been found that the prestige of universities influences the size of grants among successful Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, or SSHRC, beneficiaries, but it is unclear whether this pattern is stable across disciplines or if it matters during the evaluation process.

In her ethnographic study of how U.S. panels distribute fellowships and grants, Lamont observed that “evaluators are most concerned with disciplinary and institutional diversity, that is, ensuring that funding not be restricted to scholars in only a few fields or at top universities.” However, committee members' explicit commitment to diversity might not necessarily translate into increased funding opportunities for applicants from less prestigious universities; there could be a gap between individual reviewers' meritocratic beliefs and the aggregate result of their work.

Moreover, we can expect institutional prestige to play a different role, and have a different meaning, across disciplines. If excellence and diversity are indeed additive considerations for grant reviewers, diverging conceptions of how scientific excellence relates institutional placement might influence review processes.

This article suggests that the role of university prestige partly depends upon the weight that reviewers give to applicants' CV versus their project. While SSHRC rules explicitly state what the respective weight of the CV and project should be, in practice committees implement discipline-specific practices that give precedence to one or another.

● (27945)

I will now turn to section 3.1, which covers funding data and is in the third section, which deals with methods and data.

These investigations are grounded on a database of 56,680 grant applications that were submitted to the SSHRC between 2000 and 2021.

This dataset, obtained through a data-sharing agreement, includes information on the submission year, the language of the application, the primary discipline of the project, the outcome of each proposal, whether acceptance or rejection, the scores given to application for each of the main evaluation criteria and the amount awarded when successful. The data include applications to three funding programs.

Standard research grants, from 2000 to 2011, can be valued at up to $250,000 over three years. The success rate over the studied period was 38%. With regard to insight development grants, from 2012 to 2021, they were valued between $7,000 and $75,000 over one to two years. The success rate was also 38%. In the insight grants category, from 2012 to 2021, they could be valued at up to $400,000 over two to five years. The success rate over the studied period was 34%.

Additionally, the dataset provides information on the institution, gender and age of all applicants at the time of submission. Only the main applicant was considered for analysis. The primary applicant is the one formally responsible for the submission and administrative coordination of the project, and is typically the main contributor to the design, writing and overall direction of the proposal. Moreover, the study tells us that they only have information about co-applicants if they have applied as the main applicant for another application.

However, this focus introduces certain limitations. It does not capture the potential influence of team composition, interdisciplinarity or collaborative dynamics that may also affect funding outcomes. Using the initial dataset, several additional independent variables were designed.

At the applicant level, they calculated the total number of applications that a given professor has submitted, the number of SSHRC grants obtained in the past and the size of the team for each project.

At the university level, they further coded and included the geographical location, namely, the province; the primary working language, English, French or bilingual; the level of prestige, categorized as U3, U12 or non-U15; and the size, namely the number of students.

For this last variable, the following classification was applied.

There are large universities, that is to say the universities with 20,000+ students, such as the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia and McGill University. There are medium-sized universities with 10,000 to 20,000 students, such as Queen's University, University of New Brunswick and Wilfrid Laurier University. There are small universities, with fewer than 10,000 students, such as Acadia University, Bishop's University and Mount Allison University. There are very small universities with fewer than 1,000 students, like Trinity Western University, Tyndale University, and Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies.

● (27950)

From these various steps, a binomial logistic regression was conducted to estimate the effects of the following 11 independent variables on the funding success of SSHRC applicants: gender of the main applicant, age of the main applicant, total number of SSHRC applications of the main applicant, team size of the project, funding program, year of application, university prestige, university province, university language, university size and language of the project.

The dependent variable is a binary measure of whether a given application received funding or not. The regression was conducted on RStudio with the function glm.

They then focused their analysis on 30 research-active universities—those with the highest share of SSHRC applications during the period. They compared their overall success rates, followed by the individual applicants' chances of success, controlling for the previously mentioned variables. They also examined the average grant amounts awarded to applicants at each university. Finally, they analyzed success probabilities by university ranking within each discipline, using average marginal effects derived from a logistic regression model.

Similarly, they assessed differences in grant amounts by disciplinary ranking, this time relying on descriptive statistics. The main limitation of this quantitative analysis is that it does not take into account applicants' publication records.

Such data could, in principle, be retrieved from bibliometric databases such as Web of Science. However, the expected analytical benefit would be limited relative to the considerable effort involved in collecting and matching this information at scale.

Moreover, their objective is not to assess individual academic productivity per se, but rather to highlight broader institutional hierarchies—hierarchies that already reflect, among other factors, differences in publication patterns and research visibility of their members.

I'll move on to section 3.2, on interview material.

To understand the mechanisms underlying the unequal allocation of funding, these statistical analyses were complemented by semi-structured interviews with professors who served on SSHRC evaluation committees between 2014 and 2024 for the insight and insight development programs.

The composition of the review committees for each type of funding is publicly available on the SSHRC website. Members were contacted through their institutional email addresses.

They aimed to achieve a balance across disciplines, career stages, such as assistant, associate and full professors, university prestige, geographical location and socio-demographic characteristics such as gender, age, ethnicity and language. The goal was to ensure a diversity of perspectives.

Interviews were held in English or French depending on the interviewees' preference. The interviews primarily explored the practical organization of the evaluation process and the criteria employed by committee members to assess funding applications.

● (27955)

The relative weight given to applicants' CVs versus the content of their research projects and the nature of the discussions that take place during committee meetings were compared. They lasted between 42 and 88 minutes. All interviews were recorded, fully transcribed and anonymized. They focused on the interviewees' experience within the SSHRC committees and asked them to provide concrete examples whenever possible.

As underlined by Orupabo and Mangset in their study of academic hiring practices, focusing on practical information serves as a methodological tool to address social desirability bias. Interviewees are generally less preoccupied with presenting themselves in a favourable light when recounting processes and events compared to when they are directly asked about their opinions, meanings or values.

The qualitative material was thematically coded using NVivo, with particular attention to passages concerning perceptions of the applicant's university and the ways in which institutional affiliation—both directly and indirectly—influenced the evaluation process.

These themes were then analyzed in relation to the disciplinary background of each interviewee to identify potential variations across fields. A total of 43 researchers were interviewed, spanning six disciplines. Fifteen of them were in political science, 13 were in sociology, seven were in economics, six were in history and one was in management.

The four main disciplines were selected due to their contrasting positions within the scientific field, the diversity of their evaluative cultures and their divergent attitudes toward symbolic and status hierarchies.

Economics holds a dominant position in the social sciences, characterized by its quantitative orientation and strong formalism. Its evaluation methods emphasize a strict hierarchy of publications and institutional affiliations, alongside highly centralized and internationalized recruitment processes.

Conversely, history—a literary discipline primarily employing qualitative methods—features predominantly national patterns of scientific production and recruitment. As we shall see, historians often resist hierarchies based on institutional positions.

Political science and sociology occupy intermediate positions between these extremes, although political science aligns more closely with economics than sociology does. Both disciplines exhibit internal polarization in Canada—translating into divisions between qualitative and quantitative approaches, French and English literatures, and tensions regarding national and international dynamics of publication and recruitment.

Despite efforts to ensure a diverse and balanced sample, this qualitative approach presents certain limitations. The study relies on retrospective accounts, which may be influenced by memory biases or selective recollection. Moreover, while the interviews aimed to elicit concrete examples, participants may still under-report practices perceived as problematic or controversial.

Finally, although the sample includes disciplinary and institutional variety, it remains limited in size and cannot fully capture the breadth of experiences and perspectives present across all SSHRC committees.

● (28000)

I'll continue with section 4 on the adjudication process.

Before presenting the findings, it is important to briefly describe the process and organization of the SSHRC evaluations. For each of the three programs, applications are peer reviewed by committees constituted according to disciplinary expertise. While some committees for insight development grants can be interdisciplinary, they are typically focused on one or two proximate disciplines, such as political science and public administration or sociology and demography. Before meeting collectively to decide on the final ranking, each committee member conducts a preliminary review of a subset of applications, with two or three evaluators assigned per file. For the insight development grants, SSHRC also seeks external reviews to support the committee's deliberations.

The repartition of the applications among the committee members is an administrative task handled by an SSHRC officer. Reviewers may and, in practice, often have to assess applications that are not related to their own research interests or fields of research. They assign a score for each of the three main criteria: challenge, feasibility and capability. For every application assigned to them, researchers in the study indicate that they only had access to the scores for a subpart of their dataset. The challenge criterion refers to the purpose and importance of the project. Feasibility refers to the methods and material means used to carry it out. Capability refers to the applicant's expertise, as demonstrated by their CV. In addition, the scoring is weighted, with the challenge and capability criteria each accounting for a larger portion of the score than the feasibility criterion. Preliminary scores are used to establish a provisional ranking when committee members meet collectively. They do not typically review or discuss all the applications. Unless important discrepancies in members' assessments are noticed, top-scored and bottom-scored applications are rarely examined. The discussions focus on the intermediate applications that are around the funding line. In the event of a persistent disagreement between reviewers regarding the evaluation of a particular application, a collective vote may be held after discussing each of these applications. The committee reviews and finalizes the ranking. This final list divides the adjudicated applications into those recommended for funding and those that are not.

I will now tell you about section 5, which looks at the results and the cumulative advantages of prestigious universities.

It's fascinating, Madam Chair, so I hope my colleagues are listening carefully.

Descriptive statistics show that success in funding applications to the SSHRC is indeed correlated with institutional affiliation. Professors who are employed in bigger and more prestigious universities have a higher likelihood of getting grants. It's there in black and white. This is an independent researcher, and that's what it says. Applications from candidates affiliated to a U3 university, the U3 universities being McGill University, University of British Columbia and University of Toronto, represent 19.2% of all applications, but I'd like to draw your attention to the fact that they represent 24.6% of those funded, which shows there's an imbalance. Applications from candidates outside the U15 represent 46.4% of all applications, but only 39.3% of those funded.

● (28005)

These gaps are therefore even wider when considering the broader structure of academic employment in Canada.

Between 2016 and 2020, U3 university teaching staff, so those teaching at University of British Columbia, University of Toronto and McGill University, represented 15.2% of all university staff and 19% of all applications, while non-U15 university staff represented 54.7% of all staff, but only 46.4% of grant applications.

In short, it's very interesting and relevant to note that U3 professors—those at University of British Columbia, McGill University and the University of Toronto—tend to apply more and, when they do, they have more success. The success rate is also correlated with university size. The largest universities have the highest success rate, 40% for the whole period, followed by medium-sized universities at 34%, with the very small universities and small ones exhibiting the lowest success, at 27% and 25%, respectively.

Interestingly, the drop-out rate, that is to say those with no reapplication after one non-funded grant proposal, is structured similarly, with professors affiliated to less prestigious universities giving up more often, at 28% for U3 institutions, namely University of Toronto, McGill University and University of British Columbia, 32% for U12 institutions and 35.7% for extra U15 institutions.

The effect of university prestige and size persists even when accounting for other factors. A binomial logistic regression was performed to predict the success of funding applications between 2000 and 2021. Just as a reminder, through the SSHRC, the researchers were provided with 56,680 applications. Results are presented using average marginal effects and predicted probabilities. All the variables related to the characteristics of the main applicant's university are significantly correlated with funding outcomes.

First, all the variables related to the characteristics of the main applicant's university are, again, significantly correlated with funding outcomes.

Second, candidates from U3 universities—McGill University, University of British Columbia and University of Toronto—have the highest predicted probability of success, at 43.8%. By contrast, those from U12 universities have a lower probability of success, at 37.7%. Finally, those from non-U15 institutions have the lowest predicted probability of 32.6%. These differences are statistically significant, with average marginal effects of -0.6 for U12 institutions, -0.11 for non-U15 universities, compared to U3 universities, which are, of course, in the reference indicator, less than 0.001.

A similar pattern is observed when it comes to university size. Applicants from large universities have the highest probability of success, at 37.8%, while those from small universities, at 29.9%, and those from very small universities, at 31.3%, have a significantly lower chance of securing funding.

● (28010)

The corresponding average marginal effects are -0.08 and -0.07, respectively, reinforcing the persistent influence of institutional capacity on funding outcomes.

Geographic location also plays a role. Compared to Ontario, at 37.6%, applications from Alberta, at 34.4%, and from the rest of Canada, at 31.5%, show significantly lower predicted probabilities of success.

That's noteworthy, Madam Chair.

So for those with significantly lower predicted probabilities of success, the data show average marginal effects at -0.03 and -0.06, respectively, while applicants from British Columbia, at 40%, have slightly higher chances. Quebec shows no significant difference from Ontario, and we're very pleased about that.

Interestingly, the role of language is not straightforward and individual level factors must be distinguished from institutional dynamics. Applications written in French are associated with a lower probability of success.

You did not hear this from the Bloc Québécois. It comes from an independent researcher, funded by the federal government, namely by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council.

This researcher tells us that applications written in French are associated with a lower predicted probability of success than applications written in English—33.2% versus 37.4% for English. Affiliation with a francophone university corresponds to a higher predicted success rate compared to English-language universities. Although it is beyond the scope of this article to provide a thorough analysis of this apparent paradox, these findings demonstrate the need to differentiate between individual and institutional levels when accounting for the effect of language in science.

Gender and age are also associated with differences in predicted funding success. Predicted probabilities show that women, at 36.2%, have slightly lower chances of success compared to men, at 37.1%, while non-binary applicants, at 38.8%, exhibit the highest predicted success rate. However, these differences are modest in magnitude. The average marginal effect for women is negative and statistically significant, at -0.01, while the effect for non-binary applicants is not statistically significant due to wide confidence intervals.

Predicted probabilities decrease with age: Younger applicants, at age 26, for example, have a predicted success rate of 39.7%, while the rate declines steadily with age to 35.7% at age 54. This relationship is captured by a small but statistically significant negative marginal effect of age on funding success, suggesting a slight but consistent age-related disadvantage over time.

That's not reassuring, Madam Chair. In Canada, the older you are, the less likely you are to obtain funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. One might say that's ageism.

So, while being affiliated with a prestigious university is generally a key factor in securing funding at SSHRC, U15 universities do not necessarily exhibit the same levels of success in grant applications.

● (28015)

We can obtain a more fine-grained picture by looking at the performances of 30 research active universities—representing 83.7% of the full sample—constituted of all U15 institutions and 15 non-U15 institutions that are most represented in SSHRC applications.

Eight universities, seven of which are from the U15, appear to be overfunded. They receive more grants than their proportion of the applications would allow. The vast majority of universities, however, proportionally receive less funding than one could expect from looking at their share in the full sample of applications.

Again, there are important differences across institutions. While some are close to equilibrium, others are starkly disadvantaged. For example, the University of Manitoba's share of funding is 16.6% lower than that of all universities. Are any members from Manitoba following our proceedings? I hope they're listening. An independent researcher is telling them that their university is funded as part of the research funding allocation. The University of Saskatchewan receives 26.4% less than all universities. Are any members from Saskatchewan following our proceedings? That confirms that they are less likely to get funding. In the case of Brock University, the variance from all applications is 33.4%.

These trends are confirmed if we analyze performance across these 30 institutions while controlling for a few independent factors, as figure 1 clearly shows: I would nevertheless take the liberty of explaining it to you. There are wide disparities in funding success across universities, including within the U15 group. That's quite astonishing.

In line with the researchers' hypothesis, three universities lead the way when it comes to obtaining research funding in Canada. They are University of Toronto, which has a 49.1% predicted probability of success; McGill University, at 48.5%, and University of British Columbia, at 47%.

While most U15 universities are indeed located in the top half of the distribution, others, like the University of Calgary, are less likely to secure funding. Again, are there any members here from Alberta who are following our proceedings? No. The University of Calgary has a predicted probability of success of 32.4%, ranking 19th and occupying a median position within this top 30.

I want to point out that other institutions are even less advantaged, even though they are U15: Dalhousie University, which has a 31.2% predicted probability of getting a grant; University of Manitoba, at 30.4%; and, again, University of Saskatchewan, at 25.1%.

This highlights that the U15 group, which gradually expanded since the early 1990s, only partially reflects the actual scientific hierarchies. Notably, among the five universities that joined the group in 2006 and 2011, which are University of Calgary, Dalhousie University, University of Ottawa, University of Manitoba and University of Saskatchewan, only the University of Ottawa falls in the top-performing half, with a predicted probability of getting a grant of 38.8%. As you know, the University of Ottawa is a bilingual university, which could explain the situation. I think that's something that would need to be verified.

In contrast, some institutions that are not part of the U15, possibly because they are not medical schools, appear among the best performers.

● (28020)

Applications from Simon Fraser University have a predicted probability of 43.4%, ranking fifth overall. Université du Québec à Montréal follows at 10th place with 37.2%. University of Victoria ranks 14th with 35%.

Researchers from the largest and most prestigious universities not only have higher chances of securing funding, but they also tend to receive larger grants when successful.

It's important that my colleagues understand that. Researchers from the most prestigious universities have more money and, not only that, they have it for longer.

From 2000 to 2021, U3 universities got 25.8% of the total funding when they represented 24.6% of the successful applications. U12 universities got 36.2% for 36% of the successful applications. The rest got 37.9% when they constituted 39.3% of the successful applications.

As we saw previously, disparities are also visible in figure 1, which I explained to you earlier. There is a subsample of 30 research active universities.

I'll take the liberty of again explaining a figure that presents the greatest disparities in the insight program. The amount of funding that went to U3 projects, $67,286, is 20.5% higher than what went to U15 universities, $55,817, and 38.8% higher than what went to non-U15 institutions, which was $48,488.

Let's recap. First, U15 universities are more likely to get funding. Second, they have it for a longer period of time. Third, they get higher amounts than other universities.

Usually, three strikes is a strikeout, or a home run, for those who are currently favoured in Canada's research funding system. The amount received by McGill University researchers in the insight program is $76,104. It is $54,354 for the University of Ottawa; $50,189 for Toronto Metropolitan University;$38,413 for the University of Calgary; and $23,003 for the University of Windsor.

The discrepancies are even more important when we divide the average amounts received by the number of applicants per project: for the insight program, the average individual amount allocated to U3 projects, $48,524, is 44% higher than those of other U15 universities, $33,783, and 69% higher than that of projects conducted at institutions outside the U15, $28,781.

This ranking closely matches the success rates analyzed previously. The correlation coefficient between universities' odds ratios and average amount received is 0.94. Put otherwise, the more successful a university is, the bigger the grants.

● (28025)

While the interviews conducted confirm that committees sometimes make budget cuts when reviewing and selecting projects for funding, they are generally limited to about 10% to 20% of the requested budget. It is therefore unlikely that the disparities observed are primarily the result of the work of the evaluation committees. This is important. The purpose of the motion was to request data from the evaluation committees so that it could be subject to an outside and confidential analysis. It was an independent, government-funded researcher who told us that. Those people have credibility and that's what they said. Evaluation committees have biases, so we have to try to mitigate those biases. To do that, we need to conduct an analysis with access to data.

To some extent, this can also be explained by the fact that candidates from more prestigious universities are more likely to apply for and obtain higher amounts. It's really quite incredible. These people know that they are at universities that are able to secure more grants. They have them for longer, so they ask for higher amounts than others do. If people thought there was no inequality in the research funding system, I am telling you today that that is not the case.

If I may, I would like to go to point 5.2, which pertains to university hierarchies according to the disciplines in the curriculum vitae and the disciplines of the project. In particular, it states that, to date, funding applications to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada have been approached as a homogeneous whole.

I would point out that the researchers did not have access to data from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research or from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. It's not because they didn't want to do the work, it's because they didn't have access to the data.

We are now at a parliamentary committee and we have to ask the granting agencies to be transparent and to provide that data to certified researchers or to independent analysts from the Library of Parliament who have the expertise, knowledge and tools to conduct those analyses, so that we can then produce the best possible reports on our studies and in turn have the best public policy.

Evaluation committees from different disciplines do not necessarily give the university hierarchies the same weight when evaluating and ranking projects. It is therefore important to analyze the effect of institutional affiliations by discipline. That means that, depending on the university where people are located, their interests differ. In addition, their relationship with other institutions can influence the decision to award funding.

While candidates from prestigious universities in certain fields have a clear advantage, hierarchies seem to play a somewhat less important role in other fields.

In economics, for example, applications from non-U15 universities have a 29.6% probability of success as compared to 41.6% for U3 institutions, that is, the University of Toronto, McGill University and the University of British Columbia. The same is true in management, administration and business studies. The probability of success for non-U15 applications is 29.5% compared to 44.1% for U3 institutions.

Conversely, the gap is much smaller in certain disciplines such as anthropology, where non-U15 applications have an expected probability of success of 36.1%, which is quite close to the expected probability of 37.3% for applications from U3 institutions. We therefore commend scientific researchers in anthropology. They have the least bias by scientific field, and as indicated in this study that I am very pleased to share with you today.

● (28030)

Nevertheless, the best that candidates from non-U15 institutions can hope for is not to be disadvantaged. In no discipline do they outperform their counterparts at U15 institutions in terms of the predicted success rate.

Again, U15 universities are more likely to receive funding. They receive funding for a longer period of time. They receive higher amounts of funding. However, when you get into the details, as we're doing right now, the field of study doesn't matter. It's like saying that researchers outside those universities are not as good because they receive less funding.

I doubt it, but those researchers confirm hypotheses that we have been raising for a very long time at the current Standing Committee on Science and Research, which was created in 2021. This has not been the case since just 2021, but rather for many years. There is inequality in the distribution of research funding in Canada. It has been condoned, to be sure, by successive governments.

Once again, the discrepancies involve not only the success rates, but also the amounts awarded. In the disciplines with the greatest differences between U15 and non-U15 universities, there is a tendency to allocate higher amounts to the former. It's quite incredible.

Across all programs, the average amounts awarded to projects from non-U15 universities are lower than those awarded to projects from U3 universities: 62.6% in management, 54.2% lower in economics, 50% lower in criminology and 49.9% lower in urban studies.

Conversely, in the fine arts, literature and anthropology, the differences are smaller: 11.1% in fine arts, 24.5% in literature and 21% in anthropology. You will recall that I said that people in anthropology are the ones with the fewest differences. We applaud that.

Similarly, compared to researchers at U3 universities, faculty affiliated with the other U15 institutions consistently receive lower amounts. The only exception is for law. I think my colleagues know that. I have a lot of colleagues around the table who are interested in law. As a legislator, it is important.

As the researchers noted in this study, there is therefore a clear statistical correlation between success rates and the amounts distributed by discipline. There is a coefficient of correlation between the success rate of non-U15 universities by discipline and the funding gap between U3 and U15 universities. It is 0.67% and 0.50% when you include U12 universities.

Data on knowledge grants indicate that these disparities are based primarily on the assessment of candidates' CVs, which the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's documentation refers to as “ability”. While faculty at U3 institutions received an average score of 4.88 out of 6, applicants from non-U15 institutions received a score of 4.62, a difference of 0.26. Of the three evaluation criteria, this is the one where the effect of the university is most pronounced. For the “challenge” criterion based on the project assessment, the average difference between—

● (28035)

[*English*]

Taleeb Noormohamed: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: Wait one second. There's a point of order.

Yes, MP Noormohamed.

Taleeb Noormohamed: I've been listening to the testimony of my esteemed colleague, and I'm curious. On the basis of the study we are supposed to be in and in the context of the data he is now presenting, how, if all of it is already in his hands and we have a study under way in response to his concern—

The Chair: Please raise your point.

Taleeb Noormohamed: How is this relevant to what we are trying to accomplish in this particular motion?

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Blanchette-Joncas, please stay on the topic of the motion. The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

That is proof that my colleague was not listening from the beginning. I know, because we heard the music he's playing on his technology device.

[*English*]

Taleeb Noormohamed: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: MP Noormohamed.

Taleeb Noormohamed: There are two matters here: one, the implication that I'm not listening, which is patently untrue, and two, the assertion that it was my phone, which it was not. I would ask him to retract both those comments.

The Chair: Yes, it is not right to make those comments.

Everyone is here. They are sitting on the committee. All members are listening to you.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, just to clarify, I heard a noise from a technology device where he's sitting.

[*English*]

Jennifer McKelvie (Ajax, Lib.): Madam Chair, I apologize. I didn't have my ringer off.

The Chair: Thank you.

MP Blanchette-Joncas, go ahead.

● (28040)

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, let me confirm that there was another member of the government who was not interested. Scientists funded by their own government have said—

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, MP Blanchette-Joncas. It's not the right thing to do to point at other members. Members are sitting here. I know they are listening.

Please go ahead. The floor is yours.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

For those who didn't understand, let me clarify again that I'm explaining an independent scientific study funded by the federal government. I've just been asked by members of the government about the relevance of the data or the document I'm talking about today. I'm explaining that there are inequalities in research funding and that they can only be analyzed if researchers have access to data. I can sum it up like that.

Researchers have appeared before the committee and told us that they didn't have access to data. Right now, we're debating having access to data so that researchers, or the committee's analysts, can analyze that data and then verify whether various inequalities exist, based on the various criteria, in the distribution of research funding. That's how you build public policy based on data.

I see that my colleague doesn't want us to have access to this data because it would highlight all the inequalities in research funding in Canada.

Let me continue with my important presentation, which I started today.

Data on the insight grants indicate that these disparities stem primarily from the assessment of candidates' résumés, which the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's documentation calls “ability”.

As I was saying, professors at U3 institutions score an average of 4.88 out of 6, while candidates from non-U15 institutions score an average of 4.62 out of 6, a difference of 0.26%. Of the three assessment criteria, it's the one where the effect of the university is most pronounced.

As for the “challenge” criterion, which is based on the project evaluation, the average difference between candidates from U3 institutions and non-U15 institutions is 0.17. For “feasibility”, it's 0.12. As to the “ability” criterion, the greatest gaps are in the disciplines that tend to favour candidates from the most prestigious universities. Those are disciplines such as management, where the gap is 0.60; economics, where the gap is 0.49; philosophy, where the gap is 0.47; and political science, where the gap is 0.34. These disciplines favour the résumés of professors from U3 institutions more than in fields such as anthropology, where the gap is 0.18, geography, where the gap is 0.15, and fine arts, where the gap is 0.12.

The concentration gradient of funding is also reflected in how members of the evaluation committee perceive the importance of university affiliations across disciplines. The interviews conducted with historians, sociologists, political scientists and economists highlight the various cuts and various roles that academic hierarchies play in the evaluation process. Certain disciplines focus mainly on the evaluation of candidates' résumés, which favours researchers affiliated with prestigious educational institutions. Others focus more on the project, leaving more room for non-U3 and U15 candidates to demonstrate the strength of their application.

So it's a continuum that is visible in the way committee members, depending on their discipline, discuss the role of inequalities among universities in the evaluation process. Thus, in keeping with the position of their discipline, historians tend to reject the idea that university prestige is an indicator of quality and that grants go to professors who are affiliated with major universities. In the case of history, talent is distributed very evenly across the country. That's a good thing. The quality of historians working at any university is impressive. This is a question that researchers are asking. That's why it's great to be on these committees.

● (28045)

We see that people from very small institutions with very few resources are still putting forth incredible projects. That's wonderful. Those people can perform miracles with very little.

I will continue with what a historian from the U15 group said. He said he would be surprised if the success rate was significantly different among the major institutions. In the social sciences and humanities, there could be minor effects, but he would be surprised if there were a significant difference, for example, between Mount Allison University and the University of Waterloo. We know the location of this historian, who is based in Ontario. The fact is that his remarks are contradicted by the statistical results. Science is awesome, isn't it? This historian, both a researcher and a professor, is intelligent, critical and analytical. He thought something that was ultimately checked by the data and turned out to be false. That's science. In order to analyze hypotheses, we need data, which members of the government don't always seem to fully understand.

The fact is that this historian's remarks are contradicted by the study's statistical results. Overall, applicants from large institutions receive more grants for larger amounts, including in the social sciences and humanities. Nonetheless, his remarks provide an idea of the relative importance given to the prestige and size of universities by discipline when compared with the opinions of researchers in more hierarchical disciplines. Historians therefore do not consider that there is a correlation between a candidate's university affiliation and the merit of their project. Their judgment is based mainly on the content of the project, including its methodological rigour and feasibility.

At the other end of the disciplinary continuum, economists place much more weight on résumés because of the hierarchical nature of economics, which relies heavily on explicit rankings by journals, departments, sub-areas or methods and so forth, and widely shared quality indicators. Committee members therefore tend to refer to those standardized scales of merit in assessing candidates. In particular, the number and type of articles published by candidates serve as a generic measure of scientific merit. In some cases, a good résumé can even make up for the shortcomings of a project. It's really interesting.

Still in the U15 group, there is a certain economist from Alberta. That's good, because all the data here is anonymized, as requested. We know the location, the grouping and the discipline, but we don't have the names. That's why the motion calls for access to that data. This is scientific data that is validated by researchers. The request is realistic—I have it before me—because it comes from a federally funded, certified, independent researcher.

This economist said he thinks it can sometimes play a compensatory role in the case of a rather weak or questionable project, perhaps not weak, but to counterbalance potential concerns about the project's content. He believes that it may not be clearly worded, which he is not entirely convinced of, because it was expected. However, the authors published an article in Econometrica, so he's willing to give them the benefit of the doubt to some extent.

That's interesting, isn't it? The strength of a research project is also analyzed based on a researcher having published in a certain journal. That affects the merit of a researcher's project. We thought the project seemed weak, but since the researcher has already published an article in a reputable journal, we're going to give him a pat on the back and award him funding.

● (28050)

The discipline of economics also shows that funding is part of a much larger academic market, where prestige and resources are already distributed unequally. The role of the curriculum vitae in university recruitment combined with the fact that universities and departments are themselves ranked on their excellence—

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting.

Now it's on. That's fine.

Go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you for listening to me carefully, Madam Chair.

Let me repeat what I said: The role of the curriculum vitae in university recruitment, combined with the fact that universities and departments are themselves ranked on their excellence, means that economics committees show and strengthen pre-existing hierarchies.

I'm going to quote a Quebec researcher, an economist in the U15 Canada group. It's quite easy to know, because there are three universities in Quebec that are part of that group, one is anglophone and the two others are francophones. This researcher said that there are simply more projects coming from prestigious universities and that he doesn't think they have a direct advantage, but that faculty members at large universities tend to be a little more powerful. It is hard for me to repeat that to you with a straight face. This is an economist, a researcher, saying this in testimony, in interviews with other independent researchers. Again, he said that faculty members at large universities tend to be a bit more powerful.

The University of British Columbia, for example, competes every year for the best new doctoral students on the labour market—

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. I just need to inform members about one thing, and then you can continue.

This is for members' information. We have scheduled witnesses for the study on the governance and accountability of federal science policy and institutions for this coming Thursday, March 12.

For the first panel, we have scheduled the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. For the second panel, we have the Canada Foundation for Innovation. We also have the National Research Council of Canada and Mona Nemer from the Office of the Chief Science Advisor.

If this meeting continues with this committee business, we will have to cancel these witnesses, and then I'm not sure when they will be available. I just want to bring to everyone's attention that these witnesses are scheduled for Thursday and that if this meeting continues, we will have to cancel that Thursday meeting.

Thank you. You can go ahead.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

Personally, I would be very curious to hear the chief science adviser tell us what she thinks of a government that refuses to share data with researchers. That would be my question for her.

In November, she told us that she was currently living a nightmare because the government is making decisions that are not based on science or—

[*English*]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. You should continue on the topic of this study. I just wanted to inform the members so that everyone knew, just in case the meeting is cancelled or rescheduled.

Please go ahead and continue on topic.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, thank you for allowing me to open the discussion on the importance of considering the chief science adviser's scientific recommendations. You mentioned that it's important to consider the possibility of her appearing before the committee this Thursday. I would therefore like to remind you of the important points she raised with us in November. According to what she told us, the government is currently not acting appropriately and isn't taking her scientific expertise into account when it comes to major projects of national interest. I remember her saying that the situation was a nightmare. Those were her words. So I would still like to continue my important presentation on the consequences of not having access to data when we want to be able to establish the best possible public policies.

As I mentioned, an economics researcher who is part of the U15 group and is based in Quebec said that faculty members at major universities tend to have a bit more influence. Let me remind you, for example, that the University of British Columbia competes every year for the best new doctoral students on the job market. When they recruit one, the candidate is excellent from the start. The projects coming from there and the calibre of the candidates are quite high. Obviously, when you have a better chance of securing financial support, you're able to develop better and have the necessary tools.

Compared to history and economics, certain disciplines such as sociology and political science place a more balanced emphasis on CVs and research proposals in their evaluations. The nature of their evaluations also differs when assessing CVs. Many sociologists and political scientists adopt a more diverse view of publications, emphasizing that journal articles or academic works aren't the only valuable outputs. Public outreach publications, such as reports intended for government or community groups, are considered relevant. They also emphasize elements deemed less important by historians and economists, such as supervision of students.

One of them says that, for established colleagues, they pay a lot of attention to their efforts to mentor and supervise students. If someone has had a career as a nurse and has only supervised two people, you could say that they lack experience, that it's not enough, especially since the division of workload and supervision in the departments can be a problem. So he thinks there is a challenge in this area. It is possible to be extremely productive if there is no supervision. It was a Quebec-based sociologist at a university that is not part of the U15 group who said that.

Researchers say that this can be a decisive factor for candidates from smaller universities that don't offer master's or doctoral programs. Although sociologists and political scientists generally reject the hierarchical views of scientific excellence promoted by economists, they do take into account how university affiliation may influence the ability to recruit and train students, and consequently, the feasibility of a project. While respondents in both disciplines generally express some tolerance for alternative training plans, such as involving undergraduate rather than graduate students, it is considered the candidate's responsibility to explain how their working conditions won't hinder the completion of the project. In the absence of clear and convincing justifications, candidates from smaller universities may receive lower scores.

An Ontario-based political scientist who works for a university that isn't part of the U15 even says that this can be detrimental to candidates from smaller universities, because it's not always straightforward. For example, if they say they plan to hire a research assistant but are at a university that doesn't have master's or doctoral students, that can work against their application. He thinks this is simply the reality of being at a smaller university in general.

● (28055)

That's sad to hear, isn't it? Researchers say that's just the way things are for them, that they are at a small university, and that they recognize that the system is more powerful than they are.

Researchers note that university affiliations are also important in determining the type of support that proposals can get before they are even reviewed by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council committees. As a result, even in disciplines such as sociology, where there seems to be a broad consensus that institutional prestige doesn't influence outcomes, reviewers sometimes give more weight to candidates who have secured resources within their university, as this demonstrates the feasibility of their proposal.

According to a sociologist at a non-U15 university in British Columbia, it is quite clear that the university's ranking and reputation can be used to judge the value of a candidate. He can't say for sure if there's an implicit bias on that, but he says it really helps when universities put money on the table to support applications. According to him, when you receive an application and all the support is in kind, such as available rooms and printing services, I think that can hinder a candidacy compared to a university that provides four graduate scholarships of $15,000 each to graduate students to support the project.

That's sad to hear, isn't it? It's the researchers themselves who recognize that they're not on a level playing field with other universities and that the government isn't doing anything in that regard to help them.

In this example, we see that the impact of academic inequalities on funding success manifests itself in various ways in the work of Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council committees. Sometimes, affiliation to a prestigious institution is used as a mere indicator of quality and status, particularly in disciplines such as economics, where rankings are clear and reproduced. At other times, it plays a role in assessing the feasibility of projects. As a result, the ability of professors to obtain financial support within their university may be the decisive factor between a successful application and one that is rejected.

Again, awareness and acceptance of the role of academic affiliation varies across disciplines, with these dynamics more or less aligned with the cultural frameworks and categories specific to each discipline. This is consistent with quantitative observations that the prestige and size of universities matter more in some disciplines than in others. Nevertheless, despite these variations, many committee members interviewed cited situations where affiliation to a prestigious institution was a net benefit in funding competitions.

I'm getting to the conclusion.

This study shows a close link between university hierarchies and the success of grant applications in the humanities and social sciences. Data from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council indicates that applications from researchers affiliated with U3 universities—McGill University, the University of British Columbia and the University of Toronto—accounted for 19.2% of all submissions, but 24.6% of funded projects.

To recap, there's an imbalance here, and it's noted in the observations of the findings of this important study.

On the other hand, applications from candidates outside the U15 constitute 46.4%, of the submissions, but only 39.3%, of the grants awarded. The logistical regression shows that the effect of academic hierarchies persists, even in the face of other factors. In fact, the prestige of the university is, after previous funding, the most influential factor.

Compared to professors affiliated with universities affiliated with U3, McGill University, the University of Toronto and the University of British Columbia, this predicted probability is 43.60%. Candidates from U12 universities have a lower probability of success than 37.7%, while those from non-U15 universities face an even greater disadvantage of 32.7%.

● (28100)

When they do secure funding, candidates from less prestigious institutions also receive less money than their colleagues from top-tier universities. Under the insight grants program, candidates affiliated with U3 universities receive an average of $67,286, nearly $20,000 more than the average funding received by their colleagues at non-U15 institutions, which is $48,488. For candidates at U12 institutions, which exclude the three largest universities, the figure is $55,817. These patterns contribute to the process of cumulative advantage or disadvantage in the sciences.

The initial argument put forward was that grant reviewers used university affiliation as a judgment tool to mitigate the uncertainty inherent in evaluating applications. However, the correlation between academic prestige and outcomes is not as strong across all disciplines. While in economics and management, candidates from outside the U15 are respectively about half as likely and one-third as likely to secure funding, no statistically significant advantage is observed in anthropology or geography. That's quite interesting. Anthropology and geography are important disciplines, and they aren't affected by these issues.

Also in the study's conclusion, the researchers note that interviews with members of evaluation committees helped them understand these intertwined mechanisms. As demonstrated, the varying weight given to university affiliation across disciplines reflects a tension in evaluation practices: while disciplines such as economics focus more on CVs, others such as history prioritize the research proposal. Other disciplines, including sociology and political science, fall somewhere between these two extremes.

When evaluating CVs, sociologists and political scientists also take a broader view of scientific contributions, valuing not only journal articles and books, but also popular science publications and activities such as government reports and community engagement. They also prioritize elements, such as supervising students, that are less highly valued by historians and economists. That's interesting.

Although the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council issues formal, standardized evaluation criteria, the rules established by the agency, that is, the government, are then interpreted and applied differently by the committees, which operate as decentralized and semi-autonomous entities. This is a serious matter. You understand that this means that people could have biases, and this is confirmed here by independent researchers, funded by the government, once again, and accredited by ethics committees. I therefore believe there is cause to explore this topic further.

It is crucial to distinguish between the general standards adopted by funding agencies and the situated standards that reviewers rely on to evaluate and rank applications. This underscores the importance of a discipline-based approach to science that, above all, acknowledges the normative dimension of evaluation. By highlighting the fact that review practices are inherently localized and limited, the findings underscore the need to take disciplinary cultures into account, both in research and in efforts to reform scientific institutions. This is interesting, since that is precisely our role here: the reform of scientific institutions.

● (28105)

The findings also highlight the importance of the evaluation context in perpetuating social inequalities in science. Given the competitive nature of funding applications, evaluators must find a way to assess proposals fairly and make them comparable so that they can be ranked by relative merit. Relying on generic criteria, such as academic prestige or publications in reputable journals, allows committees to rank candidates while reducing uncertainty. It's important to note that these signals of value are largely qualitative in nature and don't need to rely on controversial bibliometrics. As such, it is doubtful that a shift to narrative-style CVs would significantly mitigate this phenomenon.

I'm going to repeat this passage, Madam Chair, so that it's clearly understood, because there are people who have come here—even members of the government—and told us that narrative CVs would solve everything. We have a group of researchers here telling us the opposite: they think it's doubtful that a shift to narrative-style CVs would significantly mitigate this phenomenon, which we've been talking about since the beginning of this meeting, namely, the hierarchy of universities and the related funding.

Given the potentially negative consequences and the diminishing marginal returns associated with the concentration of funding, it's important to understand the processes at play. While symbolic capital alone can influence outcomes, it is likely that the concentration of funding within a small group of universities is not the result of evaluation practices within committees. This adds an important nuance to the discussion.

University affiliations provide access to various forms of capital that shape candidates' prospects: symbolic capital linked to academic prestige, economic capital linked to internal funding and material support, and social capital linked to privileged access to networks of experts and disciplinary knowledge. Since disciplinary evaluation rules are partly informal and unwritten, access to insider knowledge is essential for crafting an application that meets the committee's expectations. Several members of committees from less prestigious institutions reported that they shared the knowledge gained from their experience on the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council with their colleagues, with the aim of improving their chances of securing grants.

So you can see the pattern: researchers who have gone through the system, which is imperfect and unequal, tell other researchers not to do the same thing as they did because they could be penalized.

The patterns observed could also be a direct result of the structure of the Canadian academic market. That's really interesting. Some interviewees suggested that researchers with the most valued characteristics were concentrated in the largest and most prestigious universities, and that unequal chances of success were therefore already built into the system by the time applications were reviewed. This is important. There is an unequal structure in place, and another one is being added in terms of access to research funding.

Furthermore, disparate working conditions from one university to another, particularly with regard to teaching load, administrative workload, research support and internal funding, could widen the gap even further. However, this explanation is not entirely convincing. The concentration of high-performing researchers in a small group of universities cannot be separated from the fact that prestigious affiliations can increase scientific productivity and rewards for researchers throughout their careers.

● (28110)

Assuming that scholars who are in the U3 have more merit, as the representatives of some disciplines do, is in effect a self-fulfilling prophecy. This is particularly clear in disciplines where university hierarchies are closely linked to valued publication patterns, which in turn serve as a key criterion for allocating funding. For instance, if review committees in economics placed less emphasis on CVs, specifically on past publications in a restricted list of English-speaking journals—the "tyranny of the top five"—applicants from less prestigious institutions would likely exhibit higher success rates. This is exactly what we observe in history, where the importance given to research projects during SSHRC evaluations mitigates the correlation between university prestige and success rates. Not that historians do not gauge applicants' CVs as well. Scholars who have published one or multiple monographs, depending on their career stage, are clearly valued by the committees. Yet, because historians do not abide by a clear ranking of publications and publishing houses, diverse research profiles can be valued and regarded as equally respectable. These disciplinary contrasts show that the greater success of researchers from the most prestigious universities does not reflect inherently greater merit, but rather the way merit is defined and assessed within the scientific field—a social construct that varies across disciplines and depends on the alignment between institutional positions, publication patterns, and the prevailing scientific hierarchies within each discipline.

This important study was carried out by Professor Julien Larregue and Professor Alice Pavie in 2025 with Government of Canada funding through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The title is "Prestige at Play: University Hierarchies and the Reproduction of Funding Inequalities", and it appeared in the Canadian Review of Sociology.

I also want to discuss another important response we received from the government during our study on the distribution of research funding. That response highlighted the inequities in the federal research funding system.

Madam Chair, in a letter addressed to you, the government responded to a study we did on the distribution of federal funding among Canada's post-secondary institutions. That study was presented to the House of Commons on September 15, 2025.

With regard to the first recommendation regarding the modernization of the federal research support system, which we've been talking about since the beginning of the study, the government says the following:

> The Government agrees in principle with the Committee's recommendation to implement the recommendations of the report from the Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System, and ensure that the composition of the future advisory council on science and industry is representative of the entire research ecosystem.

This report, which we commonly refer to as the Bouchard report, was published in 2023, which was three years ago. The letter goes on to say:

> The Government recognizes that an effective research support system is critical to Canada's prosperity. We know that science is increasingly key to addressing the complex challenges facing Canada and the world.

That's interesting because, in the last budget, the federal government reduced its investments. This is the first inconsistency I'd like to point out. When we say that something is increasingly key, we don't usually reduce the support we provide. The letter goes on to say:

● (28115)

> As emerging technologies transform societies and economies, Canada must seize the moment. Our future success depends on our ability to mobilize science and research across disciplines and sectors to develop transformative solutions to pressing challenges, nurture talent, plug into global science networks, and effectively commercialize homegrown ideas.

It's good to commercialize homegrown ideas, but, in the last federal budget, the government cut funding for the granting agencies by 2% and invested $1.7 billion to attract foreign researchers. We can't commercialize homegrown ideas because we're not adequately supporting the scientific researchers who are already here, on Canadian soil. The letter goes on to say:

> The Advisory Panel on the Federal Research Support System (the Advisory Panel) was launched in October 2022 to provide independent expert advice to the Government to modernize the system. The Panel's report, released in March 2023, provided 21 recommendations to enhance research excellence while enabling greater agility, flexibility, and responsiveness to support transformative research and innovation. This included structural change to enhance strategic coordination and agility; strategic direction and advice to orient the system in a common direction; modernized, streamlined programming to enhance effectiveness and reduce the burden on researchers; a new paradigm to support Canada's major research facilities (MRFs); and, re-investment in research and talent to bolster success.

However, I can tell you that that is not what the government did. Consider this: The government commissioned people to do an analysis, but it's not following the recommendations of that analysis. This is the second inconsistency. I'll continue:

> Budget 2024 announced the government's intent to create a new capstone research funding organization….

That was a recommendation in the Bouchard report, which came out three years ago, but there's still nothing on the horizon. The third inconsistency is that the government says it's doing things, but doesn't actually do things. There are several measures that the government says it has taken, but that it has not actually taken. I'll continue to read the government's response to the study on the distribution of federal funding among Canada's post-secondary institutions:

> The federal granting agencies led engagement with the research community in summer 2024 to seek feedback on the proposed capstone organization, which was synthesized in a "What We Heard" report, released in October 2024.

I don't know what the government heard, but it must not have heard much, because it hasn't implemented the recommendations in that report. I'll continue:

> The Government's commitment to work to implement the capstone research funding organization was reaffirmed in Budget 2025.

It's hard not to laugh at the government's ad hockery. Let's recap. In 2023, a report was published. In 2024, the government said it would implement the report's recommendations. In 2025, it said it was still thinking about implementing the recommendations. For three years now, the government has been thinking about setting up an organization it said it might set up. We know what the government members are saying: They want to be world leaders in science. However, it has taken then more than three years to decide whether or not to create a new capstone organization that was talked about in a report they themselves requested. That's truly unbelievable. I'm trying not to laugh. I'm laughing, but not because it's funny. I'm sure folks will understand, because we witness ad hockery here every day. I'll continue reading the government's response:

> Significant investments have also been made to [deliver] on the Advisory Panel's recommendations to boost the budgets of the granting agencies and increase levels of support for talent.

● (28120)

This is another thing I'd like the government people to explain to me. In the last budget, budget 2025, the government announced a 2% reduction in funding for the granting agencies, yet it seems awfully proud of its plan to invest $1.7 billion to attract 1,000 new researchers. I look forward to seeing the results, but I have my doubts. When those researchers see the quality of our infrastructure, I'm guessing they'll take pictures to share with their friends and have a few laughs. I don't want that to happen. However, there's no guarantee these researchers will come or be persuaded to stay. The government seems to be saying that applications are being accepted until the end of March and that researchers need only publish and they'll have an opportunity to come to Canada.

I'll continue reading the government's response, in which it announced an investment of "$1 billion over 13 years to the federal granting agencies to launch an accelerated research Chairs initiative to recruit exceptional international researchers to Canadian universities".

I think it would still be useful to continue this study and analyze the possibility of having access to the essential data.

In response to our study, the government did an inventory of its somewhat scattered investments, but it says, "Budget 2025 also noted that the government will examine whether Canada's research ecosystem requires further support to retain talent."

This committee did a study and found that scholarships had not been indexed at all in 20 years. The government thinks it has the right conditions to retain this talent because it indexed graduate scholarships for the first time in 20 years. According to the data we have, some 40% of postdoctoral students are thinking of going to other countries because conditions here aren't favourable. I think it's worth reconsidering what the government says in this response, or speeding things up, because what it's saying conflicts with what it's doing. I'll go on:

> Addressing the Advisory Panel's recommendation to simplify the suite of talent-focused programs, the Canada Research Training Awards Suite (CRTAS) was launched in March 2025.

That's interesting, because there was an election in March. I'll go on:

> The CRTAS consolidates eleven scholarship and fellowship programs across the three granting agencies into a single streamlined program suite, streamlining the way Canada supports the next generation of research talent and making it easier for students and fellows to access support.

This still doesn't make sense. The government says that students don't need more money or more financial support. They don't need to go abroad to do more research. The government says it's going to streamline things and simplify administrative standards. Apparently it wants to do more with less. If someone from the government can explain to me how that's possible, I'll gladly accept the explanation, but I haven't heard an explanation yet.

There are more responses to the other recommendations, including the one on support for research at smaller institutions, colleges, polytechnics and CEGEPs. I will read from the government's response again:

> Three of the Committee's recommendations focus on enhancing support provided to smaller institutions, colleges, polytechnics, and CEGEPs. This includes college centres for the transfer of technology (CCTTs, known in Quebec as centres collégiaux de transfert de technologie) and Technology Access Centres (TACs), which are organizations affiliated with colleges and CEGEPs that provide applied research and innovation services to local organizations and businesses, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

Madam Chair—

● (28125)

[*English*]

Taleeb Noormohamed: I have a point of order, Madam Chair.

The Chair: MP Noormohamed.

Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Chair, I have a couple of questions on this for you.

One is confirming that the repetition of this fact set is in line with the motion. I think the motion is pretty clear as to what we're supposed to be talking about, and respectfully, we're now getting into the substance of issues that are not part of the motion.

The other question is just to confirm that the time allocated to this meeting means we need to end at 5:30. Is that correct?

The Chair: Yes.

Taleeb Noormohamed: Thank you.

The Chair: We have two more minutes.

[*Translation*]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, I move to adjourn debate.

[*English*]

The Chair: We will have to vote on that.

MP Blanchette-Joncas has moved a motion to adjourn the debate, which is non-debatable. I will ask the clerk to please take a vote on that.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 5; nays 4)

The Chair: The debate on this is adjourned.

For the information of all members, we will have to deal with the letter we received.

MP Noormohamed.

● (28130)

Taleeb Noormohamed: Madam Chair, the issue is that we still haven't.... If we've adjourned debate, we have to vote on this motion, because right now, the translation piece continues to sit in limbo. We haven't dealt with it.

The Chair: We have adjourned debate on this, so we cannot go back right now.

Is it the will of the committee to adjourn the meeting? It's 5:30.

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.