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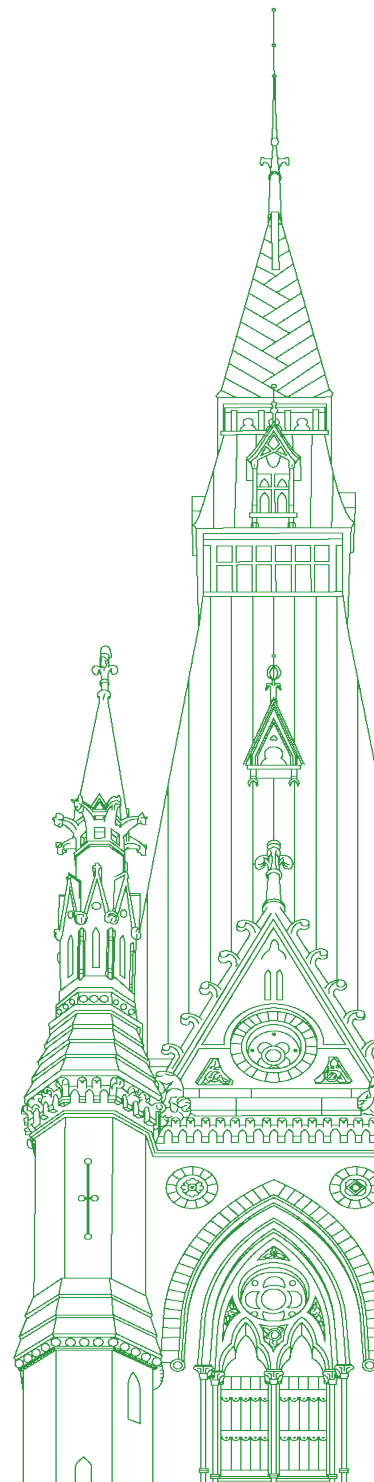
Standing Committee on Science and Research

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Chair: Salma Zahid



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• (1540)

[English]

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

Welcome to meeting number 46 of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Science and Research.

We are meeting today to resume our study on the report of the external advisory panel on the creation and dissemination of scientific information in French.

I would like to make a few comments for the witnesses and 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 make your selection of the appropriate channel for interpretation: “floor”, “English” or “French”. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel. I would like to remind witnesses that committee members may ask questions in either French or English. If you will need interpretation, please take a moment to prepare your earpiece and select the listening channel you need in advance to take full advantage of the time allotted for questions and answers.

I remind you that all comments should be addressed through the chair. For members in the room, if you wish to speak, please raise your hand. For members on Zoom, please use the “raise hand” function. The clerk and I will manage the speaking order as best we can, and we appreciate your patience and understanding in this regard.

With that, I would like to welcome our witnesses for this first panel.

We have, as an individual, Madame Valérie Lapointe Gagnon, full professor of history, Campus Saint-Jean, University of Alberta. She joins us by video conference. We are also joined by Colleges and Institutes Canada, represented today by Pari Johnston, president and chief executive officer, and by Gustave Pinault-Masson, senior policy adviser, government relations and policy research. Third, we have witnesses from Library and Archives Canada, represented by Jasmine Bouchard, assistant deputy minister, user experience, and by Leslie Weir, librarian and archivist of Canada.

Welcome to all the witnesses.

All of you will have five minutes for your opening remarks, and then we will get into a round of questioning.

We will begin with Madame Gagnon.

Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon (Full Professor of History, Campus Saint-Jean, University of Alberta, As an Individual): Good afternoon, everyone.

I would first like to thank you most warmly for the invitation to present my recommendations for your study. I had the great honour of being one of the members of the external advisory panel on the creation and dissemination of scientific information in French, specifically representing the voices of French-speaking researchers in western Canada.

The conclusion of our report is clear: Research in French is a defining feature of Canada at a pivotal moment in our history, when our neighbour is threatening our sovereignty. It is also an indispensable element of soft power for forging links with our francophone and francophile allies around the world, an economic driver for the country, a source of well-being and fulfillment for francophone communities from coast to coast to coast, and a source of reliable data for more informed public policy.

However, substantive equality in the research community is far from being achieved, despite commitments made by the government in 2023, when it recognized the vulnerability of the French language in Canada in the modernized Official Languages Act. At that time, the government committed to ensuring the advancement of the status and use of French in its activities, including in the scientific field.

I would now like to discuss the situation at Campus Saint-Jean, and, more broadly, French-language research in minority-language communities, in order to further emphasize the need to implement the recommendations in our report and achieve substantive equality. I have been a professor of history at the University of Alberta's Campus Saint-Jean for eleven years now. Over the years, I have seen just how poorly understood the mission of our campus—an entity that operates almost entirely in French within a large English-speaking research university that is part of the U15 Canada consortium—has been, both by university administrators and by governments.

At Campus Saint-Jean, our mandate is not merely to educate the next generation. We are also tasked with keeping the French language alive, while it is under threat both within the academic community and across the province. Although our mission is poorly understood, it is essential. Without the contribution of post-secondary institutions in Canada's francophone communities, there would be no teachers to teach in the French-language schools guaranteed under section 23 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. There would be no francophone health care staff to care for an aging population that loses its bearings when not treated in its own language. There would be no research documenting the realities of these groups, who are often marginalized and overlooked in studies conducted by the majority.

One of the issues most important to me is the development of a strong new generation of leaders who will be able to shape tomorrow's public policies in addressing the essential needs of francophone minority communities. Those who choose to pursue their higher education here at Campus Saint-Jean have testified before our committee that they often do not benefit from the same support or opportunities as their peers studying in the majority language. Although we are very pleased to benefit from the support of the SARF—the Acfas French-language research support service—the support services are not as well developed, and very few scholarships are awarded by the three granting councils to support the academic journeys of those who choose to pursue higher education in French outside Quebec.

Having addressed the issue of funding, we must next turn our attention to the state of training. Our report highlights inequalities regarding the variety and availability of programs and course options within Canada's minority francophone communities. Many people wishing to study in French are therefore forced to move abroad, leading to a brain drain that is detrimental to the vitality of the French language. In fact, only 37% of university students whose mother tongue is French pursue their higher education in French; this is not a large proportion. Others choose to attend an English-speaking university, a choice that distances them from the French language. At Campus Saint-Jean, we do not offer enough courses to enable students to complete their Master of Arts program, which forces them to enrol in English-language courses at the University of Alberta. This situation poses a problem for our multicultural student body, as many newcomers, particularly those from Africa, are not proficient in English. This group therefore finds itself marginalized.

Our master's and doctoral students are incredibly resilient and inspiring. They explore topics that only people in their situation would have thought to study: burnout among French-speaking elementary school teachers in Alberta, or financial literacy support for French-speaking newcomers to Alberta. Once they have completed their studies, these students wish to publish their research. However, they face a dilemma: If they wish to publish in English in major journals with a high impact factor, they must broaden the scope of their research, as the francophone population in Alberta is often considered to be of only marginal significance; alternatively, they must turn to francophone journals. Yet our report clearly demonstrates, once again, just how fragile the French-language publishing ecosystem has become in recent years.

Lastly, once these students have completed their studies, will there even be jobs available for them, given the precarious state of post-secondary institutions in Canada's French-speaking communities?

• (1545)

The recommendations set out in the advisory panel's report aim to facilitate the pathways for students—as I have just outlined—and to strengthen research that is essential to the flourishing of francophone communities across the country. They seek to redress the structural inequalities that arise at every stage of the journey for those who choose French as their language of study and research.

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, but can you wind up, please? Your time is up.

[Translation]

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: Yes.

That is why I now turn to the two recommendations I would like to see implemented.

Firstly, I would like the Government of Canada to accept all of the recommendations and measures proposed by the external advisory panel in order to develop a strategy for French-language research based on our three key principles: research in French is a matter of substantive equality, a driver of economic development and a strategic resource for enhancing Canada's international profile.

Secondly, I would like the Government of Canada to publish a road map for implementing the report, including a timeline for the next steps and the measures to be taken.

Thank you very much for your attention.

[English]

The Chair: With that, we will go to Colleges and Institutes Canada.

Ms. Johnston, please go ahead. You will have five minutes for your opening remarks.

[Translation]

Pari Johnston (President and Chief Executive Officer, Colleges and Institutes Canada): Madam Chair, ladies and gentlemen of the committee, thank you for inviting Colleges and Institutes Canada, or CICan, to give evidence before the committee for this important inquiry. We are delighted to be able to contribute once again to your vital work.

CICan is the national voice for Canada's public colleges, institutes, CEGEPs, polytechnic institutions and indigenous post-secondary institutions. Our network comprises 39 French-language institutions, eight of which are located in minority-language communities. That is why we enthusiastically welcomed the advisory panel's report.

We are particularly pleased to see that the report recognizes the contribution made by colleges and CEGEPs in Canada's francophone communities to the socio-economic development of their local areas. By carrying out applied research programs in French in partnership with businesses and community organizations, they help to solve practical problems and develop solutions tailored to local circumstances. In doing so, they ensure that public investment in research yields tangible benefits, such as advances in social innovation, the adoption of technologies by small and medium-sized enterprises, and the development of a workforce with highly sought-after technical skills.

The report, however, rightly provides a rigorous analysis of the regulatory, financial and organizational barriers that limit the full potential of French-language research, including applied research. It rightly points out that French-language research is not a peripheral cultural issue. It concerns genuine equality, the vitality of francophone communities and Canada's ability to fully harness its scientific and innovation potential.

When scientific knowledge is generated and disseminated in French, francophone businesses, public institutions and community organizations are better placed to utilize it and benefit from it. This is why it is crucial for Canada to continue supporting research in French. To this end, CIGan recommends that the committee endorse the advisory panel's recommendations and support their swift implementation. It is, however, important that colleges and CEGEPs in the Canadian francophonie are involved as full partners in the governance mechanisms, dedicated investments and support measures proposed by the advisory panel.

This should take three forms.

Firstly, the future secretariat for the coordination of French-language research should have a clear mandate, defined responsibilities and balanced representation, including stakeholders from the college sector.

Secondly, investment in the fund to support and promote French-language research should support applied research in colleges in an equitable manner.

Thirdly, granting councils must ensure genuine disciplinary and linguistic expertise within evaluation committees, while also reviewing their evaluation criteria to better recognize the specific impacts of applied research. This includes, in particular, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, adopting new technologies and strengthening local community capacities.

Adopting these recommendations would help ensure that research conducted in French not only strengthens Canada's scientific capabilities, but also enhances the productivity of small and medium-sized enterprises and the economic prosperity of francophone communities across the country.

Thank you for your time. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

• (1550)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to Library and Archives of Canada.

Ms. Weir, please go ahead. You have five minutes for your opening remarks.

Leslie Weir (Librarian and Archivist of Canada, Library and Archives of Canada): Madam Chair, members of the committee, ladies and gentlemen, thank you so much for inviting us to appear before the committee.

I am Leslie Weir. I'm the Librarian and Archivist of Canada, commonly called LAC. I'm joined today by Jasmine Bouchard, the assistant deputy minister responsible for user experience.

LAC's mandate is to preserve and promote Canada's documentary heritage, serve as an enduring and accessible source of knowledge for all, and act as the permanent memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions while ensuring that the many voices that make up our history are represented in our collective memory.

Beyond its role as steward of Canada's documentary heritage, LAC also serves as an essential national research infrastructure. Our collections constitute unique primary sources that support research across a large, wide range of fields, including history, social sciences, government studies, genealogy, indigenous studies and francophone studies. As a member of the Canadian Association of Research Libraries, or CARL, LAC recognizes that a strong and vibrant francophone research ecosystem is essential to the creation, dissemination and preservation of knowledge in Canada.

• (1555)

[Translation]

We collectively recognize the importance of ensuring that French-language research is visible, discoverable and accessible to researchers, students and communities across the country.

To support these efforts, representatives from Library and Archives Canada participated in the committee's consultations in December 2025. During these consultations, Library and Archives Canada highlighted several initiatives that contribute to the dissemination of scientific knowledge in French and support francophone and francophile researchers, including Theses Canada, the Price-McIntosh Bursary and the Archives of New France.

Library and Archives Canada will continue its efforts to support the vitality and profile of French-language research, including by ensuring the acquisition of works in French, digitizing French-language archival holdings, integrating a francophone perspective into the exploration of opportunities offered by artificial intelligence, strengthening collaboration with universities and the research community, expanding research training activities within Library and Archives Canada's collections, and by offering public programming in both official languages that showcase Canada's francophone communities.

[English]

LAC is currently reviewing the recommendations of the external advisory committee to identify the most effective ways to support and strengthen French-language scientific research in Canada. While many of the objectives do align closely with LAC's commitment to advancing access to knowledge in French, we believe careful consideration will be required to assess the implementation approaches, resource implications and opportunities for collaboration across the existing research ecosystem.

LAC remains committed to contributing to this objective in partnership with universities, research organizations and francophone communities across the country.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, we will begin our first round of questions with MP Baldinelli.

Please go ahead, MP Baldinelli.

Tony Baldinelli (Niagara Falls—Niagara-on-the-Lake, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair. I will be splitting my time with my colleague, the member for Cambridge.

Thank you to our witnesses.

I have a bit of housekeeping. I want to formally move my motion of October 6. It will be the basis, I hope, with the support of my colleagues, for the next study we'll be doing at this committee.

If I could, I'd like to have this shared with everyone.

With my colleagues' indulgence, we can have this supported. This will be the basis for our clerk to begin work on our next study.

While that's going on, I'll read into the record the motion of October 6:

That the Standing Committee on Science and Research undertake a study of no less than 4 meetings to identify and assess risks and threats to Canadian science and research in federal departments, agencies, and post-secondary institutions relating to intellectual property, research, and sensitive and confidential information that supports Canadian national security and sovereignty, including risks and threats from foreign espionage, cyber threats, unauthorized access, theft, and other forms of interference; that the Committee report its findings and recommendations to the House; and that the committee request a government response.

The Chair: Thank you, MP Baldinelli.

Go ahead, MP Deschênes-Thériault.

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault (Madawaska—Restigouche, Lib.): Madam Chair, we are ready to proceed and to support the motion.

[English]

The Chair: Do we have the consent of the committee members to adopt the motion?

(Motion agreed to)

Tony Baldinelli: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I will now cede the floor to my colleague from Cambridge.

The Chair: Thank you.

Connie Cody (Cambridge, CPC): Thank you.

Through you, Chair, I want to welcome the witnesses here today.

I really appreciate your coming here to share your knowledge and expertise.

One component to the mandate of Library and Archives of Canada, which is why I'm going to direct this question to Leslie Weir, is to be a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all, contributing to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada as a free and democratic society. What type of knowledge does the library collect and preserve?

● (1600)

Leslie Weir: Library and Archives Canada has the fifth-largest heritage collection in the world. We have 22 million books. We have 250 linear kilometres of archives. We also hold 425,000 works of art, 30 million photographs, and the list goes on. We have the records from 370 different government entities, of which about 170 are still in operation. We collect private archives that try to reflect the stories of the people of Canada from different communities. We also have a legal deposit, where we collect every book that is published in Canada. That includes books that are published in English, French and other languages. We certainly make all efforts to collect, as well, materials in indigenous languages.

I hope that helps clarify our—

Connie Cody: Yes, thank you.

You're saying that you collect all this information. How does the library acquire this knowledge and information?

Leslie Weir: The library acquires its collections through transfers from federal government departments, once their records are no longer of operational use. We also acquire archives from private citizens and organizations across the country, which are normally donated to us. We do not have an acquisitions budget in 2026, although we have had in the past. Of course, we receive all the books published in Canada through legal deposit.

Connie Cody: I'm curious. Is the information public or secure? For example, who can access it? Can ordinary Canadian citizens access it? Can foreign researchers in Canada access it? Can foreign researchers or foreign entities access it?

Leslie Weir: Many of our collections are openly accessible. They're designed to be available to all the peoples of Canada, but there are many collections that are also available globally. We also have large collections that are restricted, either because of privacy requirements or because of rules around access to information. These collections are highly secured. We run both top secret and secret networks at Library and Archives Canada to ensure the security of these records. The materials we have in our collection are mainly analog—in print—which is fairly important. About 95% of our collections are analog, which means that they're physically controlled in our own buildings, and this does not allow any interference. We have very rigorous control of our digital collections.

Connie Cody: How would someone go about accessing information and knowledge being preserved at the Library and Archives?

Leslie Weir: We have something called “collection search” on our website, which allows people to get access to information that helps them discover what is in our collections and can give them direct access to the electronic resources that are available online. They can also contact Library and Archives Canada, and we can help them find the collections that might be relevant to their areas of interest and research. We have public services that we offer in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Halifax and the national capital region. We have thousands of people who come to visit us in person at those facilities, and we have about three million visitors who contact us virtually.

Connie Cody: Is there any information or knowledge that is off limits, confidential or highly sensitive and needs protection?

Leslie Weir: Yes, there's a great deal of information that falls under all three of those categories. This is information we ensure is protected appropriately, either through physically controlling the print materials or through ensuring that we have very high levels of security on our digital collections.

I will say that, for those collections that we preserve and are looking to maintain in perpetuity, we keep multiple copies, and we have copies that are off-line and are not, in fact, connected to any networks.

Connie Cody: A library preserves original knowledge. AI increasingly interprets knowledge for users.

Are you concerned that future researchers may rely on AI-generated summaries rather than consulting original Canadian sources?

• (1605)

Leslie Weir: Yes, I'm obsessed with this question.

We know that, in February, Google announced that more than one billion searchers worldwide on the web—and these are general researchers, not research researchers—were reading only the AI-generated summary. This is of grave concern to me and to anyone who works in a library or an archive, because it's extremely important that, in Canada, we have critical thinkers and that people know how to research, discover and find information that will help them develop their own ideas and make their own decisions.

This is a concern, definitely, in terms of the ethical use of AI in a responsible way.

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, we will go to MP Deschênes-Thériault for six minutes.

Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

Ms. Lapointe Gagnon, as you know, in 2023 we undertook an ambitious modernization of the Official Languages Act, guided by the principle of substantive equality between our two official languages.

How do you see the report fitting into this evolution of federal policy on official languages, and how might the report's recommendations support this evolution in the scientific field?

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: Thank you very much for the question.

I believe our report addresses several aspects of the modernized version of the Official Languages Act.

Firstly, the act stipulates that Canadians should have access to high-quality learning experiences in their own language throughout their lives, from early childhood through to post-secondary education. Our report makes recommendations regarding such access. In particular, it recommends investing in post-secondary institutions in Canada's francophone communities so that people have a genuine choice. At present, we can see on the ground that this choice is not fully available. There is a lack of programs, particularly in science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This is highlighted in our report. We need a variety of programs to prevent a brain drain that is very damaging to our communities. Indeed, we know that once people have left and settled in another province to make a life for themselves there, they do not return. I see this every day with the brilliant students at Campus Saint-Jean. We are losing them because we do not have the programs. Either they move to the English-speaking side and eventually lose their French, or they move to Quebec or New Brunswick. This is a gain for Quebec and New Brunswick, but a serious loss for us.

The other element of the modernized version of the act is to promote Canada's bilingual character abroad. We have, in fact, made a recommendation on science diplomacy. Canada needs to adopt a well-developed and concrete science diplomacy policy in both languages. As I mentioned in my brief speech, research is a form of soft power. Researchers are connected all over the world. We must make use of this. The government must be able to utilize this resource that is available on the ground.

There is also support for the creation and dissemination of information in French, which contributes to the advancement of scientific knowledge. This forms part of part VII of the modernized version of the act. Several elements of our report address this, particularly with regard to citizens' access to research. At present, publications are largely dominated by English, but there should at least be summaries in French so that the public can keep abreast of the research being carried out in the field. I recall that we heard evidence about doctors in certain regions of Quebec who do not necessarily have a very good command of English and who find it difficult to access the latest medical research, as it is conducted in English. Therefore, it is even dangerous for people's health not to have access to the latest research, which is conducted in English. Furthermore, the government itself is a major producer of research, but it does not always produce it in both official languages—quite the contrary. Once again, even within the government, the research carried out is overwhelmingly in English.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

I have a second question.

The report contains a series of recommendations. Some are financial in nature, while others relate more to coordination and governance. I would therefore like to hear you explain how each of these recommendations fits together. Furthermore, could we prioritize the recommendations?

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: It is difficult to prioritize them, because everything is interlinked. We are currently seeing that the French-language research ecosystem is ailing because it needs better governance, because it needs better funding and because we need greater transparency in the data to understand exactly where action is needed to turn the situation around.

So, if we remove part of the remedy, I think the problem will continue to spread. We must view these recommendations as a whole. We cannot eliminate one part and prioritize another. We need a secretariat to coordinate all the recommendations, we need targeted investment to meet needs on the ground and we also need greater transparency and exemplary behaviour from the government. There is nothing here that could not be prioritized at this time.

• (1610)

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

I shall now address the representatives from Library and Archives Canada.

In the report, measure 7, which concerns outreach, proposes the creation of a national repository of summaries of popular science articles in both official languages for all articles resulting from research funded by the Canadian government.

How do you view this recommendation in the report?

Leslie Weir: Thank you very much for that question.

My colleague Jasmine Bouchard was part of our group of representatives who were involved in the consultations. So I'll ask her to answer your question.

Jasmine Bouchard (Assistant Deputy Minister, User Experience, Library and Archives of Canada): Thank you very much for the question.

We were very interested in this recommendation from the report. It is a very interesting issue. There are many directories of research articles in French in Canada. There are several such tools, and I think reading the report made us realize that there was no single portal where all this material could easily be found by a researcher.

We understand the complexity of conducting research in French. We wish to get in touch with all the partners currently running these portals to see which solution would be the simplest and most effective way to facilitate research.

So, we wish to explore this recommendation further at this stage.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Next, I would like to hear your views on the recommendation regarding the Theses Canada program, which calls for long bilingual abstracts to be required for theses deposited with Library and Archives Canada.

Jasmine Bouchard: The Theses Canada project is a tool, and people voluntarily deposit their material in the Library and Archives Canada collection. So we are certainly keen to avoid creating any barriers that might prevent people from depositing their research.

That said, we believe that artificial intelligence, in particular, could open up new opportunities for us—provided we use it responsibly—to maximize the impact of the theses deposited in our repository. So, this is an avenue we are interested in, and we will explore it as a solution for the future and in response to the recommendation.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we will proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for six minutes.

Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas (Rimouski-Neigette—Mitis—Matapédia—Les Basques, BQ): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to welcome the witnesses who are with us today.

My first question is for the representatives from Colleges and Institutes Canada.

Members of the CCTT Network—the Network of College Centres for Technology Transfer—gave evidence before the Standing Committee on Science and Research in 2025. They informed us that, since 2012, technology access centres in Quebec have been subject to a federal funding cap of \$100,000 per year, compared with \$350,000 per year elsewhere in Canada.

I would like you to explain to us the implications of this shortfall, particularly in terms of our ability to carry out research in French and to support small and medium-sized enterprises that are predominantly French-speaking.

Pari Johnston: Thank you for the question.

It certainly has had a significant impact on CCTT partners. That is why we have worked with the CCTT Network to recommend that the same funding cap be applied to all CCTTs and technology access centres, so that they can have better resources to meet the needs of their communities.

I believe that, in the funding agencies' response to the report regarding what you have just mentioned, they committed to establishing the same national funding ceiling for all projects, precisely to address this discrepancy in the case of the CCTTs.

Mr. Pinault-Masson, would you like to add anything?

Gustave Pinault-Masson (Senior Policy Advisor, Government Relations and Policy Research, Colleges and Institutes Canada): Yes. I would like to clarify that it is as part of the response and action plan from the management of the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, or NSERC, regarding the evaluation of the College and Community Innovation Program that this commitment to address the recommendation to equalize the grants awarded to technology access centres has been made.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Do you agree that an imbalance in funding also hinders the development of research in French?

Pari Johnston: I think so, and that's why we strongly support the advisory panel's recommendations. It is very important to have resources that directly address the needs of small and medium-sized businesses and community organizations in French. We are very pleased to see that we'll have the same resources for our members who have CCTTs.

• (1615)

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I understand.

Another issue the report highlights is that college research receives only about 4% of federal research funding. I would like you to tell us about the consequences of this low percentage of funding on the development of research in French, particularly in CEGEPs and college centres for technology transfer in Quebec.

Pari Johnston: That's why Colleges and Institutes Canada, its partners in the CCTT network and its other partners in the post-secondary sector that represent college interests are calling for increased investment in NSERC programs for our college program. On the other hand, we want to improve our members' eligibility for other granting agency programs that support partnership and impact programs.

We definitely have a lot of waiting lists for small and medium-sized businesses that would like to work with our research centres and CCTTs, and we would always like to help them because our approach is to always work with our partners. It's in our pre-budget submission for budget 2026. We have a recommendation that there be more eligibility for other granting agency programs to respond to this finding.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Noted.

I'll ask a very specific question. The report shows that 46% of applications to the NSERC component of the college and community innovation program were written in French, but 98% of those applications in French came from Quebec.

In your opinion, what eligibility rule or federal criterion still poorly reflects the reality of the Quebec model, which is based on CEGEPs and, in particular, CCTTs?

Pari Johnston: That's a good question. I would like my colleague Gustave Pinault-Masson to answer it.

Gustave Pinault-Masson: I would say that the college and community innovation program is an exemplary program in terms of the proportion of applications in French submitted under the program.

I think it's the same problem we're seeing in universities: There's still a perception that an application submitted in English is more likely to result in a grant. So, unfortunately, many researchers will make the effort to translate their grant application into English, since they think they will have a better chance of obtaining funding.

In the college and community innovation program, there are no criteria that limit research in French or that put it at a disadvantage, but I think it's simply a matter of perception and expected results.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Understood.

Let's now talk about low participation in French in the health care field. The report also mentions that only two applications in French were submitted in four years, from 2020 to 2024, for college and community innovation program grants funded by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

[English]

The Chair: You have 20 seconds left.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Both were from Quebec.

In your opinion, what obstacles would explain this low participation rate?

Gustave Pinault-Masson: In terms of CIHR programs, I think the obstacles are numerous. We can come back to that. There are issues in terms of eligibility criteria, evaluation processes, evaluation criteria, the composition of panels that review funding applications, as well as in terms of the complexity of the problems. Colleges tend to make their submissions, even in health, directly to NSERC.

[English]

The Chair: Your time is up.

With that, we will start our second round.

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

Vincent Ho (Richmond Hill South, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

This report on the dissemination of scientific information in French mentions the word “diversity” 32 times and the word “racialized” 22 times. It's written like a DEI manual because its recommendations, on multiple occasions, call on the federal government to adopt more race-based scholarships for racialized students and race-based hiring quotas for racialized professors as a means to achieve social justice in the next generation.

Ms. Weir, Library and Archives Canada's own departmental plan from 2022, which was signed off by you, says that your department is committed to “combatting systemic racism and discrimination of all types”. The term “systemic racism” is mentioned 38 times in your department's own annual plan.

I want to understand what you mean by that. Do you believe systemic racism currently exists within your own department?

Leslie Weir: I believe that, historically, archives and libraries have often focused on collecting materials that represent whoever is in power. If you look at many of the archives across Canada that are related especially to government records, they often focus on those who are in power, and sometimes the stories of other people are not told. There has been—

• (1620)

Vincent Ho: Is your department systemically racist? You are still part of the government. It's still a department. It's still—

Leslie Weir: I do not believe that our department is systemically racist. I believe that, in fact, we are trying to ensure—

Vincent Ho: Why does your department plan have a commitment to combatting systemic racism if your department is not systemically racist?

Leslie Weir: This was defined as a priority for the government at the time, and we were aligning our priorities with those that the government had....

Vincent Ho: Do you have an example of systemic racism—maybe not in your department, because you said it doesn't exist—that you find in your work?

Leslie Weir: It might be better to ask the Black executives network of APEX. They could probably provide you some good examples.

Vincent Ho: Okay.

How does your department define systemic racism?

Leslie Weir: We would define this as the fact that there may well be, both in terms of people's attitudes and their assumptions, when they may be using microaggressions against people—

Vincent Ho: Does a policy or a statement have to be intentionally racist or intentionally discriminatory to be considered systemic racism?

Leslie Weir: I'm sorry. I don't understand your question.

Vincent Ho: Does a policy have to intentionally discriminate on the basis of race for it to be considered systemic racism?

Leslie Weir: No.

Vincent Ho: Okay. That leads me to my next question.

I'm taking an example directly from the report we're studying today, which is the indigenous and Black engineering technology

Ph.D. program called IBET. The report calls for the adoption of more programs like these. This is a program that offers substantial doctoral fellowships in engineering and technology; however, its eligibility rules specify that applicants must self-identify as Black or indigenous.

Do you consider this program to be systemically racist or a form of systemic racism?

Leslie Weir: I don't have an opinion on that.

Vincent Ho: You don't have an opinion?

Leslie Weir: No, I don't.

Vincent Ho: You just told me that a policy doesn't even need to be explicitly racist to be considered systemic racism. Let's take that as fact, but this policy specifically singles out two identity groups. If you don't belong to those identity groups, you can't even apply for these fellowships.

Do you consider this policy, which is explicit in its criteria, to be a form of systemic racism?

Leslie Weir: I don't have an opinion on that.

Vincent Ho: Well, you seem to have a lot of opinions on a lot of other things.

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting.

We cannot be rude to our witnesses. Whatever opinion the witnesses have, that's their personal opinion.

Vincent Ho: Are you stopping the clock?

The Chair: Yes.

Please be mindful of that. Thank you.

Vincent Ho: I'm asking you whether this would fall under your department's definition of systemic racism. Your department does carry a definition of systemic racism. It's similar to what you've described. You described it in short.

Would a program like this, which would mean Canadian students of another race, ethnic group or identity group that does not identify as Black or indigenous cannot compete for these fellowships...? Would you consider that to be a form of systemic racism? It's pretty explicit. You're saying that implicit policies are enough to be—

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting, but the time is up, MP Ho.

Vincent Ho: I would like to get in writing a response to that within 45 days from those bureaucrats over there.

Thank you so much.

The Chair: We cannot say [*Inaudible—Editor*].

Vincent Ho: Can you answer? Yes? I'd like the answer to that question in a written response. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

If the answer could be provided, that would be great.

We will now proceed to MP Nathan for five minutes.

Please go ahead.

Juanita Nathan (Pickering—Brooklin, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair, and through you, thank you to all of you for being here, and welcome.

I would like to direct my first question to Dr. Lapointe.

Your extensive work on federalism, official languages and minority communities underlines how easily systemic disparities can fracture a national network. I know that policy frameworks are only as good as their regional implementation. Given your research on how institutional support on diversity operates with our federation, do you believe the panel's proposed annual fund is structurally sufficient to correct the underfunding and isolation that francophone researchers face outside Quebec?

• (1625)

[*Translation*]

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: Thank you very much for the question.

I think the advisory panel's report is a very good start in addressing structural inequalities—inequalities that have also existed for decades.

I also want to talk about the part that more specifically concerns research on francophone subjects. An entire part of our report focuses on research in French, but there is also a part on research on francophone subjects. I think this research is essential, but right now, it's largely neglected at universities across the country. Many French-speaking researchers are unable to pursue this research because their university administration doesn't consider it valid. The fact that we are recommending the creation of a chairs program highlights the need for this research. It rights the ship and shows university administrators that Canada is implementing a chairs program for researchers working within the Canadian francophonie on topics related to the Canadian francophonie. So it shifts the perspective somewhat.

What I'm also seeing on the ground is that many positions aren't being replaced. That puts enormous pressure on our institutions in the Canadian francophonie. The report also addresses these issues. As I also mentioned in my opening remarks, the report also offers solutions for every stage of a student's academic journey, from training to publication and, eventually, to the creation of positions.

So I think it's a good start. I think that, ultimately, it will also have to be part of an action plan on official languages.

Governance, through the secretariat, will also have to address these issues and define them more clearly. Right now, there is also a big information gap around certain issues because we have no way to track them. Until we have reliable data on what's happening, we won't be able to truly address the challenges on the ground.

[*English*]

Juanita Nathan: Thank you so much.

I would like to share the rest of my time with my colleague.

The Chair: You have one minute and 45 seconds.

[*Translation*]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: That's perfect.

Ms. Lapointe Gagnon, in your opening remarks, you talked about doctoral scholarship quotas. Can you elaborate a bit more on the issues you've identified and potential solutions?

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: Yes, absolutely.

The report clearly shows that there are issues of inequality in the way doctoral scholarships are awarded. We truly live in a prestige-driven economy, and that's what serves as the barometer for allocating resources, which means that U15 universities—such as the University of Toronto, the University of British Columbia and McGill University—end up monopolizing a large part of the resources. Since scholarships are awarded based on the funds that universities and institutions have secured, it's clear that a student who chooses the University of Toronto will have a significant advantage over a student at the Université de Moncton because money attracts money.

Researchers at the University of Toronto get tax breaks. They have access to their university's nearly limitless resources. They have access to an astronomical number of research assistants, which is not the case at universities in the Canadian francophonie. So you can have a researcher of the same calibre, of great excellence, but if the person chooses the Université de Moncton, they will be at a disadvantage.

Only three scholarships are allocated to the Université de Moncton; that's the quota. Now let's look at the situation at Campus Saint-Jean. There are no specific quotas for Campus Saint-Jean. We have 49 scholarships for the University of Alberta. I'm currently teaching the methodology seminar in our new doctoral program. We have 17 students enrolled in the doctoral program this year. About 17 people have submitted applications to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and asked me what their chances were. I don't know what their chances are because we don't have a quota allocated to Campus Saint-Jean. It's the same thing for the Université de Saint-Boniface, which doesn't have its own quota; it's absorbed into the University of Manitoba's quota. Can we be sure that there will be people at these universities who will review these applications through a francophone lens—

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. If you could wind up....

[Translation]

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: —and with all the understanding that this requires?

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we will proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for two and a half minutes, and we will end the panel there.

Thank you.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you, Madam Chair.

My first question is for Ms. Lapointe Gagnon.

In 2010, the federal government transferred its scientific publishing activities to an independent organization, a private company. Since 2023, a number of its bilingual journals have stopped systematically translating the abstract into French, apparently for financial reasons. So I would like to hear your comments on that.

You mentioned that summaries, commonly referred to as abstracts, are no longer available in French. What are your thoughts on the consequences for the vitality and dissemination of knowledge in French?

• (1630)

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: Was that question for me? I missed the beginning.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Yes, it was for you.

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: I'm sorry, I couldn't hear the sound at the beginning, so I didn't know it was for me.

The consequences of not having access to that are serious. It's not just about abstracts; it goes beyond abstracts. Our report shows that there has been a striking decline in French-language publications. Our bilingual journals are no longer bilingual. We have francophone researchers publishing in English in bilingual journals on subjects related to the francophonie. How can we explain these aberrations?

So I think we also need to completely re-evaluate our criteria for excellence. Journals need to be much more responsive to this imperative of bilingualism. We're seeing this even in Quebec: 50% of master's and doctoral theses in Quebec are now written in English. Why would a francophone researcher in Quebec want to write their thesis in English, if not because they're already part of a knowledge economy that shows them that English is the language of success, the dominant language, and that French is a minor language? We need to change the narrative. French is an official language. French is a language of research. French can be a language of success, just like English.

In my opinion, abstracts are a good starting point for gaining access to a showcase for research, but the problem is much more fundamental than that.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Ms. Lapointe Gagnon, I'll follow up on that. Would you say that it's not necessarily that French is disappearing because it isn't being given space but rather that it's declining because it's no longer guaranteed space to evolve, in particular?

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: Absolutely. We see how the next generation is being trained. Right from the start, they enter laboratories where people speak to each other in English—even in francophone spaces—and where French is a secondary language.

Then, when we talk about the need to publish, we're told that, if someone wants an academic career, which is sometimes the goal of people pursuing a doctorate, they must publish in major English-language journals; otherwise, their promotion may be hindered.

There is a testimonial in our report that particularly resonates with me. It's from someone who says that they did everything in English until they had secured all their promotions. From that point on, they began conducting research in French. This person would have preferred to do so in French from the outset, but they pretended to be an English speaker in order to succeed. It is all too common for researchers to adopt the persona of an anglophone because they see it as the only way to advance their career. That's truly unfortunate.

A change of narrative is essential. It must come from the top. It must come from the highest levels of authority.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: The time is up for MP Blanchette-Joncas.

I know we started a little late. Are the witnesses available for another two to three minutes? Okay.

Maybe we can have a quick two minutes for MP Godin and then two minutes for MP Deschênes-Thériault. Then we will end the panel.

MP Godin, please go ahead.

[Translation]

Joël Godin (Saint-Augustin—Portneuf—Jacques-Cartier, CPC): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I thank the witnesses.

My questions are for Ms. Lapointe Gagnon, from Campus Saint-Jean.

Ms. Lapointe Gagnon, I would have been surprised if you had disagreed with the report, since you are a member of the group that worked on it.

I'd like to ask you something. How did you arrive at the figure of \$40 million in the second recommendation—the amount you say is needed to revitalize francophone research or to support franco-phone research?

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: We needed a figure, and \$40 million is 1% of the research budget. We figured that 1% of the research budget doesn't seem like an astronomical amount, but it's enough to fund our measures, which include providing more money to university presses, creating the research program and establishing grants—

Joël Godin: I'll stop you right there, Ms. Lapointe Gagnon. I understand the exercise you went through. It's 1% of the total budget. However, couldn't you have revisited the distribution model by using the same budget allocation?

You're experiencing this in Alberta when it comes to money. Money is not an endless resource. So there may be a problem with effectiveness and efficiency.

Wouldn't it have been better to look at how the existing budget is allocated and increase funding for French, which might have made it possible to secure more than \$40 million?

• (1635)

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: Right now, the existing budget, depending on how it's managed, puts researchers at a disadvantage.

This particular fund is specifically intended for francophone researchers. We need a fund that is specifically earmarked for this purpose because the money that's currently available, as we can see, is ending up in the hands of the wealthiest.

Joël Godin: You're absolutely right; a specific amount must be set aside for that.

I do think the committee should have considered a way to rebalance things, redistribute the funds, and allocate a portion of the total budget, with the priority and intention of fostering the growth of francophone research. I think that would have been a great opportunity.

It's always easy to wave a magic wand and say we're going to put more money in. However, if the system is not effective, Canadians' money is being wasted.

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: The system will become efficient once the secretariat is set up. Right now, we're working in silos and not together. Once the secretariat is set up, we'll have a captain who can steer the ship to port.

Joël Godin: How much will the secretariat cost? That's another concern.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

[Translation]

Joël Godin: Thank you, Madam Chair.

[English]

The Chair: MP Deschênes-Thériault, you have two minutes.

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

Ms. Lapointe Gagnon, the French-Language Research Support Service is a solid measure that supports research in French across the country. This service is funded in part by our government. When the Acfas representatives were here, they recommended that the initiative receive long-term support.

Can you briefly explain whether you support Acfas' proposal?

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: Absolutely. The French-Language Research Support Service has made a huge difference. I used it and was awarded a grant. We've never had such great support before. The service needs long-term funding.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you.

In fact, I think we were both there when the service was launched in 2023 in Montreal, along with my colleague here.

In the presentation you submitted in writing, you propose a timeline. Can you tell us a bit more on that and why you've recommended it?

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: I'd say it also stems from the accounts we heard on the ground. People are fed up. They are waiting for measures. There have been many studies, including the one Acfas did. The committee too has released a report on these issues.

We want to see that the government is taking this seriously. What we heard on the ground is that people want to see how this will play out in practice, step by step. That requires a timeline, and it has to be transparent.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: In closing, we heard from different witnesses, such as representatives from Université de Montréal, which is part of the U15 group, Université de Moncton and other francophone universities.

You're at Campus Saint-Jean, which is part of a big anglophone university. Do the report recommendations also reflect your researchers' reality at Campus Saint-Jean?

Valérie Lapointe Gagnon: We're in a very particular situation, because we're with a university that's part of the U15, but the Campus Saint-Jean is often neglected. I talked about the scholarship quotas. I think it's important for Campus Saint-Jean to have its own quotas.

Our case is rather unique. I think many of the measures in the report address such a case. However, never forget that when we talk about small institutions, we fall into that category, even if we're in the U15.

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, this panel comes to an end.

On behalf of all members of this committee, I really want to thank all the witnesses for their time and important input.

With that, the meeting is suspended. I would ask MPs to do a quick turnaround of two or three minutes so that we can start the next panel.

• (1635)

(Pause)

• (1645)

The Chair: I call this meeting to order.

Welcome back.

I would like to make a few comments for the benefit of the new witnesses.

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. For those in the room, you can use the earpiece and select the desired channel.

I would like to remind witnesses that committee members may ask questions in either French or English. If you will need interpretation, please take a moment now to prepare your earpiece and select the listening channel you need in advance to take full advantage of the time allotted for questions and answers.

As a reminder, all comments should be addressed through the chair.

With that, I would like to welcome our four witnesses for this panel.

We are joined by Mr. Vincent Larivière, professor, Université de Montréal. He is here via video conference. Our second witness is Madeleine Pastinelli, president, Fédération québécoise des professeures et professeurs d'université. We are also joined by Mathieu Ouimet, director general, Réseau francophone international en conseil scientifique. Our last witness for today is Jean-Pierre Perreault, rector, Université de Sherbrooke. He is joining us via video conference. He is having some technical issues, so we will go to him at the end.

Everyone will have five minutes for their opening remarks.

We will start with Vincent Larivière.

Mr. Larivière, please go ahead. You will have five minutes for your opening remarks.

[Translation]

Vincent Larivière (Professor, Université de Montréal, As an Individual): Thank you very much.

Good afternoon. Thank you for inviting me to discuss the important issue of the place of French in the scientific ecosystem.

My name is Vincent Larivière. I am an information sciences professor at Université de Montréal, the holder of the UNESCO chair on open science and the co-holder of the Quebec research chair on the discoverability of scientific content in French.

I am not here on behalf of Université de Montréal. I am here as an individual, as a science policy expert and, perhaps above all, as the co-chair of the external advisory panel on the creation and dissemination of scientific information in French. The panel's report came out a few months ago.

For about 40 years, we have known about the anglicization of science. It's been happening in Canada, but also all over the world. The key factors behind the phenomenon are obviously the internationalization of research, the exercise of control over scholarly publishing by a few private companies and, perhaps above all, the fact that all the existing mechanisms for evaluating research emphasize the pursuit of publishing in prestigious journals, which are almost exclusively English-language journals. Depending on how you measure it, between 85% and nearly 100% of articles published internationally are in English. In Canada, between 2% and 5% of articles are published in French, a far cry from the demographic weight of the country's francophone population.

English-only science has numerous well-documented consequences, especially for non-English speakers, of course. They struggle to get their work published, and they have trouble accessing and understanding certain content. English-only science also affects the importance given to research topics. This means that international research topics easy to publish in English are valued, to the detriment of local or domestic research topics. In Canada, this undermines an already precarious linguistic balance. Giving priority solely to English creates an invisible barrier, impeding career advancement, research visibility and, admittedly, the training of the next generation of researchers. Accordingly, evaluating scientists on the basis of what they publish in English creates major challenges.

That is the context we are hoping to change through our report, which seeks to remind the federal government of its fairly clear responsibilities under the Official Languages Act and in relation to substantive equality. In short, as you've heard since the beginning of your study, we tried to address the three major gaps identified by the communities we met with—and I can tell you we met with quite a lot of people. Those challenges are normative, financial and organizational.

Establishing a secretariat is key. Without a central body guided by a strategic vision, initiatives will likely be fragmented and have a limited impact. A francophone lens is necessary to ensure that the principle of substantive equality is integrated on a systematic, not piecemeal, basis.

Unfortunately, given the federal budget that followed the release of the report, it is fair to say that, since then, the government has applied virtually one lens to its decision-making, the relationship with our neighbour to the south. While our report calls for a paltry \$40 million in funding, which still hasn't been confirmed, the government instead opted to invest \$1.7 billion to bring a few hundred researchers from the U.S. to our universities. Rather than embrace the next generation of our own researchers and develop our own infrastructure, the government created the very costly Goldenberg research chair program. In doing so, the government is again putting the resources in the hands of a few institutions, which goes against the advice in one of the committee's own reports. Furthermore, the program, by its very nature, is contributing to the anglophone-francophone imbalance, as the first round of results show: of the first 64 chair holders selected, just eight were at francophone universities.

I want to make clear to the committee that the language equality issue is not a part-time problem that can be dealt with periodically. It is central to Canadian identity, and supporting it will only strengthen our sovereignty. Support for science in French enhances Canada's soft power, increases its influence in international networks and gives it the legitimacy to take on issues that only concrete policies can provide. It is not a token gesture for a minority, but a smart investment in the quality, diversity and resilience of Canadian knowledge.

I'd like to quickly conclude by reiterating what my colleague Linda Cardinal called for. In short, I'm asking the government for two things: to accept the report recommendations and, above all, to provide a road map laying out the next steps.

Thank you.

● (1650)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Before we proceed to our next speaker, there is one thing I need to clarify with the committee members in regard to the motion to get the witness list, which was passed in the last hour by MP Baldinelli.

Is it okay with everybody if we set the deadline for October 16 at 5 p.m.? That will be the end of next week, which is a break week. In order to schedule meetings, if that is okay, we will have the deadline of October 16 at 5 p.m. for the submission of the list of witnesses. Is that okay with everybody?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

The Chair: Thank you.

Now we will proceed to Madame Madeleine Pastinelli, president.

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

[Translation]

Madeleine Pastinelli (President, Fédération québécoise des professeures et professeurs d'université): Madam Chair, members of the committee, the Fédération québécoise des professeures et professeurs d'université represents just over 8,500 professors, al-

most every faculty member in Quebec. We are very pleased to be able to discuss the report, and we sincerely thank you for the opportunity.

To begin with, I'd like to state clearly that our federation welcomes the report and supports all—

● (1655)

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. There is no English interpretation.

We will have to suspend the meeting to figure out the interpretation issue.

● (1650)

(Pause)

● (1655)

The Chair: I call this meeting back to order.

Madame Pastinelli, please go ahead. You have five minutes.

[Translation]

Madeleine Pastinelli: Thank you.

The Fédération québécoise des professeures et professeurs d'université brings together just over 8,500 professors, almost every faculty member in Quebec. We are very pleased to be able to discuss the report, and we thank you for the opportunity.

To begin with, I'd like to state clearly that our federation welcomes the report, agrees with all the recommendations and strongly encourages the government to implement them quickly.

The report largely aligns with our federation's diagnosis of the situation and the recommendations we made in our 2022 brief on scientific dissemination and research in French, which showed that the problem was structural. It's about more than providing additional funding for research in French. It's about tackling the mechanisms causing the inequalities in the research ecosystem.

We in Quebec are not facing the same situation that francophone minority communities elsewhere in the country are, but we do, of course, stand in solidarity with them and support their needs. The main challenge for us is maintaining strong scientific capacity in French in the Canadian and international ecosystem, where the mechanisms for academic recognition are largely structured by English speakers for English speakers.

Publication in certain journals, the impact factor, institutional reputation and other such indicators have become markers of excellence. These criteria are not free of bias when it comes to language. Similarly, they are not free of bias when it comes to discipline, research topic, or method of knowledge production or dissemination.

This problematic pursuit of excellence is marginalizing research in French, and that's very clear in the report. It highlights the concentration of funding at the leading research universities, the U15 institutions. Nevertheless, it would be simplistic to point to inequality between universities as the only problem. Funding is also concentrated within the most heavily funded universities themselves, with an ever-increasing share going to a limited number of teams and researchers. That very concentration is the problem, penalizing those who work or disseminate their research results in French.

It is especially problematic because, as the report clearly states, “[e]ven setting aside questions of equity, the concentration of research funding represents a poor investment strategy.” That is what the panel says in the report, and rightly so. All the evidence clearly shows that, when it comes to the production and advancement of scientific knowledge, society would be better off if the same funding were distributed more widely, rather than being concentrated, as it is now.

The measures recommended in the report to rectify the inequalities are necessary. We also think it would help to examine, in the medium term, the mechanisms that enable the concentration of funding to continue and worsen.

We believe that working conditions also play a role in equality. Carrying out research in French involves hidden costs and, as the report clearly shows, is time-intensive. That situation is not specific to Quebec. University professors across the country are overburdened with work—it's endemic. The choices they make are often due to a lack of time. Accordingly, funding programs should, where appropriate, provide support for releasing instructors from their teaching duties. Otherwise, a portion of the cost of a policy to support research in French will hinge on how much time researchers work, and time is what they lack most.

Now I'd like to turn to governance and university autonomy.

Our federation supports the creation of a secretariat for the coordination of research in French and the creation of a support fund, as recommended in the report. We see them as an important first step, but the governance component is what will make the difference. Professors, not just university administrators, must have real representation on governance teams.

The report recommends establishing a mechanism for pan-Canadian coordination that brings together federal partners and, among others, the Bureau de coopération interuniversitaire du Québec, which represents university administrations. We feel that broader coordination is needed and that the mechanism should include all stakeholders. It is also important to involve the organizations that represent faculty at those institutions, including the Canadian Association of University Teachers and our federation.

• (1700)

Lastly, we believe that the mechanisms put in place must—

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. Your time is up. If you can, quickly wind up.

[Translation]

Madeleine Pastinelli: That's fine. I'll finish my remarks.

We believe that the mechanisms put in place must preserve the autonomy of institutions and the academic freedom of our colleagues. Above all, a research support public policy mustn't become a research steering policy. This consideration should underpin the establishment of these bodies.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

With that, we will now go to Mr. Mathieu Ouimet.

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

[Translation]

Mathieu Ouimet (Director General, Réseau francophone international en conseil scientifique): Madam Chair and committee members, thank you for your invitation.

I represent the Réseau francophone international en conseil scientifique, or RFICS. This network is based at the Université Laval and funded by the Fonds de recherche du Québec. This initiative was launched by Rémi Quirion when he served as Quebec's chief scientist. He established this network with the mission of working to strengthen scientific advisory capacities for governments and parliaments in all francophone countries.

Scientific advice helps public officials, government officials and members of Parliament—but also civil society organizations—understand the available scientific knowledge and its limitations in order to inform their decisions. It draws on the humanities and social sciences, the natural sciences and engineering, and occasionally on the health sciences.

I would like to talk about the studies behind the scientific advice. The report proposes the distribution of plain-language summaries. This means translating the summaries into French, mainly the summaries from articles published in journals funded by Canadian research money. That's fine. However, to inform a decision, it's also necessary to look at the full articles—not just the summaries—and to base scientific advice on an analysis of all available studies regarding an issue relevant to the decision-maker. For example, does reducing class sizes in the early grades actually improve academic performance?

I would like to introduce here the concept of knowledge synthesis, which is known in English as evidence synthesis. This involves gathering studies and assessing their reliability—even if they have already undergone peer review—and analyzing the results in order to address them. The report raises a concern. The syntheses used to advise governments may give too much weight to English-language publications, since the major scientific journal databases primarily index English-language periodicals. Evidence syntheses, such as systematic literature reviews, are often limited in scope to English and a few other languages mastered by the team producing them.

On that note, Canadian funding agencies might want to fund meta-research studies comparing the results of syntheses produced with and without publications in French or languages other than English. Empirical studies show that, for certain topics, limiting a synthesis to studies published in English may—or may not—alter the results or findings of the synthesis. This remains a matter of empirical research.

Furthermore, the scientific diplomacy policy proposed in measure 12 could go a step further and encourage major distributors of scientific periodicals to include French-language journals. They already do this, but only on a limited scale. This would make it easier for evidence synthesis producers around the world to identify articles published in French and other languages besides English.

This scientific diplomacy effort could also focus on negotiating with major publishers of specialized periodicals to secure affordable access to the full text of all articles in their catalogues, including articles that require a paid subscription. The goal wouldn't be to give everyone free access. This would be unrealistic at this time, given the current characteristics of the scientific periodical distribution market. Instead, the goal would be to give evidence-synthesis initiatives and platforms that focus specifically on decision-makers in parliaments, governments and civil society access to a greater number of scientific studies. That way, these studies can be incorporated into their syntheses at a lower cost.

I'll take this opportunity to give an example of an international evidence-synthesis initiative, the Evidence Synthesis Infrastructure Collaborative, or ESIC. I'm saying this in English because the term hasn't been translated. The steering group is headed by a Canadian scholar, John Lavis, from McMaster University. This initiative is funded by a consortium of philanthropic foundations. It's currently developing an infrastructure to produce and provide access to high-quality evidence syntheses. These syntheses will be considered “living”, meaning that they will be updated as new studies are published. I represent the RFICS on the communities council, one of the governance bodies of this initiative.

These scientific diplomacy efforts that I referred to could help this global initiative gain access to major bibliographic databases and the full text of subscription-based articles, in order to extract information and provide strong summaries for public policy-makers.

Thank you.

• (1705)

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to Mr. Perreault.

Please go ahead. You have five minutes.

[Translation]

Jean-Pierre Perreault (Rector, Université de Sherbrooke): Madam Chair and committee members, I'm Jean-Pierre Perreault, the rector of the Université de Sherbrooke.

It's a true privilege to be speaking to you today about the importance of research in French for the advancement of knowledge.

The Université de Sherbrooke has over 33,000 students and generates economic benefits of over \$1.3 billion a year in Sherbrooke alone.

We're a proudly francophone institution and the only comprehensive university located outside Quebec's major urban centres. According to Research Infosource, for the past 18 years, we've ranked among the top 15 Canadian universities in research performance. We're proof that, in Canada, research excellence can flourish in French, in regional areas and in competition with the best-ranked institutions.

We have carefully reviewed the report's recommendations and we support them. True to the Université de Sherbrooke's core values, which prioritize the practical application of knowledge and quick and tangible benefits for society, we believe that the government should focus its efforts on a few simple, pragmatic and high-impact measures.

First, the government must ensure transparency. All federally funded agencies should systematically publish two indicators. These indicators are the percentage of applications submitted in French and their success rate. This practice already exists in some programs and must now become the standard. Publicly measured indicators can be tracked, assessed and improved.

Second, the government must ensure fairness. As the advisory panel report notes, although francophone researchers account for about 21% of the Canadian research community, the proportion of applications submitted in French remains well below that percentage.

Why? Both the Université de Sherbrooke and various other francophone research institutions often point to a lack of confidence in the system. A number of researchers are concerned that an application written in French won't have the same chance of success as an application written in English.

To address this concern, we propose three concrete measures.

First, granting agencies should adopt a policy ensuring that the proportion of applications funded in French at least corresponds to the proportion of applications submitted in French. In other words, if 5% of applications are submitted in French, at least 5% of funded projects should also come from applications written in French. This isn't about providing an advantage. It's simply about ensuring that the language of the application doesn't influence the chances of success.

Once the baseline has been established for each program, an additional percentage—such as 2%—of the funding allocations could be set aside for applications submitted in French. This incentive could be gradually increased over time to boost the number of applications submitted in French and to better reflect the role that francophone researchers play in the Canadian research ecosystem. The goal isn't to circumvent peer review, but to further encourage researchers to submit their projects in their own language.

Let me be clear here and make an important point. As a researcher, I strongly believe in research excellence. We aren't seeking to promote research in French at the expense of excellence. That would be a mistake. Instead, our goal is to ensure that researchers can compete in the language of their choice with the same confidence, the same chances of success and the same quality requirements.

Lastly, the government should make the Service d'aide à la recherche en français, or SARF, sustainable over the long term and enhance its services. The SARF provides vital support to researchers in preparing and reviewing funding applications submitted in French. It's also a trusted partner of granting agencies. It serves as a concrete tool for promoting research in French and supporting emerging talent. With this in mind, we support Acfas's recommendation to ensure the long-term sustainability and enhance the funding of the SARF, a credible service recognized by the community that can already produce concrete results.

Third, the government must promote the reciprocal transfer of knowledge. I'm being a bit ambitious here. I would like to wrap up by focusing on this last point, which we believe is fundamental.

The report rightly emphasizes the need to support the dissemination of knowledge in French. However, we talk much less about the opposite direction. This involves encouraging anglophone researchers to present their work and to participate in francophone scientific discussions in French.

Beyond the principle of reciprocity lies an inescapable reality. The bridge between the two solitudes will never be built if everyone remains on their own side. We must create opportunities to cross the divide. Why not provide additional funding to anglophone researchers who choose to present their work in French at francophone conferences both in Canada and abroad? This type of measure would send a strong message. It would recognize the value of francophone scientific communities while encouraging new researchers to discover them and become involved.

If we want French to remain a true language of research, it isn't enough to support the people who are already working in French. We must also—

• (1710)

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. If you could, wind it up, please.

[Translation]

Jean-Pierre Perreault: We also need to create incentives that encourage more anglophone researchers to take the plunge.

Thank you for your attention.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will proceed to MP Godin for six minutes. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Joël Godin: Thank you, Madam Chair.

I would like to thank the witnesses for participating in this study.

My first question is for Mr. Larivière from the Université de Montréal, who served as co-chair of the panel.

I'll ask the same question that I put to your colleague who was here during the first hour.

You're suggesting an additional \$40 million. Why \$40 million? How was this figure calculated? Where did this number come from?

Vincent Larivière: Thank you for your question.

As you know, this figure accounts for 1% of the total federal budget for basic research. It actually covers the three councils and the Canada Foundation for Innovation. It seemed like a feasible budget that wouldn't break the bank and that would also help us implement a number of the measures outlined in three recommendations. So it combines two aspects. On the one hand, it's a realistic financial target. We couldn't ask for \$1 billion, as you can imagine. On the other hand, it covers quite a bit.

Joël Godin: You're basically saying that it's a realistic amount. However, in terms of improving the scientific research situation for francophone minority communities, can you say that \$40 million isn't much?

Vincent Larivière: I must say that the \$40 million is only part of the equation. As you know, this money must go hand in hand with a secretariat and other measures. On its own, the \$40 million won't get the job done. It's a realistic amount that, as I said, will cover quite a bit.

Joël Godin: In your remarks earlier, you spoke about a sum of \$1.7 billion to bring over researchers from our neighbour to the south. I don't think that we owe that country much these days, but \$1.7 billion is a staggering amount.

Vincent Larivière: Yes, it's a large amount.

Joël Godin: Now, how can you explain that? How can the government have made that decision in recent months and in recent years?

Vincent Larivière: I don't know the government's exact motives. I've written in some places about my belief that this program wasn't well thought out—

Joël Godin: I understand, Mr. Larivière. I actually want to draw a comparison between the \$40 million and the \$1.7 billion figure. So, yes, \$40 million is indeed realistic. We, the small francophone communities, will ask for \$40 million to make this acceptable. However, if we're serious about achieving substantive equality, I think that more than \$40 million will be needed.

• (1715)

Vincent Larivière: It's likely to be more than \$40 million. Above all, it will require coordination and a change in practices within both the Quebec government and, I would say, the provinces and universities.

Joël Godin: That's what I was getting at. Shouldn't the possibility of reviewing the current model have been considered?

Vincent Larivière: Good question.

Joël Godin: Thank you.

Vincent Larivière: As you know, a review of all the federal government's programs is actually a rather complicated task that would take a long time. Obviously, our panel couldn't take on that task. It wasn't our responsibility, anyway. It fell completely outside our mandate. However, I still believe that additional funding is needed.

Joël Godin: I agree with you. If we reduce funding on one side and redirect it to the other side, based on the principle of communicating vessels, it will have a positive impact. It's unfortunate for the people living in prosperity, but this will allow the poor to thrive.

Vincent Larivière: That may be the case.

Joël Godin: Okay.

I'll now turn to Ms. Pastinelli.

You spoke about 8,500 professors. How many professors among your members are involved in research? Is the number small?

Madeleine Pastinelli: No. The university professor's role by definition includes both teaching and research. All professors carry out research. If the question is how many receive federal funding—

Joël Godin: Maybe that was the question.

Madeleine Pastinelli: I can't give you a figure. My colleague, Mr. Larivière, might be able to provide that number. However, by definition, all university professors carry out research.

Joël Godin: I see. You understood that I was making the connection with grants.

You spoke about Quebec, which wants to maintain its capacity. I would rather hear you say that the goal is to increase Quebec's capacity. However, that's up to you. I heard this during your remarks.

I must come clean. I'm part of the leadership of the network headed by Mr. Ouimet. I wanted to bring this up to avoid accusations of acting as both judge and jury. I serve as chair of the parliamentary affairs committee at the Assemblée parlementaire de la Francophonie.

Mr. Ouimet, you spoke about the initiative known by the acronym ESIC, if I understood correctly. It's a consortium dedicated to high-quality syntheses. Can you explain how this consortium came about? Did the network set it up and implement the conditions? It's an initiative—

Mathieu Ouimet: No, the network won't take credit for it.

We're part of the ecosystem. We're members of one of the committees. As I said in my opening remarks, this is a global initiative. The person acting as the driving force or initiator behind this effort is John Lavis, a colleague from McMaster University who works in health sciences. He has been working for about 30 years on the use of science to develop public policy.

We're just one of the players. Sitting at the table actually gives us the opportunity to advocate for issues concerning language and the importance of francophone countries. We also focus on scientific advice—

[English]

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

[Translation]

Joël Godin: Is it up?

[English]

The Chair: Yes. Thank you.

Now we will go to MP McKelvie for six minutes. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Jennifer McKelvie (Ajax, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

My first question is for Mr. Ouimet.

Does the report take enough account of the realities of francophone communities outside Quebec? Do you have any other recommendations?

Mathieu Ouimet: To answer your question, I won't go into matters that fall outside our area of expertise. Remember that I represent the francophone network. I'm not here in a personal capacity.

If I had one recommendation for the report, I would discuss something that you wouldn't normally find at the heart of the report. It would be our specific role of providing scientific advice. Obviously, a report on research in French will focus more on scientific research output and scientific publication.

I offered some additional ideas, particularly regarding the science diplomacy measure, in order to take things a step further. Obviously, I'm speaking here on behalf of the people who strive to promote and strengthen the quality and capacity of efforts to synthesize research data in order to inform decision-makers on specific issues.

• (1720)

Jennifer McKelvie: Thank you.

Mr. Perreault, are there challenges specific to certain fields of research, such as the sciences, social sciences or health?

Are there any differences?

Jean-Pierre Perreault: Thank you.

Good question. Yes, there are. In any event, we can see it when we look at the proportion of grants awarded in French. Clearly, in fields such as the natural sciences, engineering or health sciences, English is taking up more and more space. That's why I first proposed this principle of fairness and then suggested shifting the pendulum a bit in a different direction by gradually increasing the funding—by a small percentage, but year after year—with the goal of restoring balance. As Mr. Godin said earlier, it's the principle of the pendulum. The money currently spent on English must be redirected to French.

You know that I receive funding from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada. I'm still the same Jean-Pierre whether I write my scientific work in English or in French. The scientist behind the proposal is the same. It's necessary to restore the confidence of scientists and researchers so that they can write their scientific work in French.

Jennifer McKelvie: Okay.

Ms. Pastinelli, which recommendations from the report should the federal government prioritize? Can you explain why?

Madeleine Pastinelli: In our view, the recommendations as a whole form a coherent package. That's why I said, right from the start, that we support all the recommendations.

One of the report's strengths lies in how it highlights the three-dimensional nature of the issue. In other words, it's necessary to address the normative aspect as well as the financial, structural and organizational aspects. We believe that focusing on just one of these three aspects would be a mistake and that the best approach would be to implement all the recommendations or, at the very least, to address the three aspects at the same time.

Jennifer McKelvie: Do I have any time left?

[English]

The Chair: You have two minutes.

[Translation]

Jennifer McKelvie: Okay.

Mr. Ouimet, you spoke about science diplomacy. Do you have any examples of countries doing a good job in this area? For example, I know that France is working extensively with the Canadian embassy.

Are there other examples of science diplomacy advancing science in French?

Mathieu Ouimet: First, you're right to bring up France. In terms of science diplomacy, I think that it's one of the countries ahead of the curve.

However, I must say outright that there's a difference between science diplomacy and scientific advice. They are two different things. In general, when we think of science diplomacy, we think of international relations related to science. Scientific advice—and remember that I'm representing the Réseau francophone international en conseil scientifique—is one aspect of science diplomacy. For example, in embassies, do we draw on research findings to support negotiations?

I'm not the best specialist to answer your question about science diplomacy. My colleagues who work on science diplomacy would be better suited to answer your question and to tell you which countries are ahead of others in this area.

Jennifer McKelvie: Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: We will now proceed to MP Blanchette-Joncas for six minutes. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I have a question for Mr. Larivière.

Can criteria that appear neutral—such as citations, visibility, the impact factor or the prestige of journals—create a structural advantage for research carried out in English?

In your opinion, does this issue have broader implications for how we define scientific excellence?

Vincent Larivière: That's certain. Quantitative indicators lean mostly towards English.

There's an indicator at the heart of research evaluation called the impact factor. It allows you to gauge a journal's prestige. When the indicator was created about 50 years ago, there were a number of French-language journals that had an impact factor. Today, there are none. There might be one or two, but on the whole, of the 13,000 scholarly journals that had an impact factor, there remain none in French.

If you judge the scientists based on impact factor, then yes, structurally, we've created a strong incentive not to publish in French.

• (1725)

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: In November 2019, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and the four other main federal research funding organizations wanted to implement the San Francisco Declaration on Research Assessment, commonly known as DORA.

In your opinion, is it possible to determine whether DORA principles really change the practices of review committees, not just their written policies?

Vincent Larivière: It's very difficult, because in reality—and this is a good thing—the committees have complete discretion over their assessment criteria, so the councils can guide them, but ultimately, scientists play an important role.

Of course, the granting councils need to do some work to raise awareness among communities about research evaluation. However, sadly, this goes beyond funding bodies, universities, scientific communities themselves and learned societies. The impact factor culture is widespread in the university system.

It does indeed require more than just fine declarations like the San Francisco declaration.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Concerning the next generation of scientists in Quebec, the proportion of master's theses and doctoral dissertations written in French fell from 82% in 2000 to 50% in 2022. In your view, what explains this trend, and what does it tell us about the state of the French language among Quebec's next generation of scientists? What are the main factors behind this decline?

Vincent Larivière: I see two factors here. The first is anglicization, which I've already mentioned. The second is that more and more theses are being written in article form. In such cases, the criteria for excellence associated with articles are reflected in dissertations, which are a collection of scientific articles. It's understandable why students prefer to write dissertations in the form of articles rather than producing a traditional dissertation and then translating it.

In reality, the thesis issue is simply another manifestation of the issue we already see with scientific articles. This doesn't mean that laboratories are operating in English, but it does mean that knowledge is being disseminated in English, because that's what's valued within the scientific community.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Is it true to say that we're not merely witnessing a change in the language of publication? It's actually a profound shift among the next generation of French-speaking scientists towards a research ecosystem that is increasingly English-speaking.

Vincent Larivière: I'm not sure I'd put it quite the way you do, but it's certainly true that students are encouraged.... Anything that comes from abroad is always seen as being better. That's a value judgment. Things could be better here too; I won't comment on that. However, since anything from abroad is seen as better, the obvious connection people make is that English is the gateway to the international arena. It's a rather narrow view of the international scene, as if there were no international francophone world, but it's true that students are being steered towards a certain vision of excellence.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I want to talk about the issue of success rates and imbalances from the early stages.

In certain programs, we see that the success rates of applications submitted in French are sometimes higher than, if not equivalent to, those of applications submitted in English. Is this criterion sufficient to conclude that the system is linguistically equitable?

Vincent Larivière: That's a good question, because we could have equivalent success rates for applications in French and English. However, what I see on the ground is that the applications that are funded may not necessarily be selected on the basis of the right criteria within the subset of French-language applications. In other words, there's sometimes a perception that the selection of projects funded in French is perhaps a little more random. Five French applications may be chosen, but they may not necessarily be

the right ones, because we cannot be certain of how bilingual the committee members actually are.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Is it possible to have a fair assessment at the end of the process?

We know that the system is currently unbalanced at the outset, because researchers choose English to maximize their career prospects, publication opportunities and funding. How do we go about trying to strike a balance?

Vincent Larivière: It's not straightforward. The report provides plenty of recommendations on measures the federal government can take, but we'll need to go beyond that. The federal government has a duty to lead by example. What I personally hope for is that these recommendations are adopted, that the provinces take action within their areas of jurisdiction to improve the situation on their end, and that universities also play their part in this given that they fall under provincial jurisdiction.

We must view French as an asset for Canada, not as an additional expense.

• (1730)

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Did you have enough public data to accurately measure the disparities between research in French and research in English?

[English]

The Chair: You have 15 seconds left.

[Translation]

Vincent Larivière: We don't have all the data, obviously. However, it's not just a matter of public data. There are data that come from the ecosystem as a whole. It may seem as though it's easy to give you the percentage of articles written in French and such, but in reality, it's very complicated. We're always working with somewhat moving targets.

I'd like to return to the point raised by my colleague Jean-Pierre Perreault. Data transparency is essential. The more public data we have, the better.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

We will now proceed to our second round. It will be a shortened round because of the time.

There are three minutes for MP Ho, three minutes for MP Eyolfson, and then one and a half minutes for MP Blanchette-Joncas. Then we will end the panel.

We will go to MP Ho for three minutes.

Vincent Ho: In this so-called report on the dissemination of scientific information in French, it uses DEI vocabulary such as "gender diversity", "racialized" and "equity" over 60 times. It reads like a DEI manual because its recommendations, on multiple occasions, call on the federal government to adopt more race-based scholarships for racialized students and race-based hiring quotas for racialized professors as a means to achieve social justice for the next generation.

Professor Larivière, you co-authored this report. I want to turn to your long-standing involvement with advising on DEI in Canadian research policy, including serving three years on the Canada research chairs' advisory committee on equity, diversity and inclusion policy. That committee's mandate is to advise the government's committee and the tri-agency council on measures intended to increase DEI across the programs it administers.

What do you believe was wrong with the Canada research chairs programs at the time that required demographic equity measures?

[Translation]

Vincent Larivière: Thank you for your so-called question.

Indeed, there are concerns regarding equity within the Canadian scientific community. At the time, certain groups were under-represented in the allocation of Canada research chairs. I'll be brief on this, because it's not the focus of my remarks. We need to look at diversity—

[English]

Vincent Ho: It's very related to the purpose of your remarks because francophone professors and students can apply to the Canada research chairs.

You mentioned that under-representation is the problem. If a university misses just one of the required targets for women and gender equity in groups, racialized individuals, indigenous people or persons with disabilities, the federal program can restrict new nominations to individuals who self-identify with a designated group for which that university has a gap. This means that it bans people of certain races from applying until the target is met. If it isn't met, the federal funding to these universities will be cut.

You talk about under-representation, but 53.6% under the Canada research chairs program is now women and gender equity-seeking chair holders, against a target of 51%; 34% is now racialized, against a target of 22%. Now that the under-representation is no longer existent, is it just another crusade for more DEI? When does it end?

[Translation]

Vincent Larivière: I don't know what you are talking about. What's this new crusade?

I can give you a figure, though. In the report we wrote, the word "French" appears more than 1,000 times. You can compile just about any statistic on words. One of the aspects the report addresses is racialized people. It's a subset, because we saw that there were specific issues—

[English]

Vincent Ho: Okay, the report talks about—

The Chair: Please speak one person at a time.

Please allow the witness to answer the question.

Vincent Larivière: I should be able to answer the question I'm being asked.

Vincent Ho: He's not answering the question, so I'm going to move on.

The Chair: You have 14 seconds.

Vincent Ho: The report talks about the adoption of indigenous and Black engineering and technology Ph.D. projects. What is Black engineering or indigenous engineering, in your view? You wrote the report.

[Translation]

Vincent Larivière: Here, we are not talking about the object that is racialized. We are talking about the people who carry out research or who are in programs of—

[English]

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

We will now proceed to MP Eyolfson for three minutes. Please go ahead.

Doug Eyolfson (Winnipeg West, Lib.): Thank you, Madam Chair.

I'd like to thank all the witnesses for coming.

I would like to assure our witnesses that not all of the people on this committee think that diversity, equity and inclusion are, in fact, dirty words.

My first question is for Professor Larivière.

You have spoken about the difficulty of publishing in French internationally due to the greater international recognition of English. The report has a number of measures for how we can help within Canada.

Have you any thoughts on how Canada can influence the international community regarding improving the prestige and profile of the French language in research?

● (1735)

[Translation]

Vincent Larivière: Thank you very much for your question.

The first point—and this is mentioned in the report—is, of course, support for our dissemination infrastructure, that is to say, support for our own journals. Scholarly journals can be divided into two categories: those owned by commercial publishing houses, which, in most cases, favour English, and those which, shall we say, are owned by universities, learned societies or, broadly speaking, associations—

[English]

The Chair: I'm sorry for interrupting. There is an interpretation issue.

• (1735)

(Pause)

• (1735)

The Chair: I call the meeting to order.

Please, Mr. Larivière, go ahead.

[Translation]

Vincent Larivière: Thank you very much.

Broadly speaking, there are two types of measures the federal government can take to secure the position you mention.

The first measure is to support the infrastructure, to ensure that our journals—the journals that belong to us, that belong to the community—are properly funded and can compete with commercial journals in terms of speed of publication and the quality of the publishing infrastructure. So that is the technical and financial aspect.

The other aspect is more symbolic. It is about ensuring that our funding bodies do, in fact, recognize French-language literature as being, a priori, just as good as that published in English. We always come back to the evaluation criteria, but we cannot focus solely on the economic aspect; we must also address the symbolic aspect. This is an issue that does, in fact, fall within the federal government's remit, but not exclusively so. It is an issue that concerns the entire scientific community, but one on which the federal government can and should take a leading role.

• (1740)

[English]

The Chair: You have 30 seconds.

Doug Eyolfson: I do not think I can come up with any more questions that can be answered in 30 seconds.

Thank you very much for your time.

The Chair: We will end this panel with MP Blanchette-Joncas for 90 seconds. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, I would ask for the unanimous consent of my colleagues to be granted my full speaking time of two minutes and thirty seconds.

[English]

The Chair: Because of the time frame, we had to shorten the second round. I gave three minutes to the Conservatives and three minutes to the Liberals. Based on that, your time will be one and a half minutes.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, in that case, is it possible to extend the committee meeting? Do we have the necessary resources?

[English]

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent for two and a half minutes for MP Blanchette-Joncas?

Some hon. members: No.

The Chair: We don't have unanimous consent.

You have 90 seconds.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: In that case, Madam Chair, I shall raise a point of order. I would like to understand why you did not consult the members of the committee before reducing the speaking time for the second round.

[English]

The Chair: When I started the second round, I indicated that there would be three minutes, three minutes, and one and a half minutes. I indicated it at that time, after the first round. I gave sufficient notice to you.

Thank you. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Madam Chair, this is a point of order for me.

[English]

The Chair: This is not a matter of privilege. The committee time is distributed among all the parties, and based on the time that was available, this was done. This is not the first time it has happened. Based on the time frame—we had four witnesses for this panel, so that was an additional five minutes for the opening remarks—we had to shorten this round, and here we are.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Here is my question for you: Do we have the resources to extend the committee hearing?

[English]

The Chair: If we put in the request now, we will have to check. It will take quite a long....

Members are not available, so they are saying no. People have flights.

MP Dhaliwal, your hand is raised.

Sukh Dhaliwal (Surrey Newton, Lib.): Madam Chair, you're doing great work. You have discretion to do what you're doing, and you're doing the right thing. Let's continue instead of wasting any more time on this.

The Chair: Thank you.

I don't have agreement to extend the meeting.

MP Blanchette-Joncas, you have 90 seconds. Please go ahead.

[Translation]

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Mr. Larivière, in our previous study on the concentration of funding, you demonstrated that this can lead to diminishing returns. How do we distinguish between a concentration that genuinely rewards excellence and one that merely replicates advantages that have already been secured, such as previous funding, prestige, or even infrastructure and networks?

Vincent Larivière: We cannot.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Understood.

Do the data currently allow us to distinguish the specific effect of language from that of the discipline, the size or the prestige of the institution?

Vincent Larivière: What exactly would the effect you are referring to be based on?

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: I am referring to the evidence regarding the effect of prestige or discipline. Are we able to isolate such a factor and say that it is a specific criterion that leads to this concentration of funding and creates structural imbalances, in particular?

Vincent Larivière: Are you referring to what is happening at the university level?

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Yes.

Vincent Larivière: That's a good question. Honestly, I don't have any findings on that. One might think there are certain factors, but I don't have any findings on that. Further research is needed.

Maxime Blanchette-Joncas: Thank you.

Madam Chair, I wish to inform you that I will move the following motion:

That, as part of the study of the report of the External Advisory Group on the Production and Dissemination of Scientific Information in French, the Standing Committee on Science and Research invite the Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture and Minister responsible for Official Languages, the Honourable Marc Miller, and the Minister of Industry and Minister responsible for Canada

Economic Development for Quebec Regions, the Honourable Mélanie Joly, to appear for two hours to discuss the report French-Language Research and Substantive Equality: An Opportunity to Seize and the follow-up actions the government intends to take in response to its recommendations.

● (1745)

[English]

The Chair: Go ahead, MP Deschênes-Thériault.

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: Thank you, Madam Chair.

It is 5:45 p.m. We have just wasted yet more precious time for all members of the committee. I think it is important to respect the fact that some people have flights to catch. I believe there is a regular lack of respect for the smooth running of the committee. I therefore move that the debate on the motion be adjourned.

[English]

The Chair: We have a motion for debate to be adjourned. It's non-debatable, so we will go to the vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

The Chair: The debate is adjourned.

Go ahead, MP Deschênes-Thériault.

[Translation]

Guillaume Deschênes-Thériault: I move that the committee adjourn.

[English]

The Chair: Do we have unanimous consent to adjourn? No.

Okay, we will take a vote.

(Motion agreed to: yeas 10; nays 1)

The Chair: Thank you to the witnesses.

The meeting is adjourned.

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