



MEETING WITH CFI

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In our visit (CCUBC and CFBS members) to the Canadian Foundation for Innovation (Dr. Elliot Phillipson, Ms. Carmen Charette and Robert Davidson) we were made aware of the current status of the CFI budget and other issues.

1. The mandate of CFI continues until 2010 and allocation of funds to the various CFI Projects will have been completed by the fall of 2006.
2. Currently, CFI awaits new funds in order to develop new initiatives beyond 2010.
3. New funding is required "now" to allow for planning to occur.
4. The issue was raised whether CFI is in competition with Granting Agencies for Federal Allocations. As a clarification we were reminded that Granting Agencies' funding come from Department of Industry (NSERC) and Department of Health (CIHR) whereas CFI is funded out of Federal Budget Surpluses. Consequently, each comes from separate envelopes with CFI receiving funds when surpluses occur.
5. The level of Infrastructure support was discussed. Currently, infrastructure support in the U.K. and Australia is ~ 20% of research grant allocations. In Canada this level has, over 5 years, declined from ~ 27% to ~ 11%. It is believed that 11% is too low for Canada's current needs.
6. Given that Faculty recruitment is occurring to replace the retiring professoriate infrastructure renewal will be in demand. With current allocations of only ~ 12% of capital investments devoted to infrastructure a long term plan is required for major science investments to ensure a healthy balance between infrastructure and research allocations.
7. It was recognized that Canada's participation rate in higher education among the developed (G-8) countries is about the "middle of the pack". This is a cause for concern especially as we look at the graduation of PhDs over the years 1996-2000 when there was no increase in numbers.
8. Although post-secondary education is not part of CFI's mandate many of their initiatives have indirectly helped in providing a research environment to encourage students to enter graduate programs. Suggestions for projects that would enhance our ability to ensure that capable students consider advanced degrees would be welcome.

It is evident that the Canadian Foundation for Innovation has been instrumental in helping to create a healthier research environment in this Country. We believe that a major future contribution will be to use its resources to ensure a proper balance between funds allocated to research operating budgets and infrastructure needs of the community. This is a message that needs to be communicated to the next Federal Government.