

The Honorable Greg Rickford
Minister of State (Science and Technology, and Federal Economic Development
Initiative for Northern Ontario)
House of Commons
356 Confederation Building
Ottawa (Ontario)
K1A 0A6

Dear Minister,

In 2003, the federal government introduced the *Indirect Costs Program* (ICP) to contribute to the reimbursement of the indirect costs of research (ICR) flowing from research projects funded by the three federal granting agencies (SSHRC, NSERC and CIHR). These costs are in large part assumed by postsecondary institutions, and they encompass all the administrative, maintenance and necessary upgrade expenses to offer a propitious context for the successful completion of research activities.

As you know, the federal government began in September 2013 the examination of the *Indirect Costs Program*. On this occasion, it is necessary to shed light on some of the deficiencies of this program. Despite recommendations from numerous actors from the university and scientific milieu, who advocate raising the coverage rate of ICR to at least 40% of research grants from the three federal granting agencies, the federal government currently only ensures 21.5%. This situation, far from the initial 40% objective of the program, creates a significant shortfall for universities. Consequently, they must draw from their operating funds to cover these indispensable costs for the completion of research projects, depriving graduate students of better funding for their research training and better pedagogical and financial support to successfully carry out their study projects. Thus, in 2013, Canadian postsecondary institutions defrayed more than \$287 million to ensure the indirect costs of research.

In order to support the development of research and the competitiveness of our universities, the federal government must commit to funding the ICP to the level of 40% of the direct grants from the three federal granting agencies. While other OECD countries grant a much higher average reimbursement rate of indirect costs – around 50% in the United States and the United Kingdom, and up to 60% in some states of the European Union – the amounts Canadian universities devote to the payment of ICR should, on the contrary, serve to fund research activities within institutions or support measures for student researchers. Since they are particularly active in the advancement of research, graduate students remain the best-placed actors to ensure the transfer of knowledge and innovations, both social and technical, from universities to businesses and civil society.

In economic terms, it is estimated that each dollar invested by governments in research engenders economic spinoffs estimated at three dollars and fifty cents; the amounts spent by universities to cover the shortfall related to ICR deprives researchers of money that could be used to better fund research projects, thus contributing to the socioeconomic development and competitiveness of countries.

We look forward to your reply and send you our best wishes.

Sincerely yours,

In recent weeks, students at universities across Egypt have been subject to increasingly dramatic attacks by the country's security forces. After taking a central role in the Arab Spring protests of 2010 that brought significant democratic reforms to Egypt, students have again been protesting after the democratically elected President Mohamed Morsi was removed by the military in July. Not only has the military violated the Egyptian students' freedoms of expression and association, the intensity of the attacks has led to at least three deaths and hundreds of injuries and arrests. The fear is that such incursions could return to a level found in the Mubarek regimes where students were severely oppressed, including the rigging of student union elections and the limitation of academic freedoms.

Events like this remind us that, while we face significant problems in Canadian universities, we are fortunate to not have to face such struggles to merely attain an education and exercise democratic rights. It also reminds us that it is incumbent on us as students to lend whatever support we can to our fellow students in countries that face such struggles.

To this end, the SGPS decries the actions of the Egyptian military, and would like to voice its support for the students, student unions, and universities of Egypt that are facing this oppressive action. Further, we call on Queen's University, and the Canadian government to similarly decry these actions by Egypt's military.

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