



**OCAD University Submission to the  
House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance**

**Priorities: 2015 Federal Budget**

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## **Introduction**

OCAD University — Canada’s university of the imagination — currently enrolls more than 4,500 students in 16 undergraduate and six graduate programs. Home to the Group of Seven, inventors of industrial design and a historic engine of Canada’s advertising, graphic design and visual art industries, OCAD University produces and employs the country’s best artists, designers and cultural thinkers, inspires innovation and generates jobs, entrepreneurship and economic impact. OCAD University fuels the creative industries in Canada that provide \$49.9B in GDP, according to Canadian Heritage’s Culture Satellite Account. In Ontario, OCAD University fuels the creative industries that have grown by 40 percent over the last decade, creating 80,000 new jobs.

OCAD University alumni *are* the creative class — drivers of entrepreneurship in Ontario and evidence of how the university is putting imagination to work to strengthen the innovation economy. OCAD University’s 19,000+ alumni are among Canada’s leading artists and designers. A survey of alumni revealed that 92 percent are employed and 86 percent regard their OCAD University training as relevant to their current employment. These graduates work in more than 30 distinct fields, both within and outside of art and design — from city-planning to advertising and publishing, illustration and interior design to curating and exhibiting. Design alumni have left their indelible mark on streetcars and appliances, home and office interiors, medical equipment, automobiles, billboards and television commercials. Fine art alumni are represented in major public and private collections around the world. They have also developed distinguished careers as critics, curators, art administrators, community development workers, and teachers.

Eighty-seven percent of OCAD University alumni will operate businesses or work as independent contractors at some point in their careers, and 17 percent of alumni have been or are currently a founder of a not-for-profit or for-profit organization, 79 percent of which are in the cultural sector, including the digital media industry.

Canada’s future prosperity will depend on how well it is able to create a flexible, competitive and creative workforce that can adapt to socio-economic conditions and develop new future-oriented products, services and ideas, and OCAD University is leading the way.

The federal government can strengthen OCAD University’s role in the creative economy by enhancing investment in research and innovation, infrastructure and investing further in Aboriginal higher education.

## **Enhanced Funding for Research and Innovation**

Innovation is the key to improving Canada’s productivity. Continued investments in research support postsecondary institutions in developing innovative products, services and ideas, attracting and retaining the best students, faculty and researchers from around the world and in developing global research partnerships.

Small, specialized universities play a key role in fueling Canada’s economy and bringing creative innovation to its borders. For example, art, design and media play an “enabling technology” role in modern economies and are largely responsible for the phenomenal success of companies like Apple and Ikea. To compete on a world stage, Canada needs to invest in research capacity to connect art and design with health care, gaming, scientific visualization, information and communication technology and other rapidly growing fields. OCAD University is

growing its research and educational capacity in partnership with other institutions and with industry, so that students and industry are both exposed to the best ideas.

Further, as an institution with a strong history of professional practice, OCAD University has developed “practice-based” (or “practice-led”) research that includes practice and theory, and links researchers, practitioners and receptor communities. Today, the community benefits from a unique research environment that combines critical and theoretical thinking with professional practice, and with the applied methodologies of building, constructing and prototyping — in the university’s wood and metal shops as well as in its digital media, technology and 3D-printing laboratories.

Over the last decade since becoming a university, OCAD University has increased its research revenue tenfold and established internal capacity and recognition by Tri-council and other funding agencies. In 2011-12, the university generated a total of \$4.57M or \$44,800 in research per full-time faculty, ranking it 14<sup>th</sup> out of 20 Ontario universities. The Canada Research Chairs program has recently awarded OCAD University its first allocation, consisting of a Tier 1 Chair and a Tier 2 Chair.

On the innovation side, though Federal granting programs like FedDev, OCAD University has applied art, design and digital media knowledge to the creation of ventures in sectors as diverse as biomedical engineering, 3D-prototyping, service design and entertainment. Over a three-year period, with funding from FedDev’s ARC program, for its scale, the university has spun out a significant number of start-up companies (8), new patents (6) and products (13). Recent projects have resulted in: the creation of a Surgical Training Fetus Model in collaboration with Javelin Technologies; the LIFEbike (a lightweight, intelligent, electrical bike) in collaboration with Revelo Bikes; and Holo Mobile with STM Holographic Inc., which introduced a holographic interface for mobile immersive gaming.

Recent investments are a good start, but funding for niche and innovative areas of research and for small, specialized universities, especially through the Indirect Costs program is required. The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC) in their recently released report, “Submission to the Federal Review of the Indirect Costs Program, 2013,” states, “to be successful in the globally competitive world of research and innovation, it is vital that the Indirect Costs Program cover the real – and rising – costs of doing research.” OCAD University strongly endorses this view, and urges a consideration of the impact of these rising costs not just on the larger universities, but on the smaller such as OCAD University. Many small universities provide valuable research capabilities that contribute in large ways to Canada’s research agenda. Our research fills unique niches in areas like digital media, data visualization and inclusive design, and contributes to Canada’s economic, social and cultural life in invaluable ways. The Federal Indirect Costs program allows us to support our physical infrastructure or assist with the cost of specialized staff. For example these funds offset the cost of expert legal advice concerning research collaboration agreements and contracts with the private sector which is a very important focus of our research practice at the university. The formula should not be changed as it would weaken support to small institutions and undermine our valuable role in Canadian research and innovation.

Further, continued investments in physical and virtual infrastructure will support job creation and provide universities with the capacity to expand quality education and research and compete globally.

*Inclusion of Design in STEM*

Under the category of research and innovation, OCAD University believes that leveraging Canada's untapped potential for design innovation should be a core focus of the Government's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy, currently under review. OCAD University strongly supports the government's efforts to position Canada at the leading edge of global science and technology. We support proposed initiatives such as new funding for the Granting Councils, boosted funding for sustainable technologies, improving accessibility to grants and loans, enhancement of graduate scholarships and research chairs, support for international graduate students and research abroad opportunities for Canadian graduate students, investments in university infrastructure and the broadening of public-private sector cooperation and partnerships in the interest of innovation.

Canada's current S&T strategy serves as a strong foundation and that, with an enhanced design component, it will better position our country's industries to face economic challenges and capitalize on market opportunities in the coming years. Information and communications technologies, digital media, new energy technologies, medical services and devices — these are just a few examples of where Canadian design must be at the forefront. Design is a core partner of science and technology and a driver of innovation — this is a fact acknowledged by the world's leading companies and governing bodies, one that will work to Canada's advantage with the right investment, supports and attention from the public and private sectors.

Rather than 'STEM' (Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine), it is far more strategic for Canada to begin to describe the research and innovation knowledge set as STEM D (Science, Technology, Engineering, Medicine and Design) and for our national strategy for science and technology to foreground design capacity.

As such, under the theme of "increasing Canadian competitiveness through research and innovation," OCAD University recommends that the federal government:

- Continue investments in both operational and infrastructure costs of applied research through the federal granting agencies will allow OCAD Universities, and other Canadian universities, to continue to develop innovative products, services and ideas;
- Commit to long-term sustained and predictable research funding, including for programs like the Indirect Costs Program that helps smaller, specialized institutions to remain globally competitive; and
- Include design innovation as a core focus of the Government's Science, Technology and Innovation Strategy, in order to full leverage Canada's potential.

### **Invest in Research and Innovation Infrastructure through the Building Canada Plan**

Further, under the theme of "increasing Canada's competitiveness," continued investments in infrastructure will fuel creative city building and strengthen Toronto's Cultural and Entertainment District. The 100 McCaul Campus Expansion proposes a creative transformation of—and addition to— OCAD University's highly acclaimed Sharp Centre for Design (which celebrates its 10th anniversary in 2014-15) and its 100 McCaul building constructed in the mid-twentieth century. The project will support the growth of new and existing programs, and create a prominent showcase for emerging Ontario technologies that exploit cutting-edge technology and minimize environmental impact.

In addition, OCAD University will develop plans for a second campus on the waterfront—in collaboration with George Brown College—with the capacity to house the institution's growing

digital media activities. This initiative will create a powerhouse of learning, research and commercialization capacity and greatly enhance the university's cultural and economic impact.

### **Continued Investments in Aboriginal Education and Training**

Aboriginal Canadians are the fastest growing segment of the Canadian population. Expanding opportunities for post-secondary education for these citizens will have a beneficial impact on Aboriginal Canadians and on Canada. Aboriginal Canadians are limited in their ability to participate in the increasingly educated Canadian workforce due to low educational attainment rates. There is a need to expand university education opportunities for Aboriginal Canadians by increasing financial support to Aboriginal students and by investing in innovative university programs, like OCAD University's Indigenous Visual Culture Program.

At OCAD U, the Indigenous Visual Culture Program draws on rich histories, traditions and linguistic expression that underlie First Nations, Metis, and Inuit art, media and design, and concentrates on contemporary practice, theory and expression in Canadian and international contexts. The program includes indigenous critical and historical knowledge across a range of media and brings a unique Aboriginal focus to design history and criticism. The OCAD University Indigenous Visual Culture Program welcomes all Canadian Aboriginal people from First Nations, Metis, Inuit and urban centres. It is also building an international presence and links with Aboriginal peoples in Mexico, Australia, New Zealand and other sites. With curricula spanning art, media and design as well as curatorial and critical studies, the program is unique in Canada and significant in the world.

Additional funding to Aboriginal higher education would fast track the development of strategic programs like the Indigenous Visual Culture Program and drive immediate measurable outcomes. Canada should invest now and partner with the indigenous communities to ensure cultural, social and economic prosperity for all its citizens.

OCAD University recommends that the federal government invest in an integrated package of support that builds on existing initiatives and develops new options to enhance Aboriginal student access to and success in postsecondary education, including:

- Provide additional funding to Indspire's undergraduate scholarship program;
- Create 500 graduate scholarships for Aboriginal students to develop the next generation of Aboriginal leaders and an influential network of role models for young indigenous Canadians;
- Triple support for Postsecondary Partnerships Program, which was recently expanded to fund the design of college- and university-level courses responding to educational needs to First Nations students; and
- Create a new program to scale up successful "reach back" and transition programs at Canadian universities.

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