



Dr. Martha Radice
President of CASCA and Associate Professor
Department of Sociology and Social
Anthropology
Dalhousie University
6135 University Avenue
PO Box 15000
Halifax, NS B3H 4R2

September 29, 2017

The Honourable Kirsty Duncan
Minister of Science
House of Commons
Ottawa, ON K1A 0A6

Dr. Ted Hewitt
Chair of the Steering Committee of the Tri-agency Institutional Programs Secretariat
President, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
350 Albert Street
P.O. Box 1610
Ottawa, ON K1P 6G4

Dear Dr. Duncan and Dr. Hewitt,

Over the summer, the government of Canada announced a new funding program to attract international talent to Canada, the Canada 150 Research Chairs Program. This program commits \$117 million to fund between 15 and 35 research chairs (similar to the Canada Research Chairs Program) for up to seven years. Several universities have advertised for these positions. The distinctive feature of the program is that eligibility requirements

specify that all applicants must be living and working outside of Canada at the time of appointment.

We write to raise our objections to this program. We have several concerns.

Firstly, and most importantly, the Canada 150 Research Chairs Program excludes scholars already based in Canada. By seeking to recruit high-profile international scholars instead of fostering and promoting Canadian-based talent, the Program effectively marginalizes Canadian-based scholars, sending them the message that their scholarship is not worth investing in. This is especially distressing considering the number of faculty in Canada who are employed precariously. It also violates the Canadian Association of University Teachers' policy on Canadianization.

Secondly, the Program embroils Canada in the "brain drain" game. It recruits international scholars to Canada in part to mitigate the flow of scholars out of Canada, but in doing so, it potentially exacerbates brain drain in the countries from which those scholars are recruited. We maintain that a better solution is to increase and improve sustainable investment in research within Canada.

Thirdly, the way the Program is being implemented is problematic. It excludes faculty members from the application and review process for obtaining Canada 150 Chair posts, placing this process instead squarely in the hands of university administrators. It thereby undermines principles of collective university governance. Moreover, the Program appears to be unsustainable. It only provides funding for the Chairs for the first seven years, and gives no indication of how the Chairs and their research programs are to be integrated into universities' budgets afterwards.

Finally, the Canada 150 Research Chairs Program duplicates the Canada Research Chair Program, which can already be used to attract global talent.

We believe that research in Canada in our field of anthropology and the social sciences more broadly would be better served if the money to be spent on these chairs were redirected to SSHRC and CIHR. Many research grant applications are considered worthy each year but remain unfunded because of funding shortages. Alternatively, the \$117 million could be used to fund hundreds of Canada 150 Professorships for junior tenure-track scholars, instead of 15 to 35 Research Chairs, thereby making a long-term commitment to building Canada's research capacity as well as providing exciting opportunities to Canada's brightest new PhDs. Either of these options would do more to strengthen our research infrastructure than bringing in high-flying stars from elsewhere.

We urge you to reconsider the Canada 150 Research Chairs Program and to find ways to mark the 150th anniversary of the nation that are open to the brightest of its resident scholars.



Dr. Martha Radice

martha.radice@dal.ca

President, Canadian Anthropology Society/Société canadienne d'anthropologie (CASCA)

On behalf of the Executive Committee of CASCA

CC Guy Laforest, President, Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences