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Brief Literature Summary of
University Research Funding in Canada

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University Research Funding

According to estimates made in 1966 by the National Research Council, universities themselves contribute about 55% of the total funds devoted to university research in Canada; the Federal government contributes about 27.7% and the Provincial government only about 8%. The Federal support is substantial for financing major installations (about 50% of total major installation finance), major equipment (about 38%), and operating and minor equipment (about 33%). It is negligible in financing construction for research. The National Research Council and the Medical Research Council distribute most of the Federal aid for university research. In 1964-65, these two bodies distributed 80% of the total Federal aid for university research, and, in the same year, the Medical Research Council distributed 75% of the Federal funds for medical research in universities.

Provincial subsidies contribute little towards the costs of major and minor research equipment. However, they account for about 23% of total sums devoted to financing major research installations and 14% of sums devoted towards construction for research.

The National Research Council estimated in 1966 that university funds finance about 80% of construction for research, about 50% of operating expenditures and of minor and major equipment and about 25% for major installations.

With regard to the "indirect costs" of research (usually operating costs) as a result of the agreements at the 1966 Federal - Provincial Conference, the Federal government has made itself responsible for reimbursing half of the total operating costs of universities and colleges. (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 1969: 197-207)

Funding of University Medical Research

In Canada, the salaries of medical investigators are mostly paid by the universities in which they do research. Funds are also available from granting agencies such as the MRC for the support of career investigators who devote most of their time to research. In 1966, 15% of all Canadian investigators involved in medical research were known to be receiving a major part of their salaries through a granting agency. In a 1968 report to the Medical Research Council, it was estimated that 50% of the graduate students in Canadian Medical Schools were supported by one or other granting agency. Some received direct support through awards, but a larger group were paid from grants-in-aid of research to their supervisors. About 25% of total salaries of professional assistants, 23% of total salaries of technicians and 55% of salaries of secretarial and clerical personnel associated with research programs in Canadian medical school complexes were paid by the institution in which they worked with the remainder paid by extramural sources. (Medical Research Council, 1968: 18-20)

The direct costs of materials and supplies, animals and their maintenance, and small items of research equipment are now largely paid for through grants-in-aid from funding agencies. The equipment budget of most universities has been inadequate to do more than provide for those small equipment items required for teaching and basic faculty needs.

General overhead costs - maintenance and upkeep of laboratories, administering extramural funds, providing adequate library service and animal facilities - are, like the salaries of the investigators directing the research, presently paid for by the university in which the research is done. As noted in the previous section, much of these costs may ultimately be recovered from the Federal grants provided to the Provinces for university support. (Medical Research Council, 1968: 20-22)

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