



Public Interaction Program Description (2009)

Introduction

The Public Interaction Program (PIP) is the active centerpiece of the four Foundation programs that encourages and stimulates an interaction between Trudeau award winners – Fellows, Scholars and Mentors – and a variety of other networks, researchers and a general public. The Foundation is building a vibrant community of creative and critical thinkers providing ways for them and the wider public to work together to develop and communicate ideas that matter.

The Foundation's public activities are organized to reflect a particular approach – nicknamed “KATE” for Knowledge Acquisition, Transfer and Exchange. The best solutions emerge when individuals from different generations and different backgrounds focus on a problem together and when innovations are made in deep cultural understanding.

Trudeau Foundation Events

PIP comes to life through four major annual Trudeau events, through PIP-events organized by members of the Trudeau community and through partnerships with other institutions. All events are related to the four key themes of the Foundation: Human Rights and Dignity, Responsible Citizenship, Canada in the World, and People and their Natural Environment. In general, our events try to bring two or several different networks together with the intent to go beyond disciplinary borders and to encourage dialogue outside usual academic settings. The Foundation differentiates between the following three types of events.

1. The **four Annual Trudeau Events**, which are organized by the Foundation: the Conference on Public Policy (in mid-November); the Mentors-Scholars Retreat (in January or February); the Summer Institute (in May); the Trudeau Lectures (five lectures, in the course of an academic year).
2. The **PIP events** are policy workshops and seminars proposed and organized by Trudeau Fellows, Mentors or Scholars. The PIP program allows the Foundation to support up to four PIP projects every year, providing essential logistics and financial support of up to \$10,000 per event.
3. The Foundation actively pursues **collaboration opportunities** with other not-for-profit organizations and institutions interested in public policy issues on national and international levels. Partnerships can take different shapes, but must include the active participation of Trudeau Community members.

The Trudeau Conference on Public Policy

The Trudeau Conference on Public Policy is the Foundation's largest and most public event, which brings together the Trudeau community – Fellows, Scholars and Mentors –, as well as public decision makers from a variety of backgrounds. Conference participation is by invitation. The Foundation always reserves seats for young researchers and students. The Foundation has chosen not to apply any registration fees to any of the participants. The choice of the topic of the Annual Conference on Public Policy is the result of consultations with the Trudeau Community members. Since 2006, the Conferences have been preceded by a national opinion poll, commissioned by the Foundation in relation with the topic of the event, often in partnership with other institutions.

The Trudeau Mentors-Scholars Retreat

Held in late January or February, the annual Mentors-Scholars Retreat is a special opportunity for our Scholars to share concerns, experiences, and best practices and to spend time with a group of eminent Canadian policy-makers. Moreover, for most of the Mentors appointed in November, it is a first contact with the Trudeau Community. Since 2007, the two-day meeting opens with a lecture entitled "From Ideas to Policy" given by the head of an influential and respected think tank or research organization to address and challenge the participants to find new ways of using knowledge for the common good. Four parallel dialogue sessions structured around the four Foundation themes follow.

The Trudeau Summer Institute

The Summer Institute offers an exceptional opportunity for collaboration and intense networking among Trudeau Scholars, Fellows and Mentors. A wealth of experience, knowledge and interdisciplinary exchange transforms these four days of plenary sessions, seminars, excursions and informal discussions into much more than a meeting. The Summer Institute is the ideal place to find out about research carried out by Trudeau community members, to make contact with colleagues in preparation for other events, or to learn more about other disciplines. Aside from the Trudeau Community members who are at the forefront of the program, outstanding national and international experts are invited to give seminars on research-related topics. To lay the ground for reflection and to better structure the discussions, the Foundation commissions position papers on the topic of the Summer Institute.

The Trudeau Lectures

The Foundation launched an annual lecture series called the "Trudeau Lectures" in the fall of 2008 to promote its Fellowships across Canada and to disseminate Trudeau Fellows' key ideas. The Trudeau Lectures are an annual series of public lectures given by the Trudeau Fellows during their second year of the Fellowship and organized by the Foundation in collaboration with Canadian universities.

The Trudeau Lectures are an occasion for the Trudeau Fellows to reflect on their intellectual career and on the institutional framework within which they have developed their ideas and became the intellectual leaders they are today.

The Foundation will publish every year the text of these lectures in both official languages in the *Trudeau Papers*, which will be made available in print and online on the Foundation's website.

Conclusion

The Public Interaction Program continues to create an opportunity for the dissemination of ideas and highlight the work of our members. By facilitating the dissemination of research results in the public arena and encouraging discussion and debate around the potential consequences of these results, by participating in the development of the humanities and social sciences in Canada, by offering researchers a dedicated platform to promote their work, the Foundation has the power to bridge the gap between discovery and practical benefit for Canadian citizens. Canada has enviable intellectual resources. By unleashing their power through the Foundation's enabling capability, Trudeau community members are making a difference for future generations.

For more information on the Public Interaction Program, please contact the Program Director, Dr. Bettina B. Cenerelli at cenerelli@trudeaufoundation.ca or by phone at 514-938-0001, #227.