

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE
PRELIMINARY REVIEW
OF THE TRUDEAU FOUNDATION

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The Preliminary review of the Foundation is one element of the Programme Evaluation Framework adopted by the Board in March 2005. The Review assesses all of the Foundation’s programmes, while also taking an initial look at results and directions taken in pursuit of overall goals. The work leading up to the presentation of this report took place between January and September of this year. The findings are based primarily on interviews and a review of documents.

While acknowledging the many accomplishments of the Foundation, as well as the outstanding quality of its award-holders, the Review offers a reflection on what has been learned through three years of experience of the programme cycle, as well as of scholarly and public engagement. It also provides an opportunity for reconsideration of programme design issues, as well as of all facets of programme operations and management.

The Review is concerned with the three core award programmes supported by the Foundation: Fellowship Prizes; Scholarships; and, Mentorships. It also gives attention to a fourth area of programming, the Public Interaction Programme, which seeks to complement the award programmes by bringing the awardees together, and to link them to specialized external partners and audiences, as well as a broader public, while also enhancing the capacity of the Foundation, through its programming, to achieve the desired impact in contributing to, and influencing, public debate.

A particular focus of the report is the nomination and selection process for the awards programmes. Of the three, it is **the Scholarship Programme**, with a complex application and selection stage at the university level, which receives the most detailed examination. It is noted in the report that, within three years from inception, the Programme has established itself as a highly-regarded, elite competition.

A total of 371 nominations were received during the first three years of the Programme with candidates originating in all regions of Canada and abroad.

Ontario	113	30%
Quebec	54	15%
British Columbia	40	11%
Alberta	19	5%
Nova Scotia	13	4%
New Brunswick	12	3%
Manitoba	10	3%
Other regions of Canada	17	5%
International	51	14%
Unknown	42	11%
	<u>371</u>	100%

The application form, with supporting materials, is found to be effective in attracting the interest of a small number of outstanding doctoral students, while discouraging those who

do not fully meet the requirements. Scholars from a wide variety of disciplines within the humanities and the pure and applied social sciences, as well as environmental studies, public health and other inter-disciplinary fields, have succeeded in being nominated by their universities. The character of the four themes, the emphasis on links between student research topics and public policy, and the concern with public engagement, taken together with patterns of study in the relevant disciplines, have placed scholars from the humanities at a disadvantage in winning recognition as top candidates for the award at either university or Foundation level. Some proposals are made for further investigation of the issues, but there is no immediate remedy.

A number of recommendations are put forward concerning selection within the universities, and on matters to be discussed by the Foundation and university authorities. While no criticism of current arrangements is intended, on the basis of a very thorough, step-by-step examination of selection procedures at the Foundation, and the work of the File Review Committee and the Finalist Interview Panels, a series of recommendations is put forward concerning adjustments to procedures and selection methodology to further strengthen provisions for transparency, fairness and equity in decision-making. Attention is given, in particular, to extending the duration of the interviewing process for Finalists at the Foundation, with provision for a longer, more standardized, interview format to be followed for all candidates.

As with the Scholarship Programme, though with a much smaller numbers of nominees, candidates for **the Fellowship Prize** also came from a wide variety of disciplines and fields of study. Although no difficulties have been experienced in identifying exceptional candidates as Finalists for selection, there are some problems with the selection and nomination process at the universities which the Foundation would do well to address.

It appears that the distinctive characteristics of the Programme have yet to be fully appreciated by some universities, and this is reflected in the approach taken by these institutions to selection of nominees. This would seem to have had some impact in restricting the range of candidates put forward for consideration. While Trudeau Fellows are more likely than their peers to be engaged with public issues, some issues are raised in the report concerning the degree of attention given in selection to the dimension of public engagement, probable interest in working with Scholars, and in contributing to setting the intellectual agenda for the Foundation. For candidates for Fellowships (and for Mentorships), it is suggested that a greater investment by the Foundation is required in building a stronger and broader base of information on these matters in the candidate files.

Fellows have been active in a variety of ways in the life of the Foundation. However, they cannot be said to be setting its intellectual agenda. Under present circumstances, much of the burden of intellectual leadership for the Foundation is carried by the President. To date, he has managed the task with considerable acumen, but the arrangement does not provide a sound or sustainable basis for future development. The Fellows and others must play a stronger role in this respect.

The Foundation Board and management have given careful thought to what may be required to enhance the effectiveness of **the Mentorship Programme**, which, all agree, is the most innovative of the three award programmes and the most elusive to design and implement. After a challenging beginning, a number of adjustments have been made to the Programme this year, and these are already making a difference. The report offers encouragement to the continuing efforts of the Foundation to strengthen the Programme. It notes continuing difficulties in weighing the “virtues” which, together, add up to a formula, or formulae, for a successful Mentor. The complexities of the mentoring process are examined, and it is suggested that, in selection, greater attention be given to ensuring that nominees have the right mix of experience aptitude and attitude, to enter into a mentoring relationship, and that this is given equal consideration, alongside professional credentials and overall experience. For the longer term, a process is suggested whereby the Foundation might consider some alternative options for the Programme, perhaps moving away from a focus on the one-to-one mentoring relationship.

The report gives a very positive assessment of the **Public Engagement Programme (PIP)**, and notes the substantial steps which have been taken in the past year to build up an impressive number of activities, while also shaping a programme for 2006, based on a sequence of signature events. The most important single event held so far, the first Trudeau public Policy Conference, was found to have been a critical success, with any negative features outweighed by its achievements. Most participants found it to have been a memorable occasion. One concern noted by a number of those who took part, particularly public policy practitioners, was a weakness in making a connection between academic dialogue and practical issues of public policy and the worlds of government and business.

As yet, the report notes, none of the three categories of awardee have fully found their place in the emergent “Trudeau Community”, but it also recognizes that plans for new forms of activity and modes of engagement should contribute to changing this situation. A number of suggestions are made on ways to enhance the role of, in turn, Fellows, Scholars, and Mentors, in the broader life of the “Trudeau Community”, while strengthening the bonds to hold that community together. It is suggested that efforts of this kind, should take precedence, in the short term, to investment in broader forms of public engagement.

In the area of **management**, the report emphasizes the exemplary quality of the management and administration of programme operations, noting also the high degree of satisfaction of all awardees interviewed with the support provided. Some concerns are raised about staff overload, and the need for consideration to be given to improved staffing levels and adjustments to ways of working.

Overall, for the most part, the Foundation is found to have produced the outputs and the short-term results to which it has committed itself. A minor weakness in performance identified is the area of communications and the establishment of the “Trudeau Virtual Community”, but the report notes that plans are underway to address this gap in the near future.

Major Recommendations (A more Complete and Detailed List is Set Out at the Conclusion of the Main Report)

The Scholarship Programme

1. It will be worthwhile for the Foundation to conduct some further investigations of barriers to participation of candidates from the Humanities (possibly for the Fellowship, as well as the Scholarship, Programme). Accordingly, **it is recommended** that a small Reference, or Working, Group, with an advisory function, be established.
2. On the apparent shortage of Francophone candidates, as in the case of the Humanities, **it is recommended** that the Foundation contemplate undertaking a further assessment of the issue with the support of a small Working Group, drawn from relevant stakeholders. In the “Francophone case”, it will be helpful if the Group first consider whether there really is a “problem”, or whether, in fact, the numbers are more-or-less as they should be.
3. **It is recommended** that the Foundation give consideration to increasing the maximum number of candidates from six to eight for a few, larger institutions, to be identified on the basis of the graduate enrolment in all relevant disciplines. Taking into account the apparent concentration of talent at a small number of institutions, and given the objective to include the most outstanding applicants in the pool, some adjustment here would seem warranted.
4. One of the findings of the Review is that there is a need for more detailed guidelines on how universities should undertake internal selection. **It is recommended** that the Foundation indicate a requirement that a formal Selection Committee be set up at each participating university. Beyond this, guidelines would be couched as recommendations, rather than as mandatory. Despite this, every effort should be made to encourage their adoption.
5. In order to provide complete assurance to all concerned of fairness in **internal selection procedures** at the Foundation, it will be advisable for the Foundation to maintain a more complete record of its procedures. **It is further recommended** that, on an annual basis, the President present a complete report on the selection process and results to the Board (possibly following prior consideration at the ANRC), and that this report be reviewed and then attached to the minutes for future reference.
6. **It is recommended** that the Foundation increase the size of the FRC from five to six, and that steps are considered to increase the diversity of the background of the membership.
7. **It is recommended** that the size of each of the two interview panels for the Scholarship award finalists be increased from three to five, with one of the members designated as a chair. This will also provide the opportunity to broaden the base of

experience of the panels. A current or former fellow should be included in the membership of each panel.

8. It is recommended that the Foundation adopt a 40-minute to one-hour interview for finalists as the norm, following a consistent format. With the process facilitated by a chair, this will permit each candidate to provide an explanation of her or his research and its relationship to larger issues, while also giving the panel the opportunity to get to know all of the candidates.

9. In order to make for shared information on all candidates and a fairer process of assessment at this last stage, **it is recommended** that the two chairs and the two Fellows be asked to review the files of all finalists, including those assigned to the panel in which they will not participate, in advance. A meeting would then be held on the conclusion of the interview process involving the two chairs and the Foundation team, led by the Executive Programme Director, along with the two Fellows who have served as panel members, to make decisions among marginal candidates.

10. To complete the package of proposals for adjustment to the selection process for the Scholarship Programme, as discussed above, **it is recommended** that the Foundation plan an extended selection process at the final stage, beginning early on Friday evening, and concluding on Sunday afternoon. This would provide the enabling environment in which all the other recommendations might be implemented effectively.

The Fellowship Programme

1. It is recommended that the Foundation hold discussions with the universities (at the VP and Dean's level, and not merely through consulting University Presidents) on the confidentiality provision in the nomination process.

2. It is recommended that the Foundation make a thorough assessment of the nomination and file preparation process, with a view to considering how best to further enhance the quality, detail and relevance, of the materials to be included in the nomination files for Fellowship candidates.

3. A related issue concerns the List of Nominators and the nomination process. Under the present arrangements, academic candidates considered by the universities as potential nominees must go through an internal selection process, while others may be proposed by one individual, who might or might not be an academic, acting alone. **It is recommended** strongly that the Foundation give further thought to ways of strengthening and professionalizing the Fellowship nomination process, and that it take the immediate step of requiring that, in proposing a candidate, each nominator secure the support of a seconder, drawn from the list of nominators.

4. If there is a desire by the Board and management to include candidates from "the creative fields" whether inside or outside universities, **it is recommended** that a separate group of nominators be established, and that there should be a requirement for

nominations to be supported by a second member from within the group. A sub-committee of the File Review Committee of a further five members with the necessary expertise would then review any nominations submitted, and be asked to arrive at the recommendation of one or two names to be included among the final pool.

The Mentorship Programme

1. For the short term, it is recommended that the Foundation be encouraged to continue with its imaginative efforts to strengthen the existing Programme. **For the medium term, it is recommended** that, during 2006-7, the Foundation consider forming a small Working Group to assist the President in considering the options for a remodelled Mentorship Programme. It will be important that a broad perspective be adopted in looking at options, and, with this in mind, it is suggested that the group might also include, as well as former Mentors, other individuals drawn from the Trudeau Community who would have an active interest in thinking through alternative directions for the future

2. One possibility which might be examined at some point is a “mixed” model, where different individuals may be selected to make different kinds of contribution to bridging the gap between research and policy and practice, viewed broadly. Some might be selected as “conventional” Mentors, while others might be viewed as a resource to all Scholars and the Foundation as a whole, perhaps with a third group contributing through one or two quite intensive activities organized to open up new possibilities and ideas for Scholars. **It is recommended** that consideration of options along these lines be included in the Working Group’s terms of reference.

3. It is recommended that the Foundation consider introducing an informal consultation with Scholars on an annual basis to discuss with them, on an individual basis, what they hope to gain from a Mentorship relationship and to provide the opportunity for a frank exchange of views. Their views would then be taken into account in Scholar-Mentor assignments.

4. It is recommended that in the guidelines for both nomination and selection, priority is assigned to the candidate’s ability to be an effective Mentor. Further, the Foundation might give greater attention in the preparation of nominee files to the particular capacities of the candidate as a potential Mentor.

The Public Interaction Programme and the Role of Fellows, Scholars and Mentors in the Life of the Trudeau Community

1. It is suggested that, while Fellows have been active in the life of the Foundation, it will be necessary for them to play a stronger role in setting the intellectual agenda for the Foundation to achieve its goals. Accordingly, **it is recommended** that the Foundation reflect carefully on its approach to Fellows, and on what they may be expected to contribute as intellectual leaders and guides to the work of the Foundation.

2. Fellows themselves note that there has been no opportunity for them to meet as a group, and **the Reviewer recommends** to the Foundation that to plan for such an opportunity once or twice each year would provide a forum where the Fellows themselves may be able to consider ways to take on a more pro-active role in working with the Foundation in setting intellectual directions.

3. As a contribution to obtaining valuable feedback on the Fellowship Programme and on the role of fellows in the Foundation, **it is recommended** that formal Exit Interviews be introduced for all Fellows completing their tenure as awardees. A similar process might also be considered for Mentors.

4. **It is recommended** that the Foundation give consideration to forming a small Advisory Group with a continuing role to provide advice from time to time, or respond to concerns raised by the President or the Board relating to the Scholarship programme, with particular reference to “the scholarship experience” and balancing the desire for broadening the intellectual horizons of Scholars with the concern that they complete their academic programmes as expected. While ensuring that the topic of Scholar engagement is central to the group’s concerns, with future needs in mind, the Foundation might be well-advised to give the group a broader advisory mandate regarding the PIP as a whole. On this basis, **it is further recommended** that the group be designated *the PIP Advisory Committee*, with a broader role in offering advice on how to move forward the agenda on building the Trudeau Community.

5. Funds permitting, **it is recommended** that the Foundation give consideration to the idea of producing a high-quality, annual publication to enhance its visibility and influence.