

June 7, 2013

To: Members of the Canadian physics research community

Dear colleagues:

I am writing to you concerning the recent restructuring and refocusing of the CAP-NSERC Physics Liaison Committee (LC).

The CAP and NSERC have recently redefined the Terms of Reference of the LC to allow it to be a more effective interface to the Canadian physics community, operating at arm's length from both the CAP and NSERC. The role of the LC includes, but is not limited to:

- identification, discussion and analysis of opportunities that the Canadian physics research community could seize or build on, and challenges it may face, in its quest to be at the forefront of research at the international level.
- communication, discussion and analysis of suggestions of the Canadian physics research community concerning NSERC's programs.
- communication, discussion and analysis of developments at NSERC that affect the Canadian physics research community: reporting outcome of competitions, developments in the peer review process, or new programs and processes.
- discussion of matters that may help to inform the Group Chair for his/her participation in the Committee on Grants and Scholarships (COGS).

Additional information about the LC can be found on our new website: www.phys-cap-nserc.org (English) and www.phys-acp-crsng.org (French). I encourage you to go to the website to see recent news, national and international reports, presentations, and recent feedback provided to NSERC by the LC.

To carry out its role, the LC is focused on engaging and listening to the community, and collecting and analyzing factual information that will be conveyed to, and discussed with, the community, the CAP and NSERC. This will allow the community to present arguments that are backed up by quantitative data, demonstrating that specific programs are critical for the success of the Canadian physics community, and identifying particular needs that the funding agencies could address.

As a first step in this process, we want to evaluate and articulate the current state of Canadian physics research. Although the different subfields of physics are distinct, we are confident that we can identify some overriding themes. Our approach will be two-fold: soliciting feedback from the Canadian physics research community, and commissioning an independent study to provide in-depth information

concerning focused topics, such as the community's effectiveness in using NSERC's suite of programs. We will be asking you for your feedback in the near future, and we would be grateful if you could please take some of your time to provide us with your input. It is our hope that we will be able to determine factors that have been crucial for the success of Canadian physics to date, and to make recommendations to key community stakeholders including the CAP, NSERC, universities, and provincial and federal governments.

In conclusion, I would like to bring to your attention several recent national and international studies that have indicated the leading role of Canadian physics internationally.

1) In 2012, the Institute of Physics (IoP) published a report entitled "[Bibliometric evaluation and international benchmarking of the UK's physics research](#)" that evaluated the international impact of UK physics. In this report, they compared the "normalized citation impact" of physics research in different countries, and Canada was rated number one in 2010 (see Figure 3.2a in the report).

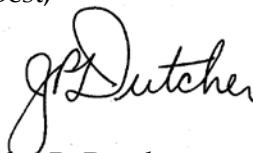
2) Also in 2012, the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA) published a report entitled "[The State of Science and Technology in Canada, 2012](#)". In this report, they identified six fields of research in which Canada excels, and one of these areas was Physics and Astronomy.

3) In May 2013, the Science and Technology Innovation Council (STIC) issued a report entitled "[The State of the Nation 2012: Canada's Science, Technology and Innovation System: Aspiring to Global Leadership](#)". The focus of this report was on Canada's performance with respect to business innovation, knowledge development and transfer, and talent development and deployment. With respect to knowledge development, they noted that the highest average relative citation (ARC) score of all scientific disciplines in Canada was obtained in Physics.

Based on these external reports, the impact of Canadian physics research is not only highest of all countries in physics, but also the highest of all scientific disciplines within Canada. Taken together, these external validations of Canadian physics research are cause for hope and they provide a solid base on which we can build a plan for the future.

The LC looks forward to your active participation and invaluable input.

Best,



John R. Dutcher

Chair, CAP-NSERC Physics Liaison Committee