

To: Large Association Members of the
Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS)

From: Representatives of Large Associations on the CFHSS Board
Heather Murray, Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English
Tony Porter, Canadian Political Science Association
Kathy Sanford, Canadian Society for the Study of Education
Mary Lynn Stewart, Canadian Historical Association

Re: CFHSS Board Meeting, November 27-28 2010.

Date: December 9, 2010

As CFHSS Board members one of our responsibilities is to communicate with the large CFHSS member associations, which we represent. At the recent CFHSS Board meeting (November 27 and 28) we agreed that it would be good to make this more systematic by routinely soliciting input from large member associations before Board meetings and providing reports on Board meetings after they occur. In the discussion of the CFHSS strategic planning exercise at the Board meeting there was a general sense that it was important to improve the two-way flow of information between the CFHSS and its members. This report on the Board is motivated by these concerns.

As you know, the CFHSS is engaged in a strategic planning exercise. A significant part of the time of the CFHSS Board meeting was taken up with further discussion of the strategic framework. The following issues raised in the feedback process either before or during the CFHSS Board meeting seem likely to be taken seriously by the CFHSS Executive (based on the visibility they had in the Board meeting and the acknowledgement of them by Michael Trottier, the consultant hired to lead the planning):

- Make the language more exciting, using less business-speak.
- Put more emphasis on how the links with the Federation members might be strengthened, enhancing a two-way flow of information between members and the Federation.
- Include more discussion of Aboriginal issues
- Consider the international dimension more
- More emphasis on the Francophone aspects of the Federation's work
- Clarify the responsibilities of Board members, including their communications with their constituencies, and call on them more
- Explore getting access to the mailing list of the associations that are members of the Federation
- Move forward on the database of HSS research, but by linking existing databases rather than creating a new one
- Increasing the engagement of more junior scholars with the CFHSS

Points that were raised in the Board discussion or in the large associations' feedback on the strategic framework that are less clearly acknowledged as needing to be addressed:

- Rebalancing the emphasis more towards the humanities and the discipline of education.
- Making the commitment to equity more prominent
- Reworking the vision and mission statements to differentiate the CFHSS more clearly from SSHRC and other organizations
- Devising a catchier label for the CFHSS (Fedcan?)
- Getting more involved in teaching issues and other matters that tend to be under provincial jurisdiction
- Drawing government researchers and the financial support of ministries into publicly accessible Congress presentations and panels or regional events
- The question of whether the vision statement is too nationalistic

It seems the intended purpose of the strategic framework is not to alter dramatically the direction of the CFHSS but rather to clarify what it is doing and make incremental improvements in its work.

Before and during the meeting Heather Murray raised the question of liability insurance for associations. She spoke to two senior CFHSS staff members who agreed to follow up on this, to see if the CFHSS can assist in acquiring or providing such insurance.

Part of the Board meeting consists of routine business, such as reviewing the ongoing work of the Federation. For instance this included reports on an expansion of the CFHSS equity activities that has been led by Dr. Malinda Smith, Vice-President Equity for the CFHSS, as well as reports on upcoming congresses. A plan for Congress to celebrate Canada's Sesquicentennial in 2017 was endorsed by the Board. The Chair of the Aid to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP) Management Board, Stephen Slemon, presented a plan to boost significantly the visibility of the ASPP program. We are happy to provide more information on any of these routine matters if you wish.

The budget was reviewed. The projected deficit in the 2010-11 budget is \$196,036. The projected deficit in this year's budget was \$321,432, but it looks like the actual deficit will be roughly half that size. These deficits are being financed by drawing down the CFHSS reserves, which remain substantial at well over \$1 million. There are a number of factors that contribute to these deficits, including reduced returns in the markets in which the CFHSS reserves are invested, and projected reduced attendance at the upcoming Congress at the University of St. Thomas and the University of New Brunswick (typically Congress has significantly lower attendance when it is in smaller cities). The CFHSS Executive is taking measures to reduce the deficit, including a cut in the expenditure on payroll and benefits from a projected total of \$1,516,591 in the current year to \$1,376,479 in the 2010-2011 budget.

A prominent theme in the CFHSS Board proceedings was related to the overall effort to promote the place of HSS in the federal government's strategies. This was evident in three ways:

1. The reports made by the CFHSS Executive members suggested that the CFHSS has had particular success with a well-received high quality report on the digital economy that it sponsored and with the well-attended "Big Thinking" series which brings HSS scholars to Parliament Hill to talk about issues on the agenda of parliamentarians. The CFHSS is considering the possibility of extending the Big Thinking series to include cities other than

Ottawa. The CFHSS is also exploring greater use of media such as radio and social networking and involving the public more in Congress to increase awareness of the work of the CFHSS and HSS scholars. It sounds like it is very difficult to get the ear of government ministers, and in Ottawa more generally there seems to be extreme caution about the consequences for associations that receive any type of government funding of speaking in ways that might be deemed inappropriate. The importance of the CFHSS not developing a mission that was too diffuse or that duplicated the work of other bodies excessively was noted.

2. SSHRC President Chad Gaffield made a presentation to the CFHSS Board which set out the way that SSHRC is conceptualizing the role of HSS research. The basic idea is that we do research on humans, that big progress is happening in systematically advancing our knowledge about humans, and that this is crucial for innovation in its broadest sense, which includes innovation in non-business institutions and practices. Gaffield emphasizes that in business as well HSS knowledge is crucial, especially since most of our economy is services. He makes the argument that we are moving from a linear model of implementation in multiple areas including business, to one in which the initiative of people (ie. the human factor that HSS studies) is crucial to success at all stages. He seemed to feel that this vision was gaining traction even with conservatives who are sometimes assumed to be dismissive of HSS research. The extraordinary and ill-advised attack on HSS in the UK budget is a sobering example of what we want to avoid. A senior SSHRC staff member also presented some more detail about the unfolding of the new SSHRC architecture.

3. Paul Davidson, President of the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada also made a presentation that covered some of the same territory as Gaffield's. It included more data on the importance of university education for the economy and individuals' economic prospects, including especially in the HSS. Since the onset of the recession in 2007-8 large numbers of jobs for those without post-secondary education have disappeared in Canada while there has been a substantial increase in jobs for university graduates, including from HSS programs. He pointed to the inadequate access of Aboriginal communities to post-secondary education, and the huge challenge that health care and the demographics of aging pose to government budgets as policy problems to which HSS research is crucial. He framed recent history as consisting of a 15 year cycle, from the mid 1990s to today, which involved the rebuilding of universities and colleges after the cuts of the 1990s. His assessment was that there had been a large investment by governments during this period, although this has been accompanied by increases in students, and that this investment is coming to an end. There are some marginal further investments that might be expected to finish off this cycle, but a feeling in government that they have already done enough for universities, combined with the perceived need to retrench after the 2008 crisis, will make future requests for funding increases very difficult. A discourse of victimization from universities will be perceived negatively. At the same time there seems to be better recognition in Canada of the importance of the HSS than in the current UK government.

We would be pleased to try to answer any questions you might have about the work of the CFHSS and to receive any comments or concerns you may have. The next CFHSS Board meeting is on March 25, 2011, with the CFHSS Annual General Meeting scheduled for March 26-7. To facilitate communication among large member associations as well between the CFHSS and the associations a list of the large associations with the CFHSS representatives and the association presidents appears below. Corrections to this are welcome.

Large member-associations of the CFHSS

Association	Rep on Board?	Rep to AGM
Canadian Economics Association	None	James Brander brander@sauder.ubc.ca
Canadian Psychological Association	None	Jean-Paul Boudreau boudreau@ryerson.ca
Canadian Historical Association	Mary Lynn Stewart mstewart@sfu.ca	Mary Lynn Stewart mstewart@sfu.ca
Canadian Society for the Study of Education	Kathy Sanford ksanford@uvic.ca	Kathy Sanford ksanford@uvic.ca
Association of Canadian College and University Teachers of English	Heather Murray heather.murray@utoronto.ca	Heather Murray heather.murray@utoronto.ca
Canadian Philosophical Association	None	Denis Fiset fisette.denis@uqam.ca
Canadian Political Science Association	Tony Porter tporter@mcmaster.ca	Tony Porter tporter@mcmaster.ca
Canadian Sociological Association	None	John Goyder jgoyder@uwaterloo.ca
Canadian Association of Geographers	None	Anne Godlewska anne.godlewska@queensu.ca