Vital yet vulnerable: Expert panel report examines security risk and resilience in Canada's research enterprise

NEWS RELEASE

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In a moment defined by shifting geopolitics, intense global competition for talent and technology, and rapid investments in national infrastructure critical to sovereignty, Canada must protect sensitive research and the benefits it creates—without closing the doors on the relationships that make Canadian science thrive. A new report from the Council of Canadian Academies (CCA), *Balancing Research Security and Open Science*, offers an independent assessment of national and foreign efforts to promote research security, highlighting potential strategies to safeguard national interests while preserving the openness that drives discovery, innovation, and prosperity.

"Our most vital areas of research are often the ones that are most susceptible to misuse," says Martha Crago, chair of the CCA's Expert Panel on Sensitive Research of Concern. "To secure the future of Canada's scientific strength, our country's research ecosystem needs adaptive safeguards that work in tandem with our commitment to open science."

Balancing Research Security and Open Science was commissioned by Defence Research and Development Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada, with support from other government departments and agencies. The report explores measures for identifying and safeguarding sensitive research of concern and highlights the need for their continuous application and reassessment throughout the research process, fostering a modern research mindset. It also describes the importance of:

- Increased training and capacity-building, especially for smaller universities, colleges, and polytechnics with limited research-security resources;
- Greater integration of the private sector, which plays a critical role in Canada's research ecosystem but frequently lacks oversight; and
- Recognition of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples' right to govern research about them and their lands.

Balancing Research Security and Open Science recognizes the critical importance of coordinated, collaborative research security efforts. The consequences for misuse of sensitive research can be severe, imperiling national and economic security, health, and well-being. With adequate training, resources, and capacity, Canada can encourage a modern research mindset, strengthening the research community and encouraging ethical and open science against an uncertain future.

"Each contributor to Canada's research ecosystem has a part to play in safeguarding sensitive research," said Tijs Creutzberg, President and CEO of the CCA. "This timely report offers practical

insight at a critical time. On behalf of the CCA, I thank the panel for their expertise and engagement with the assessment process."

Balancing Research Security and Open Science is available at cca-reports.ca.

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