

## Canada's Top 50 Research Colleges List 2015 Analysis

### Research Trajectory Slowing

Growth in research activity at *Canada's Top 50 Research Colleges* cooled substantially in Fiscal 2014, posting a 4.7% increase compared with a 38.8% expansion in Fiscal 2013. Combined research income reached \$158.0 million, compared with \$150.8 million the previous year. In total 31 colleges reported gains in research income while 19 colleges reported declines. Because the number of college faculty engaged in research increased by 14.3%, year-on-year research intensity (income per faculty) declined by -8.3%, to \$75,054 from \$81,883.

George Brown College headed the Top 50 list, attracting \$14.2 million of research income last year, with year-on-year growth reaching 53.5%. Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe recorded about \$9.4 million of income, followed by SAIT Polytechnic at \$7.2 million. Rounding out the top 10 were Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles (\$7.1 million), British Columbia Institute of Technology (\$7.0 million), Cégep Édouard-Montpetit (\$6.2 million), Cégep de La Pocatière (\$5.6 million), Red River College (\$5.6 million), Sheridan College (\$5.5 million), and Niagara College (\$5.3 million).

### Provincial Performance

Provincially, Québec's 17 colleges accounted for a total of \$57.3 million of research income and 36.3% of total Top 50 activity. With 16 colleges, Ontario posted income of \$54.3 million and accounted for 34.4% of national activity. Colleges in all other provinces/territories combined accounted for 29.2% of national income.

Among the 4 leading provinces with more than 1 college reporting, average per-college income was highest in Ontario (\$3.40 million), Québec (\$3.37 million), British Columbia (\$2.78 million) and Alberta (\$2.59 million). (Note that Alberta's results were affected because NAIT and Bow Valley College did not participate in this year's survey.)

Top 50 – Leading Provinces		
Province	Average \$ (millions)	% of Total
Québec (17)	\$3.37	36.3
Ontario (16)	\$3.40	34.4
Alberta (6)	\$2.59	9.9
British Columbia (4)	\$2.78	7.0

## Income Growth Leaders

In spite of the modest national result (4.7% increase) many colleges exhibited very strong rates of growth in income last year. Income grew by 271.6% at Cégep de La Pocatière, 89.7% at College of New Caledonia, 70.8% at Nova Scotia Community College, 70.3% at Lambton College and 67.8% at Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick.

Top 10 Research Colleges by Growth			
2014 Rank		Research College	% Change 2013-2014
Income Growth	Overall		
1	7	Cégep de La Pocatière	271.6
2	48	College of New Caledonia	89.7
3	19	Nova Scotia Community College	70.8
4	11	Lambton College	70.3
5	20	Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick	67.8
6	1	George Brown College	53.5
7	50	Cégep régional de Lanaudière	44.8
8	17	Mohawk College	43.5
9	21	Olds College	39.3
10	12	Centennial College	32.8

## Research Intensity

Average Top 50 research intensity – research income per faculty – declined by -8.3% last year, to \$75,054. Research intensity was highest at Yukon College (\$418,400 per faculty), followed by Cégep André-Laurendeau (\$305,800 per faculty) and Collège de Maisonneuve (\$196,400 per faculty). Overall, 25 of the 50 research colleges posted research intensities higher than the national average.

Top 10 Research Intensive Colleges			
2014 Rank		Research College	Research Intensity (\$ per Faculty) \$000
Research Intensity	Overall		
1	14	Yukon College	\$418.4
2	15	Cégep André-Laurendeau	\$305.8
3	26	Collège de Maisonneuve	\$196.4
4	11	Lambton College	\$182.5
5	7	Cégep de La Pocatière	\$160.6
6	25	Collège Shawinigan	\$155.8
7	4	Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles	\$150.9
8	38	Lakeland College	\$147.3
9	6	Cégep Édouard-Montpetit	\$144.3
10	17	Mohawk College	\$139.7

## Research Partnerships and Projects

A key metric for college research is the number of active and completed formal research partnerships and projects that colleges have with external organizations. This year the Top 50 Research Colleges reported a total of 2,093 active research partnerships, compared with 1,810 in Fiscal 2013. Similarly, they tallied 2,021 completed projects compared with 1,782 the year before.

## This Year and Next

This is the third year in which Research Infosource has reported on college research activity. We thank all the participating colleges for their cooperation in providing the data that help us to track national trends. As previously indicated, total Fiscal 2014 research income expanded by 4.7%, which was well below the 38.8% growth seen in Fiscal 2013 and the 35.4% growth in Fiscal 2012. On the positive side, the number of college faculty engaged in research expanded by 14.3%. Active research partnerships grew by 15.6% and completed projects expanded by 13.4%.

Why the reduced rate of income growth, which admittedly is only one measure of research activity? It is possible (though not likely) that external funders – primarily governments and the private sector – reduced the amounts of money available for college research. Or perhaps the college research model has harvested the low hanging fruit and may need to evolve in the future in order to sustain prior levels of growth. Unlike their university counterparts, college faculty generally do not have a research mandate; they are hired primarily to teach. Colleges are thus required to hire additional teaching personnel to fill in for college staff who secure research funds, a situation that creates program delivery inefficiencies. Another barrier is that colleges do not have a cadre of graduate students to do the research legwork in a sustained way. College students do an admirable job, but their time is limited compared with that of a university graduate student. Another factor might be the relative absence of infrastructure to support additional research. Other considerations may also be at play. This year's Top 50 Research Colleges results should encourage colleges and funders to consider future prospects and examine barriers and opportunities to growing college research.

There is no doubt that college research – typically applied in nature – fills an important space in Canada's national research agenda. Colleges and funders are both eager to expand their role. There is a willing group of companies, government departments, community groups and others interested in working with colleges. The coming year is a good time to establish a new action plan to move the sector forward.