Op-Ed: The Best and the Brightest

Margaret McCuaig-Johnston, Senior Fellow, ISSP

Canada has some of the best and the brightest scientists in the world. Take for instance Gilles Brassard in quantum cryptography, Paul Corkum in attosecond physics, and Barbara Sherwood-Lawlor in earth sciences who are international leaders in their fields. There is little doubt that Canadians are performing well given our modest resources. The question is: are we supporting our top talent effectively to allow them to collaborate with top researchers around the world, and to allow our companies to realize value from our research investment?

Canada produces 4.1% of all research papers, and performs only 2.1% (at $24.3B) of the research and development undertaken in the world. That’s double what it was in the 1980s and 90s, but is still far behind countries like the US ($405B), China ($296B), Japan ($160B), Germany ($69B), South Korea ($56B) and even behind France ($42B), the UK ($38B) and India ($36B).

And science and technology are, by their very nature, international. Discoveries in chemistry and innovations in engineering can take place anywhere in the world. And the most cutting edge innovation happens when the best people in a discipline are able to work together in teams to take advantage of the brilliance of each member. What we call Big Science in fields such as physics and astronomy has been characterized for many decades by international collaboration, since each project was usually too expensive and complex for a single country to undertake it alone. And climate change science has necessarily been the subject of joint projects at an international level.
2014 D. Allan Bromley Memorial Lecture

Hosted by the ISSP at the University of Ottawa, this year’s Bromley Memorial Event welcomes as its keynote speaker Professor Mu Rongping, Director of the Institute of Policy and Management of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, and Vice President of the Chinese Association for the Science of Science Policy and S&T Research.

Professor Rongping will share Chinese experiences in policy-making based on long-term foresights.

"Policy Framework for Innovation-driven Development in China"
Thursday, April 24, 4:00 - 6:00 p.m.
Desmarais Building, University of Ottawa
55 Laurier Avenue East, Room 12102 (12th floor)
Free. In English.
Reception to follow.

Register today!

April’s Distinguished Speaker Lectures: Great Success with a 100 Attendees!

The Distinguished Speaker lecture "The Critical Need for Evidence in Developing Good Public Policies" was presented on April 3 by Dr. Munir Sheikh, Former Chief Statistician of Canada, Executive Fellow, School of Public Policy at the University of Calgary, and Distinguished Fellow at the School of Public Policy at Queen’s University. Dr. Sheikh reflected on how public policy can contribute fully to enhancing our quality of life if it is evidence-based. Professor Sheikh’s talk concentrated on examples to illustrate the need to do better on developing evidence as well as using this evidence appropriately.

This event was organized in collaboration with Evidence for Democracy.

The Distinguished Speaker lecture "From the 'Bankruptcy of Science' to the 'Death of Evidence': Science and its Value" was presented on April 10 by Dr. Stathis Psillos, Rotman Canada Research Chair in Philosophy of Science, Department of Philosophy at Western University. Dr. Psillos reflected on what were and are the key external and internal criticisms of science and evidence in particular, how are these tied to a particular image of science, and what is needed to defend science and its claim to objectivity and truth.

This event was organized in collaboration with SSHRC’s Situating Science Strategic Knowledge Cluster.
New Affiliates at the ISSP

The ISSP is pleased to announce the appointment of three new Affiliates. These new connections further strengthen the interfaculty reach of the ISSP. We are looking forward to many collaborations.

Roberto Chica
Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science

Monica Gattiner
Associate Professor, School of Political Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences

Sandra Schillo
Assistant Professor, Telfer School of Management

Roger Stanev Awarded Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship

Roger Stanev, Ph.D. (University of British Columbia, Philosophy) was awarded to a two-year Banting Postdoctoral Fellowship to begin August 2014. His research project involves methodological and ethical considerations of evidence-informed decision-making. The project includes developing decision-making tools for interim analysis of clinical trials (e.g., whether to stop or continue). Dr. Stanev will spend his fellowship years at the University of Ottawa, working with Dean Fergusson in the Faculty of Medicine, Marc Saner from the Institute of Science, Society and Policy, and members from the Centre for Practice-Changing Research at the Ottawa Hospital Research Institute.

SSP Network Members in the News

Paul Dufour, Harper’s pick for new minister unlikely to inflame science community, cited in Globe and Mail.

Paul Dufour, Do science ministers really matter? in iPolitics.

Paul Dufour, Becoming a Northern Minerva: Injecting Science into Canada’s Foreign Policies in National Approaches to Science Diplomacy: An Education Resource.

Scott Findlay on the importance of public science (audio) on Habitat Radio.
Scott Findlay and Paul Dufour, Calling for a 21st Century STI strategy in Re$earch Money. Available only with subscription.

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