

size concerns relating to research and manpower training as key factors in national economic development, because this is where federal responsibilities are most immediately linked with post-secondary education. But because the emphasis of this chapter could be taken to imply a narrow view of the role of a university, the Task Force considers it important to make clear its perspective on the post-secondary sector generally, as distinct from the limited role to be played by the federal government.

The Task Force sees the significant role played by universities and associated institutions in teaching, research and reflective scholarship—in addition to the provision of commercial, scientific or professional skills—as critical to national well-being. We also see the role played by community colleges and technical institutes as vital in broadening individual experience and opening up cultural or recreational opportunities to those without access to university programs—in addition to providing technical and vocational training to meet needs for skilled labour.

These goals can only be achieved by autonomous institutions, free to innovate, to pursue reason wherever it leads, to develop critical faculties not only within their own walls, but also in society at large. There is no need to repeat the well-known arguments suggesting that a society is safe from repression only when its institutions and its citizens are free to criticize and question the very apparatus that supports those institutions and sustains that freedom. It is sufficient to note simply that we take for granted the need for strong, independent, autonomous institutions free of direct government influence. *The Task Force therefore recognizes the need for general base funding for the post-secondary sector, to permit adults of all ages—not just the traditional 18-24 age group—to pursue spiritual and intellectual goals, to polish their critical faculties and to expand their general base of knowledge on which more specific skills may be built.*

But within this global funding responsibility, the federal government also has more specific roles and responsibilities, not for reflective scholarship, but for mission-oriented enquiry, not for curiosity-oriented research, but for applied research and development, not for general knowledge, but for skills in demand in the economy. Education is a

provincial responsibility. But for many reasons explored below, there are specific federal concerns as well, and it is these we examine here. To emphasize the particular aspects of the sector that impinge on direct federal responsibilities is not to suggest, however, that we attach less importance to other aspects of post-secondary education or that we are unaware of the need for arrangements that leave institutions free of undue influence from governments. It is merely to concentrate on the particular problems relevant to present fiscal arrangements, in light of existing constitutional divisions of responsibility.

Summary of Evidence

Most of the organizations and individuals submitting briefs to or appearing before the Task Force were from the university sector of the post-secondary education field. They tended to express many of the same broad concerns about post-secondary education and about the need for continuing federal financial support. Virtually all submissions emphasized the vital role played by post-secondary education in providing the intellectual and scientific resources, as well as the trained people, that are essential to the attainment of the economic, social, cultural and language goals of individual Canadians, of the country as a whole, and of its provinces or regions. Other witnesses, both individual experts and representatives of groups, placed more emphasis on the need to adapt the system to serve more equitably and efficiently the current and future needs of Canadian society.

The following quotations from some of the submissions to the Task Force are representative of widely-held views about the importance and broader purposes of higher education in Canada:

- Nous connaissons tous le rôle très important que jouent les universités au Canada...les universités sont...à la base du progrès économique et du développement...social. Ceci se démontre...dans les efforts déployés par les universités dans les domaines de la recherche et du développement; dans leur contribution à la formation de spécialistes capables d'adopter leurs spécialités au besoin...de la société...¹
- The importance of the universities to the research and development objectives of the provinces and of the country cannot be overstated....