

## ***DFAIT Launches “Understanding Canada” Program***

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade replaced the Canadian Studies Program with a new program entitled “Understanding Canada.” This new program derives from the “Advantage Canada” initiative and favours a more strategic approach towards open diplomacy and a greater relevance in regards to Government priorities while maintaining Canadianists’ academic freedom.

It includes the following elements:

- **Canada Conference Grant Program**, theme conferences abroad to diversify participation;
- **Doctoral Student Research Award**, to support research on issues of strategic regional interest;
- **Canadian Leadership Program**, which replaces the Cultural Personalities Exchange Program (CPEP) and allows Canadian experts specialized in key issues to participate to strategic forums;
- **Student Mobility Program**, designed to facilitate students exchanges, study tours and internships in Canada and abroad;
- **A fund for Innovative Strategic Projects** to support new initiatives consistent with goals and objectives of missions’ country strategies related to international education activities.

Although the new programme consider primarily the academic merit of each file submitted, priority will be given to the following issues:

- Peace and security in Afghanistan;
- North America partnership (including key Canada-U.S. bilateral issues);
- Economic development and prosperity;
- Managing Diversity;
- Environment/Energy;
- Theme(s) directly related to mission’s strategic priorities in the region.

Following consultations by ICCS including the Forum on the Future of Canadian Studies, the following program’s components will not change:

- Canada-Asia-Pacific Awards in Canadian Studies;
- Canada-Latin America Caribbean Awards in Canadian Studies;
- Canada-Europe Awards (formerly the Institutional Research Program):
- Program for International Research Linkages;
- Library Support Program.

For the Faculty Enrichment and Faculty Research programs, national competitions will be held for Argentina, Brazil, China, France, India, Israel, Italy, United Kingdom and Russia and one multinational competition for Germany, Austria and Switzerland. As for countries that have not been mentioned previously, three regional competitions will be held in Latin America and the Caribbean (including Mexico), Asia and Europe. The Doctoral Student Research Award will now be open to all.

As for the Canadian Studies traveling book display, the organizers of a major event will submit a list of publications related to the theme of their event. The books up to a maximum of \$1,000.00 CAN will be sent to them and they will be entitled to keep them after the event.

Funding of Canadian studies Centres will be based on competitions either at the national or regional levels, according to the competitions’ definition given above, except for Mexico that will have its own competition. Beginning ne 2008-2009, other institutions and organizations will be encouraged to participate into competitions.

Finally, the funding of the Associations for Canadian Studies will be more competitive. They will be able to continue to apply for core funding as determined by analysis from DFAIT in cooperation with missions. Funding of activities including conferences will be competitive, as described previously. The local Canadian mission will remain the first point of contact for further information, guidelines, applications forms, etc.

For full details, please see :

DFAIT's Understanding Canada Website at <http://www.international.gc.ca/studies-etudes/index.aspx>;  
and ICCS' site at [http://www.iccs-ciec.ca/pages/newweb/sample2/DFAITOverview\\_en.asp?shownav=4](http://www.iccs-ciec.ca/pages/newweb/sample2/DFAITOverview_en.asp?shownav=4).