

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE FEDERATION

At the November 2000 meeting of the General Assembly, incoming President, Dr Patricia Clements, presented the report of her Task Force on Communications. The report focused on both internal communications, between the Federation and its 67 member associations and 70 universities and colleges, and external communications, with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) as well as with politicians and the media.

For Canadian universities, these are important days. Federal — and some provincial — initiatives are beginning at last to address the needs of our cash-starved institutions. These initiatives include some good news for the social sciences and humanities: SSHRC's budget is very significantly increased; the CFI has made it clear that its mandate includes support to research in the human sciences; some attention is given to upcoming academic staffing needs in the Canada Research Chairs program. But new funding is nevertheless very focused on the science, including biomedical science, and technology side of the house, and planning for the future of research and education in the social sciences and humanities is far from adequate. There is a "centripetal" effect in current funding: dollars bring dollars. The Canada Research Chairs, for instance, are allocated on a formula based on the existing budgets of the granting councils — meaning that the proportion allocated to the social sciences and humanities builds into it an already painful inadequacy of research support.

At the same time, students in large numbers continue to choose to study in our areas, and research on social and cultural issues continues to be urgently necessary.

In this context, we must do everything to ensure that the voice of our disciplines is strong and clear and that it be heard. This is a moment for the Federation to give critical attention to its communications strategy, both internal (so that we consolidate our collective strength) and external (so that we have impact in decision-making). This year, in our first working together, the new Executive and the Staff of the Federation are working on a Strategic Plan aimed at achieving the following goals:

- strengthening member associations;
- raising the profile of the Federation on university campuses;
- developing the effectiveness of our partnership with SSHRC; and
- reinforcing the Government Lobby and increasing awareness

of the humanities and social sciences in interested communities.

All of these goals support the overall mandate of the Federation. They are designed to give clear purpose and strength to our collective voice. I would be grateful to have any comments or input on these issues (c/o jawright@hssfc.ca).

Other Federation activities over the coming year include:

- Congress 2001 at Université Laval.
- Conducting a survey on the implementation of the Tri-Council Policy on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans at the request of SSHRC.
- Monitoring the impact of the Canada Research Chairs and other funding initiatives on humanities and social sciences.
- Sponsoring a Task Force on the condition of Canadian university language programs, chaired by David Graham of Memorial University

Finally, the Federation invites its members to help celebrate the 60th Anniversary of the Aid to Scholarly Publications Programme, which has been made a vitally important contribution to the dissemination of scholarly research in Canada over its history. For more information on the celebrations and all of our activities and programmes, please consult our web site at: www.hssfc.ca.

Patricia Clements, Dphil, President