



**Canadian Association of Learned Journals
Association canadienne des revues savantes**

P.O. Box / C.P. 20304, Ottawa, ON K1N 1A3

January 3, 2018

The Honourable Kirsty Duncan
Minister of Science
235 Queen Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H5

Dear Minister,

On behalf of the Canadian Association of Learned Journals (CALJ) and its Board of Directors, I would like to draw your attention to recent proposed changes by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) to their Aid to Scholarly Journals (ASJ) program, a program that supports Canadian social sciences and humanities journals. In July 2017, SSHRC formed an Advisory Committee to review this program. After beginning well with appropriate discussion, SSHRC brought forward several of its own recommendations that our association feels lack proper review and evidence. These recommendations will significantly impact the sustainability of many of our most successful journals.

SSHRC is proposing:

1. Eligibility for journals only if they make all their content freely available upon publication or after a 12 month embargo period
2. Annual maximum grants reduced from \$30,000 to \$25,000, with an additional \$5,000 available only to journals that, for a fee, place their electronic content with a Canadian non-commercial platform. Additionally, there is discussion at SSHRC to mandate deposit by all funded journals to such a platform. It should be noted that there is currently only one platform in existence that would qualify under their definition, Érudit.

Canadian scholarly journals have a diverse number of business models that are based on one of two foundations: free open access or paid subscriptions. Many of our most successful journals rely on funding assistance from SSHRC's ASJ program to supplement subscription revenue and revenue inputs from foreign content disseminators (aggregators). Open access journals rely on SSHRC assistance more heavily. No matter the approach, Canadian scholarly journal publishers deliver journal content of national

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importance efficiently, effectively and at a substantially lower price than the large foreign commercial journal publishers.

Our concerns about these new funding recommendations include:

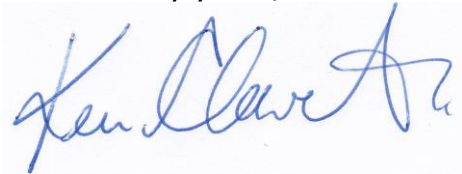
1. The lack of evidence that the proposed changes will positively impact research dissemination and usage.
2. The lack of evidence that the proposed changes will not negatively impact the leading, long-standing, highly respected and effective Canadian journals that lead the country in the dissemination of ground-breaking research.
3. SSHRC's use of the ASJ to redirect money from journals to support a specific aggregation platform that has not been proven to be competitive with international platforms. It should be noted that as SSHRC is making this proposal another nationally funded platform, Pubmed Central Canada, has announced that it will be taken offline permanently citing low usage and prohibitive cost in time and resources to upgrade the system.
4. An increased dependence of journals on grants, as the imposition of a specific platform and an open access business model will negatively affect existing revenues generated from outside Canada; this will have the worst impact on long-standing, respected, high-usage, subscription-based journals.
5. The likelihood that Canada's strongest journals will forego SSHRC funding in favour of partnering with large established foreign commercial publishers to ensure international circulation and increased earned revenue. This will result in jobs moving out of Canada and increased costs to Canadian libraries by means of subscription fee increases. Overall, we may very well see more Canadian research behind high pay walls than we do now.
6. The likelihood that journals will charge authors "article processing fees" of several hundreds or thousands of dollars to make up for lost funding and/or lost international revenues. This is particularly difficult for social science and humanities scholars who do not receive research funding to pay these processing fees.
7. SSHRC's imposing open access for all journal content when the ASJ only funds research articles.
8. SSHRC's moving beyond the current TriAgency open access guidelines established for researchers in that they will not recognize journal compliance through the deposit of "peer-reviewed manuscript[s] into an institutional or disciplinary repository that will make the manuscript freely accessible within 12 months of publication".

CALJ and its members feel that without a proper review, the proposed changes to SSHRC's ASJ program may lead to unintended consequences and negatively affect the well-being of Canada's social sciences and humanities journals. CALJ encourages SSHRC

to conduct such a review and engage in real collaboration with our community to create a strong vibrant and innovative scholarly journal community.

Your attention to our concerns and assistance in resolving these issues would be gratefully appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ken Clavette". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "K" and a stylized "A" at the end.

Ken Clavette
Executive Director
Canadian Association of Learned Journals

cc. Mona Nemer, Chief Science Advisor
Ted Hewitt, President, SSHRC
CALJ-ACRS Board of Directors