

**Ideas  
can...**

# Strategic Plan

2016-2020

Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

---

January 2016



FEDERATION FOR THE  
HUMANITIES AND  
SOCIAL SCIENCES

FÉDÉRATION  
DES SCIENCES  
HUMAINES



300-275 Bank, Ottawa, ON K2P 2L6  
[www.ideas-idees.ca](http://www.ideas-idees.ca)



## Table of Contents

Summary ..... 3

Vision, mission and strategic directions..... 4

Strategic Plan 2016-2020 at a glance..... 5

Objectives supporting each strategic direction ..... 6

1. Increase our reach with people in Canada ..... 6
2. Improve our relevance to our members..... 7
3. Ensure the sustainability of the Federation..... 9

Implementation & Monitoring..... 10

Expected outcomes for the humanities and social sciences community ..... 11

Annex A: Environmental scan for Strategic Plan 2016-2020: SWOT Analysis ..... 12

Annex B: Federation infographic: Who we are, what we do! ..... 14

Annex C: 2011-2015 Strategic Plan results ..... 15





## Summary

Informed by consultations that began in 2014, this Strategic Plan sets out the mission, vision and strategic directions of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences for the next five years. As part of this planning process, the Federation assessed progress against the 2011-2015 strategic framework (see Annex C), consulted with members and partners, and undertook an environmental scan (see Annex A). The environmental scan included a review of the alignment of our human and financial resources to our strategic goals and our capacity to adapt to the challenges and opportunities of the dynamic environment affecting Canadian scholarship and education.

This planning exercise was undertaken with the conviction that every effective organization needs a clear sense of its mission, vision and strategic goals in order to thrive and succeed in today's rapidly changing environment. By undertaking this planning exercise, the Board is fulfilling one of its core obligations of developing a coherent and relevant set of strategic directions for the Federation supported by specific, achievable objectives.

This process has resulted in updates to our mission and vision, and a new commitment to advance reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples throughout our work. In addition, this 2016-2020 strategic framework reflects the articulation of a new cross cutting goal that puts membership engagement at the heart of our work. We want to better support our community of 85,000 researchers in effectively shaping and participating in public debates and, through them, demonstrate our collective contributions to the public good.

If we are successful, five years from now we will see that together we will have transformed how the Federation and its members relate to one another: from a client and service relationship, to being partners in an active and transformational network, where members participate actively to achieve our shared hopes and aspirations.



## Vision, mission and strategic directions

A vision statement draws an inspiring picture of an organization’s future that guides members and staff, and establishes the framework for all strategic planning. A vision statement is important in strategic planning as it articulates the ultimate aspirations and hopes that drive the organization.

### *VISION*

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences helps to build an inclusive, democratic and prosperous society by advancing understanding of peoples, cultures, institutions and social relations.

A mission statement is an essential building block of any strategic planning exercise. This mission statement is a clear and succinct representation of the organization’s purpose and work.

### *MISSION*

The Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences convenes an active network of scholarly associations and postsecondary institutions to promote dialogue on ideas and issues that are critical to the public and research communities.

A strategic direction describes a goal an organization wants to achieve in the time frame for planning. Building on the strong and positive feedback received on the framework and foundations of the 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, the Board has confirmed the need for the Federation to continue within the framework of our current strategic directions, while seeking to deepen and extend its impact. In addition, by 2020, the Federation aims to achieve the following overarching membership related goal.

### *GOAL*

By 2020, the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences will have developed with member associations and institutions a more collaborative network that actively promotes the value of social sciences and humanities research and teaching as meaningful contributions to quality of life and the advancement of an inclusive, democratic and prosperous society.

This goal will be achieved by supporting activities under these three strategic directions.

#### *STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1*

*REACH: Increase our reach with people in Canada*

#### *STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2*

*RELEVANCE: Improve our relevance to our members*

#### *STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3*

*RESOURCES: Ensure the sustainability of the Federation*

## Strategic Plan 2016-2020 at a glance

The Federation has three strategic directions and an ambitious set of nine strategic objectives flowing directly from the three directions and the overarching transformational membership goal.

In addition in spring 2015, the Board adopted the *Touchstones of Hope Principles and Processes* to guide its commitment to advance reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples. Working with the Board, Aboriginal peoples and partners, the Federation will identify specific opportunities to put these principles into action in our programs and systems across the three strategic directions.

Strategic directions and objectives:

<i>1. Increase our reach with people in Canada</i>	<i>2. Improve our relevance to our members</i>	<i>3. Ensure the sustainability of the Federation</i>
<b>1.1 Promote</b> the ongoing contribution of the social sciences and humanities to democracy, inclusion and prosperity.	<b>2.1 Ensure</b> our events promote network-wide engagement of members across disciplines, institutions and borders, including as hosts and partners.	<b>3.1 Grow</b> our membership base to reflect all SSH avenues of research and teaching.
<b>1.2 Increase</b> the profile and reach of Federation activities.	<b>2.2 Increase</b> the membership’s interest and capacity to articulate the impacts of the SSH.	<b>3.2 Invest</b> in our internal systems to strengthen network and member engagement.
	<b>2.3 Build</b> our network for the benefit of our members.	<b>3.3 Increase</b> members’ understanding of Federation membership benefits.
	<b>2.4 Develop</b> public policy positions and strategies to address specific issues of concern to the community as a whole.	



## Objectives supporting each strategic direction

### 1. Increase our reach with people in Canada

#### 1.1 Promote the ongoing contribution of the social sciences and humanities to democracy, inclusion and prosperity.

The Federation, in collaboration with key partners, will launch a significant outreach and communication programme to enable the membership to engage with influencers and decision makers to discuss our collective contributions to an inclusive, democratic and prosperous society. This communications initiative will build on existing broad-based public support for postsecondary education (PSE) and the contributions of our disciplines.

The Federation will use key historic moments including, our 75th anniversary (of both original federations and of the Awards to Scholarly Publications Program) and the 150th anniversary of the Canadian confederation to engage its members and partners to make the case for the social sciences and humanities (SSH), including collaboration with the member universities that will host Congress.

By encouraging our members to be engaged, the Federation will make a contribution in improving the level of public discourse on the challenging issues facing our society. While seldom advocating for a specific position, the Federation will provide platforms to share insights from the latest research. In particular, perspectives from the humanities will be important to highlight in issues as diverse and complex as ending life with dignity, social inclusion and intergenerational justice.

#### 1.2 Increase the profile and reach of Federation activities

The Federation will continually assess its suite of programs to identify opportunities to grow reach and impact, through membership engagement, engagement with partners and staying abreast of best practices and new technologies to improve ways of doing things. This includes, but is not limited to, the following major program areas.

**1.2.1 *Big Thinking*.** The Federation will continue its *Big Thinking* series on Parliament Hill as well as explore opportunities to partner with our members to host *Big Thinking* events across Canada. In order to increase the public reach and impact of the *Big Thinking* lectures, the Federation will strengthen collaboration with associations to identify leading ideas and thinkers, aim to increase media coverage and continue to ensure the lectures are available free of charge on line. The dissemination of knowledge to audiences interested in the world of ideas should be embraced as a collective responsibility.

**1.2.2 *Congress*.** The Federation will continue to leverage the opportunity provided by Congress, as one of the largest interdisciplinary social science and humanities events in the world—to raise the public profile of the value and contributions of

our disciplines not only to knowledge creation but across society, the economy, communities and to policy makers.

- 1.2.3 ASPP and Canada Prizes.** Within our 2011-2015 Strategic Plan, the Federation renewed its Awards to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP) and has re-launched its prizes under the name of Canada Prizes. Following a 2015 review of the Canada Prizes, the Federation will deepen and focus efforts to build the profile of the prizes with members, the media and targeted publics to demonstrate and encourage a commitment to excellence in scholarly writing in the humanities and social sciences.

## 2. Improve our relevance to our members

- 2.1 Ensure our events promote network-wide engagement of members across disciplines, institutions and borders, including as hosts and partners.**

The Federation will leverage the significant reach and profile of its events and programs to promote network-wide engagement on key issues of concern to the community as a whole. Many of the most pressing societal issues require ongoing interdisciplinary learning and debate. The Federation will use its convening power to advance and share a continuous and building dialogue on emerging questions and practices.

During this Strategic Plan cycle, the Federation will pay particular attention and efforts to reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples and the impacts of social sciences and humanities on society. The Federation will also facilitate spaces for addressing recurring issues within the community (e.g., value of liberal arts degree; open social scholarship and digital architecture; research funding; community engagement; blended classrooms; renewal of PhD programs; open access). By doing so, the Federation will encourage and support the transformational potential of its collective network.

- 2.1.1 Make Congress a more accessible and open space across disciplines, institutions and national borders.** The challenges facing our world cannot be understood and addressed from a single discipline. New insights and creativity can emerge from interdisciplinary approaches. A more inclusive and open approach to knowledge creation and dissemination require that Congress participants have easy access to all sessions and materials.
- 2.1.2 Engage members as hosts/partners for Federation events across the country.** Several universities are interested in hosting a national event. We need to expand opportunities for them to express their commitment to scholarship across Canada and to the value of our shared network by hosting and convening Congress, annual conferences, and issue-specific conferences and events.

## 2.2 Increase the membership’s interest and capacity to articulate the impacts of the SSH.

**2.2.1 Research Impact Project.** As a follow up to the 2014 working paper on impact, the Board approved development of multi-year impact project in 2015. The Federation’s project will add value to the work on research impacts underway within the membership and Canada more broadly by:

- becoming a key source and portal in Canada for resources and materials on impact measurement;
- playing a convening role to facilitate knowledge dissemination and mobilization in Canada regarding impact measurement efforts at home and abroad; and
- identifying and supporting collaborative policy and program initiatives on research impact among relevant actors to improve the quality and reach of work in this area.

The project will provide members and the broader community with a framework to better track and advocate for the contributions of the humanities and social sciences and ensure the Federation enables the sharing of best practices and peer-to-peer learning on research impact.

**2.2.2 ASPP and the impact of scholarly monographs.** As part of developing the capacity of the SSH community to better articulate the impact of its research, the Federation will explore options to work with partners and members to develop an approach for better tracking the impact of scholarly monographs funded through the ASPP program.

## 2.3 Build our network for the benefit of our members

**2.3.1** Recognizing the increased globalization and connectivity of societies and networks across the world, the Federation will convene spaces for discussions for dynamic questions within and across nation states on which social scientists and humanities scholars bring important insights. It is essential that Canadian researchers in these disciplines are informed by, as well as shape, the research questions on the international scene. The Federation can add value by creating incentives and platforms—notably at Congress—for institutional and association members to work with and showcase relationships with international counterparts. The Federation can also help share and enhance knowledge of international collaboration opportunities available to the membership.

**2.3.2** The Federation will also participate in national networks focused on reconciliation, research impact, teaching and learning, digital and research architecture, open access and PhD renewal. Continued collaboration with partners such as Universities Canada, Mitacs, Canada Foundation for

Innovation, Trudeau Foundation, Royal Society, Association of Canadian University Presses, and others will enable joint learning and enhanced voice for our community. The Federation will continue to collaborate with members and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) initiative to support the communities' roles in knowledge production and dissemination in core themes of the "Imagining Canada's Future" program.

**2.4 Develop public policy positions and strategies to address specific issues of concern to the community as a whole.**

**2.4.1 Reconciliation.** Following the Board commitment and adoption of the Touchstones of Hope principles, the Federation will engage proactively with our members on the collective responsibilities of the Academy (as institutions and disciplines) to shape a relationship with Aboriginal peoples in Canada that respects their distinct rights, cultures and languages and in so doing enriches society as a whole.

**2.4.2 Research Impacts.** The Federation will develop a multi pronged strategy to both engage decision makers on the impacts of our disciplines (1.1 above ) and work with members on building capacity to better track and demonstrate those impacts (See 2.2 above).

**2.4.3 Open access.** The Federation adopted in 2015 a policy position to support open access through the ASPP. In this Strategic Plan, the Federation will engage partners to explore means to promote and facilitate open access publishing projects for monographs, particularly ASPP-funded books. The Federation will also participate in networks and policy development processes underway in the sector on this theme.

**2.4.4** The Federation will also respond strategically to opportunities for articulating evidenced-based positions on a range of policy issues such as federal research policy and funding, granting councils programs and structures, innovation, digital infrastructure, copyright, census, library and archives, student mobility and experiential learning.

**3. Ensure the sustainability of the Federation**

**3.1 Grow our membership base to reflect all SSH avenues of research and teaching**

Attracting a new generation of academics and graduate students to the work of the Federation promotes new thinking and supports sustainability. However, we must meet the challenge of attracting a new generation of academics and graduate students who are not familiar with who



we are and what we do. Many now work in degree granting colleges across the country. Furthermore, new interdisciplinary associations are emerging, often blurring the lines between the arts, humanities, social sciences and STEM. They should all find a natural home in the Federation. The secretariat and Board will develop and undertake specific outreach plans to grow the membership base in this regard.

### **3.2 Invest in our internal systems to strengthen network and member engagement**

The Federation has eliminated its financial deficit and is now operating in a positive financial system buttressed by a financial reserve to offset unexpected fiscal changes. This prudent financial management positions the Federation to invest in the systems and staff to support its strategic goals. However, the Federation will continue to exert responsible fiscal management to avoid recreating an operating environment where costs exceed revenue growth over an extended period.

**3.2.1 Strengthen our network and membership function.** The Federation depends on a small, nimble and committed Secretariat. The Federation will strengthen its capacity to integrate, gather and share information across membership associations and to connect members through improved diagnostics. In particular, the Federation will develop targeted programs and services in areas prioritized by members to build their capacities. This could include trainings or peer-to-peer learning modules in issues such as governance of small and medium associations, media training, event planning *inter alia*.

**3.2.2 Re-invest in our systems (databases, registration, website, membership support).** A renewal of our database system is under way to effectively support the nine goals of this Strategic Plan. Other aspects of the Federation's internal systems including membership outreach will also be updated during the 2016-2020 period.

### **3.3 Increase members' understanding of Federation membership benefits**

The Federation will develop systems, tools and outreach strategies to effectively communicate with institutional, associational and affiliate members regarding the diverse benefits and value of membership. This will include two-way dialogue to hear feedback and member perspectives on what priority needs are and to identify core issues for collective action, and concerns that need addressing.

## **Implementation & Monitoring**

The Strategic Plan will provide the foundation for annual operational plans. Each year, the Board will review and approve a budget that will be linked to the goals of the Strategic Plan. The Board will monitor progress annually against the broader Strategic Plan using a series of simple indicators and amend the plan as needed to incorporate lessons learned and the changing context.

## Expected outcomes for the humanities and social sciences community

A widely supported and properly executed Strategic Plan will allow us to better realize our potential as an organization and increase our effectiveness in several key areas.

1. Executing this plan helps the Federation increase the profile and influence of our members and network. To help ensure the humanities and social sciences perspectives are more central in policy discussions affecting our members (e.g., the framework for research and learning in postsecondary education institutions) the Federation will work on two fronts.

First, we will provide our members with a range of specific new communications products and updated analysis to support their participation in public debates with some common key messages concerning the contribution and relevance of humanities and social sciences research. This includes the pivotal role this research plays in anticipating and understanding social and political trends, in analyzing organizational performance, and in creating new ideas, products, services that contribute to the public good. The communications products will also support narratives that speak to the role of language, art and ideas in illuminating debates, growing creativity and enriching lives.

Further, we will take a more assertive and comprehensive approach to promoting the achievements of this community. By mobilizing our network and expanding the scope of our existing fora, conferences, roundtables, *Big Thinking* events and Canada Prizes, we will reach more representatives from governments, business, other academic disciplines and civil society. This broader exposure will create higher levels of awareness and interest in the work of our members.

2. Executing this plan will support the Federation and its members to engage constructively in a process of reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples. By fully assuming historical responsibilities and helping members identify opportunities to open up space for respectful dialogue and joint action, the Federation will energize its community for systemic change.
3. Executing this plan will underscore the reality that ensuring strong public funding for research requires demonstrating research's impacts in the real world. We will help grow members' capacity to track and publicize their impacts across key areas including: scholarship, teaching and learning, the economy, community and culture, and policy. This will be done through a variety of supports, including identification of tools and resources, supporting peer-to-peer learning, and championing best practice.
4. Convening and facilitating discussions on public policy issues, as well as enabling members to learn and draw strength from each other, will heighten members' awareness of the strengths and advantages in relating to each other as members of a formidable national network. Enhancing the Federation's convenor role is a natural extension of our academic and institutional strengths and of our partner relationships.

Fulfilling this plan guarantees we remain strong and relevant for the long term and contribute, in pragmatic ways, to fulfilling our vision.



## Annex A: Environmental scan for Strategic Plan 2016-2020: SWOT Analysis

### I. Strengths and weaknesses (internal)

#### Strengths

- The Federation has increased profile and credibility with our members, our partners, national media and with the federal government
- Congress, our flagship program, is the largest SSH event in Canada and one of the largest in the world
- Our *Big Thinking* program has an excellent reputation and is well attended
- The ASPP and Canada Prizes have a long history and have been modernized
- We have a rich network of domestic and international contacts and voices to draw on
- Our relationship with SSHRC is strong
- Our new governance structure is performing well
- We have an engaging brand, a dynamic website and a modern office
- Our dedicated and highly professional staff want to do meaningful work
- Our financial reserves are healthy and our structural deficits have been eliminated
- Growing number of sponsors and partners
- Membership has grown modestly
- Impact project has been well received
- Our reconciliation commitments are attracting attention

#### Weaknesses

- The interdisciplinarity potential of Congress remains underutilized
- We suffer from a low profile and an undefined identity, even with members
- Individuals in the humanities and social sciences research community, particularly younger faculty and graduate students, are not familiar with who we are and what we can do for them
- The majority of our members remains disengaged
- We do not have access to the membership lists of our own members
- Membership support function needs to be improved
- Our website is a work in progress
- Our systems (databases) are not performing as we need
- Ambitious policy and program agenda for a modest Secretariat

## Annex A continued: Environmental scan for Strategic Plan 2016-2020: SWOT Analysis

### II. Threats and opportunities (external)

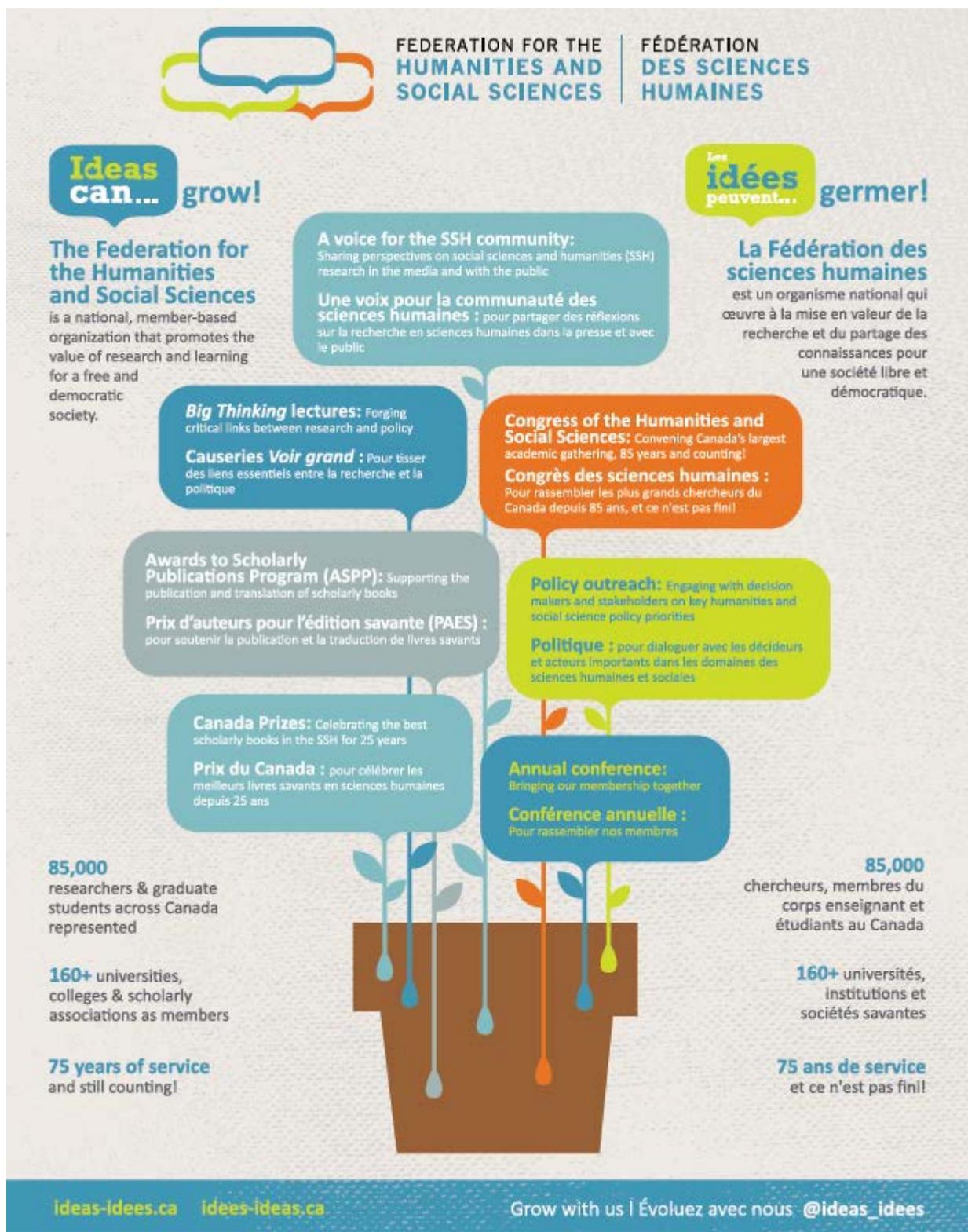
#### Threats

- There is low awareness among Canadian elected officials and influencers of the significant value and relevance of humanities and social sciences research and training to many aspects of society
- We may be perceived as somewhat defensive and inward-focused as provincial and federal governments engage in deficit-cutting measures
- The humanities and social sciences as disciplines are at the periphery of the federal Science and Technology Strategy
- Universities are facing serious financial constraints that can create pressure on the community such as the closure of humanities programs, fewer bids for Congress, reduced support for SSH research
- Widespread concerns regarding undergraduate enrollment decline in the traditional humanities and some social sciences in many member institutions

#### Opportunities

- Recent polling shows underlying and significant support for our contributions in opening up minds and preparing for active citizenship
- The digital society in which knowledge and a liberal education are a foundation for success is gaining traction as a concept
- Increasing but cautious support for open access and knowledge dissemination
- All-party recognition of the increasingly important role the humanities and social sciences play in innovation
- More Canadian colleges offering degrees and more courses in the humanities and social sciences; rapid growth of interdisciplinary programs with humanities and social sciences dimensions in Canadian universities
- 2017 presents us with a chance to raise our profile, linking Congress to the celebration of a significant national event (Canada's 150th )
- Support for interdisciplinarity, including the humanities and social sciences at CIHR and NSERC
- Potential links to international research networks
- New parliament and government offer opportunities to re-engage
- PhD renewal efforts underway within our community

Annex B: Federation infographic: Who we are, what we do!



## Annex C: 2011-2015 Strategic Plan results

### Introduction

This annex offer a multiyear overview of the progress achieved under the **2011-2015 Strategic Plan**. Additional details can be found in our **annual reports** and **audited financial statements**.

In the wake of large-scale consultations and lengthy Board discussions, in 2011 the Federation adopted an ambitious strategic framework to improve its performance in three areas of focus:

- Its relations, in particular with its members;
- Its influence, especially with the federal government;
- Its financial framework, to eliminate a worrying structural deficit.

The **2011-2015 Strategic Plan** has been actively implemented and the Federation has made considerable progress toward its objectives. Out of 17 strategic goals, the key operational objectives have been reached for eight; significant but incomplete progress has been achieved for seven others; no real progress was achieved on one goal; one goal was formally dropped by the Board in 2013. These internal findings were endorsed by a majority of our members and partners during our 2014 and 2015 consultations. Achievements in the three major goal areas are reviewed below.

### 1.0 Improve communication with our members

There is clear consensus that the Federation is on the right track regarding improved communications (social media, website renewal, monthly *Communiqué*, engaging brand). The recent conceptualization of our work as a growing plant (see Annex B), rooted in its members, has been well received. This conceptual framework helps underscore the centrality of the Federation to its different program areas, which can at times take on an identity of themselves (notably Congress). However, much work remains to be done to better strengthen the knowledge and relevance of the Federation network for its members.

For knowledge dissemination, Congress is the best organized and most powerful tool at our disposal. Congress has grown increasingly popular in recent years, drawing a large number of eminent researchers, lecturers and policy makers. Each year the Federation draws together some 7,000 to 9,000 attendees (researchers, students, academics, informed citizens, etc.) for a week of incomparable knowledge sharing. There is no bigger occasion in Canada for members of our community to meet and network, and Congress is known beyond our borders as an initiative that enriches the scientific community. There is also no doubt that Congress is the Federation's best opportunity to become known among its members and throughout the community. It is often the gateway to the Federation for students, researchers and academics who may not otherwise have been acquainted with it. However, the challenge is to ensure Congress remains associated with the Federation, as many participants tend to go home with no further knowledge of the Federation or its other activities.

Congress should remain a central vehicle in the Federation's efforts to disseminate knowledge in Canada and demonstrate its role and value to its members.



The Awards to Scholarly Publications Program (ASPP) plays a vital role in the publication and dissemination of scientific works in Canada. A change in visual identity, a pilot project with York University and extra media relations efforts have raised the ASPP's profile. Furthermore, internal procedures have been revamped, making the program more timely and efficient.

With regard to member relations, the Federation has taken steps to improve the way it communicates and the services it offers. However, these efforts are relatively recent, and it is too early to assess the long-term impact of these changes. The Federation offers members access to a larger cross-country network, a unique resource that enables members to join voices together, to showcase their work to a wider audience, and to learn from each other on shared areas of concerns or need. However, few members are aware of or benefit from all aspects of this network. More can be done to work with members to offer support through peer learning or specific capacity building activities in a range of areas (i.e. database management, support and advice for the financial management, administration and governance of member associations, etc).

With regard to governance, the Federation underwent important changes during the period in question. In 2013, after an extensive consultation and study process, the Federation adopted a new structure for its Board of Directors. The old structure, based on a representative model, was large, cumbersome and expensive. The new model, adopted in March 2013, is based on a search for specific skills to help the Federation more effectively fulfill its mandate. The Federation now has a much more engaged Board of Directors. Since it now seeks directors with expertise in an area related to our mission, the Federation can rely on the expertise, knowledge and network of Board members in a broader range of sectors than in the past.

## 2.0 Increase our influence among Canadians

To fulfill its mandate, the Federation must expand a broader public engagement with, and appreciation of, the social sciences and humanities than in the past. The Federation has taken steps in recent years to promote the benefits of social innovation and engaged scholarship for the common good of Canadians. To this end we should note, among other things, the "Campus Community Collaboration Initiative", the holding of a round table at the University of Guelph in 2012, the holding of round tables in the presence of the Governor General at the 2012, 2013 and 2015 Congresses, and the holding of a Parliament Hill special event on social innovation in February 2014.

The Federation also understands the vital importance of solid and engaged partnerships with other organizations with similar missions. That is why it maintains close relations with the Universities Canada (formerly the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada), Mitacs, the Royal Society of Canada, and the Public Policy Forum, among others. Of course, all Federation activities and programming would be impossible without its renewed partnership with SSHRC. The Federation has developed new partnerships with other state-funded agencies (CIHR, Innovation Canada, CIFAR, Genome Canada, National Film Board, etc.). In recent years, it has also modestly reinvested in international partnerships (American Council of Learned Societies, etc.).



Lastly, as a national voice for the humanities and social sciences community, the Federation plays a role in making representations to political bodies (i.e. pre-budget consultation submissions, expanding Mitacs eligibility for civil society organizations Mitacs , etc.).

The Federation has made progress in content creation and media relations, including the launch of an active blog on the Federation website, the publication of op-eds in *The Globe and Mail* and *The Hill Times*, and a growing social media presence. These actions have helped the Federation establish its reputation as a credible voice in discussions that concern research, education and learning in the humanities and social sciences.

The *Big Thinking* on the Hill lecture series is no doubt the Federation's best tool for showcasing eminent members of the social science and humanities community to decision makers. In recent years, this program has expanded to include some *Big Thinking* on the road events to expand the audiences engaged, including at annual conferences and, at the Royal Society of Canada's annual meetings. During each Congress, the Federation also organizes an edition of the series that goes beyond academic lecturers to showcase society's great thinkers and draw a link with the academic community. To ensure the *Big Thinking* conferences can reach a wider audience, video podcasts of the events are now posted on the Federation's website.

### 3.0 Ensure our financial stability

Of the Federation's main objectives, financial security may seem incidental or obvious. However, it is important to remember that it underlies the success of all the organization's other initiatives. The Federation made enormous progress in this area in recent years, especially with the elimination of its structural deficit.

As Congress is the Federation's biggest commitment, its financial success remains a priority. In recent years, significant efforts have been made to achieve a balanced and renewable budget for Congress (fee schedule review, active search for major sponsors, etc.).

For some years now, the Federation has deployed resources to increase its number of institutional members. These efforts have paid off with the arrival of two new members in Alberta, two in British Columbia and one in Québec. This is no small feat, given the climate of austerity in which many Canadian universities operate. This austerity remains a considerable challenge for members from smaller institutions, whose limited funding often forces them to make tough choices. The Federation has lost three of its institutional members in recent years (one in British Columbia, one in Ontario and one in Québec). Redoubled efforts at communication and engagement are required to prevent this from recurring.

Lastly, the organization would not be so financially healthy were it not for constant efforts to regularly review its operating costs and investment strategy. Regular cost reviews and budgeting have helped reduce some of its financial expenses. The Federation is investing in a new database infrastructure and simplifying its investments to improve performance.