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Research Infosource Releases
University Publication Efficiency Data
Highlighting Institutional Publication Cost Differences

Toronto ON, 10 April 2017. Research Infosource Inc. today released data on the “publication efficiency” of 43 of Canada’s top research universities over a 10-year period. Publication efficiency measures the ability of a university’s researchers to turn research income into peer-reviewed publications - a standard research output measure.

Research Infosource examined research income at 43 of Canada’s Top 50 universities from 2003-2012 in conjunction with their corresponding research publication data for 2005-2014. The approximately 2.5-year offset allowed time for research to be conducted and published. In addition, the 10 year period was further broken into two 5-year periods to enable tracking of trends.

Publication efficiency scores are best compared among comparable universities. To this end, Infosource reviewed and ranked the data by three distinct categories: as examples; Research Income Input (by high, medium and low research income ranges), Research Publication Output (by high, medium and low publications output ranges) and by Tier Group (medical/doctoral, comprehensive and undergraduate).

Following are a few of the key findings:

- In the 10-year period researchers at all 43 universities in the sample received a total of \$56.8 billion for research and produced 604,113 published papers, for an average publication efficiency (cost-per-publication) of \$94,100.
- Seventeen universities were identified as High-Research Income universities (each receiving more than \$1 billion of research income over the 10-year period). Collectively, they posted combined research income of almost \$49 billion and published 497,152 papers, for an average publication efficiency of \$98,500. **University of Waterloo** topped this grouping; its researchers received almost \$1.3 billion of research income over 10 years and produced 20,471 papers, yielding a publication efficiency of \$63,300. This compared with a publication efficiency of \$142,200 for the least efficient university in the high-research income range.
- Ten Medium-Research Income universities (\$200 million - \$1 billion each of research income) had combined research income of \$5.6 billion and published 75,021, for an average publication efficiency of \$74,700. **Concordia University** ranked first in this group; it received \$376.5 million of research income and produced 7,273 papers at an average cost of \$51,800. The least efficient university in the group produced papers for an average cost of \$106,100.
- The Low-Research Income group (less than \$200 million of research income) was composed of 16 universities and received a total of \$2.3 billion over the 10-year period, producing 31,940 publications for an average publication efficiency of \$70,600. **Wilfrid Laurier University** led this group receiving a total of \$99.3 million of research income and producing 2,710 papers at an average cost of \$36,700 each. The least efficient university in the range produced papers for \$166,700 each.
- On balance, publication efficiency improved in all research income ranges between the first 5-year period of the 10-year analysis and the second 5-year period, although publication efficiency did decline at some individual universities over that time.

Commenting on the data, Research Infosource Inc. CEO Ron Freedman said “The data raise some intriguing questions about why some universities appear to be consistently more efficient at turning research investments into published knowledge. For one thing, the publication efficiency differences tend to reflect the different types of research being conducted. For example, the High Research Income group typically conducts health-related research, which tends to be more expensive, whereas the Medium and Low Income groups tend to publish more in the social sciences and humanities, which is less expensive research.

“However, there also appear to be considerable publication efficiency differences among similar universities (within each research income range) that transcend any apparent differences in their teaching or research capacities. Obviously, no two universities are exactly alike, but overall their similarities outweigh their differences and we would have expected to see broadly similar publication efficiency results for universities within each research income range, rather than the 100% variations we actually saw. More work is required to understand the underlying circumstances.”

Complete data are available for purchase in an Excel spreadsheet that includes detailed results for each of the 43 universities; as well as a companion PDF spotlight summary report that includes rankings for the universities by each of three distinct categories – Research Income Input, Research Publications Output and Tier Groups.

For more information and some sample data and rankings: <https://researchinfosource.com/univpub.php>

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About Research Infosource Inc.

Research Infosource Inc. is Canada's source of R&D intelligence. Drawing from proprietary databases, Research Infosource Inc. publishes **Canada's Innovation Leaders**, which includes *Canada's Top 100 Corporate R&D Spenders List*, *Canada's Top 50 Research Universities List*, *Canada's Top 40 Research Hospitals List* and *Canada's Top 50 Research Colleges List*. As well, Research Infosource publishes specialized reports and produces *The Innovation Atlas of Canada*TM – a web-based research and innovation mapping and data information product.

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