

Letter from the Incoming President

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I would like to wish you all a Happy New Year. As you may know, I was appointed President of CS-Can (starting January 1, 2025). Our outgoing President Marc Frappier did a wonderful job for us and the Canadian CS community as a whole. I thank him, presumably from all of us, very much for his great efforts and he can be very pleased with all he has accomplished.

Going forward, Canadian universities face many challenges including financial ones. This impacts on budget, staffing, and frankly morale. While I understand (to some degree), the federal government's rationale behind the reduction of foreign students, the impact is not only felt inside universities, but far beyond. Foreign graduate students, in particular, come with an education paid for by other countries (free to Canada!).

1. **CS graduates (all levels) remain in high demand by industry.**
2. **CS graduates and R&D are critical in addressing the challenges and key priorities identified by our Government.**

CS and its graduates are essential for the Canadian Government to realize its ambitious and critical **Digital Transformation Strategy** and to address e.g., one of the key priorities: Responses to **cyber threats**. Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau, announced on April 2024, a \$2.4 billion package of measures from the Budget 2024 to secure **Canada's AI advantage**. To realize Canada's AI advantage, to respond to Cyber Threats, to enable **Digital Government, Innovation and well as Open Government** with its searches for datasets, digital records and reports, and many more important initiatives.

Government policies and priorities may change with different governments, our CS graduates and R&D, however, will be vital for any government to reach its objectives in information technology areas. **Canadian CS and its graduates are essential**. In fact, we may be forced to rely even more on home-grown talent as US isolationism and a trade-war with our

best ally are looming. Building up a well-educated talent pool takes time and needs to start now before Canada is threatened with being cut off access to sensitive technologies, information technologies, and human capital. **A well thought-out Canadian response to potential US isolationism in information technology related domains, which include CS, is of essence for Canada to not only stay competitive, but to survive economically and scientifically.** Scientific partnerships in sensitive areas might also see barriers. **New partnerships** including those with Europe need to be forged and, in this context, we applaud Canada for joining Horizon Europe and NSERC for demonstrating openness as well. This opens up new opportunities for our members and member institutions. I am in discussions with European Science councellors and ISED/ISDE to host a virtual national CS-Can—Info-Can information session on participation opportunities in Horizon (detailed to follow soon).

The number of high-quality domestic students is insufficient to address the demands posed by the ongoing and novel challenges. Is the well-intended foreign student visa policy, at least for the area of CS, not hindering the realization of these critical governmental goals, policies and priorities, Canadian industrial output, and Canadian prosperity as a whole?

Should foreign graduate students enrolling in CS at one of our recognized member institutions not be exempt from any visa cuts? In fact, **should the Canadian Government not encourage an increased enrollment in the mission-critical domains surrounding CS** to meet the demands, counter potential threats, and prepare for a proporous future for all Canadians and Canadian Industry. Mitacs e.g., has evidence that Canadian companies can significantly benefit from students coming from abroad. Graduates joining industry are also necessary for Canada to increase its comparatively low academia-industry R&D activites and investments.

For 2025 and beyond, CS in Canada and CS-Can/Info-Can will be happy to work with our various levels of Governments and industry to achieve their aspirations. I would like to invite interested parties and in particular you, our members, to talk to me and our committees about potential ideas for CS-Can/Info-Can initiatives along these lines or more generally.

I am looking forward to serving you and working with you for the benefit of CS, our R&D, institutions, students, and Canada as a whole.