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The cost of conducting research includes not only the direct costs of the project (i.e. research materials, supplies, graduate student stipends, etc.) but also a range of indirect costs. These indirect costs include expenditures that are frequently taken for granted, but they are real costs incurred by the University to supply the infrastructure required to allow a sponsored research project to proceed. Indirect costs include support for libraries, the provision and maintenance of space (e.g., utilities, custodial, security, etc.), computing and networking support, accounting and other administrative services, the creation and maintenance of regulatory bodies such as the Research Ethics Board, etc. Unless the indirect costs of research are recovered in the form of overhead charges to the sponsors of research, they are expensed within the operating budgets of the University.

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The Government of Canada introduced the Indirect Costs Program (ICP) in 2003. Renamed the Research Support Fund in 2016, the program provides Canadian universities and colleges with an annual grant to help pay for a portion of their indirect costs of research. By alleviating the financial burden of expenses, such as lighting and heating and required personnel to administer research activities of faculty, the program ultimately helps researchers concentrate on cutting-edge discoveries and scholarship excellence.

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Saint Mary's has undergone a significant transformation over the past two decades in its research enterprise. We have moved from a primarily undergraduate teaching institution to one with a healthy mix of undergraduate, graduate (including 22 Masters level programs, 5 PhD programs – with the Business Administration program now having 3 disciplinary streams – and 1 Executive Doctorate program to launch in 2023) and research programs. Research funding and activity has been increasing significantly. For example, in 2002 Saint Mary's was not even ranked in Research Info Source's top 50 Research Universities in Canada



