Abstract

This project examines the role of universities in transmitting knowledge in the forms of technology transfer mechanisms, intellectual property (IP) agreements and other knowledge diffusion policies. We will synthesize existing literature across the following four literature areas:

- literature and assessments on Canadian universities’ technology transfer and IP policies;
- literature on the use and limitations of patents as a means to encourage innovation, including scholarship related to problems generated by patent thickets and anti-commons;
- literature which explores the potential conflicts between the liberal ideal of the university as an entity that facilitates public good and promotes an enlightened society versus the university as an engine of economic growth; and
- recent policy-based literature on Canada’s innovation system.

Our literature review aims to determine current state of mechanisms through which knowledge flows from Canadian universities by identifying both best practices and the principal barriers for improving knowledge flows. We are also examining how various knowledge transfer mechanisms both enhance and impede innovation. The goal of our knowledge synthesis project is to generate evidence-based policy recommendations with the goal of maximizing the return on the nation’s investment in higher education research and development and strengthen Canada’s innovation ecosystem. Finally, our project will also, wherever possible, identify disciplinary differences with regard to technology transfer, IP practices and knowledge diffusion.