

## **CAG Award for Geography in the Service of Government or Business Dr Daniel Hiebert**



For close to 20 years Dan Hiebert has made extraordinary contributions in the service of government. For much of that period he conducted research and offered policy advice primarily on issues of immigration and settlement, especially around matters of employment, housing, and immigrant business formation. Very recently, in a new role, he has become Co-Director of a major research and policy



initiative concerned with terrorism, security and society, and how these issues are related to human rights. This project is directly linked to a number of Federal Government departments. No other Canadian academic geographer is as centrally involved with the contemporary operations of the Canadian government as is Dan Hiebert. His level of contribution and influence may well be unprecedented.

Dan's first involvement with government came in 1996 through his participation (at its inauguration) in the Vancouver Centre for Research on Immigration and Integration in the Metropolis (RIIM), which in 2007 was renamed Metropolis BC. By 2003 Dan was co-director for RIIM, later holding the same position at Metropolis BC. Both RIIM and Metropolis were game-changing initiatives in how the Federal government interacted with academics. Rather than keeping them at arm's length, with government carrying out its own in-house research, Metropolis showed government how they could integrate academic research and knowledge directly into their operations and policy formulations.

The leadership Dan provided, as a geographer to Metropolis, and the dominance of geographers within these consortia, ensured the direct integration of geography into the service of government. Dan has had an inordinate amount of interaction and exchange at the highest level with Canadian Government bureaucrats, and with some politicians, across a wide range of federal ministries. As a Metropolis co-director, he went to Ottawa at least a half-dozen times a year to consult and coordinate, to provide knowledge and advice, and to plan. He was invited not out of mere propriety, but because various branches of the Canadian government recognised and became dependent on his ability, knowledge, and perspicacity. He became the go-to Canadian university geographer for the government.

However, his record of engagement with government is not confined only to federal bureaucrats and politicians. It extends to government at all scales. It starts with his membership of the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration in Vancouver. He was appointed to this role by Mayor Larry Campbell in 2005, reappointed by Mayor Gregor Robertson in 2008, and is recently served as Co-Chair (2010-2012). At the provincial level Dan directly advised the BC Ministry of the Attorney General (2007-12) on matters of immigration. He also has a remarkable international profile, having given presentations and policy advice to the governments of Australia, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In 2006 and 2008 he represented Canada on two G8 Roundtables on Diversity and Integration (the only academic from Canada invited to participate). Dan's achievements are exceptional for both the range of governmental levels at which he works, and the importance of the government decision makers to whom he has had access and on whom he has had influence. It is no exaggeration to say that governments at all levels stop and listen when Dan speaks.

The Canadian Federal government especially continues to draw heavily on his knowledge and insight. Dan has taken up the role of Co-Director of a new research network, The Canadian Network for Research on Terrorism, Security, and Society (TSAS), where he is responsible for administration, financial management, partnerships, and knowledge transfer. Funded by SSHRC and the Kanishka Program of Public Safety Canada, formal government partners of TSAS include Public Safety Canada, CIC, CSIS, DFAIT, FINTRAC, and the RCMP. The network's purpose is to engage in policy-relevant research and dissemination on the topics of terrorism, security and society, and how these are related to human rights. The project has only just begun, and is still evolving. But it is clear from the key position Dan occupies that he continues to be admired and respected for his service to government.

In sum, for almost two decades Dan Hiebert has made an enormous contribution to the service of Canadian governments at all levels. He has been especially involved at the Federal Ministry and agency level, directing large-scale research projects, facilitating interaction between academics and government, ensuring smooth processes of knowledge transfer, and providing advice on policy formulation and implementation. Dan has not only contributed to the service of government, but has become integrated within it, one of the players. As he has become integrated within government so too has the geographical sensibility he brings. This might be his greatest service of all.