Proposal: 4th Year Economics Project with Treasury Board Secretariat

Issue

Conduct a review on how to measure productivity in the public service.

Background

Given the diverse nature of the public service, it has been challenging to develop a "one size fits all" approach to measuring its productivity. This is particularly important in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has led to a dramatic readjustment in how and where public servants work and highlighted the value of looking at different ways of measuring productivity. This research will guide the thinking of decision makers on next steps around the future of work and workplaces for the federal public service, which is the largest employer in Canada.

This work could draw on previous work such as the Public Policy Forum’s 2015 paper entitled “Changing the Game: Public Sector Productivity in Canada” as well as academic research.

Project

The student would prepare a research report on best practices in measuring productivity, both in the public and private sectors, and if appropriate make recommendations on how productivity could be measured in the Canadian public service.

The final report would include a review of existing literature and approaches used elsewhere, an assessment of different approaches that could be used in Canada and their relative advantages and disadvantages, an analysis of how data could be collected, and recommendations on next steps. Depending on findings, there might also be the opportunity to use existing data to try to assess productivity, but it will depend on data availability.

Supervisors

The student’s immediate supervisor will be Rodman Chan, an advisor/economist with the Treasury Board Secretariat’s strategic policy team. He has also worked at Natural Resources Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, and the Canadian Intellectual Property Office. Rodman holds an MA in International Economics and Finance and a B.A.H in economics.

The student will also work with Nicholas Chesterley, the director of strategic policy at the Treasury Board Secretariat. Nick has worked in a range of roles in the public service, including supporting how the public service measures its impact, and holds a PhD in economics from the University of Oxford, with a focus on behavioural economics.

Contact

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