

**Smith:** “I have been given enough indication that the federal government uses its power through researchers to only fund certain types of opinion, certain types of researchers, and I don’t think that’s fair either. I don’t, I think we need to have a balance in our university if we’re going to have a robust, free and democratic discussion about all issues.”

**Cochrane:** “But, the national research councils are de-politicized, right? It’s a jury of academics, or peer reviewed, and they make the decisions through the application on research grants going to university. And it’s all posted publicly, so you can see what’s there. But, you, you don’t have confidence in that system?”

**Smith:** “I have heard enough from some of our academics about how difficult it can be to be able to access some of that funding. So we just wanna do a review, and we wanna just see if there’s some way that we can make sure that we maintain the environment at universities which there should be, which is that *all* people from all political perspectives are able to engage in a robust debate and have a robust research agenda.”

**Cochrane:** I, I can *feel* some researchers at the University of Calgary, the University of Alberta , and places in your province getting anxious with that because the universities have agreements straight with these granting agencies that’s meant to be independent. To fund, you know, research that is protected by academic independence ...”

**Smith:** “Well!”

**Cochrane:** “... what kind of a role do you see there for you?”

**Smith:** “You know, I guess if we did truly have balance in universities, then we would see that we would have just as many conservative commentators as we do liberal commentators. Out of our journalism schools, we’d see just as many conservative-minded journalists graduate as we do progressive minded journalists graduate. We don’t see that. So that leaves me to be concerned that we’re not fostering the kind of environment that allows for balance, cause we need to have balance if we’re going to have a balanced discussion in the broader public sphere, it begins at the universities.”

**Cochrane:** “I get that, but that would be an issue with campus culture, which is funded by provincial governments. This is like medical research and scientific research and, and, and humanities research that is not necessarily determining the makeup and the composition of the people who work at the universities. ...”

**Smith** (interrupting): “Well, I guess we’ll see. That’s why we’re doing the review. We wanna see what kinds of things are being funded, and if there are any areas that are problematic, we’ll have to keep that in mind as funding agreements are renewed.”