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FRIENDS OR FOES? YOUTH PERSPECTIVES ON THE FUTURE OF THE CANADA-U.S. SECURITY & DEFENCE RELATIONSHIP

Strategic Studies Students' Consortium Annual Graduate Student Conference

The Canada-United States security and defence relationship is entering one of its most consequential periods in decades. Amid evolving geopolitical competition, Arctic security challenges, NORAD modernization, defence industrial cooperation, emerging technologies, and shifting political dynamics in both countries, there is an urgent need to hear from the next generation of Canadian defence scholars.

The Strategic Studies Students' Consortium (S3C), in partnership with the [Centre for Military, Security and Strategic Studies \(CMSS\)](#), the [Journal of Military and Strategic Studies \(JMSS\)](#), and the [Conference of Defence Associations Institute \(CDA Institute\)](#), is hosting a one-day national graduate student conference entitled "Youth Perspectives on the Future of the Canada-U.S. Security and Defence Relationship." The event will bring together graduate students and early-career researchers with defence practitioners, government officials, and academics to discuss the future of bilateral security cooperation and to foster stronger engagement between youth and Canada's defence policy community.

The conference will feature:

- a keynote address from a leading Canadian defence expert;
- opening and closing remarks from well-respected professors from the University of Calgary's CMSS;
- graduate student paper presentations; and
- networking opportunity with other students and practitioners from government, academia, and think tanks.

Graduate students from across Canada, as well as Canadian graduate students studying at American institutions, will be invited to submit **policy-oriented research** addressing the conference's overarching theme and one of its subthemes (see below). Presenters will be selected through a **competitive, anonymous peer-review process** by an academic committee composed of representatives from S3C, CMSS faculty and fellows, and JMSS.

To recognize excellence in defence scholarship, **awards will be presented** to the top three student papers:

- 1st Place: \$1000 + publication opportunity
- 2nd Place: \$750 + publication opportunity
- 3rd Place: \$500 + publication opportunity

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In addition to monetary prizes, authors of the highest-quality papers (3,000-5,000 words, *tbc*) will be invited to revise and submit their work for publication in a special student section of JMSS (the three winners + additional selected students).

The conference will conclude with an informal evening networking reception, encouraging sustained collaboration between graduate students and Canada's defence and security community.

ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Applicants* are invited to submit a 250-word abstract addressing one of the four conference subthemes. Selected participants will be invited to deliver a 7-10 minute presentation of their research at the conference at the University of Calgary, and may be eligible for reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses up to \$1,000-\$1,500, depending on individual travel requirements and available funding.

Submissions should be policy-oriented and clearly identify:

- the policy problem or challenge being examined;
- its relevance to the Canada-U.S. security and defence relationship; and
- a proposed policy solution or recommendation.

Abstracts will be evaluated by a selection committee composed of fellows from CMSS and JMSS, as well as one representative from S3C.

Please submit your abstract, along with **your first & last name, proof of university affiliation (e.g., unofficial transcript), program and year of study, and selected conference subtheme(s)**, by **November 13, 2026**, to s3c@ucalgary.ca. **Incomplete applications will be disqualified.**

Successful applicants will be contacted following the committee's review.

SUBTHEMES

- 1. Securing the Continent: Borders, Arctic Security & Continental Defence**
NORAD modernization, Arctic security and sovereignty, domain awareness, northern infrastructure, Canada-U.S. border security, transnational organized crime and illicit finance, and continental defence
- 2. Building Together: Defence Industry, Trade & Economic Security**
Defence industrial cooperation, procurement, supply chains, critical minerals, trade and tariffs, industrial mobilization, and economic security



3. **The Future Fight: Emerging Technologies & Modern Warfare**

Artificial intelligence, cyber, space, critical infrastructure, information warfare, and technological cooperation

4. **Beyond Washington: Expanding Canada's Defence & Security Partnerships**

Diversification of defence partnerships, Canada-EU security cooperation, Canada-Indo-Pacific security cooperation, NATO's European pillar, defence-industrial partnerships, strategic autonomy

ELIGIBILITY*

- Open to graduate students (Master's and PhD) currently enrolled at a Canadian university, as well as Canadian graduate students studying at an American institution.
 - Recent graduates are also eligible to apply; please indicate your graduation date and most recent academic affiliation in your application.
- Submissions must address the conference's overarching theme of the future of the Canada-U.S. security and defence relationship and fall within one of the four identified panel themes (see above).
- Students from all academic disciplines are welcome to apply, provided their submission has a clear security, defence, or public policy dimension.
- Applicants must be available to attend the in-person conference at the University of Calgary on January 29, 2027, and, if selected, deliver a 7-10 minute presentation.
- Travel stipends** may be available for eligible participants outside of Calgary who would otherwise be unable to attend.

**Note that travel stipends will be provided as reimbursements of costs up to \$1,000-1,500 (case dependent).

For any questions regarding the conference, please contact s3c@ucalgary.ca.

For updates about the selection process follow our Instagram [s3c.cmss](https://www.instagram.com/s3c.cmss).