November 2, 2017

**Big Thinking Panel - Expertise in a Post-truth Era: How to be a Trusted Advisor in a Low-trust World?**  
Organized by: Peter Severinson, Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences  
  
Speakers: Lisa Kimmel, President and CEO, Edelman Canada; Mark Kingwell, Professor of Philosophy, University of Toronto; Rima Wilkes, President, Canadian Sociological Association

Moderator: Gabriel Miller, Executive Director, Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences

**Takeaways and recommendations**

* Historically, North Americans expected their relationship with government to be purely transactional: taxes to services. Things began to shift in the 1960s as the public began expecting government to better reflect their values.
* The 2017 Edelman Trust Barometer, a survey that looks at public trust in four key institutions – business, media, government and NGOs – found the following.
  + To increase trust, organizations should improve on ethical business practices, treating employees well, and listening to customer feedback.
  + Employees can be used to build trust: they are viewed as the most trusted people within an organization concerning the treatment of employees and customers, and on financial earnings and practices.
  + Canadians are more likely to trust sources outside of established areas of authority than inside.
  + Canada’s informed public trusts institutions, whereas the mass population distrusts institutions.
* Science literacy should be added to general literacy as required for democracy to work.
* There is no long a final authority for truth – a singular authority who holds the truth strikes us as untenable.
* Trust is the foundation of everything we do in a professional capacity: we need to trust strangers and institutions in order for societies to function.
* Who can afford to trust? In order to trust, a person takes a risk. A poor person, for example, has more to lose in trusting: to trust isn’t necessarily the best thing for certain individuals.