University Delegates WebEx Meeting
February 7, 2019 - 12:30-1:30pm EDT
CIHR Room 10-219, Ottawa, Ontario
Minutes

Participants

Chair: Pierre Côté, Director General, Operations Support

Members:	Andrea Lawrance, Carleton University; Brenda Bruner, Nipissing University; Brian Christie, University of Victoria; Brittney Roughan, Mount Saint Vincent University; Chris Whitfield, University of Guelph; Christian Beaulieu, University of Alberta; Christian Patenaude, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières; Daniel Lajeunesse, Université de Montréal; David Litchfield, Western University; David Rose, University of Waterloo; François Boudreau, Université de Sherbrooke; Frédéric Lesage, École Polytechnique Montréal; Gerald W. Zamponi, University of Calgary; Keeley Rose, The Hospital for Sick Children Lara Boyd, University of British Columbia;	Lori Burrows, McMaster University; Marc Pouliot, Université Laval; Marilyn Hodgins, University of New-Brunswick; Rebecca R. Pillai Riddell, York University; Robert Bertolo, Memorial University of Newfoundland; Shari Baum, McGill University; Stephen Perry, Wilfrid Laurier University; Steven Smith, Queen's University; Stephen Waldman, Ryerson University; Tania Watts, University of Toronto; Vicki Kristman, Lakehead University; Yvonne Myal, University of Manitoba;
CARA members:	Joanne Simala-Grant, University of Alberta (CARA member); Christy McTait, University of British Colombia (CARA member); Deborah Zornes, Royal Roads University (CARA member); Jennifer Thurlow, Capital District Health Authority (CARA member);	Kate Keetch, Department of Evaluation & Research Services in Fraser Health (CARA member) Lorraine Deydey, University of Alberta (CARA member);

Institution staff:	Angela McCormick, University of Alberta; Cecilia Kalaw, Simon Fraser University; Deanna Pong, University of Toronto; Jim Woodgett, Lunenfeld-Tanenbaum Research Institute; Judith Chadwick, University of Toronto (CARA member); Leslie Copp, University of Waterloo;	Manisha Jalla, University of Saskatchewan; Penny D'Agnone, University of Lethbridge; Samar Saneinejad, St. Michael's Hospital;
Regrets:	Ali Jenabian, Université du Québec à Montréal; Brenda Smith-Chant, Trent University Claudia Malacrida, University of Lethbridge Daniel Cyr, Institut Armand-Frappier; Darcy Marciniuk, University of Saskatchewan; Estelle Chamoux, Bishop's University; Geoff Payne, University of Northern British Columbia; Jeff Ollerhead, Mount Allison University; Jennifer McGrath, Concordia University; Jennifer Walker, Laurentian University; Kristen Baetz, University of Ottawa; Lisa Porter, University of Windsor; Lori Livingston, University of Ontario Institute of Technology; Peter L. Twohig, Saint Mary's University; Richard Isnor, St. Francis Xavier University; Roger McLeod, Dalhousie University Rod McCormick, Thompson Rivers University;	Said Mekary, Acadia University; Sandra Turcotte, Université de Moncton; Sébastien Normand, Université de Québec en Outaouais; Sunny Hartwig, University of Prince Edward Island; Tanya Brann-Barrett, Cape Breton University; Timothy Takaro, Simon Fraser University; Wendy Ward, Brock University; Jeremy Knight, University of Toronto (CARA member); Maria Margarita Heras, University of British Columbia (CARA member); Virginie Portes, Université de Montréal (CARA member); Cindy Faber, University of Toronto; François l'Heureux, Université de Montréal; Paul Wiebe, Health Sciences Centre; Sanja Obradovic, Ryerson University; Sean Parsons, Laurentian University;
Staff:	Kelly Taylor, Director General, Program Design and Delivery; Allison Jackson, Manager, College of Reviewers; Annik Poirier, Manager, Business Solutions, Competition Management and Support; Martine Lafrance, Manager Program Design and Delivery; Julie Conrad, Manager Program Design and Delivery;	Corinne Guindon, Change Management Lead; Gilles Leblanc, Change Management Advisor; Tara McDonald, Curriculum Development Advisor; Kim Douglas, Director NFRF; Dominique Bérubé, Vice-President of Research Programs at SSHRC.

1. CIHR Update

UD Network Membership Updates

It is with mixed emotions that we announce the departure of Dr. Christian Baron, Université de Montréal, from the UD Network membership. Christian had been a UD member for nearly 7 years (since March 2012) and was appointed as member of the UDEC in December 2013. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Christian for his commitment and contributions to the UD/UDEC table over the last few years. His insights have been of immense value to CIHR and the UD Network alike, and we wish him the best of luck in his future endeavors.

Replacing Dr. Baron is Dr. Daniel Lajeunesse, Assistant Vice-Rector, Research, Discovery, Creation and Innovation and full Professor in the Department of Medicine at Université de Montréal since 2005.

We are also welcoming Dr. Tanya Watts (University of Toronto), Professor and Sanofi Pasteur Chair in Human Immunology, Department of Immunology, University of Toronto.

University Delegates Executive Committee (UDEC)

<u>Membership</u>

- A call for self-nominations to the University Delegates Executive Committee (UDEC) was put forward to University Delegates (UDs) on January 11 with the goal of expanding the committee by 2-3 members. Through this initiative, CIHR intends to increase UD involvement in CIHR related initiatives and consultations via more frequent in-person meetings to inform operational and strategic decisions.
- Eight (8) self-nominations were received from UD members following our first call. We will be extending the nomination process for another two (2) days.
- A Doodle poll with then be circulated to facilitate the selection process.
- CIHR has conducted an analysis of the current UD membership composition and has identified some gaps in the current UDEC membership composition (French speaking, smaller university, Maritimes, Prairies, Alberta regions, research pillars 2, 3 and 4, Indigenous experience or expertise, and early and mid-career stage.
- CIHR reserves the right to use this information to make its final membership selections, in consultation with the UDEC, with the goal ensuring a broader, more diverse representation of the CIHR research community.
- We thank you in advance for your time and interest, and would like to thank those of you who have already submitted a nomination.

<u>In-person meeting</u>

- Next UDEC in-person meeting will be held in Ottawa on March 20-21.
- This one and a half day meeting is an opportunity for members to inform CIHR operational and strategic decisions by engaging with staff on key topics of interest for the health research community.
- Agenda for the meeting is currently being developed. It will be finalized and shared with members as soon as it is available.

Questions from Members

Q: Early career researchers are not typical as existing UDs. Will you be extending the nominations beyond UDs?

A: As part of its assessment, CIHR has identified a few early career researchers in the current membership however, this is something we can consider if needed.

Q: Is CIHR planning a UD in-person meeting?

A: We will discuss with the UDEC and get back to the group with more information.

CCV Centralized Helpdesk

Since the inception of the Common CV (CCV), support to users has been provided through a decentralized support model. Each subscribing agency provided first-line support to their respective applicants. On January 31, 2019, a CCV centralized helpdesk was implemented.

CCV users now benefit from consistent, coordinated, and integrated service delivery by sending all CCV related enquiries (i.e., technical issues, general enquiries, or feedback) to the CIHR Contact Centre. Users who have questions related to a competition or about the instructions to complete a specific CV type must contact the organization to which they are applying (if not CIHR).

Questions from Members

Q: The CCV window itself is the most difficult user interface many of us have had to work with. Is there an opportunity to enlarge the window so that all of the information on the screen can actually be viewed?

A: We are currently looking into the implementation of quick wins in an effort to continue supporting the research community. Examples include improvements to the user interface, as well as the development of a common template across Tri-Agencies. CIHR understands that this is a sensitive issue and will continue to engage with the research community to understand key issues, and to keep it informed of next steps.

Program Design and Delivery Updates

See slides for additional information.

Questions from Members

Q: Project Grant budgets have now become the size of Foundation Grant budgets. There are often too many personnel on a grant so that the amount is "buffered" against an expected 25% budget cut. Capping budget size could help to increase the number of NPIs funded, this would reduce reviewer stress and lessen motivation for bias in committees. Is there any movement towards this in future funding rounds?

A: CIHR is having active discussions in a number of different areas regarding investment strategies. Thank you for this feedback.

Q: Any changes to the Observer program? It would be good to allow them to participate as fourth reviewer for some grants.
A: This round of Observers will remain the same in that they will be present but will not participate. Moving towards the Project Grant: Fall 2019 competition, we are looking at having the model evolve by letting them do some shadow reviewing. The parameters and details are still under development but we are looking into ensuring that the Observer will have an opportunity to learn-by-doing behind the scenes in the review process.

Q*:* Can we expect any changes to the Observer program? It would be good to increase the participatory aspect of the program by allowing ECRs to participate as a fourth reviewer on some grants.
A: For this round, the program will remain the same. Observers will continue to attend the meetings but not actively participating in review. We are considering changes to the program including an opportunity to complete shadow reviews with a mentor.

Scientific Director, Institute of Human Development, Child and Youth Health

CIHR is looking to hire a new Scientific Director for the Institute of Human Development Child and Youth Health (IHDCYH). Dr. Shoo Lee, who joined CIHR as Scientific Director, will be ending his term at the end of December. This is a 4-year mandate, with the possibility of an additional 4-year extension.

Link: http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51328.html (en français)

2. Project Grant Results

Results

- The Project Grant: Fall 2018 competition has approved 371 research grants, plus an additional 18 bridge grants, for a total investment of approximately $275M.
- In addition, 14 priority announcement bridge grants were funded for a total amount of $1,400,000.
- All details about the results are available on the CIHR website (en français)
- Details (en français) about the Project Grant: Fall 2018 peer review participants are also available separately on the CIHR website.

Questions from Members

Q: Members of my community have pointed out pretty egregious reviewer comments on their Fall 2018 Project grants. I've advised them to communicate these to CIHR but wonder what else can be done.

A: All concerns should be flagged with the CIHR Contact Centre. CIHR is looking into options for an automated process that could identify inappropriate language.

Q: There has been a lot of discussion about having more structure to the reviews and better guidelines to help reduce bias and discrepancy. Does CIHR have any plans to

adopt some merit indicators for evaluations, possibly similar to the NSERC, to help reduce bias and uncertainty in the system?

A: The College of Reviewers plays an active role in review quality and discussions are taking place with the College Chairs.

Q: In our committee, applications containing a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) and formatted as such, had a difficult time comparing these applications with regular ones. In our view, requesting the "RCT" format for applications not ending up in the RC1 committee hurts the candidate.

A: Meetings have been planned to enable active discussions between CIHR and committee Chairs (past and current) on this issue. The goal is to highlight what was done in the past and what can be done to improve this process going forward.

Q: Some of our funded investigators are seeing changes in budget distribution across the 5 year funding. Front loading of budgets mean that equal annual amounts are not provided and this makes it very difficult for people to budget through the term of the grant. What is the driver for this and is it happening across the board?

A: We will examine this question further and discuss the possibility of bringing the topic back to this table with the UDEC.

Q: Who else is involved in the RCT working group you mentioned? It sounded like more than CIHR is involved.

A: It is rather a consultation with current and past committee Chairs, and members of the research community.

Q: Is there a plan to evaluate the quality of reviewer reviews?

A: We are assessing reviewer performance and will provide training to support high quality reviews. Reviewers are continuously reminded of the importance of providing comprehensive reviews. Current Review Quality Assurance (RQA) parameters, as found online in the RQA checklist (en français), include utility, robustness and appropriateness. The College is working with Competition and College Chairs to finalize and implement a formal Review Quality Assurance process.

Q: CIHR will be releasing Catalyst Grant results tomorrow however, these will not be available through the portal. Is it possible to share results with Research Offices (ROs)?

A: The release of result through the system is currently only available for Open program. CIHR is exploring ways to make this possible for other programs as well.

Q: How many Foundation Grant: 2018-2019 Stage 2 applications has CIHR received?

A: To date, 145 applications were submitted to CIHR. However, these numbers are not final.

Q: What is CIHR's timeline for reviewing the Foundation program? The first 5-year grants end in 2020 and the first 7-year grants end in 2022. Investigators will require some lead time.

A: CIHR is in its final stages of reviewing the Foundation Grant Program and will be raising this as an item at the next Governing Council meeting. We expect more concrete updates for the research community later in the spring and are cognizant of the impact on current Foundation Grantees and the need to ensure timely communications on outcomes of these discussions.

3. New Frontiers in Research Fund

Kim Douglas, Director of the New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) and Dominique Bérubé, Vice-President of Research Programs at SSHRC, were invited to provide general information on the NFRF program and answer questions from the group.

Overview:

- The NFRF competition launched at end of last year to offer grants of maximum $250k over two years dedicated to ECRs;
- More than 1700 applications letter of intent (LOI) have been received;
- Full applications are due February 14 and the plan is to fund as many grants as possible based on the quality of applications received;
- Peer review activities (i.e., two-stage process with an evaluation from external panel members, as well as an internal interdisciplinary assessment) must be complete by March 31.

Questions from Members

Q: What was the rationale for using the Convergence Portal, rather than an existing portal that has had successful usability? In Convergence, there is no mechanism for RGOs to push applications back for revision and no possibility to generate a PDF of the application.

A: We are exploring options that may adress this concern.

Q: What are the expected timelines for the first NFRF competition for researchers that are not ECRs? What is the plan for the non-ECRs and for the other two streams?

A: We expect to have information about the next stream this Spring. Our commitment is to have one competition per year.

Q: I understand there was a large number of Notices of Intent (NOI) submitted. Were these triaged for eligibility in advance of the application deadline? Based on the very specific requirements for this funding opportunity, how many are actually going to be reviewed?

A: NOIs are used to support the reviewer recruitment and will not be reviewed for eligibility.

Q: Will there be a peer review manual to instruct the interdisciplinary panel members on the process? Will this be made public? For example, how will panel members address interdisciplinary differences in their assessment of "reward" or "risk"? Isn't that a waste of resources and reviewers time if a large portion of the applications are deemed ineligible as per the competition criteria?

A: Yes, this information will be made public after the competition closes on February 14.

Q: When you say "one competition per year", do you mean one NFRF competition, or one of each of the three streams each year?

A: We are committed to having one competition in the exploration stream every year.

Q: We noticed that Post-Doctoral Fellows (PDF) are no longer eligible as applicants. Why was this change made?

A: PDFs have never been eligible to apply as a principal investigator (PI) or co-PI. However, they are eligible as collaborators if they are not under the supervision of another researcher or project team members.

4. Adjournement

The meeting ended at 1:30pm EST. The next meeting of the University Delegates will be on March 7, 2019.