

# Research Board Minutes

**Date:** February 18, 2021  
**Time:** 10:00 a.m. – noon  
**Place:** Google Meets  
**Attendees:** K. Atkinson, B. Chang, C. Davidson, A. Eamer, S. Forrester, J. Freeman, L. Jacobs (Chair), M. Lemonde, S. Rahnamayan, L. Roy, V. Sharpe (secretary), A. Slane  
**Guest(s):** L. Rendl  
**Regrets:** G. Edwards

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## 1. Approval of the agenda

- Approved by consensus.

## 2. Approval of previous meeting's minutes

- Approved by consensus.

## 3. Report of the Vice President Research & Innovation

L. Jacobs welcomed the group and commented that:

- Research activities on-campus are moving ahead seamlessly and without issues. We are operating in a blended research environment.
- On Monday we received the UN International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Collaborating Centre in Canada certificate. This is a huge achievement and sets us up very well to work and focus on sustainable energy. Their mandate has become a model of social responsibility responding to climate changes and responding to global development goals. K. Atkinson's work on SMRs was important to that as well as the FEAS integrated energy systems (Kishawy and Dincer). IAEA only recognizes one centre per country. UOIT applied 7-8 years ago and McMaster has applied and wasn't successful. The fact that we were successful is terrific. L. Roy asked if there will be a big announcement made. L. Jacobs noted that because its part of the UN the Canadian government has an ambassador based in the IAEA who has to sign off on designation and an event will be forthcoming. Because of the very wide reach of the IEAE mandate and our work plan we were imagining that it would be able to involve faculty across the university.
- L. Roy asked whether there were many faculty members involved in Project Arrow. L. Jacobs noted that there are FBIT and FEAS faculty so far and that Project Arrow has hired a Chief Scientist from Britain named Fraser Dunn (was Chief Scientist for Aston-Martin). The arrangement for the funding from Project Arrow is that the project will be held at Ontario Tech and that he will have an appointment in Automotive in FEAS. L. Jacobs noted that F. Dunn is keen to teach and supervise grad students.
- A pre-fabricated frame supplied by a Michigan company has arrived on campus for Project Arrow. Funding is expected from the federal government and partial funding for part of the project has already been received from Mitacs.

#### 4. Report of the Executive Director, Office of Research Services

J. Freeman provided and circulated a presentation that included information on:

- Radiation Safety Policy - Moving on to Academic Council
- Controlled Goods Policy - Approved by Academic Council, Moving on to the Board of Governors
- Policies to come to the Research Board: Conflict of Interest in Research (seeing an increase in disclosures) and Research Entities
- Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund (CRCEF) – everyone who is eligible has been contacted
- Collaborative Research Consortium Program CRCP – EaRTH Initiative – submit interest and J. Freeman will help with matchmaking
- EDI – Self-ID survey should be coming out within this calendar year
- Hiring – Ltd Term Grants Officer to cover a maternity leave
- Patent Portfolio Review Plan – J. Freeman noted that the patent portfolio is supported by ORS, is creator-owned, and provides an opportunity for creators to approach the university to see if the university would become the protector of the patent (such as marketing). In this instance the university would file a patent and if there's no interest within a year from an industry partner we abandon the patent. The patent budget was \$60,000/year and the current budget is \$10,000/year. The maintenance fees on patent filings are extremely expensive and there is a need to find a way to get patent expenses under control but that provides protection. J. Freeman noted that ORS is looking at a 2-step review process: admin review and in-depth review by experts. If the university wishes to abandon the patent they give the option to the inventors on the patent to take over the maintenance fees on the patent or abandon if they wish. See slides for more details. L. Roy expressed that he thought it is a good process. J. Freeman noted the current burden on the IP Officer to determine which patents to abandon and that it will be better to have a committee make this decision.

L. Jacobs noted that the government forced tech transfer offices to reduce some of those costs and that there recently was a vibrant discussion with the province where all VPRs are speaking in a single voice that if the province wants universities to support patent applications then the government has to put funding in place. He noted that the current government has no appetite to put money in place.

S. Rahnamayan noted that he didn't wish to appear negative but has questions about research intensity and whether we offer value to grad students and are competitive. He noted that we don't currently offer a reduction to international graduate student tuition. L. Jacobs noted that he is working with L. Roy, B. Maclsaac, L. Livingston and S. Murphy to see if Ontario Tech can reduce international graduate student fees to the same rate as domestic fees. L. Roy noted there will be an announcement on this subject next week.

L. Jacobs noted that Ontario Tech has always operated with an inventor-owned context. The idea is that faculty, if they have commercially attractive inventions, will be able to find support in industry partners as the university has a strong commitment to fulfilling that partnership. He clarified that what J. Freeman is trying to get a pulse on is the kind of patent that we're supporting and putting committing funding to are things that have commercial potential. Without that review process we can have faculty that come up with great research findings but little commercial value. In the past they've received patent support. Every Canadian university has slashed their patent support budgets. Patenting falls into the realm of applied research which some people think does not fall under research intensity. There are indicators of stepping backward around research intensity but there are a lot of indicators about research intensity such as the increase in research funding.

K. Atkinson noted that there was a presentation recently about how Canada was extremely bad at filing and holding onto patents in comparison with other nations. He expressed a concern about going backward on holding a patent inventory and questioned why there was little commercial interest and if it is being made a priority. J. Freeman noted that there are different ways to mobilize technology and patenting isn't always the best. For example there are industry partners not willing

to take on the cost. She stated that lots of universities are moving along a different path to mobilize technology and partnership development such as having an industry partner involved to work on developing a novel ideas for inventors. A lot of our IP is moving via transfer of IP. Patenting is a protection strategy. A lot of our IP can be commercialized and mobilized. J. Freeman noted that there are also some grants that pay for patent filings. The university is only one source of funds. There is a need to determine best strategy for mobilizing each technology.

S. Rahnamayan questioned a correlation between patents and research ranking. L. Jacobs noted that there is no correlation and it is not a causal relationship.

J. Freeman noted that the options are to abandon or maintain. Abandon means to re-assign the invention back to the inventor. In the case of licensing – if there is revenue that’s different. If they are generating revenue (if the university acts as the commercial manager and the inventor assigns the invention to the university than 75% of the revenue goes to the university and 25% to the inventor because the university is taking on all of the costs/risk. She noted that in practice we have negotiated 50/50 splits. In cases where the inventor did more than the university to mobilize the technology we did 75% to inventor and 25% to the university. She also noted the option that the inventor has to choose to commercialize the invention on his/her own.

J. Freeman clarified that this review isn’t about the IP Policy and that the IP Policy is currently under review with the IP Policy review committee.

L. Jacobs stated that the early patenting and maintaining of fees actually drains money away from supporting research and new patents and innovations. There is an opportunity to stop investing in housekeeping and divert those funds in part to new patent applications. High maintenance legacy costs has a cascading effect on supporting new research (legacy patents without commercial return.) Part of the Collective Agreement for the Faculty Association is an agreement and ongoing movement on updating our IP Policy with a goal in large part to ensure that faculty feel that it is a fair deal.

J. Freeman noted that ORS has done sector checking and benchmarking across the sector to see where we fit. She noted that if there is feedback about how the university manages the IP Policy researchers are welcome to reach out to her.

## **5. Working Groups on Research Priorities**

### **Research Metrics Dashboard**

S. Forrester provided an update that the working group met and identified 10-12 metrics that the group thought were interesting and next stage is trying to gather data to fill in what those metrics might look like. Will bring back to WG to inform where we want to go forward and will bring back to Research Board.

### **CRC program policy review**

S. Rahnamayan noted that the working group will meet with the CRCs on March 8.

### **Data Management Strategy**

C. Davidson questioned whether there was any news on any announcements from Tri-Council? L. Jacobs replied that there has not; tri-council has been quiet. J. Freeman noted that RDM Requirements are coming from the Tri-Agencies in ways such as embedding RDM requirements in grant applications, etc.

### **Institutes and Centres**

M. Lemonde provided an update that the working group wasn’t able to find descriptive attributes of each of the types of entities so they created a chart to be used when future applications are evaluated. She provided a [link](#) and noted that editing access is available to all Research Board members and input is welcomed.

## 6. Faculty Exchange

None.

## 7. Other Business

### A. CFI-IF internal competition

L. Rendl noted the purpose in her attending was to get the members' insight and input on the upcoming CFI Innovation Fund call, expected before the end of the year. Due to complexity we need to start the planning now. The innovation fund is an allocation program. Need to identify an internal process to determine what will move on to the national comp.

L. Roy asked what the return on our investment is if we contribute a portion of our CFI envelope to a larger project led by another institution. L. Rendl answered that CFI funds over 40% of total project costs so at a minimum we would recoup the value of equipment purchased with only a 40% CFI investment. In addition our researchers would likely have access to more infrastructure located at other institutions as part of their participation on the project.

J. Freeman noted that it is an institutional submission. There is a PI identified but it is a university submission. There could be some set aside (EaRTH for ex) and there are different ways to manage it.

L. Jacobs noted that sometimes for small universities there is great success in attaching ourselves to large universities. Conceivably we could lead the EaRTH Initiative project for this call.

L. Rendl commented that we have participated in other institution-led proposals and they weren't successful. We've also participated in some with no envelope contribution in the last round and we were successful. The proposal with Trent last round never materialized. It requires a lot of coordination if we're going to be significant and contribute our envelope. It's hard to be competitive if it's matchmaking when there's no record of collaborating.

L. Rendl asked for confirmation that there was appetite to hold back some of the envelope. She is seeking feedback on how many projects we want to support and whether we carve the allocation up or give the whole envelope to the researcher/project. In the past we have supported either one or two applications. Based on past experience, supporting only one is preferred due to budget constraints because the application can have better grant support, management, and institutional space. L. Rendl's recommendation is to only move forward with one researcher-driven project. **DECISION:** The Research Board was in agreement.

L. Rendl sought feedback on the proposed timeline. **DECISION:** The Research Board was in agreement.

L. Rendl noted that CFI is multi-disciplinary. All faculty are encouraged to participate.

### B. Land Acknowledgement

L. Jacobs noted that the Research Board has not traditionally started with the land acknowledgement and that this will start this at the next meeting.

## 8. Next meeting – March 18, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – noon, Google Meet

## 9. Adjournment – 12:01 p.m.