



Research Committee Minutes

Date: September 20, 2022
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Place: Google Meet
Attendees: S. Brown, C. Davidson S. Forrester (Vice-Chair), J. Freeman, L. Jacobs (Chair),
A. Leach, C. McGregor, B. Murphy, R. Ruttenberg-Rozen, S. ShahbazPanahi, V. Sharpe (secretary),
N. Wattie
Regrets: K. Atkinson
Guests: L. Rendl, K. Ross McGregor

L. Jacobs welcomed everyone and commenced the meeting. He noted that the university has a full schedule of events around Orange Shirt Day which shows the university commitment to reconciliation.

As this is the first meeting of the academic year and there are new members introductions were made.

L. Jacobs noted the new name of the Research Committee (formerly Research Board) to align with other Academic Council committees. He noted that members of the Research Committee are not members of Academic Council whereas other committee members are.

1. **Approval of the agenda**

Approved by consensus.

2. **Approval of previous meeting's minutes**

Approved by B. Murphy. Seconded by S. Forrester. Approved by consensus.

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

L. Jacobs noted that this committee serves as a listening opportunity for him and J. Freeman (Executive Director, Office of Research Services) and since there is representation from every faculty it also serves as a communication corridor to bring a voice from your faculty and Dean's office. It is also an opportunity for the Office of the VP Research and Innovation to bounce ideas off you to get your input and pulse of your faculty, recognizing diversity and that you don't speak with a single voice. Thirdly, the Research Committee is a body through which some administrative practices pass for consultation and/or approval.

Committee members have a responsibility to report back to their faculty through Faculty Council or other avenue. L. Jacobs noted he experiences disappointment when faculty members are not aware of items that have been frequently discussed at the Research Committee. Some faculties have an update from the Research Committee as a standing item on their Faculty Council. This is a good practice and good way to share information.

He shared that there is a feeling of a much more normal Fall than we've had for a number of years because many of the problems in teaching, etc. that bleed into research activities have been ironed out so there is more normality in teaching which leads to more calm in research.

L. Jacobs noted that Marc Rosen has been elected as a Fellow to the Royal Society of Canada. Both M. Rosen and Ontario Tech are gaining real international recognition and an award like this brings excellent reputational rankings to the university. He noted that the award is nominated by current Fellow(s) and voted on by existing Fellows. The Royal Society mirrors some old established societies around the world and is a real recognition of research success. Appointments are for life and there are 80-100 new Fellows each year.

L. Jacobs touched on our funding numbers for 2021-2022 – an impressive \$26.2 million dollars. In 2019 we were at \$12 million. The funding is across faculty and not attributable to any specific individual or faculty and really reflects the dynamic success of our younger faculty.

He shared some noteworthy initiatives:

- 1) We are in the 3rd year of implementation of our 5 year Strategic Research Plan. It was put in place as the pandemic was beginning and we continue to make strides on it. There are opportunities to continue to push forward on strategic research priorities. Our budget woes are hopefully more in the rear view than they were a year or two ago and there is a much deeper commitment to supporting those major research priorities in the university operating budget. The integrated Research – Academic Plan shows more and more alignment between research and academics.
- 2) The contributions of the Research Committee in the past year will have legacy inputs. Members of the Research Committee played a key role in establishing the Research Excellence Chairs envelope. We have 6 internally-funded Research Excellence Chairs now, up from two. We hope to launch another competition for more Research Excellence Chairs (REC) this Fall.
- 3) The university has invested in establishing Research Entities (Institutes and Centres). Some examples include the Institute for Cyber Security and Resilient Systems (ICSRS), the Digital Life Institute, the Institute for Disability and Rehabilitation Research (IDRR), and more. We are beginning to see the benefit outside of the university.

S. Forrester asked a question about restructuring the process for the Research Excellence Chairs program noting that some Deans had a lot of letters of support to write and asked for an opportunity to have a discussion about restructuring the process. L. Jacobs noted that he received feedback from the adjudication committee that the value of the Deans letters was limited. Deans also felt that their letters, especially when writing more than one letter, were perhaps not of the most value. He noted his inclination to drop the Deans' letters requirement and that there will need to be a substantive discussion on this.

This program serves to complement our current research chair program and is for people who haven't held Chairs before. In the past the REC program has been funded in part with contributions from Deans. All the Deans have been enthusiastic when their faculty were selected but some were less enthusiastic when a faculty member in their faculty was not selected. Going forward the Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation will fully fund the RECs. He noted that the Deans didn't complain but it definitely was a pain point for some.

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

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

- Hiring in process for a Research Ethics Coordinator (FT) and Contracts Officer (LT)
- Hiring completed for a Grants Officer (FT) and Grants Officer (LT)
- Grants and Funding Programs including Mitacs funding pause
- Tier 2 CRC in Systemic Racism, Technology and Criminal Justice nomination submitted. Results expected in April 2023.
- Undergraduate Research Awards Program
 - Looking at mitigating impacts to students and faculty; but had disruptions this year. This will come back to the Research Committee for consultation on award/salary. **ACTION:** Please send feedback on the proposed timeline to J. Freeman.
- Research Ethics Board and the Animal Care Committee

S. Forrester thanked J. Freeman for advocating for our researchers with Mitacs and asked about the climate for applications that were submitted and are deep in the review process. J. Freeman replied that the list of impacted researchers is long. L. Jacobs noted that he and President Murphy met with John Hepburn and Caroline Konrad from Mitacs. They agreed in principle that we could triage some of the files. We could identify those for which a delay would be very impactful and they will assist with pushing those through.

L. Jacobs shared that we are at an advantage over bigger universities and noted that Mitacs has produced a ranking and that Ontario Tech is in 1st place for graduate students and that 1 in 4 of our grad students has a Mitacs opportunity. The U15 dominate Mitacs in general at 11%. He noted that the current problem facing Mitacs is not a case of government underfunding or withdrawing funding but rather a factor of Mitacs' success. He noted that he

is hopeful that some bridge funding from the province will come through. We've identified about 19 researchers that are impacted.

With regards to the funding numbers L. Jacobs noted that they are by disbursement not total award and that the ACE numbers have not yet been updated. Also that some Advancement dollars, while they may not flow through VPRI, are earmarked for research.

B. Murphy noted she's aware that the REB is a separate entity and there have been issues with reviews being completed timely due to sickness, turnover, etc. She asked about delays with the REB and stressed the negative impact the delays have on graduate students, noting it's morally unacceptable to not have a contingency plan and asked what is being done to ensure timely reviews? L. Jacobs stated that the REB is an independent body with autonomy and a collegial committee. Decisions about the REB are made by faculty colleagues. There are opportunities to make some decisive collegial decisions that can have longer term impacts and Faculty can advocate for changes. He noted that grad students don't submit the application to the REB but rather Faculty members submit on behalf of their grad students and that this can be changed with collegial decision making in the REB.

A. Leach noted that the process of professors applying for their grad students started because sometimes grad students would leave and cases would still be open. The REB changed it so that faculty had to be co-PIs to move along the bureaucratic process. She noted that the vote tomorrow is about whether there will be a change in leadership of the REB and that the Chair of REB decides the process. The TCPS doesn't provide a strict outline of what REBs must do. She asked about the role of the Research Committee as it relates to the REB and the problems with the delays with the REB questioning if the Research Committee can ask for an audit, benchmarking, increased staffing, etc. L. Jacobs invited A. Leach to create a motion with specifics about the REB for a vote at the next meeting and A. Leach agreed. L. Jacobs noted that a motion from this board may be far more impactful than individual faculty bringing issues forward to J. Freeman, himself, or the President.

C. MacGregor noted that there are more issues with the REB beyond the delays; it's not just grad students but also affects funding with contracts, etc. and industry partners. She stated that the REB should be accountable to timelines and need to be held financially accountable to delays to grad students. L. Jacobs noted that it is not the jurisdiction of the Research Committee but agreed that changes need to be made to stop delays.

J. Freeman shared the summary of previous [REB review in 2015](#). She noted that Research Ethics staff do all that they can to prepare reports, etc. but ultimately it is up to the REB Chair and Vice-Chair to review and process.

5. SSHRC Internal Partnerships Pilot Consultation
Deferred to October meeting.

6. Research Data Management Strategy
Deferred to October meeting.

7. Faculty Exchange

FBIT – C. MacGregor shared concerns about contract timelines. She noted that when we have contracts from the Canadian government the review process should not take so long as it causes undue delays. There is a need to review the process with reviewing contracts, particularly industry and government. **ACTION:** add discussion to future agenda.

FSci – S. Forrester noted that Faculty are starting to think about the next Integrated Academic Research Plan and that fundamental scientific research needs to be included in the plan (fundamental as opposed to applied).

8. Other Business

None.

9. **Next meetings** – October 17, 2022

10. **Adjournment** – 2:25 p.m.