

Research Committee Minutes

Date: November 29, 2022
Time: 11:30 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Place: Google Meet
Attendees: S. Brown, C. Davidson S. Forrester, J. Freeman, L. Jacobs (Chair), A. Leach, B. Murphy,
R. Ruttenberg-Rozen, S. ShahbazPanahi V. Sharpe (secretary), N. Wattie
Regrets: C. McGregor

1. **Welcome**

L. Jacobs welcomed everyone and announced that the vote was unanimous for C. Davidson to be Vice-Chair. L. Jacobs provided the land acknowledgement and provided some context for the Williams Treaties.

2. **Approval of the agenda**

Approved by consensus.

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

Approved by consensus.

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

L. Jacobs noted many new significant developments for the university:

UNESCO Chair - Long recognized as a global authority on hate crime and right-wing extremism in Canada, Barb Perry has been appointed UNESCO's Research Chair in Hate Studies which will develop evidence-based policy to minimize the incidence and impacts of hate crime and targeted hate speech, both online and offline.

Canadian Nuclear Laboratories – Ontario Tech signed a major MOU with CNL. For the first time they are viewing the university and all our strengths not only Engineering and Nuclear Engineering. This is a major breakthrough for us. They employ 3600 people and most of their activity is research-focused.

Project Arrow - Canada's First Zero Emissions Concept Vehicle is almost done being built and will be unveiled and showcased at January's Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas.

Mitacs – A number of faculty have MITACS projects approved with new Mitacs funding of nearly \$3 million. Mitacs would like to partner with us with embedding Mitacs in graduate programs so students would have Mitacs opportunities. The funding would be around \$12,000 per student per term. There are opportunities in most or all faculties. **ACTION:** If you think there is an appetite in your faculty reach out to L. Jacobs.

5. **Report of the Executive Director, Office of Research Services**

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

- ORS new hire: Anna Kristoffersen, Research Partnerships Officer, backfill for J. Armstrong
- ORS hiring in process for a Research Ethics Coordinator (FT), Research Ethics Officer (FT), and Research Contracts Officer (LT)
- Grants & Funding Summary – not representative of the total number of grants submitted
- Region of Durham – City Studio – new round of 15 projects available
- Intellectual Property – IPON event recording will be posted online soon
- Research Data Management Survey Summary – 30 faculty members responded. S. Shahbazpanahi asked how it benefits the Faculty Member to participate in the survey. J. Freeman noted that it is a compliance requirement to have a strategy in place and implement procedures and that the survey is to get feedback to prioritize RDM and support for it. S. Shahbazpanahi noted some unhappiness and

disconnects particularly in FEAS with the research enterprise and the FEAS Faculty Members' unwillingness to participate in numerous surveys initiated by the Office of Research Services.

N. Wattie agreed that there's survey fatigue but suggested that there would be some value in recirculating the survey. R. Ruttenberg-Rozen agreed and suggested recirculating in January.

C. Davidson noted that her counterparts at other institutions are all polling our researchers for the same input and agreed that survey fatigue is likely universal. J. Freeman noted that the survey is one input and the committee can look to other avenues and look at other strategies to get input. **ACTION:** Let J. Freeman know if there are researchers you think we should talk to in a targeted approach.

J. Freeman noted that the consultation is a multi-layered approach which includes consulting with faculty (targeted approach), and the survey. **ACTION:** Let J. Freeman know how we should prioritize. A. Leach agreed with the survey fatigue and noted that Faculty are interested in knowing how this fits in with the REB. J. Freeman expressed that she is keenly aware and working with REB so to not add to workload with regards to faculty and REB. The goal is to seamlessly align the material and process.

- REB – new REB Chair has been elected – Joe Eastwood, FSSH
- Radiation Safety – looking at succession planning for our Class II Nuclear Facilities to maintain our compliance with CNSC
- Subcritical Assembly (Reactor) project – process takes about a year for approval

6. Research Ethics Board efficiency and timelines

A. Leach provided a motion to address the delays with the Research Ethics Board. It would be a very long motion to list every issue so the motion requests an audit.

A. Leach raised a motion that:

“The Research Committee Chair, on behalf of the membership of the Research Committee, send a letter to the President regarding the issues that Faculty are having with the Research Ethics Board related to the content and timeliness of reviews of Human Participants Research, and formally request an independent audit of the REB's policies and procedures.”

The motion was seconded by B. Murphy. B. Murphy noted that something needs to be done with the REB and the lack of timeliness and the need for the REB to commit, at least, to a timely first response. She noted that sometimes the delay is the faculty members however the REB has a lack of contingency planning for a committee this important and needs it. They are self-governing and need a contingency plan. She suggested that perhaps there should be two motions; one to recommend an audit and the other to address timeliness.

A. Leach noted that the incoming chair suggested the audit, is fully supportive and recommends that it is done by an external auditor. She noted that the REB has serious issues in terms of staffing at the moment and that she is happy to create two motions to address the issues.

N. Wattie suggested adding “policies, procedures and performance” to the motion to have a clear picture of the outputs.

L. Jacobs noted an extensive audit done 4 to 5 years ago and asked if there ever a follow up on that audit J. Freeman noted that there was no official follow up due to transition in the VPRI role and the REB Chair role. The Chair had firm notions on how the report should be disseminated and implemented. L. Jacobs suggested that perhaps a review of the audit report could be done and the REB could see what could be implemented from it that hasn't been already. It provides a framework. It may well be the vehicle to do something very quickly. J. Freeman provided the [link](#) to the audit.

A. Leach noted that the audit identified procedures however the implementation of the procedures has changed over time. L. Jacobs suggested perhaps a more narrowly focused motion. A. Leach stated that there are so many issues and although an audit may be a long process; but it may be what the REB needs.

J. Freeman suggested changing the word “performance” to “practice”. B. Murphy agreed and said it would be good to keep the motion broad but would hate to lose the specificity such as contingency plans. She moved to amend the motion by adding “and practices”. Seconded by N. Wattie.

The new motion reads

“The Research Committee Chair, on behalf of the membership of the Research Committee, send a letter to the President regarding the issues that Faculty are having with the Research Ethics Board related to the content and timeliness of reviews of Human Participants Research, and formally request an independent audit of the REB’s policies, procedures, and practices.”

The Chair commenced a vote. Zero opposed. One abstention. The motion was approved.

7. Contract Acknowledgement Process Consultation

J. Freeman noted that the current practice is that the lead researcher acknowledges that they, along with the research team members, are aware of the terms of the agreement. The lead researcher is also consulted and informed throughout the contract review/development/negotiation process. She proposed a process modification whereas:

- there is a separate read and acknowledged form that the lead researcher will manage with each research team member during on-boarding;
- the form will be managed/stored by the lead researcher, but may be subject to periodic audits conducted by the VPRI (like the NSERC HQP process)
- the form is not a legal agreement; it is meant to document acknowledgement and understanding of contractual obligations.

S. Shahbazpanahi stated that he feels it is a conflict of interest in having the PI secure the student’s signature as the PI may be seen in a position of authority.

J. Freeman noted that the students come on the project at any time and ORS is not involved at the project level so it makes more sense for the PI to manage the process. If the PI is not comfortable doing this they can ask ORS to assist. The PI knows the specifics of what student is on what project at what time. ORS can help to explain contractual obligations with the students. The key part is to have the discussion with the students. The process needs to have balance to make sure the process doesn’t become onerous. L. Jacobs noted that this is the practice at virtually every other research-intensive university in the province.

8. Contract Review Timelines

C. MacGregor – deferred in C. MacGregor’s absence.

9. Research Excellence Chair Program – new stream

L. Jacobs noted that there had been a one-off award program about 4 years ago where a Research Excellence Chair (REC) was awarded to 2 faculty members. Then the program went dormant and was resurrected last year when 6 RECs were awarded. L. Jacobs noted a high level of interest this year, approximately 26-28 LOIs. L. Jacobs noted his intention is to introduce a second stream to be launched in January 2023, for 2 Chairs, which will be at a more senior level including eligibility for people who have held research chairs. The idea is to level the playing field so that they are not competing in the other stream. The funding will be for course release and flexible research funding. The requirement, in order for chairholders to obtain the funding, is that they have to match it with other research funding. He noted that, going forward, there is no requirement from the Deans, in general to participate in the application process. This aligns with Research Chair programs in other universities.

S. Forrester asked if the matching is one-to-one and how it will be monitored. L. Jacobs noted that the details are to be worked out but it’s very likely that the Chairs will hold other funding.

S. Shahbazpanahi asked what type of funding is eligible. L. Jacobs noted that it can be any external funding (industry, tri-council, etc.) and that the Research Committee will meet again before the funding call goes out.

ACTION: Research Committee members are asked to encourage their colleagues to apply.

10. Undergraduate Research Awards 2023 Program Updates Consultation

J. Freeman noted that an email was circulated about targeted funding from Tri-Agency about new funding for Black scholars. We likely will receive a quota of 1 for CIHR and one for SSHRC. For NSERC; it will be similar to how they handle Indigenous funding which is outside of our university quota and we may submit many applications. ORS is updating the form for project descriptions (by Dec 1) where researchers can submit projects. Information will be posted on the website and will launch to students.

J. Freeman noted that there were very few projects from the Faculties of Education and Social Science and Humanities. The program has been re-opened and researchers are encouraged to submit. A. Leach asked if researchers are required to provide some funding. J. Freeman noted that Faculty are required to provide \$3000 top up for NSERC Awards. The STAR Awards top up is different (see slides). L. Jacobs noted an ad hoc fund that can be applied to if a faculty member is struggling to find funding. **ACTION:** Encourage faculty to submit projects.

11. Faculty Exchange

FSSH – no update.

SGPS – no update.

Health Science – no update.

Education – no update.

Science – no update.

FEAS – no update.

Finance – New analyst hired for Social Science named Jason Chan.

Library – no update.

FBIT – no update as C. MacGregor absent.

12. Other Business

C. Davidson noted that our involvement with Canadian Nuclear Laboratories was noted at the integrated academic research plan retreat.

13. Next meetings – ~~January 17, 2023~~ February 21, 2023

14. Adjournment – 1:00 p.m.