



Research Committee Minutes

Date: February 21, 2023
Time: 12:30 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Place: Google Meet
Attendees: S. Brown, T. Christou, C. Davidson, S. Forrester, J. Freeman, L. Jacobs (Chair), C. McGregor, R. Ruttenberg-Rozen, S. ShahbazPanahi, V. Sharpe (secretary), N. Wattie
Regrets: A. Leach

1. **Welcome**

L. Jacobs welcomed everyone and commenced the meeting.

2. **Approval of the agenda**

Approved by consensus.

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

Motioned by S. Forrester. Approved by consensus

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

L. Jacobs introduced Ted Christou, Dean, Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies and T. Christou provided a brief biography.

L. Jacobs noted many new significant developments for Ontario Tech:

- Rankings - named one of Canada's Research Universities of the Year for 2022 by Research Infosource (No. 2 among smaller universities, and No. 1 in Ontario). No. 3 in Canada among smaller universities for corporate research income: \$5.465 million (FY 2021). No. 3 in Canada among smaller universities for corporate research income as a percentage of total research income: 25.8 per cent (FY 2021). In the five-year period from FY 2017 to FY 2021, No. 1 in Canada among smaller universities for research income from the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC): \$20.2 million and No. 1 in Canada among smaller universities for NSERC research income as a percentage of total research income: 25.8 per cent.
- L. Jacobs noted that committee member C. McGregor had asked by email about how members can have a more robust role in this committee. He noted that the function of the committee is not decision-making and not oversight so in effect it has historically functioned as an advisory committee, advising the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (VPRI). The Research Committee operates in an unusual space because the Research Committee often provides information that ideally Faculty Members bring back to their faculty and on the other hand it provides ideas about new initiatives and seeks advice. C. McGregor made the point that there's real value in having more agenda items coming from the committee. For example, she has two agenda items on the agenda this week and strongly recommend that other committee members put forth agenda items. The length of the presentation by the Executive Director, Research Services was noted. J. Freeman noted that her presentation is to provide information that committee members can read outside of the committee time and that she will highlight and speak to a few items from each presentation.

C. McGregor noted that she wants to understand the role and suggested that there may be a need for a forum for discussion on topics such as how do we work together to help grow faculty research, including growing research across faculties, career progression in general, etc. and noted that it's not clear if topics like this belongs in this committee or another committee should be created.

C. Davidson noted that some universities have an 'Associate Dean Research community' and she supports the idea of creating a committee like that. L. Jacobs indicated the value of this type of gathering and gave his support to it.

5. Report of the Executive Director, Office of Research Services (ORS)

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

- ORS Hiring – two new hires to support the Research Ethics Board – Melissa Sidhu, Research Ethics Officer, and Jessica Castillo, Research Ethics Coordinator, and limited term Rohat Jumani, Research Contracts Officer
- Research Support Fund (RSF) – Ontario Tech allocation of \$43,997. Application deadline was January 2023.
- Research Excellence Award – looking to launch in the spring with three categories:
 - Emerging Researchers
 - Mid-career Researchers
 - Established Researchers
- Research Excellence Chairs program – Two streams “Transform” and “Ignite”. Funding is up to \$15,000 per year for two years, non-renewable. Launch in the spring and decisions by July 2023.

T. Christou asked if there is anything tied to providing funding to post-docs. J. Freeman noted that historically there has not been but that can be open for discussion. There is a list of eligible and non-eligible expenses.

S. ShahbazPanahi asked about the Research Committee adjudicating the nominations. J. Freeman noted that Conflicts of Interest (COI) are declared and that last time the committee was a subset of the Research Committee whose members did not have any COIs.

- Factbook and Funding – C. McGregor asked which faculties received the two CIHR grants that were awarded. J. Freeman noted that they were in Health Sciences (S. Dogra and J. Arcand).

6. Women in Research Council

L. Jacobs introduced guest Karla Dhungana-Sainju, inaugural Chair of the Women in Research Council and noted that the official announcement is going out next week. She provided a presentation that included the mandate of the committee, their proposed activities, and the Advisory Committee Membership. The specific mandate of the Council is to develop and implement initiatives to invest in gender equity at Ontario Tech by helping to actively nurture and retain talented women who can help advance and lead the university in research, teaching, and beyond.

T. Christou said he would love to meet to discuss opportunities for Grad Students that can democratize grad students and decrease barriers to graduate students. K. Dhungana-Sainju said they are developing opportunities for grad students including through a variety of informative workshops.

L. Jacobs suggested that Karla should speak to other committees such as ALT. **ACTION:** V. Sharpe send info to K. Dhungana-Sainju.

7. Faculty-based Communications & Marketing for Research

C. McGregor noted that FBIT is looking at how to amplify research. She noted that FEAS does a great job with a research book they put out and that FBIT has a staff member responsible for social media. She asked how we can establish a social media campaign to raise awareness and the profile of university research including research impact and knowledge translation. She noted that there are no available resources in FBIT. J. Freeman noted that the research department is in the same boat; great ideas of what we want to do but lacking resources to do it.

L. Jacobs noted that he is working on an initiative that he is planning to have originate in his department and then scale it up. He noted that funding is in place and a staff member has been identified to lead it. The plan is to have a team of students leading the content. C. McGregor noted the need to have a strategic plan. C. Davidson noted that at York they had a slate of events where lecturers, panelists and lightning talks took place in the library and were amplified on media. L. Jacobs noted that acting on this wouldn't be the purview of this committee and that the university has full-time continuing staff in Communications and Marketing who develop and release media content.

8. Contract Review Timelines

C. McGregor noted that good work is happening in VPRI and ORS to process contracts however some contracts are still taking months to go through approvals. She praised Candi, Danielle, and Gary and suggested that perhaps there can be a way to expedite crown contracts and evaluate our appetite/assessment for risk noting that problems arise when it takes months to get contracts approved such as students leaving.

J. Freeman noted the additional staffing brought on, weekly review meetings they're having, that staff are connecting with colleagues at other institutions. She stated an increase in volume and increase in complexity (for example: companies want the university to own the IP, Faculty don't want the university to own the IP).

N. Wattie noted that Faculty are lacking information about insurance and asked if ORS can do anything to disseminate information and provide learning opportunities to Faculty that may expedite the process or remove some of the barriers? J. Freeman noted that ORS is hosting a second workshop on IP policy soon and that it will be recorded and available on the website. She has been starting to go to Faculty Councils to ask what types of training they would like. She noted that a big piece that ORS is seeing is that companies wish to work with us and they aren't carrying insurance and they need to have insurance. L. Jacobs noted that virtually all research-intensive universities in Canada are carrying the same insurance from the same provider. J. Freeman noted that as a university we do a very disproportional amount of industry partnerships in our research grants in that ours is the highest in the country for intensity. Mitacs has become an incredible volume and this relates to increased demands.

L. Jacobs noted that he will be hiring staffing regarding safeguarding research.

9. Faculty Exchange

Health Science – concerns about Google storage limits as they relate to research. L. Jacobs noted that students are the largest users. IT will be securing appropriate storage for Faculty research.

Education – echoed concerns about Google storage.

Science – launched a new internally-funded award (\$30,000 over 2 years) in Science to bolster research and bring together researchers that have not collaborated before. Must involve 2 researchers and must hire a Masters' student.

FEAS – welcomed Ted & reiterated problems with securing graduate students because of funding.

FBIT – add support to S. ShahbazPanahi's comment about lack of graduate student funding. Interested in looking at ways to fund students.

SGPS – Grad students are organizing and hosting protests as they are upset about the absence of a living wage. March 23 is Teaching & Learning Awards and the 3MT competition.

FSSH – no update as A. Leach is away.

Finance – no update.

Library – no update.

10. Other Business

None.

11. Next meeting – March 21, 2023

12. Adjournment – 2:02 p.m.