



Research Committee Minutes

Date: September 10, 2024

Time: 11 a.m. to noon

Place: Microsoft Teams

Attendees:

Les Jacobs

Susanne Brown

Elisa Beverley

Catherine Davidson

Jennifer Freeman

Amanda Goddard

Amy Leach

Peter Lewis

Robyn Ruttenberg-

Rozen

Nick Wattie

Guests:

Regrets:

Theodore Christou

Sean Forrester

Shahram

ShahbazPanahi

1. **Welcome**

2. **Approval of the Agenda**

Move: A. Leach

The agenda was approved as presented.

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

Move: A. Leach

Second: N. Wattie

Amendment made to May 9th Meeting Minutes: P. Lewis reports that the AI Task Force will submit its findings to the Provost, covering research, teaching and learning, as well as institutional applications.

Motion passed with an amendment stated above.

4. **Selection of Research Committee Vice-Chair**

L. Jacobs stated that a Vice-Chair be elected. The duty of the Vice-Chair is to chair the roundtable discussion and/or Chair the meeting in L. Jacobs' absence. R. Ruttenberg-Rozen stepped forward. The decision was unanimously approved

5. **Report of the Vice-President Research & Innovation.**

L. Jacobs announced the Research Excellence Chairs Program Award and Research Excellence Award Recipients. Celebration event will be held October 29, 2024.

A. Leach asked if the Chairs Program was high in applications in certain Streams? Suggested that taking the information back to the Faculty will allow for more publicity for next years applications.

L. Jacobs stated that Stream 1 and 2 were high in applications, Stream 3 received 2 applications. Notes to encourage colleagues to nominate for next year.

6. **Developing the new Ontario Tech Research Strategic Plan 2025-2030**

Strategic Research Plan (SRP) Renewal for 2025: The university is facing the renewal of its SRP for 2025. The current SRP, which was established in 2019, focuses on identifying research strengths in a way that is inclusive, allowing most faculty to align with them. The goal is to add new priorities that complement existing strengths.

Committee Involvement: L. Jacobs is seeking feedback from the committee on how they want to be involved in developing the new plan. Options include forming a working group or having the office do groundwork. Another option is for VPRI Office to review research strengths and presenting findings to the committee in November.

Timeline: The plan must be presented to the Board of Governors by June, with earlier milestones including presenting to Academic Council in March for feedback and rolling out Faculty Council engagements in January and February.

Faculty Engagement: Faculty representatives are expected to report back to their councils on the progress of the SRP development before formal consultations occur.

Inclusivity in the Plan: The SRP should be inclusive, reflecting the needs and strengths of a small research-intensive university. While not every research area

may receive heavy investment, all faculty should benefit from the university's growing research reputation.

AI Research Proposals: There are proposals related to AI research—one for responsible AI and another for mindful AI. The speaker suggests consolidating these under an AI Institute rather than separate centers, which will likely be discussed in the next meeting

P. Lewis agrees on the importance of engaging in discussions about faculty research development and future priorities.

7. Research Centre Application Discussion

AI Proposal Overview and Consolidation: In June, three AI-related proposals (Responsible AI, Mindful AI, and Machine Intelligence) were discussed, with significant overlap identified. As a result, the decision was made to merge the proposals and focus on establishing a unified AI institute, rather than separate centers, to integrate and streamline AI research efforts across the university.

AI Institute Proposal: A pan-university AI Institute proposal will be presented at the next meeting, incorporating input from multiple faculties and disciplines. P. Lewis is leading the AI Institute. P. Lewis stated the partnership he has created with the other faculties to merge and highlight the work and strength in AI research.

Collaboration Efforts: Over the summer, meetings were held to align the work of different groups involved in AI research. The proposal now has contributions from all faculties, reflecting wide engagement across the institution.

Strengths in AI Research: The diversity of perspectives and disciplines involved in AI research is considered a unique strength of the university.

Alignment with Strategic Research Plan: It was emphasized that the AI institute should be established prior to the development of the strategic research plan to ensure coherence and avoid overlapping timelines.

Next Steps: The formal proposal for the AI institute will be presented at the next meeting for consideration.

A question was raised regarding the anticipated launch date of the AI Institute. L. Jacobs stated the proposal will need to go through Academic Council and the Board. If approved at the next committee meeting and added to the Academic Council agenda in late October, it would proceed to the Board's Strategy and Planning Committee, with a likely presentation to the full Board in December. A potential launch date of early January is expected, pending successful approvals.

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

Full partnerships team now in place, including Julia Armstrong (interim Research Partnerships Manager), Victoria Nash-Woolley (Full-time Continuing Partnerships Officer for Engineering and Applied Science), and Daniel Huizenga (Limited-term supporting Social Sciences and Education).

Additional Partnerships Officer and Manager added to the team to increase bandwidth, aiming for greater efficiency and faster processes.

Research Ethics updates: Jessica Rob is now Research Ethics Officer, and the process for hiring a Research Ethics Coordinator is ongoing. There has been no disruption of services during this transition.

Vacancies: Hiring underway for an Intellectual Property Officer and a Research Business Analyst.

Major upcoming deadlines, including CIHR project grants, with support teams assisting faculty applicants.

The large NSERC-supported Lab Market application has been submitted for \$41.6 million, focusing on inclusive entrepreneurship training for faculty and students.

Three pillars of the inclusive entrepreneurship proposal: Inspire (career readiness), Elevate (entrepreneurship training), and Empower (ecosystem support/funding).

Proposal involves 21 academic institutions from nine provinces and partners supporting indigenous and EDI-focused entrepreneurship training.

Safeguarding research initiatives: A new research security website, government-supported training on cybersecurity, and a loaner laptop program for faculty traveling to high-risk areas.

Upcoming workshops on research security, particularly relevant for dual-use civilian and military applications.

Undergraduate research wages aligned with minimum wage increases to ensure financial fairness.

Canadian Council of Animal Care (CCAC) visit was successful with regular recommendations for improvement. APHAC biosafety inspection is upcoming.

Continued focus on improving research support infrastructure and maintaining compliance with national standards.

9. Faculty Roundtable

Deferred due to time restrictions.

10. **Other Business**

Discussion: No discussion/questions raised

11. Upcoming meetings

Monday, October 7, 10 to 11 a.m.
Thursday, November 14, noon to 1 p.m.
Wednesday, January 22, 2025, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, February 19, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, March 19, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, April 16, 1 to 2 p.m.
Wednesday, May 21, 11 a.m. to noon
Wednesday, June 18, 1 to 2:30 p.m.
Wednesday, July 23, 1 to 2:30 p.m.

12. Adjournment - Unanimous adjournment at 11:59 a.m.