**University Delegates WebEx Meeting**  
**December 4, 2014 – 12:30-1:30pm EST**  
**CIHR Room 10-219, Ottawa, Ontario**

**Participants**

Chair: Jennifer O'Donoughue, Executive Director, Reforms Implementation

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<th>Members</th>
<th>Institution staff</th>
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<td>Deborah Anderson, University of Saskatchewan</td>
<td>Ghyslain Boisvert, Ecole Polytechnique Montréal</td>
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<td>Nicole Baillet (for Ranjana Bird), University of Northern British Columbia</td>
<td>Lara Boyd, University of British Columbia</td>
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<td>Christian Baron, Université de Montréal</td>
<td>Jean-Philippe Gouin, Concordia University</td>
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<td>Shari Baum, McGill University</td>
<td>Alana Kolendreski, University of Saskatchewan</td>
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<td>Lionel Berthoux, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières</td>
<td>Denise Figlewicz, University of Western Ontario</td>
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<td>Robert Bertolo, Memorial University of Newfoundland</td>
<td>Mark Filiaaggi, Dalhousie University</td>
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<td>Janet Bryanton, University of Prince Edward Island</td>
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<td>Lori Burrows, McMaster University</td>
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<td>Michael Buschmann, Ecole Polytechnique Montréal</td>
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<td>Peter Cattini, University of Manitoba</td>
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<td>Penny D’Agnone (for Lesley Brown), University of Lethbridge</td>
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<td>Réjean Dubuc, Université du Québec à Montréal</td>
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<td>Janice Eng, University of British Columbia</td>
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<td>Bareket Falk, Brock University</td>
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<td>Denise Figlewicz, University of Western Ontario</td>
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<td>Robert Weaver (for Michael Owen), University of Ontario Institute of Technology</td>
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<td>Elaine Wiersma, Lakehead University</td>
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<td>Richard Wozniak, University of Alberta</td>
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<td>Gerald Zamponi, University of Calgary</td>
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**Regrets:**

| Ranjana Bird, University of Northern British Columbia | Norbert Haunerland, Simon Fraser University |
| Lesley Brown, University of Lethbridge | Shanthi Johnson, University of Regina |
| Dean Care, Brandon University | Dale Keefe, Cape Breton University |
| Estelle Chamoux, Bishop’s University | Brenda Smith-Chant, Trent University |
| Faith Donald, Ryerson University | Peter Twohig, Saint Mary’s University |
| Karen Grant, Mount Allison University | Otis Vacratsis, University of Windsor |
| Michael Hayes, University of Victoria | Nancy Young, Laurentian University |
Welcome Message

The Chair called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. EDT and welcomed the University Delegates (UDs) to the WebEx meeting.

1. Farewell to Janice Eng

Jennifer O'Donoughue, Executive Director of Reforms Implementation, informed members that Janice Eng's term as a UD is ending this month. CIHR would like to thank and acknowledge Janice for all of her work over the last 6 years as a UD member and as a member of the UD Executive Committee. Janice has been very active throughout the reforms process and has been a strong voice for the entire research community at UBC.

CIHR also welcomed Lara Boyd to the network as the new University Delegate for the University of British Columbia beginning January 1st, 2015.

2. Modernization of Institutes

Jane Aubin, CIHR Vice-President of Research, Knowledge Translation and Ethics, provided an update on the Modernization of Institutes. Earlier in the year, members were provided with a summary of the directions from Governing Council. This was in response to the recommendations of the working groups and consultations for the Institutes Model Review.

Working groups have been put in place to operationalize the directions from Governing Council. The working groups are comprised of CIHR’s Scientific Directors, Directors, as well as Institute staff. They have begun to meet and are providing advanced thinking on how to proceed with some of the directions. The Institute Advisory Board chairs have also been meeting with CIHR by teleconference and will be participating in a face-to-face meeting in January.

Jane acknowledged that CIHR is aware of the news coverage by the CBC in regards to how the Aboriginal health research community is reacting to the directions of the institutes as well as their concerns on how the reforms and peer review processes may affect them. CIHR is responding to all the letters that were received, including those from the Aboriginal health community. CIHR asks for the support from University Delegates to ensure that the correct information is being transferred to stakeholders since some misinformation may be circulating.
CIHR will provide UDs with key messages from the letters of response once they have been finalized and disseminated.

Main discussion points:
- One member asked when the decisions on institute advisory boards will be made. The working group first needs to continue to discuss before the changes will happen. Institute advisory meetings will go forward as usual until a new plan has been established.
- The intent is that whenever possible, funds should be leveraged, not matched. We are actively working with the CIHR Vice-President of how we can have a better strategy towards partnering and leveraging.
- One member commented on the common fund. It was confirmed that the institute budget is not being cut in half. It remains the same as it is today, which is 8.6 million dollars per institute. The changes will see $4.3 million dollars allocated to institute-specific initiatives and the other $4.3 million dollars allocated to a common pot to enhance and continue the cross-institute initiatives which include signature initiatives.
- One member asked if the external report will be released. CIHR is currently obtaining approval and advice on releasing the report.

3. Canada First Research Excellence Fund

Members were informed of the launch of the Canada First Research Excellence Fund (CFREF). The CFREF is intended to:
- address some perceived gaps in the Canadian higher education research system
- try to take Canadian institutions to the state of being recognized as world-leaders
- try to give flexibility and incentive to win the global race for research, innovation and talent

Members were given the link to the CFREF website (http://www.cfref-apogee.gc.ca/home-accueil-eng.aspx). This site provides background information as well as information on the two new competitions.

The CFREF is intended to leverage key strengths and world-leading capabilities. Funding will be competitively allocated based on peer review and will be awarded to institutions and not to individual researchers. SSHRC will administer the funds on behalf of the Tri-Council. All post-secondary degree-granting institutions, colleges, and universities will be eligible.

All institutions will compete in a single undifferentiated pool. There is no prescribed award size. There will be a single set of criteria and proposals must align with the updated science, technology and innovation priority research areas.

At this time there are two competitions posted:
- Inaugural competition 1
  - Notice of intent deadline: February 2, 2015
  - Application deadline: March 2, 2015
  - Funding to be awarded: Up to $350 million
  - Results announced: July 2015
- Inaugural competition 2
  - Notice of intent deadline: August 31, 2015
  - Application deadline: October 30, 2015
- Funding to be awarded: Up to $950 million
- Results announced: Spring 2016

The next competition will occur in 2021.

The announcement is also posted on the Prime Minister’s website: 

The announcement by the Prime Minister released not only the details the Canada First Research Excellence Fund but also released the Government of Canada’s new science, technology, and innovation strategy in which 5 priorities have been identified:
- environment and agriculture
- health and life sciences
- natural resources and energy
- information and communications technology
- advanced manufacturing

Main discussion points:
- *Members wanted to know why the timelines were tight.* The timelines for the competition was a cabinet decision.
- *Members asked if the 7-year award is renewable.* The network was informed that the concept of renewable is not being used. Programs of this type will most likely be in a different phase 7 years from now. People would be eligible to re-apply in the same area to expand or shift or maintain their program, but they will be competing with new proposals coming in.
- It was confirmed that joint institution applications are welcome.

4. Foundation Scheme Update

Dominique Lalonde presented an update on the 2014 Foundation Scheme live pilot competition.

The decisions went out on December 1st to applicants and institutions. Of the 1366 applicants that have been reviewed in Stage 1, 467 applicants were invited to submit a Stage 2 application. Each applicant received a consolidated ranking and a standard deviation of their review. Applications were selected if either:
- At least two reviewers ranked the application above the 78th percentile of their ranked list
- The application had a minimum consolidated ranking above the 65th percentile for the whole competition

Members were presented with a breakdown of pillar distribution and applicant category. Of the 467 applicants invited to submit a stage 2 application:
- 312 currently hold CIHR funds
- 68 never held CIHR funds
- 87 are new investigators

The pillar breakdown is as follows:
- Biomedical: 55.2%
- Clinical: 21.6%
- Health Systems and Services: 9.9%
- Social, Cultural, Environmental & Population Health: 13.1%

CIHR will be conducting further analysis, including gender and region distribution. For stage 1 review, reviewers were assigned an average of 15 applications with a range between 8 and 20. An average of 4.97 reviewers were assigned to each application. Prior to the deadline to submit preliminary reviews, 4 applications had less than 5 reviewers. An additional 21 applications had less than 5 reviews after final deadline to submit. CIHR reviewed individual results of applications with less than 5 reviewers to ensure that they were not disadvantaged in the decision process.

Members received a draft set of questions and answers on the Foundation Scheme Stage 1 decisions and asked if there are any questions to add to the document or if they require any clarification.

Main discussion points:
- How does the alignment between the percent of applications submitted by pillar and percent of successful applications moving forward reflect overall merit of the applications? There is no relationship between these two factors. This is a common question but we are showing the distribution for information only.

- Is the expectation that ALL who made it through to Stage 2 will apply or do you anticipate that those with lower rankings will switch to the transitional OOGP? We are anticipating that some will decide to go to the Transitional OOGP competition. CIHR is expecting a high application pressure in the TOOGP.

- One UD commented on their experience as a reviewer. It was noted that only one Aboriginal research application was received amongst their 13 applications assigned to review. It was also noted that there was no online asynchronous discussion that occurred amongst their 13 applications. Reviewers are encouraged to respond to the survey as this is the kind of information CIHR would like to obtain. Moderators and chairs are also being surveyed. CIHR will be using the survey results to modify processes for the second pilot.

- One member wanted to know when the data from the reviewer surveys will be released. Members were informed that the applicant survey information has been shared with Science Council. Jane Aubin will be presenting this information at her Town Hall meetings as part of her cross-Canada tour. There was a 75% response rate from applicants. The reviewer survey closes towards the end of December and this feedback will be shared once it has been evaluated.

- Members requested to have a breakdown of data by discipline, university, and by institute, especially surrounding aboriginal research.

- Were different criteria applied for new investigators vs holders of CIHR funds? It was confirmed that the review criteria is the same for all applicants. Reviewers were asked to review the application taking into account the applicant’s career stage. There was no differentiation with new investigators with the review criteria.
- Can you outline the 2 reviewer 78th percentile rationale? One of the goals of the reforms is reducing applicant and reviewer burden. We started with a target range of 450 applications to fund 150-200 grants. Then we looked at many methods to decide which applications to bring forward. The 78th and 65th percentile was used because it brought forward the target number of applications.

- How many applications had fewer than 5 reviewers eligible to participate in the online discussions? As soon as reviews were submitted, reviewers were able to participate. The majority of reviewers participated with over 800 applications discussed. Chairs and moderators felt that there was a great desire to discuss applications.

- Are unsuccessful candidates for Stage 1 eligible for Round #2 of Foundation Pilot? Yes, they are eligible to apply to round 2 but they are encouraged to review the feedback they received from this pilot.

- Are unsuccessful candidates for Stage 2 eligible for Round #2 of Foundation Pilot? Yes

- Is the relative distribution of successful Stage 1 grants among the 4 pillars different than for the OOG competition? It appears to be roughly the same but this information will be added to the question and answer document.

- It would be helpful for future rounds to have more details on when a new investigator would be at an appropriate stage to apply so that we can best support their applications. That is something we will look at as we prepare for the second pilot.

- Mixing young and experienced researchers impacts how applications are reviewed. Those who reviewed seem to report very different experiences. We will see what comes out of the survey. We heard that it depends on the caliber of the applicants and what they were able to talk about in their application in terms of leadership. Our reviewers were good at differentiating career stage. If the applicant did not have much to say in terms of leadership or productivity based on how new they were, it was more difficult for reviewers.

- Can you share number of applications from teams vs. single PIs and success rates? This information will be added in the question and answer page.

- Would team application potentially increase success for new investigator? People who apply as multiple Program Leaders are working jointly and will be evaluated jointly. The idea is not for a new investigator to team up with an experienced investigator to increase their chances of success.

- I thought originally stage 2 reviewers would have access to stage 1 materials. Has there been a change (or maybe I just missed that)? This was discussed at a previous call. For this particular pilot, Stage 2 reviewers will not have access to Stage 1 reviews. CIHR will assess this after this pilot and will decide if the process needs to change.

- Since CIHR anticipates the largest OOGP its history for 2015, with an accompanying low success rate, is there an opportunity to plan to provide soft landing in the OOGP via the institutes? This will assist us advising Stage 2 applicants. In terms of whether institute money or other strategic funds from CIHR could be transferred to support some
transition with the Open Operating Grant competition, members are reminded that GC has already decided that an additional 10 million dollars each year over 5 years is being shifted from the strategic budget to the Open Grants Competition.

- If unsuccessful candidates submit an application for a Transitional OOG (and it is funded), will they still be eligible to apply for the second round of foundation? Yes.

Members were asked to forward any additional questions to add to the Q&A file to the UD mailbox. Members were also asked to help correct general misinformation at institutions.

The next call will be on February 5, 2015. The meeting was adjourned at 1:30pm EST.