University Delegates WebEx Meeting
March 13, 2014 – 12:30-1:30pm EDT
CIHR Room 10-219, Ottawa, Ontario

Participants

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

Members: Nicole Baillet (for Ranjana Bird), University of Northern British Columbia
Christian Baron, Université de Montréal
Shari Baum, McGill University
Lionel Berthoux, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières
Janet Bryanton, University of Prince Edward Island
Lori Burrows, McMaster University
Michael Buschmann, Polytechnique Montréal
Dean Care, Brandon University
Peter Cattini, University of Manitoba
Penny D’Agnone (for Olga Kovalchuk), University of Lethbridge
Keith De’Bell, St. Francis Xavier University
Faith Donald, Ryerson University
Réjean Dubuc, Université du Québec à Montréal
Janice Eng, University of British Columbia
Bareket Falk, Brock University
Denise Figlewicz, University of Western Ontario
John Fisher, Queen’s University
Lucie Germain, Université Laval
Norbert Haunerland, Simon Fraser University
Michael Hayes, University of Victoria
Marilyn Hodgins, University of New Brunswick
Shanthi Johnson, University of Regina
Gerry Johnston, Dalhousie University
Vicki Kristman (for Elaine Wiersma), Lakehead University
Richard Leduc, Université de Sherbrooke
Julian Little, University of Ottawa
Rod McCormick, Thompson Rivers University
Cindi Morshead, University of Toronto
Stephen Perry, Wilfrid Laurier University
Roger Pierson, University of Saskatchewan
David Rose, University of Waterloo
Chris Shield, Acadia University
Brenda Smith-Chant, Trent University
Otis Vacratsis, University of Windsor
Jessica Vaisica (for Lauren Sergio), York University
Robert Weaver (for Michael Owen), University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Richard Wozniak, University of Alberta
Gerald Zamponi, University of Calgary
Troy Harkness, University of Saskatchewan
Oksana Moshynska, University of Saskatchewan

Institution staff:
Robin Ashcroft, Queen’s University
Leslie Copp, University of Waterloo
Mark Filiaggi, Dalhousie University

Regrets:
Ranjana Bird, University of Northern British Columbia
Estelle Chamoux, Bishop’s University
Karen Grant, Mount Allison
Shawn Hayley, Carleton University
Dale Keefe, Cape Breton University

Jennifer McGrath, Concordia University
Michael Owen, University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Proton Rahman, Memorial University of Newfoundland
Lauren Sergio, York 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. A roundtable of CIHR staff attending the meeting followed.

1. Dalhousie University Update

Gerry Johnston informed members that this is his last UD meeting as his term is expiring at the end of the month. He introduced the new Dalhousie University delegate, Mark Filiaggi. Gerry took the opportunity to thank the delegates and CIHR and in turn Gerry was thanked for his many contributions as the delegate for Dalhousie.

2. Open Operating Grant Program (OOGP) Update

Greg Huyer, Acting Director of Open Programs, provided an update on the Spring OOGP competition. There were approx. 2,860 applications received, which is an increase of approximately 13% from the last competition that saw 2527 applications. It was noted that the application increase was not due to a flood of early renewals as there were no more than 44 early renewal applications. The increase is broad-based and does not appear to be localized to any pillar, demographic or research area. CIHR is operationally prepared to manage the applications and peer review recruitment is going well. The funds available for the competition and the target of funding 400 grants remain unchanged (as always, there will be some additional grants awarded through priority announcements and bridge funding).

3. Reforms Update

Jennifer O'Donoughue, Executive Director, Reforms Implementation, thanked members for taking the time to participate in the UD Roundtable calls over the past month. The feedback from the calls is being incorporated in the decks. Members were informed that that peer reviewer guidelines are expected to be published within the next month.

Members asked if any decision has been made around allowing New Investigators to apply to both the Transitional OOGP and Phase 2 of the 2014 Foundation Pilot. It was discussed and determined that, like other applicants, new/early career investigators who are successful in Phase 1 of the 2014 Foundation Scheme pilot competition will be required to make a choice between the Transitional OOGP and the Foundation Pilot.
4. Federal Budget 2014

Marc Gervais, Manager, Policy and Government Relations, provided an overview of the 2014 Federal Budget. This was tabled in the House of Commons on February 11, 2014. Highlights included:

- The plan is to balance the budget by 2015-16. The deficit is projected to decline to $2.9 billion by 2014-15. However the contingency fund in place by the Government of $3 billion leads to a surplus of $100M. The surplus is expected to be roughly $6.5 billion in 2015-16.

- Measures to support research and innovation for CIHR include an increase of $15M/year to expand SPOR, the creation of the Canadian Consortium on Neurodegeneration and Aging, and other health research priorities.

- NSERC received an increase of $15M/year and SSHRC $7M/year with an additional $10M over two years for social innovation and research projects at colleges and universities.

- With regards to the Indirect Costs Program, there is an injection of $9M/year to help universities and college with hidden costs of research.

- There is also $1.5B over the next ten years to establish the Canada First Research Excellence Fund. This fund will help post-secondary institutions compete with the best in the world for talent and breakthrough discoveries creating long-term economic advantages for Canada. Few details are known at this time however CIHR is aware that the fund will be administered by SSHRC in collaboration with NSERC and CIHR, and will be available to institutions through a competitive peer-reviewed process.

Questions and discussions were raised in regards to the budget:

- The Canada First Research Excellence Fund was discussed. Members were informed that CIHR will be part of the design and administration of the program. The money flow will begin in 2015-16, so this gives a year to design and roll out the program. The breakdown is $50M in 2015-16, $100M in 2016-17, $150M 2017-18, then reaching to sustained level of $200M in 2018-19 and onwards. This fund originated from the university environment and was not created by the councils. UDs were encouraged to discuss this topic with VPRs if they require more information.

- One member felt that budget is not very favourable for CIHR and for research in general. There was a sense increases would be minimal, however overall research did reasonably well. It was noted that CIHR has received a $15M increase for the last three years.

- One member asked if UDs should make the case for non-restrictive funds for CIHR as it continues to pursue the Reforms of the Open Suite of Programs. UDs have a lot influence as long as it is done in a positive way.

- Members wanted to know if the $9M in indirect cost was the same as last year or if it was an increase. CIHR agreed to look into this and report back to the UDs.

  - Budget 2014 proposed additional funding of $9 million per year, starting in 2014–15 and on an ongoing basis, for the Indirect Costs Program.
  - Budget 2013 did not provide any additional funding for the Indirect Costs program. However, it indicated that in 2013-14 the Government would examine the Indirect Costs Program in consultation with the post-secondary sector to ensure that the program is meeting its objective of reinforcing excellence in post-secondary research.
The Indirect Costs Program was established on a permanent basis in 2003. Investments in the program have risen gradually, from $225 million in 2003-04 to $332.4 million in 2011-12.

5. Institutes Model Review Update

Kathryn Andrews-Clay, Director, Institute Affairs, provided an update on the Institutes Model Review. The objective is to review the model, role and slate of the 13 institutes. This is in response to the recommendations of the International Review Panel and the CIHR Act, which indicates that CIHR is expected to review its framework and institute governing policies every 5 years.

To help inform the deliberations, GC has asked for 2 working groups to be established. These groups will provide GC with a list of recommendations around the model, role and slate of institutes. The first group is an internal working group, which is made up of the 13 Scientific Directors. They will be working with their IAB’s to provide recommendations. The second group is an external working group, which consists of 10 highly respected health experts who have a good knowledge of CHR as well as a broad understanding of health research. Their mandate is to review the structure.

The working groups have been regularly meeting over the past months. Both groups will be meeting in May and will collectively develop recommendations which will be presented to GC in June 2014.

GC is expected to make their decision in August and announcements will follow in the fall of 2014. Updated information can be found on the CIHR website and feedback can be provided by contacting CIHR at: institutesmodelreview@cihr-irsc.gc.ca.

CIHR was asked if the reviewers were chosen from the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. Members were not chosen from this source. They are individuals whom EMC felt would be the right people to complete this task. Information about the external working group including their terms of reference and membership bios can also be found on the CIHR website.

The Delegates also asked if there will be an opportunity for UDs or the UDEC to make a contribution to the review. Delegates were informed that their feedback can be sent using the email address listed above and comments will be reviewed by the external working group.

6. SPOR Update

Nancy Mason MacLellan, Manager, Major Initiatives provided an update on SPOR SUPPORT Units:

SUPPORT Units

Business plans for SUPPORT Units in Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and the Maritimes have been approved and grant agreements have been negotiated and are in the signing process this week. Implementation plans for these four SUPPORT Units are now being developed. The Federal Minister of Health and her provincial counterparts have made announcements for Alberta in November 2013 and Manitoba in February 2014. The announcements for Ontario and the Maritimes are currently being planned.
Business plans have been submitted for Newfoundland and Quebec, which are currently in the review process. Decisions and next steps will be sent shortly. The draft business plan for Saskatchewan was submitted and has received feedback from the SPOR Working Group. It is anticipated that final a business plan will be received in the coming months. British Columbia continues to develop its business plan in consultation with their community. The third draft is expected to be submitted in the next month. A final plan is expected to be submitted in the Spring. Dialogue continues with the Territories on appropriate measures to engage in SPOR.

Delegates highlighted that the community is looking for specific information on the SUPPORT units in their respective provinces and asked if more information is being shared with VPR and AVPR offices. The group was informed that most provinces have started to put information on their websites. A link to these sites can be accessed through CIHR’s SPOR website.

**SPOR Networks**

The application process for the Youth and Adolescent Mental Network has included an expression of interest phase, a strengthening workshop, a letter of intent phase, and the full application stage. Applicants will receive the results of the competition in May and a public announcement will be made in June. This will happen in partnership with the Graham-Boeckh Foundation, which is the single funding partner for this initiative.

The second SPOR network focuses on Primary and Integrated Health Care Innovations. A funding opportunity was launched for development grants. Applications have been received and a decision will be released shortly. A strengthening workshop will be held in early May with the leads of the network.

With regards to funding for additional SPOR networks, a funding opportunity is being developed with guidance from the SPOR Working Group. This opportunity will focus on chronic diseases and will use an applicant-partner model. It is anticipated that funding will be available for more than one network with successful networks receiving up to $25M over 5 years. SPOR will be contributing half of this amount and partners will contribute the other half. The funding opportunity is anticipated to be launched in summer 2014.

**Patient Engagement**

Delegates were also informed that a framework for patient engagement is currently in development and has been sent out for targeted consultations. Groups who have received it include NAPHRHO, SUPPORT Unit leads, Scientific Directors, Institutes, Assistant Directors, and patient engagement workshop participants. Feedback is expected in the coming weeks after which the framework will be presented to Science Council for endorsement and then be released to SPOR partners.

**7. Agenda Items at the June Meeting**

Delegates were asked to provide input into possible items for the June face-to-face meeting.

Delegates highlight the following topics:
- Budget
- Peer review process for the Foundation Scheme and associated impacts
- Update on the Project Scheme
- College of Reviewers (Recruitment for College and International reviewers)
- Building a case for the value of investigator-initiated research
- Transition plans for open programs sun-setting (i.e. New Investigator, POP, PHSI, etc.)

A draft agenda will be reviewed by the UDEC.

Based on the results of the poll, the most optimal date for the face-to-face meeting is June 6, 2014. This will be confirmed once all the responses have been received. Members were reminded to submit their responses if they have not already done so.

8. Veria

- The Delegates were informed that an Update to Funding Agencies’ Joint Conflict of Interest and Confidentiality Policy has been published. Members are encouraged to read and distribute this through their communication channels.

- Participants were asked to vote on if they prefer to continue holding the monthly meetings via WebEx or if they prefer teleconferences. The majority of members chose WebEx.

Adjournment

The Chair thanked everyone for their participation, and adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m. EDT.