Chair: Adrian Mota, Associate Vice President, Research Programs

1. **Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund**
   Louise-Michelle Verrier (SSHRC)
- The Canada Research Continuity Emergency Fund (CRCEF) was [announced on May 15, 2020 (en français)](#), as part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan.
- CRCEF is a temporary program that has been established to help sustain the research enterprise at Canadian universities and health research institutions that have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- CRCEF is a Tri-Agency program that is administered by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) on behalf of the three federal research funding agencies: the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and SSHRC.
- The program has the following objectives:
    o As a priority, to provide wage support to universities and health research institutions, both of which are ineligible to the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy (CEWS), to help them retain research-related personnel during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic (up to $325 million); and;
    o To support extraordinary incremental costs associated with maintaining essential research-related commitments during the COVID-19 pandemic, and then ramping-up to full research activities ($125 million).
- Eligible institutions include:
    o Non-affiliated health research institutions that are already eligible for agency funding.
    o Universities eligible to the Research Support Fund (RSF). Health research institutions will receive funding through the universities with which they are affiliated.
- The program is implemented in three funding stages.
- The deadline of the first two stages of the program has already passed. The first two stages provided wage support for eligible research personnel. $225 million was awarded to recipients during stage 1, and stage 2 has a budget envelop of $100 million.
- The third stage will support incurred costs associated with maintenance and ramp-up of research activities and is needs-based. The details of the third stage have not yet been finalized, however, they will be made available to institutions in early September. This stage will reimburse up to 75% of the costs incurred due to the pandemic.
- The third stage will have an open deadline. Institutions that are ready to submit can do so as of mid-September 2020. The final deadline for Stage 3 applications will be on November 15, 2020.
- Following the launch of stage 3, an update will be provided at a future UD Network meeting.
- In the meantime, questions can be directed to crcef-fucrc@chairs-chaires.gc.ca.

Questions from members:

- Will stage 3 applications be first come first served?
    o It was confirmed that there will be a notional allocation for the third stage. Each eligible institution will receive an amount. This amount represents the maximum amount of funding they can obtain. There could be a final reallocation, if there is funding left from stage 1 and stage 2
- Are core facility costs eligible in stage 3?
    o It was explained that the program was developed to reimburse direct costs of research. This represents costs incurred through specific research projects. While the institutional costs are not eligible, if those costs are charged to researchers and are included as incremental expenses to their project, they could ask for that expense to be reimbursed.
- What is the institutional allocation amount based upon for stage 3?

- It was explained that the stage 3 notional allocation is based on the Canadian Association of University Business Officers total research income data included in their dataset. The allocation is calculated based on the annual average over three years for the total research income from all sources (including governmental sources).

2. CIHR Updates

Spring 2020 Project Grant Competition

- The remote peer review meetings began August 4 and will continue until August 21.
- The preliminary feedback that CIHR has received to date has been positive.
- At the end of the remote peer review meetings, CIHR will send a short survey to reviewers, Chairs, and Scientific Officers to obtain their feedback on the remote peer review meetings.
- Starting with the Spring 2020 Project Grant competition, CIHR is reintroducing the Notice of Recommendation (NOR), which was last used in 2015 in the Open Operating Grant Program. Bringing back the NOR was something that was requested by the community and research administrators.
- The NOR provides applicants extra time before they receive their Notice of Decision to consider their scores, ranks, and reviews when deciding whether to resubmit their application for a subsequent competition. CIHR will provide a more detailed overview of the NOR in the coming weeks.
- As announced on July 31, CIHR will compensate peer reviewers for dependent care and internet and phone costs associated with participation in virtual peer review meetings.
    - Peer reviewers will be permitted to:
        - Claim up to $50 per household, per day, with a declaration for dependent care
        - Claim up to $100 per dependent, per day, with receipt and declaration for dependent care
        - Claim incidental per diems for days of peer review meetings for phone and internet costs, with justification

Fall 2020 Project Grant Competition

Changes to the competition
- The Fall 2020 Project Grant competition funding opportunity will be launched soon.
- CIHR has heard from the community that stability is critical during these unprecedented times. The UD Network was assured that CIHR has kept the key components of the program the same; however, some changes will be implemented to reflect the context of COVID-19 and are designed to make the Project Grant competition work better for all applicants and reviewers.
- CIHR has shifted the timelines for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Project Grant competitions. This decision was made to ensure that a gap continues to exist between when applicants receive their results from the Spring 2020 Project Grant competition and the registration and application deadlines for the Fall 2020 competition, and between the results of the Fall 2020 competition and the application deadline for the Spring 2021 competition. This gap will allow researchers to take stock of reviewers' comments if they choose to resubmit unsuccessful applications to the following competition.

Fall 2020 Project Grant Competition timelines	Anticipated timelines for the Spring 2021 Project Grant
- Registration deadline: September 16, 2020 - Application deadline: October 14, 2020 - Notice of Recommendation: February 16, 2021 - Anticipated Notice of Decision Date: March 3, 2021 - Funding Start Date: April 1, 2021	- Registration deadline: February 17, 2021 - Application deadline: March 17, 2021 - Anticipated Notice of Decision Date: July 7, 2021 - Funding Start Date: October 1, 2021

- CIHR recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted many people's work and personal lives. To that end, applicants to the Fall 2020 Project Grant competition will have the option of completing a COVID Impact Statement (one additional page in their application) to highlight how COVID-19 has affected their work, (e.g., reduced productivity). It will also be important that any potential impact on the feasibility of the research to be undertaken is addressed within the research proposal. CIHR will create guidelines for reviewers when considering the impacts and delays caused by COVID-19.
- CIHR has seen in the literature and heard from the community that the disruptions caused by COVID-19 are disproportionally impacting early career researchers (ECRs). To account for these disruptions, CIHR plans to extend the timeframe to be considered an ECR for the Fall 2020 and Spring 2021 Project Grant competitions. We are consulting with key stakeholders on this issue over the coming weeks and will share more details shortly.
- CIHR is committed to helping build a healthier future for First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, and one way to do this is by increasing Indigenous health research capacity. Following consultations with representatives of Indigenous communities, and in the spirit of being more inclusive, CIHR is updating the eligibility criteria for the Project Grant competition. Starting with the Fall 2020 competition, individuals affiliated with Indigenous non-governmental organizations in Canada with a research or knowledge translation mandate will be eligible to apply to the Project Grant competition as Nominated Principle Applicants. Our Contact Centre staff will be standing by to help these applicants create a ResearchNet account, register for a CIHR PIN, and navigate the application process more generally, as required.
- CIHR is aware that Canadian Common CV (CCV) requirements are a barrier to application for some groups, including Indigenous Peoples, knowledge users and international applicants. To address this issue, CIHR has been piloting a new PDF CV template in our recent COVID-19 applications. The template, referred to as the Applicant Profile CV, is based on the National Institute of Health Biosketch and has been refined with input from various stakeholders including Indigenous community members and researchers. This pilot has allowed CIHR to learn valuable insights about the process and template. While CIHR is not able to roll out the Applicant Profile CV for the Fall 2020 Project Grant competition, we plan to implement it for knowledge-user roles starting in 2021. More information will be available closer to the launch date.
- Applicants who choose to respond to previous reviewer comments will be required to include all of the reviews they received on their previous application—not just a selection of the comments as has previously been the case. CIHR made this decision following feedback received from peer reviewers who participated in the Fall 2019 Project Grant competition. CIHR has updated instructions to applicants to reflect this change.

Update on Indirect Support for Students, Trainees and Research Support Personnel
- CIHR released a [notice](#) ([en français](#)) on June 4th, 2020, to announce additional funding to support trainees (students and postdoctoral fellows) and research support personnel.
- On July 27, 2020, CIHR began contacting eligible grant holders directly to offer a supplement for each eligible grant that they hold. To accept a supplement, the recipient must confirm the following for each grant:
    o the research and work of trainees and research support personnel was disrupted by COVID-19 from April 1 to June 30, 2020, and
    o the grant was used to pay the salaries and stipends of trainees and research support personnel during this period of disruption.
- Note that the value of the supplement will be commensurate with the average level of support provided to trainees and research support personnel over a three-month period. This amount was calculated using historical reported data on the average percentage of grants that are used to support trainees and research personnel and will be based on the average annual amount of the grant.
- CIHR also emailed the lists of eligible grant holders at each institution to the Research Grant Offices on July 27, 2020. The grant holders have until August 13th, 2020, to respond to this offer of a supplement. CIHR asked Research Grant Offices to use their internal processes and communications to help ensure that eligible grant holders at their institution are aware of the supplements and the deadline for responding.

- Once the deadline has passed and the final list of supplements has been approved, CIHR will email the revised Authorization for Funding documents to the grant holders and their Institution. The institutions will also receive a final list of the grant holders who accepted or declined the supplements.

Questions from members:
- Can you think about re-enabling the chat function for reviewers as this function helps with the flow?
  - CIHR is currently investigating whether the chat function could be re-introduced as part of the remote peer review meetings. It was explained that there is some apprehension about making the change during the current remote peer review meetings.
  - One UD member recommended that CIHR implements the direct chat function as well as the delete chat function for remote peer review meetings.
- When will applicants receive the NOR for the Spring 2020 Project Grant competition?
  - CIHR confirmed that the NOR will be sent to applicants at the end of August 2020. The Notice of Decision (NOD) is currently planned for September 16, 2020. There will be two weeks between the release of the NOR and the NOD.
- How will the page limit work for responding to reviewer comments?
  - CIHR explained that applicants will have a two-page response limit. The applicants will also be required to attach the reviewers' comments without edits. However, this attachment does not count towards the two-page response limit.
- Will the Indigenous agencies/institutions also sign on to the Tri-Agency agreement so they can hold the funds directly?
  - CIHR explained that it is currently exploring the option of creating a separate agreement for Indigenous agencies and institutions. However, this will not be implemented for the Fall 2020 Project Grant competition.
- Are Foundation grants eligible for the support for students, trainees, and research support personnel through CIHR research grants?
  - CIHR confirmed that the support for students, trainees and research support personnel through CIHR research grants will include most active grants, with some exceptions. CIHR is currently finalizing the list of eligible programs and will share the list with members. CIHR confirmed that there are 4363 eligible grants which represent approximately 120 programs.
- Are grants from the New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) eligible to receive the support for students, trainees, and research support personnel through CIHR research grants?
  - CIHR confirmed that the NFRF provided top ups to Exploration grantees, and therefore would not be eligible to receive the support for students, trainees, and research support personnel through CIHR research grants.
- Are those whose grants expired on March 31st eligible to receive the support for students, trainees, and research support personnel through CIHR research grants?
  - CIHR confirmed that grants that expired on March 31st are no longer active and are therefore not eligible to receive the support for students, trainees and research support personnel through CIHR research grants.

3. **Adjournment**
   - The meeting ended at 13:30. The next meeting of the University Delegates Network will be held on September 3rd, 2020.