

**University Delegates Meeting**  
**June 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 – 12:30-1:30 pm (ET)**  
**Meeting Minutes**

Chair: Adrian Mota – Associate Vice-President, Research Programs (Operations)

**1. CIHR UPDATES**

***July University Delegates Meeting***

The Chair informed the network that due to the July University Delegates (UD) meeting falling on a statutory holiday (Canada Day), CIHR will delay the meeting by one week. The meeting will therefore be held on Thursday, July 8<sup>th</sup> from 12:30 – 1:30 pm (ET).

***Membership Survey***

The UD support team sent a UD membership survey to the network on Monday, May 31<sup>st</sup>. The purpose of this survey is to seek input and feedback from the University Delegates' Network members to ensure we continue to support this valued relationship through effective engagement and ongoing dialogue. CIHR asks that all UD members complete this short survey by end of day, Monday, June 14<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate your ongoing support throughout this process.

Please note the survey is intended for University Delegate members only.

***Eligibility of global health-focused applications in the Project Grant competition***

On Monday, May 31<sup>st</sup>, CIHR published [Global Health 3.0: CIHR's Framework for Action on Global Health Research](#). While members of the community continue to have questions about whether global health research proposals are eligible for funding in the Project Grant competition, it is important to CIHR to reiterate that, **yes**, applications focused on global health are eligible for and welcome in the Project Grant competition and are relevant to all pillars, disciplines, and Institutes.

***2021 Federal Budget***

CIHR understands the network's desire to learn more about the 2021 Federal Budget. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

**2. Spring 2021 Project Grant Competition Update**

The Spring 2021 Project Grant competition is progressing as anticipated with the peer review committee meetings taking place throughout the month of June.

***Reviewer-Specific Information***

Reviewer-specific data from the Spring 2021 Project Grant competition was discussed, including a discussion analyzing the differences in participation from both male and female reviewers in the Chair and Scientific Officer (SO) roles. The following factors were analyzed: sex of recruited chairs, sex of recruited scientific officers, sex of recruited committee members, and the ability to review French applications.

Factors mentioned by the UD network as influencing the peer-review process included: term limits for peer-reviewers, the equalization of female Chairs and Scientific Officers, distribution of individuals across career stages, ensuring equity is considered, and geographic considerations in terms of institution sizes. CIHR understands the need for diversity with regard to peer-reviewers. Furthermore, CIHR is

working towards re-establishing a process to refresh peer review panel membership that will consider the key principles mentioned above.

### **3. Fall 2021 Project Grant Competition**

While vaccination efforts are well underway in Canada, it is clear that we are not in a position to resume face-to-face peer review for the Fall 2021 Project Grant competition. Arranging the logistics for these meetings must be done months in advance and with public health guidance still calling for physical distancing and lockdowns, it is not feasible to return to face-to-face this fall. CIHR has heard from the community that face-to-face and virtual meetings both have their strengths and weaknesses. CIHR is surveying all those who participated in the Spring 2021 competition for their thoughts on this issue, and will also be surveying the wider community. When the results become available, they will be provided to the network and CIHR will have an open discussion with the community.

#### ***Virtual vs. Face-to-Face Peer Review***

Some UD members were in support of a hybrid approach for future competitions, noting that there are significant advantages to both virtual and face-to-face peer review. Some advantages of virtual peer-review include lessened environmental impacts as well as cost-effectiveness. Virtual peer-review was also noted as being beneficial for allowing participation for those individuals with caregiving responsibilities and those with mobility issues, and ultimately, for allowing traditionally unheard voices to be a part of the peer review process. CIHR encourages the network to complete the surveys to ensure the agency has as much information as possible to inform and support the continued enhancement of peer review processes.

#### ***Modular Budgets and as the Across-the-Board Cut***

The modular budget as well as the across-the-board cut is of significant interest to the UD network, as the two initiatives are inextricably linked. CIHR explained that the cut cannot be removed until further developments with regards to the budget have evolved.

#### ***Publication Limits***

The current publication limits (5 pages) were raised as being not lengthy enough due to factors including the ongoing pandemic, with members noting that a more reasonable window should be considered. While the impact is different for everyone, establishing a standardized approach moving forward is a priority for CIHR.

### **4. Appendix A: Funding Opportunities**

A list of current and released funding opportunities was provided under Appendix A of the PowerPoint.

### **5. Adjournment**

The meeting concluded at 1:30pm ET. The Chair thanked the network for their participation. The next meeting of the University Delegates will take place on July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021.