

**University Delegates WebEx Meeting
 May 2, 2019 - 12:30-1:30pm EDT
 CIHR Room 10-219, Ottawa, Ontario
 Minutes**

Participants

Chair: Pierre Côté, Director General, Operations Support

Members:	Darcy Marciniuk, University of Saskatchewan; Lisa Porter, University of Windsor; Roger McLeod, Dalhousie University Daniel Lajeunesse, Université de Montréal; Sandra Turcotte, Université de Moncton; Brittney Roughan, Mount Saint Vincent University; Brian Christie, University of Victoria; Christian Beaulieu, University of Alberta; David Rose, University of Waterloo; Chris Whitfield, University of Guelph; Kristin Baetz, University of Ottawa Brenda Bruner, Nipissing University; Gerald W. Zamponi, University of Calgary; François Boudreau, Université de Sherbrooke; Christian Patenaude, Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières; Sylvain Baillet, McGill University; Ali Jenabian, Université du Québec à Montréal; Kristina Arseneau, Queens University;	Rebecca R. Pillai Riddell, York University; Vicki Kristman, Lakehead University; Yvonne Myal, University of Manitoba; Lara Boyd, University of British Columbia; Cindy Faber, University of Toronto; David Litchfield, Western University; Daniel Cyr, Institut Armand-Frappier; Marc Pouliot, Université Laval; Stephen Waldman, Ryerson University; Tania Watts, University of Toronto; Stephen Perry, Wilfrid Laurier University; Vicki Kristman, Lakehead University; Frédéric Lesage, École Polytechnique Montréal; Tim Takaro, Simon Fraser University ; Stephanie Baello, Ontario Institutes for Cancer Research; PhebeAnn Wolfram-Smith, Lake Head University.
CARA members:	Deborah Zornes, Royal Roads University (CARA member);	Joanne Simala-Grant, University of Alberta (CARA member).

	Deanna Pong, University of Toronto; Leslie Copp, University of Waterloo;	Nicole Balliet, University of Northern British Columbia;
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Institution staff:	Manisha Jalla, University of Saskatchewan; Keeley Rose, Sick Kids Hospital; Allison Sekuler, Research Bay Crest;	Sanja Obradovic, Ryerson University Tom Chau, university of Toronto; Penny D’Agnone, University of Lethbridge.
Regrets:	Brenda Smith-Chant, Trent University Estelle Chamoux, Bishop’s University; Geoff Payne, University of Northern British Columbia; Jeff Ollerhead, Mount Allison University; Jennifer Walker, Laurentian University; Lori Livingston, University of Ontario Institute of Technology; Peter L. Twohig, Saint Mary's University; Richard Isnor, St. Francis Xavier University; Rod McCormick, Thompson Rivers University; Said Mekary, Acadia University; Claudia Malacrida, University of Lethbridge; Robert Bertolo, Memorial University of Newfoundland; Andrea Lawrance, Carleton University; Jennifer McGrath, Concordia University; Steven Smith, Queen’s University; Dawn Whitworth, University of British Columbia (CARA member); Kate Keetch, Department of Evaluation & Research Services in Fraser Health (CARA member); Pat Jones, University of Alberta; Lorraine Deydey, University of Alberta (CARA member).	Sébastien Normand, Université de Québec en Outaouais; Sunny Hartwig, University of Prince Edward Island; Sara Andres on behalf of Lori Burrows, McMaster University; Marilyn Hodgins, University of New-Brunswick; Tanya Brann-Barrett, Cape Breton University; Heather Duncan, Brandon University; Jeremy Knight, University of Toronto (CARA member); Jennifer Thurlow, Capital District Health Authority (CARA member); Judith Chadwick, University of Toronto (CARA member). Josie Reed for Wendy Ward, Brock University; Virginie Portes, Université de Montréal (CARA member); Christy McTait, University of British Columbia (CARA member); Paul Wiebe, Health Sciences Centre; Angela McCormick, University of Alberta; Saad Salim, University of Alberta; Asaf Gilboa, University of Toronto.
Staff:	Martine Lafrance, Manager Program Design and Delivery; Mélanie Tremblay, Project Officer; Marina Dubois, Project Officer; Adèle Blanchard, Lead, Strategic Communications; Gilles Leblanc, Change Management Advisor; Sandra Shimizu-Herr, Deputy CIO/Manager, Business Solutions; Kathryn Barker, Senior Program Officer; Sylvie Gareau, Manager, Financial Planning and Advisory Services;	Corinne Guindon, Change Management Lead; Alannah Brown, Project Lead; Nathalie Gendron, Manager, Program Design and Delivery; Allison Jackson, Manager, Recruitment, Learning and Mentoring; Christian Sylvain, Director General, Governance and Government Affairs; Liane Swanlund, Director General, Human Resources Manon Lechasseur, Manager, Strategic Communication; George Collier, Senior Partnership Lead.

	Allison Forsythe, Communication Strategist;	
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1. CIHR Update

CIHR welcomes new UD member, Dr. Sylvain Baillet (McGill University)

- Dr. Sylvain Baillet is a professor at the Montreal Neurological Institute (Neurology and Neurosurgery).
- He obtained his PhD at University of Paris in 1998 and joined the Montreal Neurological Institute in 2011.
- Dr. Baillet has an international career profile, having held positions in France, the USA and Canada.

Annual University Delegates' Meeting (Ottawa)

- We are pleased to announce that the annual University Delegates' face-to-face meeting will take place on **Friday, June 21st**, 2019 in Ottawa.
- We received a 75% response rate, with 27 votes received for the 21st and 22 votes for June 17.
- CIHR is now preparing the agenda for the day, which will be discussed with the UDEC during our next agenda setting call on May 15. Topics of interest include but are not limited to:
 - Sunsetting of the Foundation Grant program
 - CIHR Strategic Plan
 - Project Grant peer review committee mandates

Any other topics of interest can be sent to us via the UD mailbox or by replying to the call for item email sent by Marilyn Hodgins before May 15, 2019.

Strategic Plan

- We are developing our five-year strategic plan and want to hear from the community about your priorities.
- We are launching our public engagement activities next week to gather feedback from the research community and the general public on strategic directions for the agency going forward.
- The link is now available: <https://letstalk-cihr.ca/>

CIHR at 2019 CARA Annual

- The 2019 CARA Annual conference will take place in Montreal from May 26-29, 2019.
- CIHR will be participating in a number of sessions/workshops:
 - CIHR Strategic Planning CIHR Update

- Update on the Tri-Agency Grants Management Initiative
- Implementation workshop of the Renewal of Tri-Agency Financial Administration Initiative
- Tri-Agency session
 - 2019-2020 CCV Projects: opportunity to engage on CCV's two main enhancement projects: greater harmonization of templates and enhanced interface
 - This item will also be on the UD annual face-to-face meeting agenda
- Program, dates and times (subject to change) are available on the CARA website: <https://cara-acaar.ca/conference-site/program>.

Questions from members

Q: Will CIHR be attending the CARA West Regional conference at the end of November in Banff?

A: Yes, CIHR will be attending to discuss various topics of interest (both CIHR and Tri-Agency specific).

Programs Updates

See slides for additional information.

Project Grant

Spring 2019 competition

- Peer review is ongoing, with committee meetings being held from May 14 to June 11.
- The anticipated Notice of Decision for this competition is July 10.
- The Project Grant: Fall 2019 competition will be launched in July 2019.

Key dates from Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 competitions

- Key competition dates will be posted on CIHR's website shortly and will also be included in an upcoming issue of our *Access* newsletter.
- The dates are no longer August 15 and September 15 for the registration/application deadlines – rather, deadlines will fall on Wednesdays mid-month.

Foundation Grant

- The Stage 2 review process is complete and results will be released by the end of this week. The Final Assessment Stage (FAS) review activities will begin in early May, with meetings taking place from June 20 to June 21 in Ottawa. The anticipated notice of decision will be July 16, 2019.

Questions from members

Q: Why not September 18th for the application deadline? It would allow a little more time between registration and application?

A: We have considered that option but have very tight deadlines between the time we receive the application and peer review. Reviewers need a minimum of four (4) weeks to review the applications.

Q: So it will always be the second Wednesday each September?

A: We will see how it works this time and will explore keeping the application deadline on the second Wednesday of the month moving forward (for both the Fall and Spring competitions). This would allow us to post key dates in advance of competitions being launched.

Q: Are there proposed changes to the Doctoral Research Awards next competition (i.e. quotas for each institution)?

A: The three federal granting agencies have been working to harmonize the Canada Graduate Scholarships-Doctoral (CGS-D) program. Work is currently underway and more information will be released to the institutions when possible.

2. Sunset of Foundation Grant Program

- As you know, on April 15th CIHR released a [message from Dr. Strong](#) regarding the decision to sunset the Foundation Grant program.
- There were many factors that went into this decision including:
 - Feedback and perspectives from multiple stakeholders, including the UDs;
 - Internal data analysis from four (4) Foundation Grant competitions, which revealed unintended consequences in Foundation Grant funding distribution not evident in the Project Grant program (nor the former OOGP).
 - The peer review process does not align with our renewed commitment to offer face-to-face reviews and wasn't successful in reducing reviewer burden.
- We have received questions during the "Ask Me Anything" webinar about why we did not choose to keep the program but change the design.
 - In analyzing the data, we realized that the program in its current state would require significant change/redesign.
 - We had to consider the time and resources that would be needed to support the redesign (i.e. process and system) and then weigh that against factors such as:
 - What timeframe would be feasible (as there would have been a gap in competitions); and
 - What the impact would be on other programs and applicants.
- Key considerations for sunsetting the program are available online: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/51418.html>

What the decision means for grantees and applicants

- As Dr. Strong noted in his message, this decision does not affect the competition that is currently in progress. Successful applicants from the 2018–19 competition will still receive their Foundation Grants in full. The anticipated Notice of Decision date remains July 16, 2019.
- For Foundation Grant holders, it is important to note that their grants will continue as planned, with no reductions in funding levels.
 - CIHR is committed to working with Foundation Grant holders as they transition back into the Project Grant program. This was the main question raised at the AMA webinar.
 - Grantees will receive additional information about transition planning shortly. We will share the same information with the University Delegates when it becomes available.

Reactions from the community

- Within the research community, there were many strong opinions about the Foundation Grant program – both positive and negative – so it will come as no surprise that reactions to the news have also varied.

- During the March 20-21 meeting, UDEC members suggested that we host an “Ask Me Anything” webinar to address questions and concerns from the research community. We thought that was an excellent idea and offered two webinars: one specifically for Foundation grantees and research administrators, and one for the research community more broadly.
 - Both of these webinars were held on April 16th and were hosted by Adrian Mota.
 - We recognize that it was very short notice between the release of the announcement and hosting the webinars, but we did want to address comments and concerns from the community very quickly.
 - The webinars were both very well attended with 74 participants in the morning session, which included Grant holders and Research administrators, and 140 participants in the afternoon session.
 - We plan to share a recording of the first webinar with all Foundation grantees and research administrators, as well as the University Delegates. This can be useful for the individuals that missed the webinars.
 - If you are hearing concerns from the community, please reach out to Pierre directly or the CIHR UD mailbox. Specific questions can be sent to the Contact Center.
 - An overview and answers to some of the more popular or pressing questions will be posted on our website shortly and we will share the link to that information when it becomes available. Some examples of those questions include the success rate of the program, what the transition plan consists of and where the money will be reinvested.
 - The decision to sunset the program is not a reflection on the quality of the research that was funded. In fact, we know that outstanding researchers and excellent research programs have been funded through the program. In making this decision, however, we had to look at the funding system as a whole.

The way forward

- CIHR will work with Foundation Grant holders as they transition back into the Project Grant program towards the end of their Foundation Grant. We will work with the Foundation Grant holders to get a sense of what their intentions are to return into Project.
- We will not be using a “one size fits all” approach, as an individual who held one operating grant at the time they were awarded their Foundation Grant may not require the same transition plan as an individual who held three or four operating grants previously. (Approximately 21% of all non-ECR Foundation Grant holders held three or more open grants at the time they were awarded their Foundation Grant.)
- Eligibility guidelines and other transition planning considerations will be provided to Foundation grantees and we will share the same details with the University Delegates for information.
- The top question on everyone’s mind is where the Foundation Grant program budget will be reinvested.
 - As Dr. Strong mentioned in his message, our current plan is to reinvest the majority of the funds into the Project Grant program in future fiscal years.
 - The Foundation budget was around \$100M – but because of the way we plan competition investments to support multi-year grants, the full \$100M will not be “available” to reinvest until about 2027.
 - As Adrian noted during the webinars, the funds from the Foundation Grant program budget **will not be used** for Institute-led funding opportunities or for CIHR’s operational support (administration).
 - Our strategic planning process will give us the chance to discuss the gaps that exist in the Canadian system and what we can do about them.
- I strongly encourage everyone to funnel their opinions about the best way forward through the strategic plan engagement opportunities. The survey and other tools are now available online: <https://letstalk-cihr.ca/>

Questions from members

Q: People should not underestimate the potential negative impact on current Foundation grant holders as they come off this program. I think even if the program had continued this would have been an issue, but CIHR selected supposedly their top people for these grants and now they are at major risk in losing their funding - this needs to be very carefully done.

A: Thank you for your comment. We can discuss this in greater detail at the annual face-to-face UD meeting in June. We are committed to working with Foundation Grant holders for this transition.

Q: The re-entry of the first round of Foundation holders into the Project Grant competition is going to put considerable pressure on the programs – and will make it highly competitive – which could be a problem not only for Foundation grantees trying to go from one grant to multiple projects, but also for those in the projects who might be displaced. Has there been consideration to putting extra funds into those competitions?

A: This is an excellent point and something we will be taking into consideration. We will be discussing the timing of their re-entry with Foundation grant holders, in order to plan accordingly and limit the impact on other applicants.

Q: Phasing the Foundation researchers out slowly but extending their grants with some partial funding.

A: Extending their authority to use funds is something that will be offered to the Foundation grant holders. Grantees will receive additional information to assist their transition planning shortly.

Q: Some of us were not available for the webinar at such short notice and we were offered a phone call to discuss our specific issues-but have not heard back yet.

A: CIHR will be in touch with all Foundation Grant holders shortly. In the meantime, let us know if you think there is a need for another webinar by contacting the UD mailbox.

Q: Will the "NSERC ban" be lifted in the 18-month transition?

A: To clarify, this question may be referring to the Grants and Awards Guide, which outlines that: “The Nominated Principal Applicant must wait until after they are notified of the decision for the first application before they can submit the same (or a very similar) application to CIHR, NSERC or SSHRC.” <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/22630.html#1-E>. It is not unusual for researchers to have both NSERC funding and a Foundation Grant. All researchers are encouraged to apply to any granting agencies to which they are eligible.

Q: I think the community will be concerned about "understanding gaps for reinvestment". Most would feel anything other than 100% transfer to Project grants would be a setback.

A: This comment was made at the webinars and also shared by the UDEC. If you or your colleagues feel this way, please submit this feedback through the strategic planning activities: <https://letstalk-cihr.ca/>

Next steps

- We'll continue to use the UD table as a sounding board to inform the best way forward for managing the impacts of our decision, including CIHR investment in its programs.
- If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us for guidance and support.

Questions from Members

Q: Given the short deadlines, can we book our travel for June 21 meeting? Can we assume a 9 am to 5 pm meeting?

A: You will receive travel and accommodations information by May 15, 2019. Other logistical information (e.g. dinners, etc.) will also be provided as soon as it is available.

3. Adjournment

This is ending this month meeting. Thank you for your participation. The next meeting of the University Delegates will be on June 6th, 2019.