

## University Delegates Meeting

### Minutes

Thursday, April 2, 2020

**Co-Chairs:** Dr. Michael Strong, President and Adrian Mota, Associate Vice-President, Research Program

#### Response to the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

##### Verbal update provided by Dr. Michael Strong, President

- Dr. Strong expressed his desire to provide advance notice of the news below with the University Delegates Network before it was shared more widely with the community.
- Given the role of the University Delegates Network as a key link between CIHR and the institutions, an advance briefing of the announcement regarding CIHR's decision to cancel the Spring 2020 Project Grant competition as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic was provided. The full announcement released later on April 2, 2020 can be found on [CIHR's COVID-19 webpage \(en français\)](#).
- CIHR will continue to monitor the situation as it evolves, and will take more action as needed to help mitigate any impacts and delays caused by COVID-19.
- Members are encouraged to visit the [CIHR's COVID-19 webpage \(en français\)](#), and email their questions to the Contact Centre: [support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca](mailto:support-soutien@cihr-irsc.gc.ca).

#### *Questions from members*

- Will the first wave of foundation holders put pressure on the Spring 2021 Project Grant Competition?
  - CIHR explained that the added application pressure across competitions was considered when evaluating the options. With no interventions, CIHR anticipates the application pressure for Fall 2020 Project Grant competition to be approximately 3000 – 3500 applications. Identified measures ([Announcement](#) / [annonce](#)), will help reduce this pressure.
  - In terms of the Spring 2021 Project Grant competition, the application pressure will increase as the first cohort of eligible Foundation Grant holders (n=127) will be eligible to apply.
- Can Nominated Principle Investigators (NPIs) that are receiving extensions still apply to the Fall 2020 competition with a different grant?
  - CIHR clarified that the NPIs that are receiving an extension cannot apply to the Fall 2020 competition with a different grant.
- Will the grants that were in a no-cost extension period for funding receive a continued no-cost extension for the year? If so, is anything needed to be done to receive the extension?

- CIHR clarified that grant holders currently within a no-cost extension will receive the continued no-cost extension. Grant holders will not have to request this extension; rather, CIHR will apply it automatically.
- Will the one-year extension period be available to Foundation Grant holders eligible to apply to the Spring 2021 competition?
  - CIHR confirmed that this was considered. It was noted that providing one-year extensions to these Foundation Grant holders, will push them into the Spring 2022 competition which is the first competition that the second cohort of Foundation Grant holders (n=102) is eligible to apply to the Project Grant program. This would compound issues moving forward, however, CIHR will continue considering suggestions received.
- How will CIHR support ongoing grant holders given that many investigators are paying salaries and other resources while they cannot do research?
  - CIHR recognizes this issue. It was confirmed that additional measures are being explored.
- Will CIHR's Strategic Plan be substantively re-evaluated?
  - CIHR confirmed that the timeline for the release of the Strategic Plan is being reassessed. It was also noted that the impact of COVID-19 on the research landscape must also be addressed within the plan.
- Can the announcement of the Canadian Health Research Project (CHRP) competition still be expected?
  - CIHR confirmed that the three-month moratorium applies to all Funding Opportunities. That being said, competitions that are at decisions stage, including CHRP, will release results as anticipated (with only slight delays in some cases). Results of competitions that had not entered the peer review phase will experience delays.
  - Additional information was provided in a follow-up email to the University Delegates Network on Friday April 3, 2020 (email title: *COVID-19 Impacts on Scholarship and Fellowship Competitions / Répercussions de COVID-19 sur les bourses et les bourses postdoctorales*).
- Are the strategic competitions whose timelines have recently been revised going to move forward with normal submission and review?
  - CIHR confirmed that the three-month moratorium will be placed on all current and upcoming funding opportunities. This moratorium will put pressure on CIHR and it cannot deliver 12 months of competitions in 9 months, all competitions will therefore need to be assessed with respect to how and if they move forward. This moratorium does not apply to any COVID-19 related competitions.
- Are the initiatives that were planned for clinician scientist training part of the moratorium?
  - CIHR noted that these programs were to be introduced in the context of the Strategic Plan. Timelines will be reassessed moving forward.
- Will individuals have to resubmit to the Fall 2020 competition if they applied to the Spring 2020 Project Grant competition?
  - CIHR clarified that they will reach out to each applicant on this matter, allowing them to confirm how they would like to proceed, as CIHR anticipates applicants may want to make updates to their submission. However, applicants will not have to reapply: they will have the option of bringing their application forward to the Fall 2020 Project Grant

competition automatically (with or without the one-page update to their submission), or they may withdraw and submit a new or updated application to the fall competition if they wish.

- Will the Planning and Dissemination Grants that were recently announced be revoked?
  - CIHR confirmed that the deadline for this competition will be delayed until after July 2020.
- Can you confirm that the bridge funding extension is only for individuals whose bridge was ending March 2020?
  - CIHR confirmed that the bridge funding extension is only available to those who received a bridge grant in the Fall 2019 Project Grant competition. The window targets the Spring 2020 Project Grant competition and deliberately excludes those who would be applying to the Fall competition.
- Will the New Frontiers in Research Fund (NFRF) competition be delayed?
  - CIHR confirmed that the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) has delayed the NFRF competition.
- Will the CIHR PhD Scholarships and Post-doctorate Fellowships be eligible for extensions?
  - CIHR clarified that extensions could be available to training award holders at no cost although acknowledged that the context is different than with grants as these awards are largely comprised stipends for students.
- Will individuals funded through the Project Grant Priority Announcement receive an extension?
  - Yes in most cases. Some Priority announcements were for top ups to full term grants (not eligible). CIHR will be reaching out to those who qualify for this extension.
- Is the Canada Emergency Wage Subsidy program applicable to the salary of research teams?
  - CIHR confirmed that it is currently unclear if this is applicable to the academic environment. Conversations on this subject are evolving daily.
- Has there been any considerations to help fund individuals whose labs have lost funding within the past two years and are now in more dire circumstances (e.g. discussions to offer smaller Project Grant competitions)?
  - CIHR confirmed that discussions have been held with key stakeholders from the research community on this topic and this issue has been raised consistently in the context of the strategic plan.