

July 20, 2016 TOWNHALL: CIHR Funding and Peer Review

Please send email to fix.cihr@ubc.ca to:

1. Receive updates on new CIHR developments (**type “D”** in the Subject line)
2. Participate in further developing solutions to identified concerns (**type “S”** in the Subject line)
3. Submit any concerns and/or solutions that were not raised or adequately discussed

Summary of Initiatives to Generate Feedback on CIHR Funding and Peer Review

1. Canada-wide initiatives

- **Canada's Fundamental Science Review:** On June 13, 2016, the Government of Canada launched an independent review of federal funding for fundamental science research (<http://news.gc.ca/web/article-en.do?nid=1083789>); information on how to participate is available at: <http://www.sciencereview.ca/eic/site/059.nsf/frm-eng/RVOT-AASJLL>
- **Dr. Helen Burt**, VP Research & International (VPRI) *pro tem*, **announced a UBC-wide consultation process for the Federal Review:** Register online at https://research.ubc.ca/federal_initiatives and help UBC inform Canada's approach to research and innovation
- **Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences petitioned to bring back face-to-face peer review:** To date, 676 researchers have signed the petition (<https://www.csmb-scbm.ca/advocacy/Petition.aspx>)
- **Dr. Jim Woodgett's letter to the Minister of Health, Dr. Jane Philpott:** To date, the letter (<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1nzzO0tskEat4da9azA0sv1PoqKt2NvKAN4Z0ErZdiE/edit?pli=1>) has been co-signed by 1,338 researchers and led to the CIHR Working Meeting
- **Survey of Canadian Biomedical Researchers on the CIHR Live Pilot (Fdn + Pjt) Experience:** The survey (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/G9LBNQN>; @farmgirlphd) closes July 29th

2. UBC-led efforts

- **AVP Research, VPRI:** VPRs and other university leaders met with CIHR executives urging changes to the virtual peer review process; also participated in the recent CIHR-U15 VPR teleconference
- **UBC President, Dr. Santa Ono:** Briefed; supportive of initiatives; has an active interest in the matter
- **CIHR University Delegate (UD), Dr. Lara Boyd:** Represents UBC at monthly teleconference meetings and is part of the UD Executive Committee; submitted UD-led letter to the Minister of Health, Dr. Jane Philpott, urging peer review changes; participated at the CIHR Working Meeting
- **Dr. Liisa Galea:** Conducting a Canada-wide data collection survey to establish effects of CIHR funding changes across all career stages; survey (<http://survey.ubc.ca/surveys/37-5be05ffd3c35dc1d006efa42bba/canadian-pi-survey/>; @LiisaGalea) closes on July 30th

3. CIHR Working Meeting Outcomes

- **61 participants including Drs. Lara Boyd & Rob McMaster (UBC), and Jim Woodgett:** CIHR accepted the following changes to its suite of Reforms:
 1. Face-to-face discussions will be re-established and virtual discussions will no longer be used;
 2. Teams of Virtual Chairs and Scientific Officers will be organized to oversee a group of applications throughout the review process;
 3. A complementary iterative process will be implemented for indigenous focused research; and
 4. A working group will be created to further refine the recommendations moving forward.

Outcomes of CIHR Working Meeting with Research Community

CIHR Governing Council approved the below changes, following an assessment of the organizational feasibility of the recommendations made at the July 13th Working Meeting.

Applications

- Applicants will be permitted to submit a maximum of two applications to each Project Grant competition.
- Existing page limits for application will be expanded to 10 pages (including figures and tables) and applicants will be able to attach additional supporting material, such as references and letters of support.

Stage 1: Triage

- Virtual Chairs will now be paired with Scientific Officers to collaboratively manage a cluster of applications and assist CIHR with ensuring high quality reviewers are assigned to all applications.
- Each application will receive 4-5 reviews at Stage 1.
- Applicants can now be reviewers at Stage 1. However, they cannot participate in the cluster of applications containing their own application.
- Asynchronous Virtual Review will be eliminated from the Stage 1 process.
- CIHR will revert to a numeric scoring system (rather than the current alpha scoring system) to aid in ranking of applications for the Project Grant competition.
- CIHR will introduce an iterative peer review process for Indigenous health research applications within the Project Grant competition.

Stage 2: Face-to-Face Discussion

- Approximately 40% of applications reviewed at Stage 1 will advance to Stage 2 for a face-to-face review in Ottawa.
- Stage 2 will include highly ranked applications and those with large scoring discrepancies.
- Virtual Chairs will work with CIHR to regroup and build dynamic panels, based on the content of applications advancing to Stage 2.
- Applications advancing to Stage 2 face-to-face discussions will be reviewed by three panel members. A ranking process across face-to-face committees will be developed to ensure the highest quality applications will continue to be funded.

Next Steps

- A Peer Review Working Group will be established under the leadership of the College of Reviewers Executive Chair along with representative participants drawn from those who attended the Working Group meeting to advise CIHR in the implementation of these changes.
- In addition, the Peer Review Working Group will explore options related to adjudication criteria appropriate for the various career stages of applicants. In addition, they will discuss the statement presented at the Working Group meeting:

"The working group will discuss for the next 2 comps for mid career (5-12 yrs) researchers for 5% over whatever the success rate is during that competition"*

*CIHR defines mid-career as 5-15 years