

## CIHR UD Meeting (Webcast) March 4, 2021

Hello everyone,

The March CIHR-UD meeting was held by webcast on March 4, 2021. Here are the highlights:

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

### **1. CIHR UPDATES**

#### **UDEC Appointment Process**

UD members were reminded that the deadline to submit their vote for the University Delegates Executive Committee (UDEC) vacancy is Monday, March 8th. The vote is only open to UD members.

#### **Institute Advisory Boards**

CIHR has opened recruitment for our IABs and is accepting applications, via ResearchNet, until April 12, 2021. The focus will be on ensuring IABs reflect the diversity of Canada and the health research ecosystem at large, and CIHR encouraged underrepresented groups to apply.

#### **Equity, diversity and inclusion**

CIHR's online discussion on systemic racism in Canada's health research funding system launched on February 4, 2021 and will be open until April 9, 2021. The purpose of the online discussion is ultimately to identify specific measures that CIHR can implement to address barriers faced by racialized and Indigenous communities. Following the online discussion, CIHR will host virtual small group listening sessions with racialized communities, including dedicated engagement activities with Indigenous communities.

#### **CIHR's Strategic Plan**

On Tuesday, February 23rd, CIHR launched a new Strategic Plan to guide our operations and investments from 2021 to 2031. The Strategic Plan was accompanied by the Action Plan for Year 1 (2021-22). It is the first installment of a series of annual action plans that will outline key activities to be undertaken on a yearly basis to support implementation. CIHR will continue to engage the health research community throughout implementation, and will provide implementation-related updates to UD members as work progresses.

### **2. Health Research Training Platform (H RTP) Pilot**

In early January, CIHR launched the Health Research Training Platform (H RTP) Pilot funding opportunity to fill a gap in the career development opportunities available to trainees and Early Career Researchers (ECRs). Funds will be available to establish up to 12 platforms within the scope of the identified research training areas. The research areas for this pilot were selected by those contributing funds - 9 CIHR Institutes, 1 CIHR Initiative, and 3 external partners. The H RTP Pilot competition was informed by CIHR's Strategic Action Plan on Training, evaluation of the CIHR STIHR program, the design of other CIHR training platforms, capacity development literature, international examples, and feedback from the community. CIHR will take stock of lessons learned from the H RTP Pilot funding opportunity to continue to improve its career development and training support offerings to the health research community.

*Summary of H RTP Discussion* - CIHR modified the program design based on feedback from the Association of Canadian Early Career Health Researchers (ACECHR) as it relates to ECRs. The CIHR response letter to ACECHR will be published on the H RTP webpage in the near future. The PowerPoint slides used for the H RTP webinar that occurred on March 4th can be requested from the Contact Centre.

### **3. Funding Opportunities**

#### **Project Grant Competitions**

Notices of Decision for the Fall 2020 Project Grant competition were released on March 3. Changes to the Spring 2021 Project Grant competition include the addition of a Summary of Progress and the Applicant profile CV, the removal of weighted scores in the evaluation criteria, and the greater integration into the assessment and score of Sex- and Gender-Based Analysis considerations. The Project Grant Competition frequently asked questions (FAQs) were recently updated to include information about these new components. Webinars for reviewers will be held in May. The registration deadline for the Spring 2021 Competition is Thursday March 4, 2021 and the Notice of Recommendation date has been changed to July 15, 2021.

#### **Strategic Funding Opportunities**

A list of the current funding opportunities with deadlines was provided. The recommendations for the Institute Community Support (ICS) program are currently being reviewed by the VP Research and will be communicated shortly. There are no updates to provide on the Collaborative Health Research Projects (CHRP) program as discussions continue between CIHR and NSERC.

### **4. Questions and Answers Discussion**

#### **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)**

Equity, diversity and inclusion underpin CHIR's Strategic Plan. CIHR reflected that throughout the previous COVID-19 competitions that have been held, some applications have required a specific page on EDI-related plans, requesting information on how researchers are meaningfully considering in relation to their research teams and research designs. CIHR does hope to incorporate this approach for the Project Grant program with time. CIHR intends to raise the bar regarding how EDI is incorporated within the application and the peer review processes.

#### **Summary of Progress**

The feedback received from the network regarding the addition of the Summary of Progress page was positive. It had been noted that the Summary of Progress is a great opportunity to put grants in context for Foundation Grant holders and it was further noted that applicants are pleased with the Summary of Progress format.

#### **Across-the-board Budget Cuts**

A previous communication to the community stated that CIHR has committed to getting rid of the across-the-board cuts for all funded applications starting with the Fall 2021 Project Grant competition. This change is intended to provide greater discretion to peer review committees on budget allocations. The removal of the across-the-board cut will be a gradual process and the Summary of Progress page is one element supporting this transition. To get rid of the cut, CIHR needs to ensure that the review panels have appropriate information to do a comprehensive review of the budget, as this will increase pressure on the panels. No further decisions have been made for how the across-the-board budget cuts would be

implemented; however, robust discussions are continuing on this topic among Scientific Directors and CIHR staff. The UD Network shared comments and ideas for several approaches, including modular budgets and small budget envelopes. CIHR continues to take into consideration the UD network's perspectives and will report back as discussions proceed.

Next CIHR-UD meeting is on April 1, 2021.

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