

CIHR UD Meeting (Webcast) September 5, 2019

Hello everyone,

The September CIHR-UD meeting was held by webcast on September 5, 2019. Here are the highlights.

CIHR Updates (Annik Poirier)

President Strong will be beginning visits to institutions in November. These will be structured, small group sessions, organized through institution research offices. Selected participants will be invited, including the UDs. These will inform the final strategic plan, although it is likely that the priorities will already be set by this point in time.

The Tri-agency guide on financial administration (TAGFA) has completed pilot with 12 institutions, and a new guide is about to be released. The pilot has confirmed that objectives are being met. CIHR expects that the new guide will be shared this fall. Full implementation is expected in April 2020. Guides will be used to assist in transition.

The Fall Project Grant competition received 2583 registrations which is about 400 fewer than in the spring. The roles of early career observers on committees will not change this competition. Cross-board cuts to budgets are being recommended for elimination but this will not occur during this competition. Peer reviewer recruitment is underway and Chair meetings will be taking place on September 19 and 24 in Ottawa. Committee meetings will be held from November 23 to December 12, with an anticipated Notice of Decision date of January 22, 2020.

The last competition of the Foundation Program is now complete, applicants received the notice of decision in July 2019. 28 were approved – 23 accepted, 1 declined, still waiting on the other 4 to decide. Regarding transition of Foundation holders back to the open competition – CIHR is calling each Foundation recipient, and they are working to make sure ECIs know that they can apply now.

Over the past year, a new process for CGS-D awards, implementing a quota system where the universities decide on which students can apply for scholarship, based on a number defined by previous success. There was extensive concern expressed by the UDs, that this change was implemented last year without consultation. There are additional concerns that this will disadvantage smaller institutions, non-medical institutions and that the internal decisions may not necessarily be transparent. It was suggested that the quota may artificially increase success rates. There are also concerns that the evaluation criteria have changed. CIHR staff responded that the formula is based on performance of the university over the last 3 competitions (see details for derivation of the formula on the CIHR website). In addition, a similar quota system has been used by NSERC for years. Staff have examined the results without quota over the last few years compared to with the quota and did not see much change. They welcome feedback.

Update on the Common CV (Annik Poirier/Adrian Mota)

CIHR is aware that there is a [petition circulating](#) among the research community to eliminate the CCV and staff will be preparing a formal response. They acknowledge that the suggestions from the community have significant merit. Problems with the user interface are the result of old and complex systems. Changing at this point in time will be very expensive. CIHR is taking a longer view and investing in a new grant management system, which is currently out to tender, and CCV replacement is within this system. CIHR will make investments in the CCV to address the most pressing issues. Upgraded the software and changes in the hosting infrastructure will improve reliability. User acceptance testing underway and development team is working on prototype to present to focus groups. The solutions will have to be adopted across the Tri-agency platforms. Apparently free-form upload is not an option, as the CCV is integrated into many of the functions of CIHR. There is an indication that the limited CV contained within the Biosketch may be adopted in the majority of CIHR programs.

CIHR Strategic Planning (Jeff Latmier)

Jeff Latimer indicated that the Strategic Plan is scheduled for launch in June 2020 (20th anniversary of CIHR). CIHR has conducted three phases of community engagement. In Phase I CIHR sought input from multiple stakeholders: 2400 online submissions, all 13 IABs, roundtables with stakeholders, all staff at CIHR, public input from 4500 Canadians. In Phase II CIHR will be holding a workshop on Sept 10-11 to discuss the Phase I results and will share the conclusions of the workshop thereafter. This will inform the priorities of the strategic plan. In Phase III, a workshop will be conducted on Dec 13 to look at the Phase II report. The Strategic Plan will then be assembled for approval and release in the Spring of 2020.

Some UDs expressed concern about the breadth of consultation and requested a list of participants in the Phase II workshop. This will be available from CIHR shortly. CIHR has met with U15 VPRs, and with Universities Canada.

College of Reviewers Update

Three-year college memberships are up for renewal, so members will be contacted to update your information. Renewal will be done in a staggered manner, with the next renewal requests in January.

Next CIHR-UD meeting is on October 3, 2019. Bye for now!!

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