

Establishment of a SSHRC Advisory Review Committee (SSHARC)

Background

On June 7th, 2016, the Associate/ Assistant Deans Research in the Faculties of Management, Law, and Arts and Social Sciences met to discuss potential cross-faculty initiatives to support research in the Social Sciences and Humanities at Dalhousie University. The discussion culminated in the proposal for the establishment of a joint SSHRC Advisory Review Committee (SSHARC).

Issue

Researchers who rely on SSHRC as their primary source of funding are housed across a number of Faculties, including Management, Law, Arts and Social Sciences, as well as Science and Architecture and Planning. It is our common goal to support applications to SSHRC programs, and to support their success. Individually, Faculties have few resources to devote to this goal.

Proposal

To develop a University wide committee, the SSHRC Advisory Review Committee (SSHARC), whose mandate would be to offer a review of SSHRC proposals, mimicking an adjudication panel. The proposal is to focus on the Insight Grant program in the initial phases of this committee, as this is regarded to be the most transparent and most utilized SSHRC funding program.

Members of the SSHARC are to be drawn from two pools:

- (i) researchers who have participated in the SSHRC adjudication process;
- (ii) researchers who were successful in obtaining a SSHRC Insight Grant.

Normally, Dalhousie's SSHRC Leader would chair the SSHARC. Alternatively, one of the ADRs from a SSHRC intensive faculty would chair the committee.

The SSHARC would focus on one main task in the initial (pilot) phases on its mandate: the review and assessment of applications to be submitted to SSHRC in the fall. The proposed timelines are:

- August 1 – Submit to SSHARC
- August 15 – SSHARC feedback available
- September 1 – Faculty level internal deadline
- October 1 – Research Services internal deadline
- October 15 – Application to SSHRC

Expected Outcomes

The purpose of the process is to develop a multi-faculty systematic process to support the development of SSHRC applications, and to improve the chances of success for Dalhousie researchers. In the initial year to two years, the SSHARC would focus on the Insight Grant program. Following an assessment of the initiative, the committee's mandate would potentially expand to include other SSHRC programming, including partnership programming. The expected outcomes are: (i) a better understanding of the challenges that Dalhousie's researchers encounter with the SSHRC application process; (ii) a better system to respond to these challenges; and (iii) improved funding success rates.

A secondary benefit will be to provide the SSHRC Leader with more information about applications across the University and, given the participation of those who have served on SSHRC adjudication committees, about the review processes at SSHRC.