CIHR University Delegate Meeting (August 4, 2017)

Notes prepared by Jennifer McGrath (Concordia University Delegate)

Opening remarks (Adrian Mota)
- Child leave policy has now been harmonized with other agencies. Will go into effect July 2017 (not retroactive).

Project Competition update (Martine Lafrance)
- All Chairs have now been recruited for committees. Currently in process of inviting SOs (80 have accepted, with at least 1 for each committee.)
- Working with Community Chairs and SOs for recruitment of reviewers
- Series of webinars (11 scheduled) being presented for applicants; until September 8.
- On August 17 & 21, there will be a webinar for the Chairs & SOs. There will also be webinars for Reviewers starting in October.
- Peer Review Manual is currently being updated (English version completed, French version being updated). Planned to be posted online in the next week or shortly thereafter.
- Registration deadline for Project is Tuesday, August 18.

Ask Me Anything Webinar update (Adrian Mota)
- Community was generally positive
- Asked questions about Early Career Investigators, how to do things on ResearchNet, inclusion of figures/tables (range of questions)
- UDs asked to remind applicants to write strong Summary of Proposal (basis of assigning to committees) and to ask colleagues to accept invitations to be Reviewers

General Discussion
- CIHR will clarify the inclusion of figures/tables online. The key idea is that the applications must “stand alone”, which is why important figures/tables should be included in the proposal itself. Reviewers are not required to look at any appendices.
- Q – Can co-PIs or co-Is be added later, after the registration phase? Martine: Yes, but it is not encouraged. It is important to know who is on the applicant team to ensure there are no conflicts when assigning committees and reviewers.

Foundation Competition update (Dale Dempsey)
- Results of Foundation Scheme will be released at 1pm today (August 3, 2017).
- 76 Program Leaders will be funded today (199.6$M); 17% were ECIs. Tomorrow, Friday, there will be Live descriptions of the funded Program Leaders posted online.
- Dale extended sincere thanks to the many reviewers and Chairs throughout the entire multi-stage process. CIHR witnessed continued improvements and strengthening of peer review with each iteration.
- Beginning to plan for next Foundation competition.
- Many researchers are excellent, who were not funded, but are encouraged to apply in the future.
- Registration deadline for next Foundation competition is August 8, 2017.
- Adjustments (see July 17 President message) have been made for the 2017-18 Foundation Competition, with funds transferred to Project, leaving 125$M for Foundation (~3$M per individual). It is anticipated 40 Foundation grants will be funded in 2017-2018. As well, Early Career Investigators are no longer eligible to apply.

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General Discussion

- Q – There should be guidelines for figures/tables as some have made them microscopic and require them to be zoomed in. Martine: Applicants need to be reasonable so the Reviewer can read them; font size is not specified. If Reviewers cannot read, it may impact review of application.
- Q – Struggle with idea that applicants can add Appendices, but not require Reviewers to read. Martine: Need to realize differences by Pillar, so this is left flexibility for the applicant/committee/Pillar. For example, some areas of research value inclusion of a specific questionnaire. Needs to be considered in the context of the breadth of Pillars.
- Adrian: The issue about appendices was previously discussed at meetings of UD and College Chairs. There were some recommendations to limit to 5 pages, but others were comfortable with a range. No decisions have been made yet, and there are differences observed by Pillar. Example provided of someone once including over 1000 pages of appendices. (no information provided on whether this was a funded grant)
- Q – Wondering if it is resource efficient to launch another Foundation Competition, when only 40 grants will be funded? Adrian: There are many excellent researchers within Canada. Agree there may be another mechanism for recognizing this excellence; there have been many issues raised and suggestions made with continued discussion. Will need to consider as we go forward. Other issues that have been raised about how researchers can “transition out” of the Foundation. Will continue to have conversation with Community throughout the Fall. They will recruit individuals for a committee to for this, including at least one UD member.
- Q – Can all ECIs who hold Foundation be automatically transferred to a 5 year Project? Adrian: Most ECIs that were awarded Foundation do hold small amounts (there are a few outliers). CIHR is considering possibilities for how to best proceed with the transition.

College of Reviewers (Allison)
- Wave 1 Recruitment: 2100 individuals invited to be members in July 2017 (1700 have agreed; 135 declines; others non-response)
- Wave 2 Recruitment will start in August. College of Reviewers will approach Institutions with both outcomes of Wave 1 and to update lists for individuals to invite for Wave 2. Plan to update lists with all nominated PIs who were funded in last 5 years, especially those who held over $100K, and meet the membership selection criteria. CIHR will also consider nominations (and self-nominations). Communication to Institutions will be sent early next week (August 8/9ish). Institutions and UD can give input and suggestions. CIHR is targeting 4000 individuals in next phase (1800 August, 1000 in subsequent phases of Wave 2 over next few months). CIHR will continue to update UD about enrollment.
- There was President announcement (July 10), followed by College Chairs statement (supporting President’s announcement) outlining the expanded advisory role of College Chairs; expression of support for changes to competition; College Chairs will be advisory body for all things peer-review related.

General Discussion
- Q – Who do we send nominations to for College Chairs? Allison: CIHR will send an email address that nominations can be sent to. CIHR will cc the UD for planned communication with Institution. Allison: There is also information about how to become a College member on the CIHR website.
- Q – How did you arrive at 5 year window for recruiting reviewers? Allison: We did consider extending to 7 year (received funding window), and we will continue to monitor and will likely eventually extend to this. This was a starting place to identify those who were recently funded and be sure they are giving back to CIHR. Adrian: Ultimately, we need to have individuals join the College as reviewers.

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