



General Faculties Council
RESEARCH AND SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE
Approved Minutes

Meeting 59
December 16, 2021, 3:00 p.m.

By Zoom platform

Voting Members

Robert Thompson, Co-Chair Designate
Dora Tam, Academic Co-Chair
David Eaton
Carolyn Emery
Sabine Gilch
Michael Hill
Claire Kamaliddin
Tom Keenan
Renzo Pereyra
Shane Sinclair
Piers Steel – arrived during Item 4
Martin Wagner

Non-Voting Members

Hamid Habibi

Secretary and Scribe

Elizabeth Sjogren

Regrets

Lyndsay Campbell
Ariel Ducey
Raafat El-Hacha
Thomas Oldenburg
Alex Paquette
Cristina Rai
Mary-Jo Romaniuk
Shelly Russell-Mayhew
Cathryn Ryan

Guests

Malinda Smith, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President Research (Equity, Diversity and Inclusion) – present for Item 4

The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 3:04 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved/Seconded

That the Agenda for the December 16, 2021 Research and Scholarship Committee meeting be approved.

Carried

2. Remarks of the Co-Chair and Academic Co-Chair

The Co-Chair included the following in his remarks:

- 2021 was a challenging, yet still productive, year and 2022 will have its own challenges
- A lot of great work is going on within the research enterprise, including the current reviews of applications for the Vice-President (Research) Catalyst Grants and Eyes High Postdoctoral Match-Funding Program

The Academic Co-Chair observed that instructors are now in the grading period and expressed wish that the pandemic travel advisory will not impact members' upcoming travel plans.

In response to a question, it was reported that the Tri-Council has not communicated about any new extensions, but it was observed that the Tri-Council has been sympathetic about the impacts of the pandemic thus far.

3. Approval of the November 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes

Documentation for this item was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes of the Research and Scholarship Committee meeting held on November 18, 2021 be approved.

Carried

4. EDI in the Research Portfolio - Dimensions Update

Malinda Smith and Robert Thompson, Associate Vice-President Research, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters provided an update on the University's participation in the Dimensions: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Canada pilot program, including that:
 - The Dimensions program's core principle is that diversity fosters increased research excellence and innovation, and the University is committed to achieving greater equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)
 - The Dimensions program focuses on five equity deserving groups: women, Indigenous Peoples, persons with disabilities, members of visible minority or racialized groups, and members of LGBTQ2+ communities
 - The University is one of seventeen institutions participating in the pilot program, and the University has appointed an executive committee and a steering committee to help accomplish the requirements of participating. The institutions have an opportunity to receive a Dimensions award that recognizes their progress in improving EDI at their institution.
 - The University has made progress, despite the impacts of the pandemic

- The system by which the University will be assessed is being developed, and the deadline to apply for an award is in the Fall of 2022
- The University has just launched an employment equity census and a student census, and this data will be useful
- The University's Dimensions steering committee has established five Equitable Pathways working groups, populated with persons from across units and including faculty, staff and students, and there is one working group for each of the five equity deserving groups. The working groups are studying EDI data and individuals' experiences and are reporting back to the steering committee. This information will be shared with the University community.
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
 - The key performance indicators for assessing the University's progress in improving EDI are specific to Dimensions and were communicated to the University as part of the Dimensions program process
 - The Dimensions program is similar to the Canada Research Chairs (CRC) action plan, but it applies to the University's entire research ecosystem and not just CRCs, and it builds upon the Athena Swan Charter's principles
 - The Dimensions program requires that the University collect quantitative and qualitative data on each of the equity deserving groups, and that the data be from across all disciplines and include faculty, staff and students. The Dimensions program is seeking evidence of concrete actions and measurable impacts.
 - The four categories of assessment of EDI progress are Initiating, Establishing, Advancing, and Transforming. The University is currently in stage 3 (Advancing) but intends to be at stage 4 (Transforming).
 - A 60-page report providing guidelines to hiring faculty and staff members in consideration of EDI is forthcoming
 - EDI and excellence are sometimes framed as a trade-off, but history demonstrates that this is not true. Qualified persons can be blocked by obstacles and biases, and robust conversations about this are needed.
 - The University must make effort to disrupt ignorance, biases, discrimination, racism, and other systemic obstacles, so that there can be confidence that hiring committees are operating fittingly
- Discussion included:
 - If EDI in the student population improves, then it can be expected that EDI in the doctoral student, postdoctoral scholar, and academic staff populations will naturally improve
 - Some disciplines, such as Finance, do not typically attract persons from all equity deserving groups. Some universities can offer generous salaries to attract persons, but the University cannot afford to do this.
 - Training and guidance are needed so that researchers' applications and processes appropriately address EDI, as EDI will be an integral part of all research funding initiatives going forward. The presenters indicated that resources are being developed and capacity within Research Services is being built.

5. EDI Updates

Secretary's Note: This item was withdrawn due to lack of time.

6. Other Business

There was no other business.

7. Adjournment

The December 16, 2021 Research and Scholarship Committee meeting was adjourned by consensus.
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The meeting was adjourned at 4:02 p.m.

Elizabeth Sjogren
Meeting Secretary