Thursday, February 13, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
Meeting #80

A167/Zoom

Voting Members
Robert Thompson, Co-Chair
Sheri Madigan, Academic Co-Chair
Ayan Chanda*
Jessie Dinh*
Michael Hill* – arrived during Item 1, left during Item 6
Kris Innanen
Aamir Jamal* – left during Item 6
Yrjo Koskinen
Daniel McGrath*
Dongyan Niu
Raylene Reimer DeBruyn
Shelly Russell-Mayhew*
Rudiger Tscherning* – arrived during Item 1, left during Item 4

Non-Voting Members
Alyona Belikova* – arrived during Item 1
Hamid Habibi*
Katrina Milaney
Cristina Rai*

Secretary
Courtney McVie

Scribe
Elizabeth Sjogren

Regrets
Alexandria Poppendorf
Alex Ramirez-Serrano
Mary-Jo Romaniuk
Lorraine Venturato

Guests
Elena Di Martino, Schulich School of Engineering and Academic Co-Lead, Health and Life ITS Area of Focus – present for Item 4
Nils Forkert, Cumming School of Medicine – present for Item 6
William Ghali, Vice-President (Research) – present for Item 3
Jenny Godley, Faculty of Arts and Academic Co-Lead, Health and Life ITS Area of Focus – present for Item 4
Jill Kowalchuk, Director, Research Computing Services, Information Technologies – present for Item 6
Nicole Letourneau, Cumming School of Medicine and Academic Co-Lead, Health and Life ITS Area of Focus – present for Item 4
Mariska Span-Smeelen, Manager, ITS – present for Item 4
Buffy St-Amand, Senior Director, International – present for Item 3
John Thrale, Program Manager, University Innovation Quarter – present for Item 5

Attended virtually

Secretary's Note: In accordance with the General Faculties Council (GFC) Bylaws Section 8.2, the motion box and "Carried" denotation serves as the entry in the minutes that the Chair of the meeting declared the motion carried.

The Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. **Meeting Opening**

   1.1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved/Seconded
That the Agenda for the February 13, 2025 Research and Scholarship Committee meeting be approved.
Carried

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

   The Co-Chair included the following in his remarks:

   - It has been a busy start to the term, with the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) Innovation Fund applications due on Tuesday, February 4. The University submitted 12 applications and was co-applicant on four more applications, asking for more than $180 million in research infrastructure funding, and the team is hopeful for positive news in the November 2025 announcement of results.

   - The Tri-Council's Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) granting agency has two competitions per year. The results of the Fall round have been announced, and the University did exceptionally well, receiving more than $30 million in funding which is significantly higher than past results. This is impactful also because Tri-Council funding effects the envelope for other programs including the CFI's John R. Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) recruitment and retention program and the Canada Research Chair program.

   - The University applied for 13 and received three Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships in the Fall 2024 competition, which is up from the one received in the previous competition. The names of the three recipients will be announced soon.

   - The University is monitoring statements by the new United States federal government leadership and changes happening in the United States research funding ecosystem, and it is not yet known how this may impact the University's partnerships and other connections.

   The Academic Co-Chair made no remarks.

   In response to questions, it was reported that:

   - The total amount of available CIHR funding has grown.

   - The University of Toronto reports its CIHR funding differently, with its hospital-based funding reported separately, but the University of Calgary still ranks very well in CIHR funding compared to the University of British Columbia and the University of Toronto (ranking third) even when this is factored in.

   - The provincial government is working on an implementation plan for the Provincial Priorities Act 2024 (formerly Bill 18) and it is not yet known how this will impact the University's funding and operations.

   - The University is creating data management plans and is monitoring researcher needs and concerns in relation to data.

   - It has been announced that the Banting Postdoctoral Fellowships program will not continue and Fall 2024 was the last competition. The funding is not being cut, but the Tri-Council is restructuring its scholarship portfolio to a different model. It is expected that the postdoctoral fellowships in the new model will also be available to international students.

2. **Approval of the January 16, 2025 Meeting Minutes**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded
That the Minutes of the Research and Scholarship Committee meeting held on January 16, 2025 be approved.
Carried

3. **International Research Update**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. William Ghali, Vice-President (Research), and Buffy St-Amand, Senior Director, International, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters gave a presentation on international research at the University, including that:
  - There was an organisational realignment in 2024. UCalgary International (UCI), which consists of the International Research, International Relations, and Strategic Global Partnerships units, now reports to the President's Office. The UCI International Research unit works with the Research Services Office, which reports to the Vice-President (Research) Office.
  - The UCI International Research unit provides the following services:
    - Roadshow sessions with Faculties to raise awareness of supports for researchers in identifying and applying to international funding opportunities, and faculty consultations.
    - The International Funding and Researcher Matching (IFARM) database of international funding sources. A Catalyst Grant has been obtained to further develop this tool.
    - The UCalgary Research Ecosystem Dashboard (UCRED), which helps identify University researchers based on their areas of expertise.
    - Assistance with applying for the University's Catalyst Grants and Transdisciplinary Connector Grants, both of which are intended to be leveraged toward other funding opportunities. An International Partnership Research Workshop Grants program is in development, which would also help to initiate or advance new projects with international research partners.
    - Assisting with the Visiting Scholars Program, which facilitates short and long-term visits by eminent researchers.
    - Coordinating a strategic alliance between the University of Calgary, University of Aberdeen, and Curtin University, which involves missions at the three institutions, delegations of administrators and visiting scholars to learn from each other, collaborations of cross-institutional research groups, and joint funding pursuits.
    - Supporting the execution of other missions, delegations, and events with a variety of international research connections.
    - Facilitating the submission of proposals and activities relating to Horizon Europe, the world's largest research and innovation funding program. Applying to Horizon Europe is for existing partnerships only, as the timing from call-for-submissions to deadline is tight, and partnerships should include corporate and non-academic partners. If successful, having Horizon Europe funding is onerous, with significant project coordination and reporting requirements, and so having a strong central support

team is essential. Institutions can gain Horizon Europe understanding by have persons serve as Horizon Europe Expert Reviewers.

- o Outcomes include that:

  - International research revenue (revenue that comes from outside Canada) has grown significantly in recent years. The top five subject areas are Medicine, Engineering, Biochemistry, Neuroscience, and Computer Science, and the top five countries/regions of connection are the United States, India, Switzerland, the Republic of Korea, and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

  - The number of internationally co-authored publications have also steadily increased.

- Discussion included that:

  - o Some Canadian research grants require having international partners, so the reporting of international research revenue is complicated and may not accurately present the actual amount of international-related research revenue.

  - o The more that the UCI International Research unit is aware of researchers' interests and partnerships, the more can be done to intentionally connect researchers to opportunities.

  - o Researchers need seamless legal and financial reporting support systems, and for research overhead costs to be logical. Indirect costs of research funding needs to be distributed in a timely manner and to where it is needed.

  - o It is understood that the University is risk adverse, but some research involves risks to make important advances and the institution's units need to be practical about this.

- In response to questions, it was reported that:

  - o The University of Aberdeen and Curtin University had an existing agreement before forming a strategic alliance with the University of Calgary, which is also an energy industry city.

  - o In addition to the energy commonality, the University of Aberdeen and Curtin University alliance also has health discipline and Indigenous ways commonalities. There is a website with information about the alliance.

4. <u>Institutes for Transdisciplinary Scholarship (ITS) Spotlight on Health and Life</u>

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Jenny Godley, Faculty of Arts and Academic Co-Lead, Health and Life ITS Area of Focus, Elena Di Martino, Schulich School of Engineering and Academic Co-Lead, Health and Life ITS Area of Focus, Nicole Letourneau, Cumming School of Medicine and Academic Co-Lead, Health and Life ITS Area of Focus, and Mariska Span-Smeelen, Manager, ITS, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters reminded the Committee that the Institutes for Transdisciplinary Scholarship (ITS) has five Areas of Focus, and then gave a presentation introducing the Health and Life team and including:

  - o The vision of the Health and Life Area of Focus is to contribute to an increased understanding and valuing of transdisciplinary research in the Health and Life area while nurturing collaborations across campus and beyond. The team will connect, support, and celebrate researchers in this area.

  - o Connections will be made through various engagement events, the Post-Secondary Mental Health and Well-Being Research and Knowledge Hub, and research conferences, and transdisciplinary work will be promoted through social media and public events.

  - o Researchers will be supported in preparing applications for the University's Connector Grants, which are

intended to help build transdisciplinary teams, and for other external funding opportunities such as through the Tri-Council, New Frontiers in Research Fund, and Horizon Europe.

- o A Health and Life specialization within the University's new Transdisciplinary Graduate Program will be developed.

- o Work connecting to the Health and Life Area of Focus will be celebrated through UToday stories, social media, the Transdisciplinary Online Teams Hub, the ITS Bulletin, and at events. Members of the University community are encouraged to join the Transdisciplinary Online Teams Hub and subscribe to the ITS Bulletin.

- In response to questions, it was reported that:

- o The team has connections with the various institutes in the Cumming School of Medicine.

- o The team has attended Faculty Council meetings as part of efforts to build awareness and relationships.

- Discussion included:

- o The ITS Areas of Focus teams have come together quickly, and the enthusiasm and dynamic work happening is applauded.

- o The Connector Grants are demonstrably valuable for catalysing research teams and enabling teams to be successful in applying for external grants.

5. **University Innovation Quarter Update**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. John Thrale, Program Manager, University Innovation Quarter, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter gave a presentation on the University Innovation Quarter, including:

- o The University Innovation Quarter is a 76-acre area immediately north of the University's main campus. It is a place for innovation, collaboration, and entrepreneurship where academia, industry, and business converge in an ecosystem.

- o The site is being developed by the University of Calgary Properties Group, with funding support from the provincial government.

- o Innovate Calgary, the University's technology transfer and business incubation service subsidiary, is based in the University Innovation Quarter.

- o The University Innovation Quarter currently has two hubs: the Life Sciences Innovation Hub and the Social Innovation Hub. A third hub, the Quantum Hub, is in development. The Quantum Hub will consist of office spaces called Quantum City and a laboratory wing called qLab.

- o Future additional development, dependent on City of Calgary land use approvals, will include a variety of buildings and public outdoor spaces. Denser development will occur nearer to the LRT system while development will be less dense near the existing residential area.

- In response to questions, it was reported that:

- o It is envisaged that the University Innovation Quarter will become a welcoming community similar to the University District. Changes to the roadways will be made and green spaces will be retained.

- o It is possible that a bridge connecting the main campus to the University Innovation Quarter could be built and that a shuttle system from the Foothill campus could be established.

- Discussion included:
  - It is unique in Canada to have a substantial innovation park immediately next to the main campus.
  - The University District has a thriving atmosphere in the evenings and has been a positive addition to the area, and the University Innovation Quarter development could grow this.

6. Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Research

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Robert Thompson, Associate Vice President (Research), Nils Forkert Cumming School of Medicine, and Jill Kowalchuk, Director, Research Computing Services, Information Technologies, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters gave a presentation on Artificial Intelligence (AI) as it relates to the research enterprise of the University, including:
  - AI has revolutionized research across all disciplines, enhancing efficiency and accuracy and accelerating some discoveries. The most significant benefit of AI in research is the ability to process and analyse large and complex datasets and identify patterns that are not obvious.
  - Machine learning is a subfield of AI and can identify complex patterns in data and can make predictions.
  - Some challenges relating to the use of AI in research include ethical concerns such as biases in algorithms, data privacy issues, the potential for misuse, and the potential for fake information. The use of AI should not replace critical human judgment.
  - Tools like ChatGPT have the ability to be used as writing assistants and can be used to generate initial drafts of writing such as research articles, review papers, and grant proposals, and AI grammar and style checkers are capable of polishing writing.
  - It will be necessary to align with the new Alberta Protection and Privacy Act, and sensitive Level 3 and 4 data cannot be used with third party AI tools. Canada's new Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC) guidelines are intended to protect national security and research integrity and require some research projects and partnerships to undergo scrutiny before proceeding. Researchers should seek advice from the University's Research Security team if they are unsure about any restrictions.
  - The University is piloting the use of Microsoft Copilot and this and the Microsoft Copilot chatbot are expected to soon become available for use by the University community.
  - A working group has been struck to identify opportunities and develop operational advice on the use of AI in research.
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
  - The Microsoft Copilot chatbot is built into the Edge browser.
  - Researchers can ask to be scheduled for access to the University's and other graphics processing units (GPUs), and additional nodes and platforms are being created to help meet demand. The federal government has also invested in building AI infrastructure.
- Discussion included:
  - It is important to acknowledge when AI has been used to assist with writing.
  - The Faculty of Graduate Studies is working on guidelines related to AI.

7. <u>Other Business</u>

There was no other business.

8. <u>Adjournment</u>

Moved/Seconded
That the Research and Scholarship Committee adjourn the February 13, 2025 meeting.
Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 4:01 p.m.

Courtney McVie
University Secretary