

Thursday, April 17, 2025, 2:00 p.m.
Meeting #81

A167/Zoom

Voting Members

Robert Thompson, Co-Chair – arrived after Item 2
Sheri Madigan, Academic Co-Chair – left during Item 5
Jessie Dinh
Michael Hill*
Kris Innanen
Aamir Jamal*
Yrjo Koskinen – left during Item 5
Dongyan Niu* – left during Item 4
Raylene Reimer DeBruyn*
Shelly Russell-Mayhew*
Joshua Taron
Rudiger Tscherning*

Meeting Secretary and Scribe

Elizabeth Sjogren

Staff

Vanessa Kozielec

Regrets

Alyona Belikova
Ayan Chanda
Daniel McGrath
Alexandria Poppendorf
Alex Ramirez-Serrano
Mary-Jo Romaniuk

Non-Voting Members

Hamid Habibi*
Katrina Milaney – arrived during Item 3
Cristina Rai* – left during Item 5

Guests

Michael Blough, Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Research Intelligence – present for Item 4
Steven Bryant*, Academic Lead, Transdisciplinary Scholarship – present for Item 5
Jill Kowalchuk, Director, Research Computing Services, Information Technology – present for Item 3
Hector MacIntyre, Manager, Postdoctoral Office – present for Item 5
Trevor Poffenroth, Chief Information Officer – present for Item 3
Susan Skone, Associate Vice-President Research – present for Items 3 and 4
Mariska Span-Smeelen*, Manager, Transdisciplinary Scholarship – present for Item 5
Maryam Yaqoub, Postdoctoral Program Coordinator – 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 Academic Co-Chair called the meeting to order at 2:08 p.m. and confirmed quorum.

1. Meeting Opening

1.1. Approval of the Agenda

Moved/Seconded

That the Agenda for the April 17, 2025 Research and Scholarship Committee meeting be approved.

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

The Academic Co-Chair presented a Traditional Land Acknowledgement and then included the following in her remarks:

- Jessie Dinh, outgoing Students' Union Vice-President (Academic), and Alex Poppendorf, outgoing Graduate Students' Association Vice-President (Academic) (not present), were acknowledged on this occasion of their last Research and Scholarship Committee (RSC) meeting.
- The members were asked to consider the value of attending RSC meetings in person, when possible, especially when all guests are present in-person. This will be revisited at the next meeting, and if the vast majority of members prefer attending virtually, it will be discussed whether there should be a switch to holding the RSC meetings in fully virtual modality.

2. Approval of the February 13, 2025 Meeting Minutes

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda.

Moved/Seconded

That the Minutes of the Research and Scholarship Committee meeting held on February 13, 2025 be approved.

Carried**3. Sustainable Active Research Data Storage Solutions**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Susan Skone, Associate Vice-President Research, Jill Kowalchuk, Director, Research Computing Services, Information Technology, and Trevor Poffenroth, Chief Information Officer, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters gave a summary of research data storage at the University, including description of the categories of service and the infrastructure options, data on usage, and highlights of current challenges including attestation requirements, deadlines, and demand for resources.
- In response to questions, it was reported that:
 - Data storage usage jumped in 2024 because capacity increased.
 - A user with a need for a high amount of storage should be granted space, but there may be a caveat that there could be a charge for space in the future. Situations are managed on a case-by-case basis.
 - There are data retention rules, and some data can and should be deleted after time or be transferred to a data repository or other long-term service.
 - There are a limited number of specialized servers.
 - Data storage is an expensive operation to provide, considering factors such as power, cooling, and people-time, and the University is charging less than it costs to operate. There should be clear

communication with researchers about the value of the service being provided.

- Representatives of the University communicate with government representatives about the need for investment in data storage.
- Discussion included:
 - Most researchers have limited funds, and expenditures such as graduate student stipends and overhead rates have gone up, but transparent and reasonable fees for data storage services are acceptable. Having a fee for data storage might trigger a researcher to contemplate if the storage is truly needed.
 - If funding is for a set period of time, such as for five years, a budget is in place and it is likely not possible to reallocate funding such as for unanticipated data storage costs.
 - While a subscription model for data storage could be attractive, the University should be providing a base level of storage to researchers at no cost.
 - Open Science involves active data, and there may be risk to how this is stored.
 - Demand for data storage is going to continue to grow.

4. Strategic Initiatives and Research Intelligence Team Update

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Susan Skone, Associate Vice-President Research, and Michael Blough, Manager, Strategic Initiatives and Research Intelligence, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters highlighted the Strategic Initiatives and Research Intelligence (SIRI) team and its work, including reporting that the team facilitates the pursuit of non-traditional funding opportunities and maintains awareness of research strengths at the University and developing opportunities. The presenters noted that non-traditional funding programs tend to be of higher dollar value and have shorter timelines than other programs, and reported that the application success rate is 10%, which is typical, and that it is researchers at mid to late-career stages who tend to be successful probably because they usually have established labs and teams.
- Discussion included:
 - If a researcher's application is unsuccessful, they should be encouraged to resubmit to the same or another funding program. Researchers would benefit from talking with successful peer applicants.
 - It would be helpful if the SIRI team presented information to units about the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) application process.
- In response to a question, it was noted that some international funding programs require that there be an international partnership in place. The Research Services unit works with the International unit within the President's Office and can help researchers find international research opportunities.

5. VPR Funding Programs

a) Catalyst Grants Program

b) Postdoctoral Match-Funding Program

c) Transdisciplinary Connector Grants Program

The Co-Chair indicated that the following items are annual reports on the three funding programs run by the Vice-President (Research) (VPR) office.

Catalyst Grants Program

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Hector MacIntyre, Manager, Postdoctoral Office, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenter highlighted the Catalyst Grants program, including that these are short-term grants to boost research projects, that there are three intakes per year, and that these grants are intended to be leveraged to receive additional funding. The presenter reported data about success rates, awards by round, awards by Faculty, awards by career stage, and future funding success at least in part attributable to the Catalyst Grants.
- Discussion included:
 - In response to a question, it was reported that a portion of the Catalyst Grants funding is not formally earmarked for early career researchers, but this is a consideration during adjudication and the committee is normally quite generous to early career applicants. It was suggested that communications about the Catalyst Grants program make clear that early career stage researchers are welcome to apply.
 - It is helpful to be able to point to the Catalyst Grants program as a potential opportunity during the hiring process, especially since some Faculties do not have research funding for new academic staff members.

Postdoctoral Match-Funding Program

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Katrina Milaney, Associate Vice-President Research, Hector MacIntyre, Manager, Postdoctoral Office, and Maryam Yaqoob, Postdoctoral office, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters summarized the Postdoctoral Match-Funding program, reporting on the recent submissions to the program and awards made, the immigration status of the postdoctoral scholars, additional external funding received by scholars, and factors impacting the recruitment of scholars.
- The presenters noted that this program started out as the *Eyes High* Postdoctoral Match-Finding program.
- Discussion included that the Tri-Agency Postdoctoral Fellowships are now valued at \$70,000. If the value of the VPR Postdoctoral Match-Funding awards are similarly raised, this may be a hardship for the supervisor matching the VPR portion. The presenters noted that the match-funding does not necessarily have to come from the supervisor, and that an increase in the value of the award may attract more applicants.

Transdisciplinary Connector Grants Program

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda. Steven Bryant, Academic Lead, Transdisciplinary Scholarship, and Mariska Span-Smeelen, Manager, Transdisciplinary Scholarship, presented this item.

Highlights:

- The presenters provided an overview on the Transdisciplinary Connector Grants program, reporting that the program is intended to foster connections between researchers, that the program now has three intakes per year, that there are two streams (Initiating grants and Consolidating grants), and that it is hoped that receiving a Transdisciplinary Connector Grant can be leveraged for additional funding. The presenters described the eligibility criteria and adjudication process, and presented data on grants awarded.
- There were no questions.

6. **Approved Revisions to the 2025-2026 GFC and GFC Standing Committees Meeting Schedule and the 2026-2027 Meeting Schedule**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda for information only.

7. **March 13, 2025 Meeting Notes**

Documentation was circulated with the Agenda for information only.

8. **Other Business**

There was no other business.

9. **Adjournment**

Moved/Seconded

That the Research and Scholarship Committee adjourn the April 17, 2025 meeting.

Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.

Elizabeth Sjogren
Meeting Secretary