CIHR University Delegate Meeting (February 1, 2018)
Notes prepared by Jennifer McGrath (Concordia University Delegate)

Opening remarks (Adrian Mota)
- No updates about President yet – or timing; expect to know more information by the end of the Fiscal Year (this is not conducted directly by CIHR)

Project Competition update (Martine Lafrance)
- Fall 2017 – results posted; 512 funded applications, 33 bridge grants; $372M funding
- Spring 2017 – registration 6Feb, application 6Mar
- Webinars scheduled and ongoing; all applicants encouraged to attend (French & English available) to learn of new changes: Project Grant: Spring 2018 Applicant Learning Module [http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/lms/e/applicant_pjt_2018_spring/]
- Currently recruiting for planned 64 committees; Chair recruitment nearly complete (88%); SO recruitment underway; Reviewer recruitment will begin soon
- New features: Applicant suggests peer review committees (2) and specification/explanation of why these committees; Reviewers now explicitly need to evaluate sex/gender, when applicable; Streamline up to maximum of 50% (up from 35%), rationale is to discuss most competitive applications (note – any committee member can still request any application be discussed). This cutpoint is based on analyses of historical data from OOGP (not Reforms); Priority Areas are included in this competition (posted online). ECIs are included in the streamlining process; but it is requested to have a brief discussion so there is an SO note for them.
- Q: Why the 25% budget cut? A: (Adrian) Due to increase application pressure, budget constraints, funding cuts are necessary to balance number of applications funded.
- Q: Were the success rates equivalent across committees? A: (Adrian) Largely yes, but complicated due to some procedures in place to ensure equalize success rates (ECIs), denominators per committee (# applications), grant size (large grant pool), or ranking ties. This contributes to why some success rates differ slightly.
- Q: Where will reviewers be recruited from? A: (Martine) Reviewers need to have experience in review process (even for committee outside CIHR, eg HSFC, etc); Successful applicants and College Members are also considered; Special expertise individuals may still be recruited depending on need in consultation with Chair/SO. Committees can also be reconstituted to be reflective of applicants; the one page summary is used to determine if the committee has expertise to review.
- Q: Will reviewers received past reviews? A: (Martine) If applicants provide response to past reviews (2 pages), they will also be required to add the past reviews as well.
- Q: Are there specific instructions to reviewers to provide ratings to individual sub-criteria? These were not received by applicants. A: (Martine) Reviewers were instructed to evaluate each of the sub-criteria and address in their reviews; they know there is a certain weight for each criteria; (Adrian) Applicant can decide how to best use space.
- Q: Is CIHR considering increasing the number of bridge grants? A: (Adrian) Number of bridge grants is dependent on total funding envelope and trade off to try to maximize the number of full applications funded. Feedback from community was mixed (some like, but it can pose difficulties when many get bridge grants). CIHR is happy to get feedback about the balance of full vs bridge grants.
- Q: Should applicant inform committee of their rank when responding to reviews? A: (Martine) We do not specify what responses to reviewers should or should not include; it is at discretion of applicant.

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- Q: What is official procedure to complain about CIHR review? A: (Martine) Yes, there is a formal process. The information with supporting evidence should be sent to the CIHR support center and it will be investigated. support@cihr-irsc.gc.ca
- Q: Can applicants exclude reviewers? A: (Martine) Yes, applicants can list those to exclude with justification. But, that does not mean the reviewer would be excluded from the committee. If there is a conflict of interest, they would also not be in the room during the discussion.

Foundation Competition update (Anna-Lisa Kates)
- Stage 1 decisions were released in December; 180(?) were invited to Stage 2.
- Webinars and learning modules have been ongoing
- Stage 2 deadline is next week (February 6); March-April is review period.
- Q: Are ECIs eligible to apply to Foundation? A: (Anna-Lisa) If applicant holds Project, cannot apply to Foundation. Currently awaiting recommendations about how / when current ECIs who hold funding can apply.

Strategic Update (Nathalie Gendron)
- Strategic funding opportunities are listed within database
- Examples of current funding opportunities include: Indigenous development for healthy life trajectories; Microbiome initiative; Team grant on Lyme’s disease; Institutes also support some initiatives....;
  Studentships and travel awards also available
- Institutes may have preannouncements for special funding to allow researchers to prepare for the formal launch (preannouncements might be communicated through the Institute; until it is formally approved, there is a delay before it is posted in the funding opportunity database)
- Upcoming announcements are partnered with European agencies (also posted and listed in the funding database)
- Any question should be directed to the contact centre: support@cihr-irsc.gc.ca
- Q: What is the update re: the AI & Healthy Cities competition: A: (Nathalie) This is still underway and results will be announced soon.
- Q: How many applications are received for these competitions? What are the success rates? A: (Adrian) We will provide regular updates on this in the future.
- Q: What proportion of budget goes to these opportunities? A: (Nathalie) It is quite variable. Some of these depend on partner funding, or contribution of Institute (~30%). CIHR can formally calculate this and report back.
- Q: When will CIHR be recruiting for IAB? A: (Adrian) We will look into this and report back.

College of Reviewers (Allison Jackson)
- Deadline for enrollment is February 21.
- Have delayed 3rd wave of enrollment because of the other ongoing recruitments for committees; at end of February, wave 3 recruitment lists will be sent out for review
- Associate Membership Progress – program description (to build capacity in College): http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50799.html; Associate Member criteria: academic appointment, funding as PI, 0-1 peer review experience; expertise within CIHR mandate; after review quality is assured (1-2 peer review experiences), they will be invited to be Full Member
- Invitations for both Full membership and Associate membership will be sent for enrollment / nomination
- Q: Are all Chairs in the College? A: (Allison) Yes.

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- Review Quality – Have released a review quality guide; objective is to establish definition of review quality; to harmonize review quality requirements across funding opportunities; Have tools and resources available including practical checklist, learning module, & contact information for questions (Review Quality: http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50787.html)

General Discussion
- (Adrian) Encourage colleagues to accept nominations to be peer reviewers; if they are not invited but they are interested, to please contact CIHR and volunteer
- Next UD meeting is March 1, 2018.