

Report of the Vice-President Research University of Saskatchewan

Review of Activities - June 2006

Overview

Over the past year, the Office of the Vice-President Research (OVPR) has focused on final implementation of a broad range of initiatives collectively aimed at intensifying research, scholarly and artistic (RSA) activities and enhancing the research culture at the University of Saskatchewan. This report is intended to highlight some of the Office activities related to grant, contract and knowledge transfer activities; knowledge translation; infrastructure development; regulatory environment enhancements; and the celebration of our RSA successes. OVPR planning and development in these areas is firmly linked to commitments and goals identified in the University's *Strategic Directions* and through the first integrated planning cycle. With the end of the first planning cycle and the launch of intensive planning for the second, the focus of the OVPR in 2006-07 will shift from implementation to review and assessment of current activities. Through recently launched initiatives, such as the Task Force on the Management of Centres, the OVPR has already begun to consider foci for future activities. Over the next few months, the OVPR will engage in an intense self-study of its activities. Consultations with the campus community will be launched in Autumn 2006; in late Autumn the OVPR will be hosting a townhall to share the outcomes of the evaluations and to begin identifying areas of priority for the next planning cycle.

New Initiatives

University of Saskatchewan Chairs Program

Over the past six months the subcommittee of the Joint Committee of Chairs and Professorships (U of S Chairs Program Drafting Committee) has developed a discussion paper articulating the creation of an integrated University of Saskatchewan Chairs program. The paper proposed the creation of four categories of Chairs to enhance the institution's ability to recruit and retain highly qualified personnel, to enhance the institution's ability to leverage external funding, and to celebrate our achievements. The Paper has been widely discussed and endorsed by the academy, including Budget (April 20), Planning (May 1) and the RSA (April 28) Committees of Council, Associate Deans Research Forum (April 27), and Deans Council (May 2). The Drafting Committee is in the process of refining the proposed program in response to feedback and is developing an implementation strategy. This revised proposal will be shared with the campus community in the upcoming months.

Task Force on the Management of Centres

In May 2006, the OVPR launched the Task Force on the Management of Centres under the leadership of Tom Wishart (Vice-President Research / Dean, Graduate Studies & Research). Mandated to explore a broad range of issues around the management and assessment of centres, the Task Force will be submitting its report in December 2006. Recommendations will focus on strategies to ensure that centres are best positioned to fulfill their mission to enhance the academic interests and goals of the University.

Task Force on Establishing a University of Saskatchewan Press

At the request of PCIP, the OVPR has launched a Task Force to explore the feasibility of establishing an academic press at the University of Saskatchewan. Led by Peter Stoicheff, SSHRC Research Coordinator, the Task Force will be considering a number of issues including the:

- Potential of a University of Saskatchewan Press (USP) to contribute to the University's mission to enhance and intensify its research, scholarly and artistic activity;
- USP mandate and ability to fill a unique role in the provinces' and the Canadian publishing environment; and

- Economic viability of the press and the feasibility of it becoming a cost-recovery operation.

The Task Force will be submitting its report in early fall 2006.

OVPR PROGRAM UNITS: REPORTS

The OVPR is responsible for all aspects of research administration. Services provided by the Office include grant and contract support, knowledge transfer activities, award development, research communications, ethics review and major program support. Some recent activities and achievements are highlighted below; the best source of information on these and all other OVPR programs is the recently revised University research website.

Office of Research Services

Canada Research Chairs

The University received notification from the CRC Secretariat that the 2 CRC renewal requests (Dr. Ajay Dalai and Carl Gutwin) that were submitted in fall 2005 have been successful. A second set of 3 renewal requests (Drs. Bernard Kraatz, Alex Moewes and Evelyn Peters) have been submitted and a decision is expected in Sept 2006.

The University submitted a SSHRC Tier 2 nomination in April 2006 and a decision is expected in September 2006. As indicated in the past report, we have allocated 28 Chairs out of the total complement of 34. Based on improvements in U of S Tri-Council activity, an increase in the CRC allocation is possible in the upcoming November 2006 distribution.

The University has submitted an updated *Strategic Research Plan* (SRP) and *Summary* to Ottawa on February 13, 2006 following the last submission in April 2003. This new Strategic Plan provides the framework within which CRCs may be allocated, in order that the University may build on its strengths, and pursue initiatives in emerging areas of pre-eminence identified through an institutional integrated planning process. In its new Strategic Plan, the University identified seven research thrusts for development, including Culture & Society, Indigenous Peoples, Frontiers of Technology, Fundamentals of Science, Human & Animal Health, Environment & Natural Resources and Material Science. The plan also addresses the University's guidelines on: (1) Allocation of Chairs Planned for 2006-2009; (2) Anticipated Allocation of Chairs by Research Area, Strategic Research Plan 2006-2009; (3) Gender Representation; (4) Allocation of Chairs to Internal, External Candidates; (5) Assessment of Progress; and (6) Planning and Approval Process. The plan and summary may be viewed at <http://www.usask.ca/crc/policy/> <<http://www.usask.ca/crc/policy/>>

Canada Foundation for Innovation

The review process for the Leading Edge Fund (LEF) and the New Initiatives Funds (NIF) applications, submitted in February 2006, is currently underway at CFI. As part of this process, 4 of our projects (requesting more than \$4 million from CFI) have to attend a face-to-face meeting with a team of CFI appointed Expert Committee Members. The results for this competition are expected this fall.

The CFI restructured its funding program last year. As part of this process, the New Opportunities Funds (NOF) was discontinued and Leaders Opportunity Fund (LOF) was introduced. According to CFI, LOF competition is open to all full time academic appointments at the Universities. However, the University of Saskatchewan decided to keep this LOF competition available to the new faculty for the time being until we can access the impact of this new program. A number of other Universities are also taking a similar approach. There will be 3 application deadlines – February 15, June 15 and October 15. Applications were invited for the June 2006 completion and we are currently in the process of developing 4 applications for

submission to CFI on June 15th. For a list of application, please see Appendix II. We are expecting about 15-20 applications for the October competition.

ROF - Research Overhead Fund

The Research Overhead Fund is a new initiative as of January 2005, based on the new Research Overhead Policy approved by the Board of Governors. This fund is managed under the Director of Research Services/Assistant to the VPR. The change over to the UNIFI system has not yet allowed detailed tracking of overhead revenues to date. With the fiscal year end just closing for 2005/06, preliminarily numbers for overhead recovery will be determined shortly. Accounting and assessment will be completed at the end of the fiscal year to determine available funds; at that time the Indirect Costs Advisory Committee will recommend allocations for the 2006-07 fiscal years.

Financial Services for Researchers

The top priority for the Financial Services Division at this time is to finish working through their first year end with UniFi. FSD has been consulting with academic units and Research Services (among others) with respect to the needs of researchers, their support network, and research administration. It is hoped that delivering on meeting the needs of these groups will progress through the 06/07 fiscal year (e.g. further customized reports for faculty and administrators).

Database Developments and Responsiveness to Community

An initial phase of changes have been made to the Research Services database in the Spring of 2006, focused around enhanced monitoring processes for ethical requirements related to research, added capability to attribute research activities to multiple entities for a designated investigator, and the development of a framework for tracking credit for research activity for all U of S affiliated investigators. Further changes as part of a second phase of development are planned in fiscal year 2006/07, some of which are operational enhancements necessary as a result of changes made in this initial phase.

Policies and Procedures

In cooperation with ILO the M of A related to Intellectual Property was revised and has been implemented. The Overhead Policy launched in January 2005 will undergo a formal review including sessions with stakeholders in the second half of 2006, with possible revisions to be made for 2007. The conflict of interest and code of conduct policies will likely be the next policies being reviewed during 2006-07.

International Research

In February 2005, PCIP approved a reorganization of international research which resulted in creation of an International Research Unit within the Office of Research Services, mandated to double international research activity within three years. The integration of a unit responsible for the development and facilitation of international research into OVPR has led to a better information dissemination system for grant/contract opportunities. Moreover, the contract processes formerly used by USI have been integrated into ORS' standard operating procedures. The International Research Unit will be key in helping develop the strategy mentioned above related to increasing international partnerships.

In February 2006, David O'Brien resigned his position as Director to assume a position at IDRC concerning International science research and policy development. Although his departure has a negative impact on U of S international activities, his presence at IDRC may give us opportunities to work more frequently with that organization. In the meantime, Anne Neufeld, International Research Facilitator has assumed a leadership role and is promoting several initiatives such as working with the Global Health Research Interests Group and on particular opportunities in the Caribbean with researchers like Carol Henry. A number of applications for the Tier 1 and 2 AUCC competitions have been submitted.

In addition to the work above, we have solicited the help of STEP to provide expertise and in depth information concerning opportunities that match with the expertise available at U of S. Also, consultants have been engaged to pursue opportunities. In particular, we are following up on opportunities in India identified last October during the IT and Bio-technology trade mission. At the present time, 5 proposals have been developed with counterpart institutions in India under a bilateral Research and Development initiative funded by India and Canada as well as a World Bank RFP which will be issued in July. Several senior officials from Indian will be visiting U of S in June to confirm commitments to working collaboratively.

Provincial Government Initiatives and Western Diversification (WED)

In 2005, the University Advisory Committee for WED reviewed and approved a number of proposals for submission to the external joint WED/SIR Committee which forms WEPA. Submissions to WED are typically developed in collaboration with WED and provincial priorities; additional discussions have occurred to increase the provincial Innovation and Science Fund (currently used to match CFI projects and CRCs) and to create a Saskatchewan Innovation Fund (SIF) which would complement existing infrastructure investments with operating funds and other seed funding opportunities.

Four proposals were submitted in September 2005, however, since all WED funding was allocated, these projects remain unfunded. These and other proposals will be reviewed and submitted to WED. WED provided support for proposal development for the CFI proposals recently submitted and have been asked to provide supplemental funding to some of the projects. WED is undergoing some review considering the new government and Minister but the anticipation is that funding will be available this fiscal year will again provide funds to match provincial funds under the Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA).

Management of Research Revenue: Indirect Costs

The OVPR continues to champion the principle of re-investing research revenue back into research, scholarly and artistic activity, and in this context, the Office manages and develops recommendations (for final approval by the Provost's Committee on Integrated Planning) for both the Indirect Costs (IC) and the Research Overhead Fund (ROF). A fundamental part of the OVPR's management strategy is participation and input from the research community through representation on the Indirect Costs Advisory Committee. This Committee, whose mandate has been expanded to include the ROF, is crucial in identifying priorities and developing expenditure strategies. The Committee will advise on the allocation for 2006 -07, IC funds. In 2005-06 the allocations was as follows:

- Operational support for research including facilities (18%)
- Resources in information technology and libraries (20%)
- Regulatory requirements (10%)
- Intellectual property management (10%)
- Management and administration – funds in this category include allocations to colleges and research development grants (approximately 20%) and to administrative services (22%)

Additional Indirect Costs funds may be available as a result of the University's growing Tri-council activity, and by political decisions which direct federal monies to Universities through the IC program.

Leadership of Centres by OVPR

The OVPR is providing leadership to Centres such as the Structural Sciences Centre and the Isotope Lab as well as for the following capital projects: Intervac (approved in 2005, expected to be operational in 2009), Aquatic Toxicology Research Centre (approved in 2005, CFI proposal in 2006, expected to be operational in 2007), Feed Technology Centre (CFI proposal in 2006), the Research and Innovation Centre, and others. These projects are all at various stages of approval and completion and require different levels of involvement of the OVPR leadership team. In addition, the OVPR is exploring, in cooperation with the Saskatchewan Research Council, development of a Mineral Technology Research Centre (MTRC).

An MTRC steering committee has been established with representatives from the university and other partnering organizations including SRC and SIR. A stakeholders group including representatives from industry is being established to provide guidance and direction to creating the MTRC. Steven Franklin and Bryan Schreiner with Paul Labbe from SRC recently visited the INCO Innovation centre at Memorial University and the Mineral Exploration Research Centre (MERC) at Laurentian University. The information shared and the discussions were very useful and productive and there appears to be opportunities for networking with these and other centres across the country.

Discussions are ongoing between the University and the Saskatoon Health Region concerning the development of a Clinical Research Agreement as part of a more comprehensive MOU. As part of this plan, SDRI is scheduled to become part of a new Clinical Research initiative. The relocation of SDRI to space in the hospital is planned this year.

Research Communications

Enhanced Internal Communications

The RC Office, which worked with all OVPR units to launch a new revamped Research website this spring, recently added new content to the Student Research News pages; in addition to student research news releases and briefs, the pages now feature a Student Field Notes Blog with student researchers writing in from various parts of the world, Student Research Profiles, and Awards and Opportunities.

Research News, which provides bi-monthly updates on research successes, upcoming events and new developments in research administration, has expanded its distribution list to include some key external stakeholders in government and business.

External Communications

The Research Communications Office (RC) is embarking on the final year of its current three-year Research Communications Plan to advance the U of S RSA profile locally, nationally and internationally, mainly through media relations initiatives. In 2005, the audience reach for media stories about U of S RSA exceeded 50 million people. RC anticipates participating in the U of S branding exercise to ensure that RSA is effectively positioned in the brand.

The current centerpiece of RC communications is a series of short videos on U of S RSA for public dissemination on television, at conferences, and in schools. Written and produced by RC, the videos have been picked up by the Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN). The first six videos in the series have gone into rotation on SCN this spring and will run for five years. They may also be picked up nationally by SCN's affiliates. The videos are also available on our website. RC will produce more video profiles of researchers and scholars in strategic areas.

RC continues to increase efforts to promote scholarly and artistic work in the humanities, social sciences, and fine arts. For instance, the Office has orchestrated major coverage for Saskatchewan Public Policy Institute lectures. RC was successful in achieving major national and international media story placements (including CBC's *The National* and *The Globe & Mail*) for historian Keith Carlson's research about a Sto:lo boy who was wrongfully lynched by an American mob in 1884. RC also produced a Green & White article on Carlson's work. Recently, RC launched a news announcement about Congress 2007 (Canadian Federation of the Humanities and Social Sciences) which resulted in stories in *The StarPhoenix*, the *Saskatoon Sun*, and even a half-hour phone-in show on the topic. Communicating about Congress 2007 will be a major thrust for the Office in the coming year.

Ethics Unit

The Ethics Unit in conjunction with the Animal Care Unit has developed a strategy to harmonize the human and animal ethics review process. The proposal has been accepted in principle and discussions are underway regarding the operational and financial details.

Under the leadership of Dr. Roger Maaka, the new Chair of the Aboriginal Ethics Working Group, a report has been developed which summarizes a number of documents based on guiding principles for research with aboriginal peoples. It is posted on the Aboriginal Working Group website, which is accessible to usask account users (http://www.usask.ca/research/aboriginal_working_group/index.html) The Working Group is meeting in May to comment on the document and formulate the next steps to produce a practical guidelines document for research and the REBs.

The Ethics Unit has launched a campus wide survey and interviews to collect information on existing ethics education courses and workshops in colleges, departments and research institutes at the University of Saskatchewan. This information gathering process will culminate in a report, scheduled for completion in June, which will be used to formulate the basis for an ethics education strategy, extending educational opportunities on research ethics for the campus community, and where to target funding/resources. The Ethics Education Committee also has a website with updated information on their activities <https://www.usask.ca/ethics-ed/>.

Coordinator/Facilitator Offices

CIHR

CIHR is reviewing the Regional Partnership program beginning this fall. Early indications are that the program will continue, with some indication that funding may be greater than the current \$2 million/year. At the University of Saskatchewan, RPP currently supports 13 operating grants (\$1.07 million), 8 faculty salary awards (\$308,000), 12 PDFs and students (\$320,000).

Unfortunately, SHRF budget for the support of health research was not increased, which will likely limit the current programs and restrict the development of any new programs in the coming year. SHRF has now begun the process of reviewing the groups which receive major funding support (SPHERU, IAREH, Neuropsychiatric Research Unit, & Saskatchewan Cancer Agency), and continues to accept applications from nascent health research groups. The following groups were renewed for continued development: Genomic Medicine & Pathobiology, Immunology and Infectious Diseases, and Molecular Design. One new group was approved: Quality End of Life Care lead from the College of Nursing.

SPHERU is no longer an incorporated entity, and is now a research centre shared between the Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan. Bonnie Jeffery, Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina is the new Director.

The University of Saskatchewan was very successful in the CIHR competition "Reducing Health Disparities & Promoting Equity for Vulnerable Populations –ICE Competition". Of the 20 grants (@\$800,000 over 5 years), three are lead by the University, and two others have significant co-applicant involvement. With the inclusion of the RPP supported operating grants, the success rate in CIHR operating grants continues to be at or slightly better than the national average.

NSERC

Services to the NSERC community are provided by a three person team consisting of a Coordinator (Chris Soteros); Grant Facilitator (Tom Porter); and Grant Officer (Amanda Plante/Bruce Baumann).

In the last year, the team's focus continued to be on facilitating NSERC applications, identifying impediments/issues related to NSERC success, and implementing strategies towards addressing the identified issues. This was done by organization/presentation of workshops and information sessions, meetings with Associate Deans Research, maintaining contacts with NSERC, reviewing/mentoring grant applications, linking researchers with mentors, facilitating networking between researchers, developing research management tools, and meetings with individual researchers.

The recent emphasis has been on maintaining our success with the Discovery Grant competition and improving participation in NSERCs Research Partnership Programs. Activities that are new include establishing strong links with the new NSERC Regional Office (these links are expected to result in increased U of S participation in NSERCs Research Partnership and Outreach programs), and increased participation in national reviews/evaluations of NSERC programs. We have also expanded our mentoring activities to include more direct decision appeal facilitation and reapplication planning for those applicants who were recently denied a Discovery Grant.

SSHRC

SSHRC Knowledge Impact in Society (KIS) Grant is a new SSHRC program, similar in scale to the CURAs, designed to improve knowledge mobilization between communities and universities. Each university was only eligible to receive one KIS grant – the U of S was one of only eleven KIS Grants awarded across Canada, out of 86 applications.

Researchers at U of S submitted 7 applications to the SSHRC Aboriginal Program. Five were successful for a success rate of 71%. Seventy applications were submitted nationally and 29 were funded for a success rate of 41%. The U of S success rate is extremely high in the national context; it represents an enormous increase from our performance in the Aboriginal program's first year (2004-5) in which the U of S received no grants at all. The U of S is ideally situated, in the national context, for success in Aboriginal research. Successful applications demonstrate the academic scholarship of the researchers as well as their ability to make meaningful linkages with Aboriginal communities.

Of 35 SSHRC Standard Research Grants applications submitted by the U of S, 83%, or 29 applications, were judged to be worthy of funding. SSHRC's limited budget permitted only 8 of those 29 to be funded. In our most successful year to date, 2004, of 44 applications submitted to SSHRC, 23 were judged to be worthy of funding (12 of the 23 were funded). The 2006 results illustrate the increased quality of U of S Standard Research Grant applications.

Industry Liaison Office

The ILO had a record year for 2005-2006 with income (combined ILO and UST) of \$571K and 39 new invention disclosures. UST has been successfully wound down and all its assets and responsibilities transferred to ILO. Highlights of the year include:

- Research and Innovation Centre – A consultant's report was received regarding a possible early stage business incubator at the U of S. The report examines the nature and feasibility of such a facility in combination with a new home for ORS, Research Communications and ILO. It is being referred to at the Research Transition Facility. The consultants report is encouraging and we now plan to garner feedback from the many internal and external people that were consulted during the study. This matter will then be discussed at PEC.
- A revised MOA dealing with IP was accepted by USFA executive and the U of S board of governors. Modified versions will now be developed for all other employees, post-doctoral fellows and graduate students.
- The ILO start-up company specialist has resigned and recruiting has begun for her replacement. An affiliation agreement which largely deals with conflict of interest and commitment issues in start-up situations in which faculty act as founders or officers or directors or employees of the start-up has

been drafted and circulated to key stakeholders. A meeting of this group will be held soon to get feedback and finalize the document which will then need approval from higher levels.

- The ILO hired a new technology transfer officer to work with the college of agriculture to deliver the ILO IP management program. We continue to recruit a technology transfer Manager to work with Karl Miller to manage the ILO program with the colleges of Arts & Science and Engineering. ILO is also recruiting for three new positions, a technology transfer associate, an Administrative Coordinator and a Financial coordinator.

Appendix I – Canada Research Chairs at the University of Saskatchewan

Agency/Tier	Name	Department	Research Area
CIHR T1	BABIUK, Lorne	VIDO	Vaccinology
CIHR T1	CHAPMAN, Dean	Anatomy & Cell Biology	X-Ray Imaging
CIHR T1	DELBAERE, Louis	Biochemistry	Structural Biochemistry
CIHR T2	ABONYI, Sylvia	Community Health & Epidemiology	Aboriginal Health
CIHR T2	HAAS, Thomas	Anatomy & Cell Biology	Cell Biology
CIHR T2	KALYNCHUK, Lisa	Psychology	Behavioural Neuroscience
NSERC T1	CHIBBAR, Ravindra	Plant Sciences	Molecular Biology for Crop Quality
NSERC T1	GEORGE, Graham	Geological Sciences	X-Ray Absorption Spectroscopy
NSERC T1	GIESY, John	Toxicology	Bioanalytical Ecotoxicology
NSERC T1	HIROSE, Akira	Physics	Plasma Science
NSERC T1	KASAP, Safa	Electrical Engineering	Electronic Materials & Devices
NSERC T1	PEDRAS, Soledade	Chemistry	Bioorganic and Agricultural Chemistry
NSERC T1	POMEROY, John	Geography	Hydrology
NSERC T1	ST. MAURICE, Jean Pierre	ISAS	Environmental Sciences
NSERC T1	TSE, John	Physics	Materials Science
NSERC T2	ACHENBACH, Sven	Electrical Engineering	Sub-Micron MEMS X-Ray Patterning
NSERC T2	BRANDIZZI, Federica	Biology	Plant Cell/Molecular Biology
NSERC T2	DUBE, Monique	Toxicology/Vet Biomedical Sciences	Aquatic Ecosystem Health Diagnosis
NSERC T2	GUTWIN, Carl	Computer Science	Next Generation Groupware
NSERC T2	KRAATZ, Bernie	Chemistry	Biomaterials
NSERC T2	MOEWES, Alex	Physics	Materials Science with Synchrotron Radiation
NSERC T2	PICKERING, Ingrid	Geological Sciences	Molecular Environmental Science
NSERC T2	YANG, Qiaoqin	Mechanical Engineering	Nanoengineering Coating Technologies
NSERC T2	DALAI, Ajay	Chemical Engineering	Bio-Energy and Environmentally-Friendly Chemical Processing
SSHRC T1	BRAWLEY, Lawrence	Kinesiology	Physical Activity for Health Promotion & Disease Prevention
SSHRC T1	MILLER, Jim	History	Native Newcomer Relations
SSHRC T1	PARTRIDGE, Mark	Agricultural Economics	New Rural Economy
SSHRC T2	PETERS, Evelyn	Geography	Aboriginal Experience

Appendix II – List of Leaders Opportunity Fund (LOF) applications being developed for the June 2006 competition.

Principal Investigator	Department	College	Project Title
TEMPIER, Raymond	Psychiatry	Medicine	Prescription Patterns, Treatment Trends & Estimated Costs of Psychiatric Disorders.
TODD, Christopher	Biology	Arts & Sci.	The Higher Plant Functional Genomics Facility for Biochemical and Molecular Physiology: Understanding the relationship between biological nitrogen fixation, ureide catabolism and water stress.
WILSON, Lee	Chemistry	Arts & Sci.	Characterization of Pore Size, Surface Area and Sorption Properties of Supramolecular Porous Material
SCOTT, Robert	Chemistry	Arts & Sci.	Nanostructural Control of Solid-State Catalysts and Sensors