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1.0 Program Background

BrainsCAN prides itself on being agile and responsive to initiatives that promote and move forward cognitive neuroscience at Western and abroad. As such, BrainsCAN accepts, on a continuous basis, funding applications for these types of special initiatives. The types of proposals this fund has previously supported include, but are not limited to, knowledge mobilization; workshops/seminars; collaboration development; technology / capacity development; and community outreach.

2.0 Duties and Responsibilities of Review Panel

   i. Provide a detailed and fair appraisal of SIF applications based on the priorities of the program and the mandate of BrainsCAN
   ii. Participate in SIF Review Panel discussions (i.e. via a dedicated Slack channel or other online channel)
   iii. Determine the proposals meriting funding, as well as providing feedback to both successful and unsuccessful applicants to improve the funded initiatives or their future submissions

3.0 Special Initiatives Fund (SIF) Review Panel

   3.1 Review Panel Composition

   The SIF Review Panel will consist of approximately 7 members (including the 2 panel Chairs), appointed by the Executive Committee, with a wide range of expertise to evaluate the diverse applications encouraged by this program.

        3.1.1   Term of Appointed Panel Members
                The membership on the panel will be evaluated annually. This will allow an opportunity for member renewal, voluntary or requested replacement and/or addition of required expertise.

   3.2 Non-Voting Participants

   Non-voting participants from the BrainsCAN support team will have access to the on-line discussion to facilitate the logistical aspects of the review process, as well as archived decisions and rationale as needed.

4.0 Transparency and Fairness Practices

   4.1 Full disclosure of Panel composition

   The names and affiliations of the full SI reviewer panel will be publicly available on the BrainsCAN website.

   4.2 Conflicts of Interest

   A conflict of interest (CoI) refers to any conflict between a Panel member's duties and responsibilities with regard to the Review Process, and a Panel member's private,

professional, business or public interests. There may be a real, perceived or potential CoI when the Panel member:

i. would receive professional or personal benefit resulting from the application being reviewed;
ii. has current and direct collaboration with an Applicant relating to the SI proposal;
iii. has a direct or indirect financial interest in the application being reviewed; or
iv. feels that their relationship with the Applicant could affect their ability to judge the proposal objectively.

4.2.1 Review Panel disclosure
The Review Panel members will disclose potential or perceived CoIs prior to the evaluating an application and will recuse themselves from that review.

4.2.2 Panel member as SIF Applicant
Review Panel members are eligible to apply to this program; however, they will be removed from the possible pool of reviewers for that cycle.

4.3 Feedback to Applicant
The applicant will receive a summary of comments, along with the final decision

5.0 Adjudication process
5.1 General Expectations
To avoid administrative delays, the adjudication process has been designed to allow for rapid, yet robust, review of applications. Since applications are collected on a rolling basis, the panel discussions will need to be agile to match. The SIF panel will strive to reach a decision within 1 month of receiving an application.

5.2 Review Process / Workflow
- SIF LOIs are initially reviewed by program chairs
- Applications that are deemed to be a central BrainsCAN priority and are requesting a budget less than $1500.00 will be reviewed by the program chairs only.
- Applications that are deemed to be a central BrainsCAN priority and are requesting a budget over $1500.00 will be distributed to the full panel.
- Panelists will have 2 weeks to review the application(s) and provide their recommendations with comments on the discussion forum. Please note the applications are fairly brief and will only be reviewed for impact to BrainsCAN priorities.

- At the end of the two-week period, consensus recommendations will proceed to the EC to be ratified without further discussion, while those applications without consensus will have an opportunity for further discussion. If a consensus cannot be reached the majority recommendation will proceed to the EC to be ratified. The possible recommendations include fund, not fund, or revise/resubmit
- A review must have input from **at least 5 SIF panel members** to be valid
- The recommendations will be reviewed and ratified by BrainsCAN's Executive Committee in consultation with the program chairs.

6.0 Equity and Diversity

As part of the developing equity & diversity plan for BrainsCAN, the Executive Committee is committed to ensuring that the recruitment of panel reviewers and applications to the SI Program are as a minimum compliant with university policy. This will be achieved by recording and monitoring all aspects of equity & diversity in relation to the SI Program, including the composition of selection panels and the breakdown of shortlisted applicants, addressing any imbalances which occur.