Western

Vice-President (Research)

Memorandum to: University Research Board

From: Dr. John Capone, Vice-President (Research)

Date: March 27, 2013

Re: Re-Profiling Internal Research Funds

Since I joined Western in the fall I have noted on a number of occasions the need to review and consolidate the many pots of internal research funding that are in place. They are all relatively small, are labour intensive and bureaucratic to allocate, are not as effective as they might be in providing our researchers what they need, and the terms of the funds do not always align with the programs of the tri-council agencies making it difficult to leverage the funding.

The attached note, shared recently with the research community is the product of broad consultations over the past several months with Deans, Associate Deans and others in the research community. It presents a different way of looking at internal funding. Rather than looking at the funding through the lens of the various individual funds, it is proposed that we think of them in terms of what, collectively, they can offer our researchers. Thus, the memo speaks of three funding priority areas: seed grants, bridge grants, and accelerator grants.

ADF will be one of the internal funds used in support of the new grant structure. The principles contained in the ADF Guidelines with regard to project and applicant eligibility will continue to be respected in the new structure and grant proposals will continue to be reviewed by panels of peers from the broadly-defined academic disciplines. (SUPAD currently divides itself into three discipline-based panels: Biosciences; Physical & Mathematical Sciences and Engineering; and Social Sciences, Arts & Humanities. Under the new structure, there will be three Boards, reflecting the tri-council: Social Sciences & Humanities Research Board (SSHRB) for SSHRC research; Medical & Health Sciences Research Board (MHSRB) for CIHR research; and Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) for NSERC research.) The program review guidelines and the Terms of reference for SSHRB (Appendix 1), MHSRB (Appendix 2) and SERB (Appendix 3) are attached.

With respect to SUPAD itself, my recommendation to URB is that, for the coming year, it be held in abeyance and that final decisions with respect to allocations be made by the SSHRB, MHSRB and SERB. At the end of the year, I will report to Senate through the URB on the allocation outcomes of all the funds (not just the ADF allocation as is done now) and provide an evaluation of the new process. The URB can then consider whether there is a future role for SUPAD or whether it should be discontinued.

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Re-Profiling Internal Funding Programs

Guiding Principles

Western aspires to be counted among Canada's top research-intensive universities as judged by a variety of performance indicators – including national and international rankings – and is committed to enhancing its research profile, excellence, intensity and capacity. There are a number of specific institutional priorities that underpin leading-edge research and excellence that we can begin to more directly address and target by re-purposing the existing suite of internal funding programs all for better flexibility and alignment with institutional strategic objectives. This document outlines some of the directions that we are taking.

Western's New Research Mandate for Internal Support

The University's research mandate is based largely on **five core priorities** that serve as pillars for guiding research excellence and impact at Western, and for further nurturing the culture of advanced innovation at one of Canada's top research institutions.

1. ***Going Global***
2. ***Mobilizing Knowledge***
3. ***Preparing Global-Ready Graduates***
4. ***Partnerships with Impact***
5. ***Leadership Through Interdisciplinary Research***

Three New Internal Funding Priority Areas

With due consideration to the diversity and spectrum of research across our community – and by extension, differences in needs and expectations of individual researchers –three interrelated programs have been established that are explicitly aligned with the funding opportunities and mandates of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC, respectively. Each of the following three programs will be supported by a portion of Academic Development Funds, Reapplication Assistance, International Research Funds and/or Residual Funds:

Seed Grant

To provide one-year funding to eligible Early Career Researchers to develop competitive externally-funded research proposals. This will typically include untenured Assistant Professors who do not at the time of application hold Tri-Agency funding, or have participated in the prior Tri-Agency competition. Early Career Researchers are applicants who are within three years of the start date of their first eligible academic position;

Bridge Grant

To provide one-year funding to established eligible investigators who no longer hold Tri-Agency funding and who have participated in at least one tri-council competition in the previous year. Research Board funding will be directed towards addressing specific deficiencies in the most recent grant submissions as highlighted in referee reports (eg. HQP training, publication rate, generation of preliminary data etc), and that can be reasonably expected to lead to increased success in subsequent grant competitions; and

Accelerator Grant

To provide one-year "accelerator" funding to establish senior and mid-career researchers currently holding Tri-Agency funding. The goal of this funding will be to help investigators "make the leap" to higher grant values.

Faculty will be required to match award 1:1. Guidelines for eligibility criteria, competition deadlines & award values will be available on the Western Research website in March 2013.

Western's New Research Boards

Applications to the funding priority areas outlined above will be submitted to Research Development & Services and peer-reviewed by appointed members from one of the following Research Boards:

SSHRC Research - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Board (SSHRB)
CIHR Research - Medical and Health Sciences Research Board (MHSRB)
NSERC Research - Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB)

Faculty Research Development Fund (FRDF)

Effective May 1, 2013, the SSHRC Internal Research and Conference Travel programs, along with the Academic Development Fund Small Grant program, will all be realigned to the Faculty Research Development Fund (FRDF) to strengthen SSHRC related research. Support for the FRDF will derive from Western's SSHRC Institutional Grant and the Academic Development Small Grants Fund. Funds will be provided directly to individual Faculties (based on the average uptake from the past 3 years) and will be administered by the individual Faculties. Funds will be allocated on an annual basis and will be based on both general and specific measurable outcomes that will be established with each Faculty.

NSERC CREATE

Effective immediately, cash commitment from the office of the VPR of up to $10,000.00/year for the life of the grant in salary support for an education coordinator will be offered. This support is for every Western led CREATE going forward with the condition that the faculty match at a 1:1 ratio.

SSHRC Partnerships

Effective immediately, for each Partnership Grant going forward, the office of the VPR is making a cash commitment of up to $35,000.00/year over the life of the grant. This cash is to be used at the discretion of the applicant with the overall goal of increasing the chances of success. No direct Faculty match is required to receive this support however, traditionally faculties have supported the Partnership Grants and we would look for this support to continue ensuring the strongest possible proposal is put forward.

Graduate and Post-doctoral Strategic Support

Effective May 1, 2013, the Graduate Thesis Research Fund will be realigned to the Graduate and Post-doctoral Strategic Support program as follows:

Joint Fund for Graduate Research (unchanged)
Banting Post-Doctoral Fellowships - up to $20,000 from the VPR office, with $10,000 match from Faculty (on time)
Vanier Scholars – up to $10,000 (one time-no match required)

Continuing Internal Funding Opportunities

Joint Fund for Graduate Research
Petro-Canada Young Innovator Award for Western and Robarts Researchers
Western Humanitarian Award
Western Innovation Fund

Please note the following programs are no longer offered: University Research Grant, Research on Teaching, and Scholarly Journals at Western. ***For latest information on internal funding opportunities now available, please visit: http://www.uwo.ca/research/funding/internal/index.html.***