

**URB Task Force Steering Committee**  
**Support for Research in Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities at Western**

**Final Report**  
**May 16, 2016**

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**Contents:**

1. Background
2. Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities Research – The Western Context
3. Value and Recognition of Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities Research at Western
4. Infrastructure to Support Research at Western
5. Funding and Other Resources for Research at Western
6. Conclusions

Appendices:

- 1 – Report of Working Group 1 (including updates to the Interim Report)
- 2 – Report of Working Group 2
- 3 – Report of Working Group 3

**1. Background**

The priorities of the Western University Strategic Plan are built upon a “shared ambition to seek always the betterment of the human condition” (*Achieving Excellence*, 2014, p. 4). This choice of words is both apt and profound. Indeed, the human condition is both acted upon and improved by “academic freedom,” “autonomy,” “accountability,” “diversity,” “integrity,” “openness,” and “social responsibility” (*Achieving Excellence*, 2014, pp. 19-20). For Western, this means “creating a culture that places a higher value on scholarship and innovation, one that strives more intently to increase the impact and productivity of our research and scholarly activities across and between the disciplines” (*Achieving Excellence*, 2014, p. 7). For this kind of culture to thrive there must be appropriate infrastructure and support. The Strategic Plan specifically recognizes this need in the commitment to

“...focus more attention and resources promoting and rewarding (1) excellence in scholarship and innovation; (2) knowledge creation; and (3) the translation and mobilization of that knowledge into languages and applications useful in the public realm.” (*Achieving Excellence*, 2014, p. 7)

The social sciences, arts, and humanities are central to Western’s vision and mission. Indeed, world-class researchers in these disciplines are found across the University in eight of Western’s Faculties. However, changes in both the internal and external contexts make it timely to examine how social science, arts, and humanities research is valued and supported at this institution. Thus, while the mission and vision of Western’s Strategic Plan is the foundation upon which this report is built, the

goal of this report is to reclaim the idea of creating a culture of scholarship and integrity in order to move from concept to action.

## 1.2 The value of social sciences, arts, and humanities research

There have been many eloquent statements about the value of the research of social scientists, artists and humanists. A recent example, the 2014 *Leiden Statement on The Role of The Social Sciences and Humanities in the Global Research Landscape*, was signed by the U15 Group of Canadian Research Universities (of which Western is a member) and six other international research university networks. The Leiden Statement declares that:

“The social sciences [arts] and humanities are indispensable to understanding and addressing contemporary global challenges and to grasping emerging opportunities. *Every challenge the world faces has a human dimension, and no solution can be achieved without enlisting the support and efforts of individuals, communities and societies.* [These disciplines] cultivate knowledge about human expression, behaviour, and social life that is essential to understanding the human context of these challenges and crafting viable solutions to them. Because of the centrality of these disciplines to these issues, as well as their intrinsic value, it is *essential within the global research landscape to promote, nurture, and cultivate social science [artistic] and humanistic research.*” (emphasis added)  
(<http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/leiden-statement.pdf>, p. 1)

Others have noted that,

“research [in these disciplines] teaches us about the world beyond the classroom, and beyond a job. Humanities scholars [for example] explore ethical issues, and discover how the past informs the present and the future. Researchers delve into the discourses that construct gender, race, and class. We learn to decode the images that surround us; to understand and use the language necessary to navigate a complex and rapidly shifting world” (Gretchen Busl, <http://www.theguardian.com/higher-education-network/2015/oct/19/humanities-research-is-groundbreaking-life-changing-and-ignored>).

Furthermore, an examination of the top five universities ranked in the Leiden Ranking 2015 (<http://www.leidenranking.com/ranking/2015>) indicates that a strong social science, arts, and humanities sector is critical to the strong showing of those research-intensive institutions. Four of the five universities (MIT, Harvard, Stanford, Princeton) were also ranked in the top five in the areas of social sciences and humanities. MIT and Princeton had their highest ranks in this area, as does Western.

## 1.3 Task Force Steering Committee Directives

The Task Force Steering Committee was formed by the University Research Board at the request of the Vice-President (Research) in September 2015. The mission of the Committee was to examine the environment of social sciences, arts, and humanities research at Western – both internal and external to the institution – and ultimately recommend strategies to better support success, growth, and leadership in research in these disciplines.

The Committee identified, and the URB approved, three main areas of focus. In consultation with the URB and the Associate Deans Research (ADRs), three working groups were constituted, one for each of the main objectives. Members of the Steering Committee acted as coordinators for the working groups, which included representation from all eight faculties linked to the social sciences, arts, and humanities. The main areas of focus for the respective working groups revolved around three broad questions:

1. How do external entities, including funding agencies and professional organizations, define leading edge scholarly activity in social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines?
  - a. What are their priorities now?
  - b. Where are they going in the next five years?

Working Group 1 members consulted directly with the major funding agencies in Ottawa and professional organizations to fully understand the external context. This was followed by an examination of how Western might best position its researchers to take advantage of existing and emerging opportunities.

2. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for and threats to social sciences, arts, and humanities research at Western?
  - a. How do units at Western define leading edge scholarly activity?
  - b. How is research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities valued and measured at Western?
  - c. How is research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities valued and measured outside of Western?
  - d. In what ways are these values and measurements aligned with the external context?

Working Group 2 engaged in direct consultation with social science, arts and humanities scholars in faculties across campus in order to understand perceptions of the research environment at Western. Personal consultations (interviews, focus groups) with 152 researchers were complemented by an online survey completed by 347 colleagues. This represents a participation rate of 60% or more (the figure is approximate as it is difficult to determine the exact number of social science, arts, and humanities researchers on campus due to overlapping areas of interest in the Faculties). The findings of Working Group 2 are represented in each of the sections of this report.

In addition, a senior graduate student working group was assembled and conducted a focus group discussion that paralleled the personal consultations with faculty members. Their reports have been communicated directly to SGPS and are included here as part of the Working Group 2 material.

3. How is research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities supported at Western and how can this be improved?
  - a. Specifically, how can (i) administrative practices and processes, (ii) funding, and (iii) recognition be improved?
  - b. How can Western better communicate the results of leading edge scholarly activities in social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines?

- c. How can Western advocate for social sciences, arts, and humanities research more effectively?

Working Group 3 focused on understanding the process and pattern of research communication at Western, across campus and within faculties. This included a review of administrative practices and processes in Research Development Services and the Department of Communications and Public Affairs. Staff in individual Faculties with responsibility for promotion and celebration of research were consulted, as were individuals at other universities, to understand best practices here and elsewhere and how other universities deployed internal funding resources. Working Group 3 was also interested to understand how researchers promote and communicate their own work and how they can be encouraged and supported to do that more effectively.

This report is a summary of the input from all the Working Groups, and as such cannot present the full richness of detail that our Committee received. The summary reports from the Working Groups are attached to this document as appendices and we strongly encourage a careful reading of those documents. We have deliberately chosen to strike a constructive tone in this report, but we acknowledge that there are deep currents of discord within the social sciences, arts, and humanities community at Western, and the reader is directed to the consultation report in Appendix 2 to get a better sense of the mood of the community.

## **2. Social Science, Arts, and Humanities Research at Western – The Western Context**

The *Leiden Statement* and recent “defense of” writings regarding the value of research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities are indicative of the broad perception that these areas are in crisis, even in research-intensive institutions. Our consultations with scholars across campus clearly demonstrate that this perception is felt at the local level within Western as well.

Our findings suggest a considerable sense of malaise and discontent among the majority of those consulted. The critical concerns are around the valuing of research within Western, the lack of suitable internal funding mechanisms, and limited research infrastructure support. These issues are addressed here and in subsequent sections.

The consultations revealed an impressive array of social sciences, arts, and humanities research at Western, the vibrancy of which is overlooked by a model of research that is founded on assumptions about practices and success that are not necessarily aligned with the needs, traditions and goals of many of these disciplines. Such a model is, therefore, unable to recognize, support or communicate the value and impact of social sciences, arts, and humanities research at Western. The pervasive feeling is that the university tends to support and celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of researchers according to a hierarchical system of values that recognizes and celebrates high-budget research that is tied to technological “innovation” and industry interests, and particular kinds of research output (e.g., numerous and often multiple-authored publications).

The great diversity in social sciences, arts, and humanities research at Western reflects both the strength and authority of the University. A research-intensive university such as Western must make

the most of this diversity by leveraging resources, and ensuring the optimization of researchers' time and focus. Within the broad scope of research in these disciplines, there are some social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers who find Western's research climate to be supportive and who have been successful in securing internal and external funding. Even those who are successful within the prevailing model, however, note that the value ascribed to their work by the University pales in comparison to that given to big budget projects. Other social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers work within scholarly traditions that embrace different models of research and success. Some do not require large amounts of funding, such as is seen with Tri-Council monies, yet experience great difficulty finding sources for the smaller amounts of funding they do need. There are other people who do not require funding in order to undertake their research but do require other sorts of support. They are looking for, but not often finding, is institutional recognition that research 'value' is not synonymous with research funding.

If Western is truly to realize its aspirations to become a world-class, research-intensive institution, it is critical that it acknowledge, value, and support all types of researchers and their respective needs. Researchers within social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines typically work alone or in small collaborative groups, requiring time to but little to no funding to do their research. Researchers who work within this model report feeling pressure to satisfy metrics-based evaluative processes, which are inappropriate to fully capture the value and impact of their academic work. Furthermore, for social scientists, artists, and humanists who do not require large budgets, application for external grants (such as Tri-Council) is not an efficient use of time, since the 'return on investment' for these applications is very low (given the combination of low competition success rates and a low budget request – see Appendix 3), time and effort could be spent more effectively conducting research rather than seeking funds to do the same. In addition, the increased Tri-Council emphasis on team-based grants makes it more difficult for the solitary scholar to be successful. It is in the University's best interests to work creatively to find other ways to support this work.

Within the social sciences, arts, and humanities there is a strong tradition of research practice where researchers work alone to produce sole-authored publications, often in the form of books. This mode of research typically requires time-intensive analytic, writing, and publication processes that are often, though not exclusively, driven by a sole author. Social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers working explicitly from critical, social justice perspectives— indeed those who are seeking “always...the betterment of the human condition” (*Achieving Excellence*, 2014, p. 4), and who work collaboratively with community, regional, national and/or international partners to effect long term social change through incremental impacts, are particularly disadvantaged within this hierarchical model.

Mid-career researchers are often disenfranchised as they find their programs of research difficult to sustain given current internal funding conditions. For these researchers, ineligibility for internal research programs coupled with the absence of sufficient and appropriate institutional supports stifles research productivity and research and threatens the optimal use of Western's human capital and resources that are vital to making it a world-class, research-intensive institution.

The Faculties at Western that house the social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers are not only diverse in terms of the research they undertake, but also in terms of the resources that they can mobilize to support research at the Faculty level. In size alone, these eight Faculties range from the

University's largest to smallest Faculties. While the larger among these Faculties are able to mobilize some research support, smaller faculties (with associated smaller budgets) are much less able to do so. Music, Law and FIMS, for example, only recently joined forces to hire a joint research officer, while some Faculties on campus have at least one if not several such staff members. Effective support of all faculty members' research requires a combination of resources available at the local and central levels, with specific recognition of the relatively limited resources available in smaller faculties.

The University's recent decision to contribute \$5M from the 2016-17 budget to an endowed fund to support social science, arts, and humanities research is clearly a step in the right direction and one which must be recognized and applauded.

### **3. Value and Recognition of Social Science, Arts, and Humanities Research**

Central to any discussion of research advocacy and communications is the notion of value. The very act of advocating and communicating presupposes that there is value to what is being communicated. But how and in what ways does Western value research, particularly in the social sciences, arts, and humanities? What standards are used in that valuation? How does valuation take account of the diversity of work going on at the University? Does the rhetoric of valuation match the practice?

The value of research is expressed at a variety of levels within the University. At one level, the value of research is indicated by how the institution chooses to deploy tangible internal resources such as funding and infrastructure. At another level, the value of research is indicated by what and how the University chooses to communicate to internal and external audiences. Finally, the value of research is assessed and expressed at the Faculty and Department levels related to promotion and tenure (P&T), communications, and Annual Performance Evaluation (APE).

*Achieving Excellence on the World Stage* recognizes the diversity of research at this institution:

“... research outcomes and their dissemination ... mean different things to different people—from citations in the most prestigious disciplinary journals, to monographs and books published by leading presses; from keynote speaking engagements at national and international conference plenary sessions, to musical performances on the world's international stages; from scholarship that shapes public policy, to business cases that inform entrepreneurial decision-making; or from curiosity-driven enquiry, to scientific and technological innovations that can be commercialized for application in health care and by private industry.” (*Achieving Excellence*, 2014, p. 8)

The value of research is often discussed in terms of *impact*. How to measure that impact is a wide-ranging and ongoing discussion that we cannot completely capture here. Interestingly, the potential impact of the diversity of research outcomes and their dissemination through a wide range of mechanisms is generally not acknowledged within the University and its faculties and departments. This is in spite of the fact that the Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences has published a working paper entitled *Humanities, Social Sciences and Arts Research: A framework for identifying impact and indicators* (<http://www.ideas-idees.ca/sites/default/files/2014-05-05-impact-project->

[update-en.pdf](#)) identifying five categories that can be used to characterize the impact of this research: (1) impact on scholarship, (2) impact on capacity (through teaching and mentoring), (3) impact on the economy, (4) impact on society and culture, and (5) impact on practice and policy. Each of these several subcategories goes far beyond the simplistic assessment of impact by means of the size of grants, citation counts and journal impact factors. Our consultations clearly indicate that social science, arts, and humanities researchers at Western feel that the University does not recognize these other areas where their research has impact. There is substantial concern among some scholars that simplistic metrics/indicators such as citation counts could become externally-mandated standards for faculty assessments (such as Annual Performance Evaluation, and Promotion and Tenure adjudications). While some schools and departments may find metrics to be appropriate for evaluative purposes, researchers remain adamant that the evaluative use of metrics *must not* be imposed on all units as *the* method of assessing faculty or individual researcher performance. The SSHRC ADRs submitted a document to the AVPR in February of 2016 that outlines the complexity of this issue within the social science, arts, and humanities disciplines. That document offers a summary of the kinds of metrics and other assistance that would help researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds to document research impact and excellence. It is attached as part of Appendix 2.

The value and impact of research are also considered at the Faculty and departmental level through the P&T and APE processes. While these processes are supposed to be based on disciplinary norms, they do not recognize many of the aspects of the research of social scientists, artists and humanists. This includes the longer timeline for community-engaged research (given the need to first develop strong community relationships), and many aspects of knowledge mobilization such as reports generated for research partners that do not appear in peer-reviewed journals, and public engagement (e.g. media, public lectures etc.). If Western is to support its researchers in their efforts to align themselves with Western's strategic priorities as well as those of the Tri-Councils, it must find a way to recognize these additional activities (see Appendices 1 and 2).

An examination of advocacy strategies being deployed by the Tri-Councils clearly demonstrates that knowledge mobilization in all its forms is the key to having impact on the academy and society at large. In particular, the term "engaged research," with myriad modifiers (patient-engaged, community-engaged, public-engaged) is replacing the idea of "outreach," as it emphasizes the bi- (or multi) directional flow of information that increasingly characterizes engaged research, particularly that done in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. However, such engaged research faces a number of requirements, including the need for extensive lead time and consultation before research can even begin, negotiations with partner communities and other Universities that have their own research protocols that may or may not dovetail with those of Western, and outcomes that may not fit traditional academic models of impact. The training of graduate students in this area is also of particular importance. The outcomes of such engaged research surely bring Western closer to truth (*Veritas*). However, immediate usefulness (*Utilitas*) may not be as apparent nor may it fit neatly into the "typically defined... research groups" (Strategic Research Plan Summary, p. 1)

The communication of research results in venues beyond the usual scholarly publications and academic conferences serves many purposes beyond satisfying external granting agencies. It is a way to recognize success and offer public congratulations for a research achievement. It is a way to boost a researcher's profile (whether faculty members or graduate students), which in turn may bring new

and different opportunities for research and engagement. It is a way for the institution to demonstrate the breadth and quality of its research work to prospective students, faculty members, and donors, to governments, and to the private sector. It is a way to build a campus community, with researchers in seemingly disparate disciplines being made aware of the research taking place throughout the eight Faculties. Effective communication of research successes is also a means of publicly acknowledging the support of the Tri-Councils and of reinforcing to them the value of the research they fund. In all of these ways, the communication process serves to validate the scholarship of each researcher.

Western uses a number of tools as part of its broader communication and public relations strategy. These activities are coordinated by the Office of Communications & Public Affairs (hereafter CPA), under Associate Vice-President Communications Helen Connell. This office includes Alumni & Development Communications, Media & Community Relations, Creative Services, and Editorial Services. Many faculties have their own communications officers/teams. Further details regarding the research communications environment are outlined in Appendix 3. Our consultations revealed a strong and consistent sense among social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers that their work is not adequately publicized by the University, and that the publicity spotlight shines much more frequently on research in the STEM areas. Indeed, more than 80% of Working Group 2's online survey respondents indicated that social sciences, arts, and humanities research deserves both better recognition by the University and better promotion to improve visibility outside of the University (see Appendix 2).

A tabulation of "mentions" of research activity across the various public communication platforms at Western over the past five to seven years show some broad trends (see Appendix 3). Our analysis reveals that a research achievement in the STEM disciplines is four to five times more likely to receive institutional publicity than an achievement in the social sciences, arts or humanities disciplines. We do not mean to suggest that this disparity is intentional, and it must be stressed that the relatively poor promotion of social sciences, arts, and humanities research is not for lack of trying by CPA. Over a period of years, CPA has developed several initiatives to engage with scholars in these disciplines and begin conversations that could lead to greater publicity, with very limited success. Our findings suggest that this pattern appears to be the result of several phenomena: (1) the challenge of the CPA gaining access to information about social science, arts, and humanities research, (2) considerable differences in the support for communications among the various faculties (it is typically better supported in the STEM faculties than in social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines), and (3) a reluctance on the part of many social scientists, artists and humanists to engage with the communications team(s).

### **3.1 Recommendations**

Western should:

- initiate broad discussion within the University about how research is valued and impact assessed at the level of the institution. The VPR's office initiated a discussion on this issue, and the SSHRC social science, arts, and humanities ADRs responded with a statement on indicators, but more discussion is needed, particularly in terms of how the University can be an advocate for its researchers
- engage in a new and critical discussion of contributions and impacts that are considered in promotion and tenure, Annual Performance Evaluation and graduate student assessment files.



It is clear that the external context is shifting in terms of contributions that the Tri-Councils value, so Western should respond to support its researchers

- establish better mechanisms to connect the Communications & Public Affairs office with the Faculties and social science, arts, and humanities researchers

For this process to be effective, researchers themselves need to recognize the value of advocacy / knowledge mobilization / public engagement / dissemination to their own work, and become partners with communications professionals across campus in publicizing their research achievements.

#### **4. Infrastructure to Support Research**

In order to enhance research productivity and impact, it is critical that Western ensure social scientists, artists and humanists have the infrastructure support to develop research projects, prepare and submit research grants, conduct research, and initiate the “reciprocal and complementary flow and uptake of knowledge between researchers, knowledge brokers and knowledge users” (SSHRC, 2016 <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#km-mc>).

Based on the findings of the Working Groups (see all Appendices) our Committee identified four areas in which infrastructure should be strengthened to enhance social sciences, arts, and humanities research.

##### **4.1 Support for the preparation of research proposals**

Supports for faculty members applying for grant funding include: the identification of grant opportunities, application review, assistance with budgeting, identification of knowledge mobilization activities and development of knowledge mobilization plans. As discussed in Section 2 (above), some Faculties have the resources to provide some assistance to researchers in these areas, but access is not universal. Consultants in RDS are available to help with large grant applications, but their capacity to support more basic applications is very limited. Access to these and other relevant support services will enable researchers to prepare stronger grant applications and efficiencies would be gained if some supports were centralized, since this would promote coordination, avoid duplication and ensure access.

Researchers in the social sciences, arts, and humanities, in formulating their research programs from the outset would benefit from assistance in developing coordinated knowledge mobilization programs that include traditional modes of mobilization but also mechanisms such as research narratives, media releases, and community outreach. Research and Development Services, Western Libraries (e.g. Scholarship@Western), the Community Engaged Learning group and Communications Western would be key partners in this important initiative. In addition, knowledge mobilization plans will benefit from strong relationships with municipal, provincial and federal governments, policy makers, not-for-profit agencies, and other potential research users. Assistance with identifying, developing, and maintaining these relationships would help to strengthen both the awareness and the impact of social science, arts, and humanities research. In turn, this will enhance the competitiveness of our researchers in external grant applications by aligning them with the priorities of the external funding agencies.

To assist with budget development and justification, Western should develop a University-wide framework for the identification and valuation of institutional in-kind contributions. Increasingly, these types of contributions are required for external grant applications, and researchers need support to identify and document the in-kind contributions offered by the University. Two additional administrative areas were identified as being problematic: ROLA and the new HR regulations around hiring research assistants. ROLA is widely perceived by faculty members to be arcane and user-unfriendly. The ADRs have noted that ROLA is not useful as a means of tracking research application activity in their faculties.

Once a grant is awarded, faculty members highlighted that the new HR regulations surrounding the hiring of research assistants have significantly increased the workload of administrative staff, resulted in a longer hiring process and greatly increased the administrative burden on researchers, particularly those with large and complex grants. These regulations act as a particular disincentive to researchers with smaller grants, for whom the cumbersome hiring process may not be commensurate with the resources they have to devote to research assistants.

Given the highly competitive nature of external funding, social science, arts, and humanities scholars would benefit from access to an internal peer-review system. The system should provide timely and constructive feedback to enhance the quality of submitted research grants.

## **4.2 Research ethics review and approval**

It is widely acknowledged that research involving human participants must reflect high ethical standards, and we recognize the importance and value of faculty and staff contributions to the research ethics process at Western. Nonetheless, in our consultations, many faculty and students expressed frustration with the University's ethics approval process, citing, in particular, Research Ethics Board comments that go beyond the accepted purview of ethics review and significant delays in procuring ethics approval. In addition, researchers involved in multi-university projects experience difficulties and delays in coordinating ethics approval across institutions.

Our Committee recognizes that the REB is aware of these challenges and is taking steps to address them. Documents detailing the steps taken to improve efficiency in the Office of Research Ethics are included as materials in Appendix 3. We support their efforts and encourage the University to ensure that they are given adequate resources, both in terms of finances and training of personnel, to promote timely review of submissions. Finally, if the REB is to reflect the ideal of local peer-review for ethical acceptability, social scientists, artists and humanists must dedicate their time to serving as members of the Board.

## **4.3 Access to research tools**

Many research tools, such as quantitative analysis software that is commonly used in the sciences and in some of the social sciences, arts, and humanities, are centrally supported and are therefore widely available to students and faculty members at Western. There is not, however, comparable access to tools that would be of use particularly to social science, arts, and humanities researchers, such as qualitative analysis software and online survey software. Some Faculties are able to provide

to their researchers access to these resources, but others do not have the funds to make these tools available. Thus, coordinated centralized support for these resources would be of inestimable benefit to social science, arts, and humanities research on campus.

#### **4.4 Fostering interdisciplinary and collaborative research**

External funding agencies promote interdisciplinary projects that involve multiple researchers and students distributed across institutions, and participation in these large multisite grants is an important aspect of research practice. In our consultations, the Committee heard about the need for strong support for interdisciplinary and collaborative research. The development of fruitful collaborative relationships requires time and careful consultation; moreover, the outcomes of these collaborations will take diverse forms. Support for interdisciplinary and collaborative research projects must be structured in light of these facts.

Western's Strategic Plan clearly acknowledges the importance of interdisciplinary research:

“Recognizing that solutions to many of the world's most significant and complex challenges are often found where disciplines intersect, we will promote and support collaboration while building capacity for interdisciplinary research and teaching.” (p. 19)

This strategic focus is aligned with the Tri-Councils' increasing emphasis on interdisciplinarity. In keeping with this commitment, Western does provide some support for interdisciplinary research, particularly through the InterDisciplinary Initiative (IDI) program. However, there remain many barriers to conducting interdisciplinary research, and support for this kind of research should be broadened and enhanced. Barriers were reported by faculty members who have appointments in two or more units, particularly with regard to P&T and APE. Progress has been made in this area in the Collective Agreement, but apparently there is work yet to do. Supports could include both physical spaces on campus and events that promote conversations between disciplines and with partners outside of the University would be beneficial to the entire Western community. Creating venues and multiple ways in which the University can continue to encourage, facilitate, and support interdisciplinary research involving social scientist, artist, and humanist researchers and graduate students will strengthen the value of research across disciplines at the University level and beyond. Further, administrative support could be provided by people who are knowledgeable about community partnerships and international collaboration (such as the Community Engaged Learning group and Western International). Finally, the significant amount of time that goes into cultivating relationships in community based and interdisciplinary research—before grants can be applied for and research can be undertaken—should be recognized and valued (see Appendix 1 and 2).

## 4.5 Recommendations

Western should:

- Centralize some elements of grant support activities, such as the identification of granting opportunities, grant preparation support, peer review, determination of the nature and strategies for in-kind support, knowledge mobilization strategies and community engaged research facilitation and support
- Streamline basic administrative requirements and undertake a broad based review to increase efficiencies and decrease the load on the researcher
- Continue to support the search for improvements and efficiencies in the ethics approval process, noting the improvements that have taken place in the last year
  - expand the negotiated agreements with other institutions to allow ethics review to be delegated to a single institution.
  - encourage faculty members to become involved in REB committees
- Centralize support for key research tools, such as Qualtrics and NVivo
- Provide more support for interdisciplinary research
  - encourage the continued support for the IDI program
  - work for improvements in cross-unit appointments
  - create spaces that promote collaboration and cross-unit communication

## 5. Funding and Other Resources for Research

Western is to be applauded for the amount of central resources it invests in its internal funding program. Western contributes approximately \$2M/year in its internal funding programs, while some universities (e.g., McGill) only use funds made available from the Tri-Councils through the SSHRC Institutional Grant and SSHRC/NSERC Grant Residual Funds. Some universities have endowments that support internally-funded research (e.g., University of Toronto's sizable Connaught Fund, and University of Alberta's and University of British Columbia's Killam Funds) (see Appendix 3).

The diversity of interests and needs of social science, arts, and humanities researchers means that a "one size fits all" approach to the provision of support is inappropriate. We work within an external funding environment that stresses interdisciplinary projects and collaborative teams and partnerships. However, many scholars at Western and elsewhere work alone and/or require only small amounts of money to do their research. These scholars find themselves in a difficult position, since their projects and research needs do not fit the external funding model, and internal funding models have not been designed to fill the gap. Many researchers in the social sciences, arts, and humanities maintain an impressive research output without large grants, since their research costs are low relative to those seen in other disciplines, and they do not typically support labs or large numbers of graduate students. It is in the University's best interests to deploy internal funding programs that support the range of social sciences, arts, and humanities research. This would include support intended to enhance success in external grant applications as well as support for high-quality research that does not require larger-scale external funding.

To better understand existing supports for research, our Committee examined the internal funding environment for social sciences, arts, and humanities research. Prior to 2013, Western had a menu of

internal granting programs that included the Academic Development Fund (large and small), the SSHRC Internal Grants (research and travel), and the International Research Grant, among others. In 2013, the internal granting program was repackaged, with funds going to the social science, arts, and humanities faculties under the Faculty Research Development Fund (FRDF) and into the Tri-Council-specific Western Strategic Support for Success Funds (WSSS). This funding structure is still in place. With the FRDF, funds are deployed at the discretion of the Faculties, while the WSSS focuses exclusively on preparing researchers for the development of an application to the Tri-Councils.

Some perceived problems with this structure were uncovered by our Committee. The distribution of the FRDF funds was based on a formula (which has apparently not been recorded and cannot be reconstructed) that considered each Faculty's previous success in internal funding competitions and was thus heavily dependent on the size of the Faculty. Thus, some Faculties receive larger allocations, while others receive smaller allocations. With regard to the WSSS, the size of the grants (up to \$25k), their exclusive focus on the development of Tri-Council proposals, and the restrictive eligibility criteria for applicants (one must have held a SSHRC grant within two years or have recently received a 4A rating on a SSHRC application) means that larger amounts of money are concentrated among a smaller group of researchers. There is a widespread belief that the current internal funding program fails to recognize the breadth and variety of social sciences, arts, and humanities research at Western, and that many researchers have been effectively shut out from internal support. This strategy may be consistent with the University's Strategic Plan, but it has had the consequence of eliminating support for many researchers, with a significant negative impact on faculty morale. In all, the changes have led to the perception of many researchers that they are unable to apply for internal support.

A focus of our Committee was to explore and identify concerns with the existing internal funding programs, but further consultation is required to determine specific means to address these issues. Thus, we recommend that the URB strike a subcommittee to oversee re-organization of the internal funding mechanisms. To aid the work of that subcommittee, we have identified a range of initiatives, based on our consultations at Western and a review of internal funding programs at other institutions that could enhance internal research support at Western. These are presented below in no particular order (see Appendices 2 and 3).

### **5.1 Existing Funding Programs**

While emphasizing that a one-size-fits-all approach does not work across the social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines, there are some merits to the current internal funding model. In particular, the distribution of research funds to the Faculties through the FRDF program, while imperfect, has allowed for effective, focused local investments determined by Faculty priorities. In addition, something like the Strategic Support for Success program makes sense in better preparing our faculty members to be competitive at the Tri-Councils. However, beside the perceptions of inequities that are described above, there is some question as to whether these funds are actually achieving their stated aim. An analysis of the total value of SSHRC funds held at Western from 2011 to 2015, and an anecdotal accounting of the success at SSHRC application of WSSS recipients is presented in Appendix 3, suggesting that the WSSS program could be improved. At the very least, eligibility should be extended to collaborators or co-applicants on Tri-Council grants, those holding external

grants from agencies other than Tri-Council granting agencies, and those who have made recent Tri-Council applications where feedback indicates strategies that could feasibly lead to success on reapplication.

## **5.2 Possible New Forms of Internal Grants**

An analysis of the internal funding programs at Western in light of our researchers' overall funding success at SSHRC revealed that the current strategic focus for Tri-Council success did not appear to be functioning as desired. Furthermore, a reflection back to the upward trajectory in funding from 2011 to 2013 suggests that a diversified, flexible and multilevel internal grants program actually permits more creativity and innovation and ultimately breeds more success than a program that assumes that one-size-fits-all. This is clearly the model followed by the leading international research-intensive universities (see Appendix 3).

To that end, a sequence of possible new forms of internal grants was developed from the input received as part of our consultation as well as the examination of internal granting programs at other universities (see Appendix 2 and 3).

### Competitive Teaching Release

Lack of time was identified as a major barrier to research progress by many faculty members working in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. While this concern is no doubt also familiar to researchers from other disciplines, the form and demands of much social science, arts, and humanities research exacerbates the issue. Specifically, many of these researchers work alone, within a research model that is characterized by prolonged and intensive engagement with research materials, often involving work off-site. For these researchers, the most valuable research support – and the support that would offer the greatest impact in terms of enhanced research productivity – is relief from teaching in order to make meaningful gains in their work. Competitive internal grants that allow for teaching release would help to facilitate research momentum and productivity in social sciences, arts, and humanities.

### Mid-career Research Awards

Mid-career researchers commonly observed that they are disadvantaged by the current internal funding mechanisms (e.g., seed, bridge, accelerator grants) that restrict eligibility to early career faculty or that tie eligibility to recent success in securing Tri-Council funding. Mid-career researchers who have not previously held Tri-Council funding and who wish to seek external support are constrained by restrictive eligibility requirements in their efforts to seek support for preparatory/pilot research, and are thus unlikely to be successful in preparing competitive grant proposals and in procuring external funding. They require internal support in order to develop competitive external funding applications. One proposal to support mid-career researchers in getting new projects off the ground is to offer a one-time “Kick Starter Grant” that would be available to researchers at a critical point in their careers, designed to help them build toward future external grant success.

### Small Grants Program

Western University should actively support research that can be carried out on small budgets. Many of the participants in our consultations mourned the loss of the SSHRC Internal Grants and the Academic Development Funds, which were identified as valuable support programs for this type of low-budget research. Smaller grants should be made available to researchers in social sciences, arts, and humanities in the forms of small competitive grants (e.g. \$10,000 or less) and support for dissemination. The focus of these programs should be to support smaller budget research where there is no anticipation of external grant applications; instead, these projects should be considered on their own merit and with respect to the outcomes and impact they are anticipated to achieve.

### Grants to support the preparation of large and complex proposals (e.g., Partnership Grants)

All three of the Tri-Council granting agencies stress multi-site and multi-investigator grants with an emphasis on interdisciplinary initiatives that include partnerships between academic institutions as well as community-academy partnerships. Researchers who work in these areas emphasize the significant time and effort involved in setting up these large-scale partnerships. Western should provide grants to support the preparation of these large-scale grants (e.g., SSHRC Partnership and Partnership Development Grants) in order to enhance success in these applications.

### Research Grant In Lieu of Salary

As discussed in Appendix 3, our consultations revealed that many researchers frequently resort to self-funding their research or conference travel. A program (formerly known as the University Research Grant) does exist under which researchers can allot a portion of their salary as a research grant, allowing them to claim those expenses against their taxes. However, the language of the program is not clear, and a recent Canada Revenue Agency bulletin has been interpreted to mean that only sabbaticants can apply for this grant. There are some suggestions, however, that this interpretation is overly restrictive. If this is the case, the program is going unused by many of the researchers who could benefit from it.

## **5.3 Recommendations**

Western should:

- re-examine its internal funding program to better understand whether current programs are achieving their goals, being cognizant of the variability in the kinds of support that researchers need. This could include:
  - revisiting the current FRDF and Strategic Support for Success Grants, doing an analysis of the effectiveness of these programs and the equity of the distribution of funds
  - broaden the existing internal funding program, considering new possibilities such as:
    - competitive teaching release grants
    - mid-career kick starter grants
    - small research grants
    - grants to support the preparation of large and complex proposals

- reviewing the URG and how it is being utilized as a means of making it more “user friendly” for faculty members who must, or choose, to self-fund. This may involve seeking a ruling from the CRA on the issue of whether non-sabbaticants can apply.

We feel that a diverse internal funding program will achieve two ends. The first is to support basic ongoing research and associated research outcomes in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. The second will be to better position our researchers to achieve success in their efforts to obtain external funds. Both these ends will be of benefit to the researchers themselves and to the University as a whole.

## 6. Conclusions

The strength in this report lies in the voices that are represented. Over that past year, we have spoken with multiple stakeholders. Conversations with representatives at the different Tri-Councils provided a frame of reference, as did dialogue with Western administrative staff, managers, and Deans. But above all it was the discussions and conversations with our colleagues and students in the social sciences, arts, and humanities faculties that were most formative to this report. At the heart of being valued is the simple act of being heard. This is not to deny the very real concerns and perceptions the researchers expressed: these are tangible and require immediate attention and action. It is to realize, however, that through conversations and discussions a deeply profound value can be co-created. One thing we have come to know is that there is a deep sense of care and pride for Western. Care should be the foundation for any ethical engagement and the processes of education and research is always that: ethical.

We trust the reader will find a detailed but also actionable set of recommendations within this report that would be of benefit not just to the social sciences, arts, and humanities, but to the entire Western community. This past year has revealed deep currents of frustration and disillusionment, but out of grievance a pathway forward is thus laid.

Respectfully submitted,

### **The URB Task Force Steering Committee – Support for Research in Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities at Western**

Andrew Nelson (Chair)	Social Science (Anthropology)
Cathy Benedict	Director of Research, Don Wright Faculty of Music
Jacquie Burkell	ADR, FIMS
Alison Doherty	Health Sciences (Kinesiology)
Jonathan Vance	Social Science (History)
Charles Weijer	Arts & Humanities (Philosophy)



## **Appendix 1**

### URB Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities Task Force Working Group 1 Summary Report and Attachments

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#### **Contents:**

1. The External Context - Interim Report Updates
2. New Analysis
  - a. Engagement/Knowledge Mobilization/Communications/Advocacy

**Attachment** - URB SSAH Task Force, Working Group 1 Draft Report; The Ways in Which External Funding Agencies Are Pursuing Communication and Advocacy Strategies – Prepared by: Cathy Benedict (Faculty of Music) and Joshua Lambier (Faculty of Arts)

Working group's initial remit:

How do external entities, including funding agencies and professional organizations, define leading edge scholarly activity in social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines?

- a. What are their priorities now?
- b. Where are they going in the next five years?

#### **1 The External Context - Interim Report Updates**

Federal Budget - The most important development since the interim report was presented to the URB was the Federal Budget, released on March 22, 2016 (<http://www.budget.gc.ca/2016/docs/plan/toc-tdm-en.html>). It included \$95M in new funds for the Tri-Councils: \$30M each to CIHR and NSERC, \$16M to SSHRC and \$19 million for the Research Support Fund (to support the indirect costs) (some additional funds were promised in the last budget so the reporting of numbers in different sources is quite variable). Of particular importance is that these funds were not targeted, leaving it up to the individual councils to decide how to spend the funds. The budget supported a variety of other programs targeting student support and STEM research, including Genome Canada, industry partnerships, the Perimeter Institute, etc. In addition, the budget included \$2 billion over three years, starting in 2016–17, for a new Post-Secondary Institutions Strategic Investment Fund, for 50% of eligible funds for research infrastructure (see <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/051.nsf/eng/home>). Finally, the budget included new funds for the Mitacs Globalink program, which some SSAH researchers can access. With the reintroduction of the long form census and other measures, it is clear that this government has a very different approach to research both in the sciences and SSAH disciplines than pertained under the Conservatives.

SSHRC – The main update for SSHRC is how it instructed committees to handle budgets in the most recent round of Insight Grants. The committees were instructed to be more stringent in terms of their scrutiny of budgets, which is quite different from the last several years when budgets were generally not touched. This has led to an increase in success rate (from 24% last year to 31% this year). SSHRC also moved away from the old 4A system to giving individual grants sextile rankings. It will be interesting to see how universities respond to this in terms of the 4A reapplication programs that almost every institution (including Western) has had.

SSHRC has also made a firm commitment to support policy research that will address the recommendations in the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission:

[http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/about-au\\_sujet/president/index-eng.aspx](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/about-au_sujet/president/index-eng.aspx) .

NSERC – On April 21, 2016, NSERC announced that it was undertaking a review of Discovery Funding allocation ([http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Media-Media/ProgramNewsDetails-NouvellesDesProgrammesDetails\\_eng.asp?ID=832](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/Media-Media/ProgramNewsDetails-NouvellesDesProgrammesDetails_eng.asp?ID=832)) . The committee in charge of this review will, among other things, help to decide how future budget increases are to be allocated. Professor Dean, Dean of Western’s Faculty of Science is on the Advisory Committee ([http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/doc/Professors-Professeurs/MembershipAdvisoryCommittee\\_e.pdf](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/doc/Professors-Professeurs/MembershipAdvisoryCommittee_e.pdf)) .

CIHR – Like SSHRC, CIHR made a commitment to support Indigenous Health Research (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49620.html>). It is not clear if this commitment is related to the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation report.

NCE – The NCE evaluations team shared with us the information that 20% of researchers in the networks reported being from SSAH disciplines, with 65% from natural sciences and engineering and 31% from the health sciences (multiple responses were permitted).

The NCE recently announced the 2017 International Knowledge Translation Platforms (NCE-IKTP) competition ([http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/Competitions-Competitions/Current-EnVigueur/NCEIKTP-SITCRCE-2017/Index\\_eng.asp](http://www.nce-rce.gc.ca/Competitions-Competitions/Current-EnVigueur/NCEIKTP-SITCRCE-2017/Index_eng.asp)) . The competition funds networking and administration costs associated with knowledge translation and commercialization, but not research activities, students or stipends.

In March, MITACS (which started as an NCE) and the University of Waterloo partnered to bring together grad and post doc students in philosophy to “solve hands-on innovation challenges using philosophical approaches in collaboration with local partners.”

<http://www.mitacs.ca/en/newsroom/news-release/philosophy-researchers-address-ethical-and-social-challenges-through-industry> . MITACS tends to be STEM oriented, but they are interested to support projects from the SSAH disciplines, as this project demonstrates.

Canada Council for the Arts – The emphasis on culture and the arts that was outlined in the federal budget included \$550M over the next five years for the Canada Council. These funds will allow the Canada Council to open “a new chapter on the artistic and cultural history of this country” (<http://canadacouncil.ca/council/blog/2016/03/budget16-canadacouncil>) .

Ontario’s Culture Strategy – This program was not mentioned in the interim report, but bears watching closely (see <https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-culture-strategy>). This is an effort by the Province to “set a vision for arts and culture, define priorities and guide support for the sector in the years to come”. The strategy is still being developed and they are seeking input (see the web site).

## **2 New Analysis - Engagement/Knowledge Mobilization/Communications/Advocacy**

A new research paradigm is emerging in the granting councils and many Universities’ strategic plans: the “engaged research” paradigm. The key component of this new paradigm is the fact that an increasing body of scholarship now no longer operates as a unidirectional transfer of knowledge from the academy to recipient knowledge users. Rather, knowledge users are engaged right from the beginning in a bidirectional (or multidirectional) exchange in order to define research questions, lay out research programs and to ensure the adequate and targeted mobilization of knowledge that arises from the research. The research is therefore inherently collaborative, engaging communities, the public, patients, industry etc. The nature of the engagement will necessarily vary depending on the nature of the partnership.

Engagement at the Tri-Councils is expressed in a variety of ways. SSHRC talks about “community engagement” (<http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/community-communitite/index-eng.aspx>), CIHR uses the terms “citizen engagement” (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/41592.html>) and “patient engagement” (<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/45851.html>) and the Canada Council uses the term “public engagement” (<http://canadacouncil.ca/council/news-room/news/2014/simon-brault-apm>) (NSERC’s concept of “community engagement” appears to refer to the community of researchers rather than external partners; see [http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Reports-Rapports/Visits-Visites\\_eng.asp](http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/NSERC-CRSNG/Reports-Rapports/Visits-Visites_eng.asp)). Engaged research is happening in all faculties at Western, but community based research is commonly found within the SSAH disciplines, including, to name only a few, projects that are Aboriginal, archaeological, geographic, educational, sociocultural anthropological, migration and ethnic relations, and transitional justice in nature.

While engaged research is a new and emerging paradigm that is being enthusiastically embraced by the Federal granting councils (and many other granting agencies), it must be noted that not all academic research can be accommodated within this model. However, the increasing emphasis on knowledge mobilization at all granting councils means that researchers in all disciplines must be more attentive to their audience.

### 2.1 Western’s Position on Knowledge Mobilization and Engaged Research

Western’s most recent strategic plan: *Achieving Excellence on the World Stage* ([http://president.uwo.ca/strategic\\_planning/index.html](http://president.uwo.ca/strategic_planning/index.html)), lists 4 fundamental strategic priorities, one of which is: *Raising Our Expectations: Create a world-class research and scholarship culture*. Within this strategic priority is a goal to: *Partner with other institutions and communities*. This text does not use the rhetoric of “engaged” research, but its intent could be

consistent with the engagement paradigm, particularly the quote that “We must identify and pursue more opportunities to advance and apply knowledge in partnership with the private sector, non-profit sector, and specific communities within the broader public (e.g., Aboriginal and immigrant communities).”

[http://president.uwo.ca/strategic\\_planning/priorities/expectations.html](http://president.uwo.ca/strategic_planning/priorities/expectations.html)

The strategic plan notes that Western will support this core priority by “*focusing more attention and resources promoting and rewarding (1) excellence in scholarship and innovation; (2) knowledge creation; and (3) the translation and mobilization of that knowledge into languages and applications useful in the public realm.*” This statement does emphasize knowledge mobilization, but it does not use the rhetoric of engagement and it does not recognize the bidirectional flow of knowledge or the act and process of collaboration and co-creation.

## 2.2 Impediments to the Implementation and Recognition of Engaged Research – Case Study

However, it is clear that there are some fundamental structural impediments to the goal of engaging with other institutions and communities. An examination of Aboriginal research can serve as a case study of some of the most important of these issues. The Tri-Councils’ strategic focus on Aboriginal research (discussed in the interim report and above) presents both an opportunity and a challenge to SSAH researchers at Western. The opportunity arises from Western’s current efforts to develop an Indigenous Strategic Plan and the strong research base in this area that exists within the University. The challenges include:

- the community engaged nature of Aboriginal research, meaning that such research projects often cannot be developed and executed within the term of a single grant
- an increasing number of Indigenous communities in Canada have research protocols that researchers must agree to in order to move ahead with the project. These contracts specify what is important for the community, and this might not cohere with what is seen as important by the university, making Indigenous research a challenging venture for university based researchers. In other words, the researchers must be accountable to two groups, each of which has their own standards and priorities.
- the outcomes of Aboriginal research do not necessarily fit university definitions of “leading edge” research. This particularly applies to outputs such as mandated reports, the need for enhanced relationships with government and/or service organizations, the development and dissemination of plain language texts that need to be completed for Aboriginal organizations/groups and social media projects. These are usually done “in addition to” journal publications and do not merit serious consideration on the Annual Performance Evaluations, even though the Indigenous community has deemed them just as (if not more) important than the academic outputs
- there are different forms of community peer-review of research output that are usually undertaken for Indigenous research that are not seen as valid by institutionalized authorities, leading to important questions about whose knowledge is most important -- the institution or the community involved in the research -- *which is at the heart of this ongoing debate.* Furthermore, even when journal articles result from such research, they are usually published in journals that do not have high “impact factors” or are open-source so that the broader Indigenous community can readily access the information

In order for Western to live up to its stated commitment to "improving the accessibility and success in higher education for Indigenous peoples" (*Strategic Plan - Achieving Excellence on the World Stage*), there must be a corresponding commitment to enhance the type of research that is valued and validated at Western. This can be done by incorporating the principles of engaged research into all research aspects of the University, from funding internal grants, going into the community and bringing the community to Western, to reconsidering how research is valued broadly and how it is assessed at the level of the Annual Performance Evaluation, thus demonstrating that Western is serious about cultivating institutionalized change. It can also be achieved by incorporating complementary resources on campus, such as the Community Engaged Learning group in the Student Support Centre. This requires the attention, commitment, and support of both the University and the communities to work together effectively within this new paradigm, so that Western can live up to its promise to be a "leading edge" research institution for Indigenous people in Canada and globally.

This case study focused on Aboriginal research, but the same issues arise with any project practicing engaged research. Simply put, the resources are not available to support the development of such projects, nor is there institutional or local level recognition of the value of this research.

### 2.3 Engaged Research, Knowledge Mobilization, Communications and Advocacy

It should be clear from the discussion above that the distinction between *knowledge mobilization* and *engaged research* is becoming increasingly blurred. Indeed, SSHRC's definition of knowledge mobilization is very similar to the definition of engaged research presented above:

*“Knowledge mobilization: The reciprocal and complementary flow and uptake of research knowledge between researchers, knowledge brokers and knowledge users—both within and beyond academia—in such a way that may benefit users and create positive impacts within Canada and/or internationally, and, ultimately, has the potential to enhance the profile, reach and impact of social sciences and humanities research. Knowledge mobilization initiatives must address at least one of the following, as appropriate, depending on research area and project objectives, context, and target audience:*

Within academia:

informs, advances and/or improves:  
research agendas; theory; and/or methods.

Beyond academia:

informs:  
public debate; policies; and/or practice;  
enhances/improves services; and/or informs the decisions and/or processes of people in  
business, government, the media, practitioner communities and civil society.”

<http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/definitions-eng.aspx#km-mc>

Thus, it can be argued that the “reciprocal and complementary flow and uptake of research knowledge between researchers, knowledge brokers and knowledge users” must emerge from an engaged research program. Knowledge mobilization is also part of two other key priorities for SSHRC – open access and data management/curation.

Further, successful knowledge mobilization strategies that emerge from engaged research programs include communications strategies and can be effective tools in advocacy efforts. This would seem to be the logic underlying the Tri-Councils’ push on all four fronts. Effective *story telling* is an increasingly important component of the granting councils’ rhetoric (see [http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/storytellers-jai\\_une\\_histoire\\_a\\_raconter/index-eng.aspx](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/society-societe/storytellers-jai_une_histoire_a_raconter/index-eng.aspx)). The same can be said for recognizing that *impact* comes in many forms, which indicates that the best way to assess impact is to assess research outputs against the goals that were developed collaboratively within the initial engagement process. This is a more nuanced view of impact as something more than simple bibliometrics and as such requires changes at the institutional and disciplinary levels to facilitate and recognize this kind of research.

Finally, it is very important to note that many of our students are already actively participating in engaged research. We must be in a position to provide them with opportunities, train them in best practices, as well as to recognize non-traditional research outputs, such as blogs, websites, films, oral and digital storytelling projects as valid ways of presenting their research and engaging with their communities. SSHRC has recognized the importance of graduate training in this area with its story telling project (web site above). Students participating in this project are getting additional training in public engagement as well as the writing of op-ed pieces enabling them to mediate the academic and public spheres. Thus, at the same time as we struggle with the value of these outputs at the University and APE level, the generational change is already happening amongst our students.

Working Group 1 membership included:

Andrew Nelson, Charles Weijer, Cathy Benedict, Alan Leschied (Education), Jim Davies (FSS), Jeff Dixon (Schulich), Joshua Lambier (student A&H), Sam Trosow (FIMS/Law), Janice Forsyth (FHS)

This report was informed by additional submissions by:

Cathy Benedict – Faculty of Music  
Jim Davies – Faculty of Social Science  
Jeff Dixon – Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry  
Janice Forsyth – Faculty of Health Sciences  
Stephanie Hayne – Student Support Centre  
Lisa Hodgetts - Faculty of Social Science  
Joshua Lambier – Faculty of Arts  
Joanna Quinn - Faculty of Social Science  
Andrew Walsh - Faculty of Social Science  
Graduate Student Working Group  
NCE and SSHRC

## Attachment

URB SSAH Task Force  
Working Group 1 Draft Report  
The Ways in Which External Funding Agencies Are Pursuing  
Communication and Advocacy Strategies  
Part 1  
Cathy Benedict (Faculty of Music)

### Advocacy

The case can be made that the processes, mechanisms and strategies for advocacy are to laud and to appeal to the sensibilities of the status quo. As such, advocacy often stems from the need to protect a system that for whatever reason is unable or unwilling to embrace change. Advocacy, then, has a specific agenda and in the case of external funding agencies that are supported by governmental sources, agenda and status quo will constantly be in flux. Much like public relations, the target of advocacy is fundamental to the success of the message. The directionality of such a message has (until recently) flowed from agency to audience (target), with little care for what will be referred to in these reports as co-creation and shared authority.

The other side of the advocacy coin, the prevailing systems that govern flux, while always already present, more often than not remain unarticulated. That said this report will highlight the ways in which a narrative turn away from metrics represents a distinct embrace of the ways in which people come to know. Fueled in nature by the necessity to be recognized, seen, heard, and supported financially, this turn represents an epistemological shift toward an awareness of the human need to engage in sense making. This report, then, will focus on how language has shifted throughout both external and internal documents and those ways a unilateral focus on numerical metrics as proof of knowledge mobilization and impact has shifted toward the use of narrative.

### Communication

In 2007 the *Higher Education* Funding Council for England (HEFCE) moved to create a “broad framework for the assessment of impact” which would be submitted and reported as case studies (Research Excellence Framework- REF). Recognizing that research in Higher Education is manifold across the disciplines it was noted that as such it is “difficult to reduce this diversity to numbers.” Thus, the use of “qualitative case studies were found to “capture the diverse connections between research and society” (Grant, 2015, [bit.ly/1D7aunD](http://bit.ly/1D7aunD)). Aside from the multiple critiques of the REF, research impact in the form of narrative and story has made multiple inroads and is readily observable on several platforms and media sites.

The ability to “[craft] a good story” was recently cited in a March 30th, 2016 column in the journal *University Affairs* ([bit.ly/1orcl0d](http://bit.ly/1orcl0d)) as a most effective way to communicate scientific research to the general public. Seminars that address how to better present scientific findings as a story exist ([bit.ly/21ZO6mR](http://bit.ly/21ZO6mR)), as do those that instruct the use of the 140 character tweet ([bit.ly/1QSI72Y](http://bit.ly/1QSI72Y)), not to mention several existing twitter accounts that speak to the importance of finding the story in the data (see for instance [@FromTheLabBench](https://twitter.com/FromTheLabBench), [@lunascientific](https://twitter.com/lunascientific)). An entire day was devoted at the 2011 World Science Fair to story telling as a way to “explore the

communication of science—on the page, on the screen, and on the stage—illuminating the process of translating science to story” ([bit.ly/1SJt3mb](http://bit.ly/1SJt3mb)) and finally it is worth reading a blog post devoted to interrogating “story” in scientific research as well as thinking through the typology of science stories ([bit.ly/1N3LVI3](http://bit.ly/1N3LVI3)).

Most telling of all, for our context, is the way in which institutions of all kinds (including universities, and government supported programs) have begun to articulate not only the impact of research creation, but also with whom the research begins, evolves and benefits. This narrative presentation moves beyond simple storytelling and perhaps even questions the primacy of meta-narrative or the “Truth” of the numerical presentation of metrics.

### **The Purpose of These Reports**

The following report presents analysis of the communication and advocacy strategies from the following websites in order to underscore not just the ways in which the sciences have moved away from the presentation of metrics to narrative, but also the ways in which research priorities are developed, identified and articulated.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council – SSHRC  
Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada – NSERC  
Canadian Foundation for Innovation - CFI  
Canada Institutes of Health Research - CIHR  
Canada Council for the Arts

### **SSHRC**

One of the prominent links on the SSHRC landing page is *Connecting with Community* (italics added), under which includes Aboriginal connections, Community Engagement, Imagining Canada’s Future and Storytellers. Under the Community Engagement link “engagement” for SSHRC is addressed as a “committed to engaging its stakeholder communities” which suggests an interest in reciprocity of knowledge mobilization. Indeed, knowledge mobilization for SSHRC is stated as “The reciprocal and complementary flow and uptake of research knowledge between researchers, knowledge brokers and knowledge users” (<http://bit.ly/1fkDA84>).

This reciprocity is further exemplified by the kinds of questions SSHRC incorporates to frame a research agenda that suggests a reciprocal relationship between all stakeholders:

Imagining Canada’s Future  
How is our world changing?  
What Challenges lie ahead?  
Whose insights do we need?  
Are we ready for Tomorrow?  
Where must Canada do better?

And finally, since 2012 SSHRC has hosted an annual Storytellers contest which “challenges postsecondary students to show Canadians how social sciences and humanities research is affecting our lives, our world and our future for the better” (<http://bit.ly/1btDWjd>). Students are encouraged to address and reflect upon where research is taking us, the story of the research, and how it impacts Canadians.



A further conversation with Ursula Gobel underscores the ways in which SSHRC takes reciprocity as their mission:

SSHRC is about people and humanities, about novel ideas and thinking out of the box – that is our strength. We look at issues and problems from all sides and listen to new ideas and explore pathways – days of sending out the press release is not going to fly- if we truly want to benefit humanity than we need to engage differently. (April 8, 2016, personal communication)

### **NSERC**

The landing page of NSERC offers multiple links as entry points. Phrases such as “feedback loops,” “strategic partnerships” and “collaborate research” (<http://bit.ly/1sR16J9>). Less obvious on this page is a sense of what these terms indicate. If one scrolls down on the landing page there is a link that take you to Impact Stories. At the time of this writing both stories highlighted issues of import to Canada, fresh water and greenhouse gases.

### **CFI**

At left hand top of the landing page is Research in Action. Each of the stories speaks to bringing primary stakeholders together in order to move research forward; trusting and listening to the patient, or bringing young voters together to wonder with them what can be done in order for them to vote. Bringing research stories alive through video furthers the message of care between and not simply a positioning of knowing what’s best.

### **CIHR**

One of the three priorities listed on the CIHR landing page makes reference to research strategies that are designed to involve all stakeholders at every stage of development.

Patient-oriented research refers to a continuum of research that engages patients as partners, focuses on patient-identified priorities and improves patient outcomes.

### **New Paradigms of Engagement**

The following report (Part 2 of Working Group 1) extends and builds on the issue of communication strategies and the construction of engagement. Language signals intent and if Western’s intent is to “[build] upon a “shared ambition” that “seek(s) always the betterment of the human condition” (Achieving Excellence, 2014, p. 4) the recommendations presented suggest the acknowledgement of and support for policies that encourage research connected to “interweaving new modes of public engagement into the fabric of the research process”.

URB SSAH Task Force  
Working Group 1 Draft Report  
The Engagement Paradigm and External Communication  
Part 2  
Joshua Lambier (Faculty of Arts)

In recent years, there has emerged a new paradigm of engagement in higher education to rethink the public mission of universities and colleges across North America and beyond. Canadian universities have increasingly focused attention on the public good as an integral part of the strategic planning process, and integrated robust community engagement activities into institutional vision statements for research, teaching, and service. The new paradigm moves beyond the traditional “one-way” model of expert knowledge delivery, extension, and outreach towards a more dynamic “two-way” approach that emphasizes collaboration, co-creation, and shared authority with public partners. To facilitate this “civic turn,” to use David Scobey’s term,<sup>1</sup> government funding bodies in Canada have renewed their mandates to support research programs that engage broader publics in the process of knowledge production and dissemination, with particular emphasis on projects that address issues of pressing concern. This section highlights some of the ways in which public and private funders are shifting their communication strategies to foreground initiatives that cultivate open dialogue between the campus and community, which may in turn bolster public support for the vital role that research-intensive universities can play in Canadian society. The Western social science, arts, and humanities community could enhance advocacy efforts beyond the university by studying the evolving conceptual vocabulary underpinning the scholarship of engagement, while incorporating principles (where necessary and desirable) that align our activities with the stated objectives of various social science, arts, and humanities funding agencies.

Like other universities in Canada, Western has recently published a new strategic plan that reaffirms our collective commitment to the public good. From the outset of *Achieving Excellence on the World Stage* (2014), the new mission statement reads as follows: “Western creates, disseminates and applies knowledge *for the benefit of society* through excellence in teaching, research and scholarship. Our graduates will be global citizens whose education and leadership will *serve the public good*” (emphasis added 5). While each of the four strategic goals of the plan respond to emergent themes of engagement, the third goal (“Reaching Beyond Campus: Engage Alumni, Community, Institutional & International Partners”) places the greatest stress on the value of collaboration between the university and its publics, whether local, regional, national, or international. In the final section on “Western’s Institutional Principles and Values,” the plan also underscores the University’s commitment to “partnership” and “social responsibility,” two critical components for the advancement of an engaged culture on campus. Other universities in Canada, however, have taken additional steps to institutionalize the principles of community

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<sup>1</sup> David Scobey, “Civic Engagement and the Copernican Moment,” Plenary Address, Imagining American National Conference. Minneapolis, MN. 21 September 2011. Available at: <http://imaginingamerica.org/fg-item/civic-engagement-and-the-copernican-moment/>

engagement through the development of strategic documents<sup>2</sup> or community-engaged programs.<sup>3</sup> What each of these frameworks and programs offers is a university-wide consensus for working definitions of key terms along the way towards a new critical vocabulary for engagement. While many successful campus-community projects and exchanges are already taking place in the social science, arts, and humanities disciplines at Western, university leaders could boost our profile by developing a unified framework for public engagement. Just what counts as rigorous engagement should be established clearly and transparently from the outset. One of the most widely adopted definitions comes from the Carnegie Foundation’s new Community Engagement Classification: “Community engagement,” according to the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, “describes collaboration between institutions of higher education and their larger communities (local, regional/state, national, global) for the mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity.”<sup>4</sup> Looking ahead to future directions for the social science, arts, and humanities community, Western could open new avenues for community-oriented research by cultivating an inclusive definition that suits the unique culture of our campus and responds to the engagement frameworks of external funding agencies.

With the emergence of engagement as a strategic priority for higher education institutions, funders and other national organizations have also developed the following terms to orient their programming and external communications:

**Public Engagement at the Canada Council:** “Actively engaging more people in the artistic life of society notably through attendance, observation, curation, active participation, co-creation, learning, cultural mediation and creative self-expression.”<sup>5</sup>

**Community Engagement at SSHRC:** “Through engagement, SSHRC fosters interchange with and among key audiences on university and college campuses, in communities, and across public, private and non-governmental organizations, to enhance informed decision-making on SSHRC programs, policies and directions.”<sup>6</sup>

**Citizen Engagement at CIHR:** “For CIHR, citizen engagement is the meaningful involvement of individual citizens in policy or program development, from agenda-setting and planning to decision-making, implementation and review. It requires two-way communication that is interactive and iterative with an aim to share decision-making power and responsibility for those decisions. This requires bringing together a diverse group of citizens that includes the broader

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<sup>2</sup> See, for example, York’s “Towards an Engaged University: President’s Task Force Report on Community Engagement,” February 2010; Memorial’s *Public Engagement Framework, 2012-2020*; or Simon Fraser’s “Community Engagement Strategy”(2013).

<sup>3</sup> The promotion and practice of publicly engaged scholarship is beginning to find regional and national champions, such as Victoria’s Institute for Studies & Innovation in Community-University Engagement, Memorial’s Office of Public Engagement, Guelph’s Community Engaged Scholarship Institute, Simon Fraser’s Community Engagement Initiative, McMaster’s Centre for Scholarship in the Public Interest, and McGill’s Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas, to highlight only a few.

<sup>4</sup> The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, “Community Engagement Elective Classification,” 2008. Available at:

[http://www.nerche.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=341&Itemid=92#CEdef](http://www.nerche.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=341&Itemid=92#CEdef)

<sup>5</sup> Canada Council for the Arts, “Public Engagement in the Arts: Discussion Paper,” October 2012. p. 3.

<sup>6</sup> See SSHRC’s Community Engagement section on the website: <http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/societe-societe/community-communitie/index-eng.aspx#1>

public, not just the usual stakeholders for ongoing dialogue, deliberation and collaboration in informing CIHR’s work.”<sup>7</sup>

**Patient Engagement at CIHR:** “Meaningful and active collaboration in governance, priority setting, conducting research and knowledge translation. Depending on the context patient-oriented research may also engage people who bring the collective voice of specific, affected communities.”<sup>8</sup>

**Community-Campus Engagement at CBRC:** “Within the broader context of community-campus engagement, nationally and internationally, CBRC is part of a movement to change the research culture, especially to promote the importance of community and post-secondary sector collaboration to co-create knowledge, advance social innovation, and generate evidence that is timely, robust and appropriate for informing policy and practice.”<sup>9</sup>

Though each organization activates the discourse of engagement in a highly distinct way to address their strategic priorities, the various definitions call attention to the common constitutive elements of mutually beneficial partnerships, shared authority, social responsibility, and a collective purpose (or purposes) amongst multiple individuals or groups. While the traditional idea of outreach situates the scholar as the expert who delivers knowledge to the community with a unidirectional approach (e.g., the standard lecture series at the public library), the engaged scholar participates in a two-way process of exchange and co-creation to produce knowledge with, for, and by the community. What each of these reports and policy documents also highlights is the need for social science, arts, and humanities scholars to begin to think of “engagement” as *more than a public relations strategy* to address the rhetoric of crisis that surrounds the cultural disciplines. Indeed, the civic turn in higher education calls attention to the need for the social science, arts, and humanities disciplines at Western to interweave new modes of public engagement into the fabric of the research process.

Public and private funding bodies are now using a similar model to orient their communication strategies around participatory models of community engagement. NSERC, for example, recently completed their “Community Engagement Visits 2015,” which were designed to give researchers and other stakeholder groups the opportunity to meet with representatives to discuss various aspects of the Council’s programming, including discovery research, scholarships and fellowships, as well as policies and guidelines. In the new strategic plan of the Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, too, the first two strategic goals outline the need to “increase our reach with people in Canada” and to “improve our relevance to our members,” goals that illustrate the growing desire to develop innovative communication strategies to engage broader audiences within and beyond the university system.<sup>10</sup> To bridge the gap between the academy and the public, funders in the US are also developing new strategies that intertwine engagement with scholarship. The National Endowment for the Humanities, for instance, has introduced new

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<sup>7</sup> Canadian Institutes of Health Research, “CIHR’s Framework for Citizenship Engagement,” p. 14. Available at: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/41270.html>

<sup>8</sup> Canadian Institutes of Health Research, “Strategy for Patient-Oriented Research: Patient Engagement Framework” (2014), p. 5. Available at: [http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/spor\\_framework-en.pdf](http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/documents/spor_framework-en.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Community Based Research Canada, “Strategic Plan 2014-2018,” September 2014. p. 6.

<sup>10</sup> Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences, “Strategic Plan, 2016-2020,” January 2016. Available at: [http://www.ideas-idees.ca/sites/default/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-final-2016-01-13\\_0.pdf](http://www.ideas-idees.ca/sites/default/files/strategic-plan-2016-2020-final-2016-01-13_0.pdf)

publicly engaged initiatives like “The Public Scholar Program,” which supports “well-researched books in the humanities intended to reach a broad readership.”<sup>11</sup> This particular project demonstrates the blurring of distinctions between traditional academic work and publicly engaged scholarship. Rather than thinking of public engagement as a communication strategy distinct from research, public funding agencies are beginning to design initiatives that marry both functions into a cohesive knowledge creation process. Against the grain of the traditional idea of the isolated scholar, the new model privileges scholar-citizens who are trained to narrate a compelling story of their research to broader publics (e.g., SSHRC’s Storytellers contest for graduate students).

The turn to engagement, however, presents new challenges. For many social science, arts, and humanities disciplines at Western, the place of both the public scholar and public scholarship has yet to receive sufficient institutional recognition and support. Research programs geared towards the public sphere are often perceived to lack sufficient academic rigour and autonomy, to be ideologically motivated, or simply to be reserved for a few well established professors (i.e., public intellectuals). Younger scholars in the arts and humanities are rarely trained to translate their research to fit policymaking processes or broader forms of engagement, and there remains a widespread resistance on behalf of Canadian universities to include publicly engaged scholarship in considerations for granting promotion and tenure. With these challenges and opportunities in mind, the social science, arts, and humanities community should establish a more meaningful system to recognize, reward, and highlight the public engagements of their researchers, both faculty and students, which will assist their future efforts to attract external grants and awards, especially if they are earmarked for scholars who engage with broader audiences. This new system of evaluation might also encourage a new generation of scholars to pursue projects that connect their public engagement activities with research and teaching strengths of the University.

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<sup>11</sup> The National Endowment for the Humanities, “Public Scholar Program,” February 2016. Available at: <http://www.neh.gov/grants/research/public-scholar-program>

## **Appendix 2**

### URB Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities Task Force Working Group 2 Summary Report and Attachments

May 14, 2016

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#### **Contents:**

1. Overview of Working Group 2's activities – Prepared by Jacquie Burkell

#### **Attachments:**

2. URB SSAH Task Force Working Group 2 Report on Faculty Perspectives - Prepared By: Crystal Gaudet and Jaclyn Nardone in consultation with Jacquelyn Burkell and Jessica Polzer
3. Submission of the SSHRC Associate Dean's Research regarding research indicators - Prepared by Cathy Benedict, ADR, Music, Helene Berman, ADR, Health Sciences, Nandi Bhatia, ADR, Arts, and Humanities, Stephen Bird, ADR, Education, Jacquelyn Burkell, ADR, FIMS, Robert Klassen, ADR, Business, Ken McRae, ADR, Social Sciences, Valerie Oosterveld, ADR, Law
4. URB SSAH Task Force: Graduate Student Consultation Recommendations - Prepared by Joshua Lambier and Diana Moreiras

#### Working group's initial remit:

1. What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities for and threats to social sciences, arts, and humanities research at Western?
  - a. How do units at Western define leading edge scholarly activity?
  - b. How is research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities valued and measured at Western?
  - c. How is research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities valued and measured outside of Western?
  - d. In what ways are these values and measurements aligned with the external context?

### **1. Overview of Working Group 2's Activities**

The priorities of the Western University Strategic Plan are built upon a “shared ambition” that “seek(s) always the betterment of the human condition” (Achieving Excellence, 2014, p. 4). We believe that this choice of words both apt and profound. The human condition may be productively viewed as space of freedom co-created by the actions of words and deeds. Indeed, the human condition is both acted upon and improved by “academic freedom, autonomy,

accountability, diversity, integrity, openness...and social responsibility” (Achieving Excellence, 2014, pp. 19-20). For Western University this means “creating a culture that places a higher value on scholarship and innovation, one that strives more intently to increase the impact and productivity of our research and scholarly activities across and between the disciplines” (Achieving Excellence, 2014, p. 7). For this kind of culture to thrive there must be an infrastructure supporting this organization and the Strategic Plan recognizes this need.

“... Western will focus more attention and resources promoting and rewarding (1) excellence in scholarship and innovation; (2) knowledge creation; and (3) the translation and mobilization of that knowledge into languages and applications useful in the public realm.” (Achieving Excellence, 2014, p. 7)

The social sciences, arts, and humanities are central to Western University’s vision and mission. Indeed, world-class researchers in these disciplines are found across the university in eight of Western’s Faculties and Schools. However, changes in both the internal and external contexts make it timely to examine how social science, arts, and humanities research is valued and funded. Thus, while the mission and vision of Western University’s Strategic Plan is the foundation upon which this report is built, the goal of this report is to reclaim these ideas, and move from concept to action supported by infrastructure.

### **Social science, arts, and humanities research and outcomes**

“... research outcomes and their dissemination...mean different things to different people—from citations in the most prestigious disciplinary journals, to monographs and books published by leading presses; from keynote speaking engagements at national and international conference plenary sessions, to musical performances on the world’s international stages; from scholarship that shapes public policy, to business cases that inform entrepreneurial decision-making; or from curiosity-driven enquiry, to scientific and technological innovations that can be commercialized for application in health care and by private industry.” (Achieving Excellence, 2014, p. 8)

The breadth of social science, arts, and humanities research at Western includes projects that are single investigator-driven, as well as multi-site, collaborative and community-based projects on regional, national and international scales, and research that draws on an array of disciplinary-specific theoretical perspectives, research methodologies (e.g., ethnography, discourse analysis, surveys, experimental research) and methods (quantitative and qualitative). These diverse projects yield a wide variety of research outputs, including single- and multiple-authored publications, which encompass peer-reviewed journal articles and presentations, books, book chapters, reports, as well as other forms of research dissemination, including artistic creation and performance, contributions to policy consultation, dissemination through news and social media, and community-based presentations. This impressive array of social science, arts, and humanities research is at the heart of what makes Western University a global university achieving excellence on the world stage.

### **Infrastructure to support research**

Western recognizes that “research” and “scholarship” mean different things to different people across our campus. For example, funding requirements and sources vary considerably from one discipline to the next. Additionally, research and scholarship

outcomes differ significantly in their production, validation, dissemination, and application—even in the ways we celebrate them. (Achieving Excellence, 2014, p. 7)

Social scientists, artists, and humanists must be encouraged and supported to apply for external funding wherever appropriate and available. Careful attention must be paid to return on investment for such applications. Large-budget projects, including unidisciplinary projects and those comprised of interdisciplinary teams, require considerable investment of time and resources in preparing the application, and are associated with a reasonable probability of a high return. But, in the current external funding environment, small-budget projects require a similar investment of time and resources for the preparation of an application, and are associated with a low probability of success and a small return. Accordingly, resources for small-budget projects might be better deployed in *conducting* research rather than seeking funding.

In order to maximize funding successes, the University should provide grants facilitation support to social scientists, artists, and humanists. While appropriate and indeed excellent support is available in some units across campus, the availability of these resources is inconsistent, and in general social science, arts, and humanities faculties have relatively little funding to devote to these initiatives. A strong and universally available program of grants facilitation would assist social scientists, artists, and humanists to apply for and secure external grant funding. Initiatives should include:

- 1) Grant writing support: Assistance with grant writing and an internal review process prior to submission would benefit social scientists, artists, and humanists applying for external funds. While this assistance is available to researchers in some units, access is not universal and this should be remedied. Moreover, some tasks related to grant applications may be better addressed centrally (e.g., preparation of in-kind contribution letters). Specific assistance that would benefit grant applicants includes:
  - a. Assistance with preparation of ROLA forms;
  - b. Assistance with preparation of budgets;
  - c. Procurement and documentation of in-kind and matching contributions;
  - d. Assistance with knowledge mobilization plans; and,
  - e. Internal review of grants prior to submission.
- 2) Access to research tools: The University currently provides access to quantitative analysis software at no cost to graduate students and at a reduced cost to faculty members. Comparable tools that would be of use to social science, arts, and humanities researchers include qualitative analysis software and online survey software. The negotiation of free access or reasonably priced site licenses for these resources would be of benefit to social science, arts, and humanities research on campus.
- 3) Knowledge mobilization: social scientists, artists, and humanists would benefit from assistance in promoting their own work through mechanisms such as research narratives, media releases, and community outreach. In addition, knowledge mobilization plans will benefit from strong relationships with municipal, provincial and federal governments, policy makers, not-for-profit agencies, and other potential research users. Assistance with identifying, developing, and maintaining these relationships would help to strengthen



both the awareness and impact of social science, arts, and humanities research. In turn, this will enhance the competitiveness of our researchers in external grant applications.

### **Funding for research**

As a research-intensive university, Western must ensure that it supports the full range of research activities that characterizes research at this institution. Some social science, arts, and humanities research requires large amounts of external grant funding, and researchers have been successful in securing these funds. At the same time, many social scientists, artists, and humanists work alone on projects that require only small amounts of funding. External granting agencies are not currently oriented toward funding low-budget research projects. Indeed there are few external granting programs that will provide these researchers with what they need the most: small amounts of funding, and time to conduct their research. To support the full range of social science, arts, and humanities research, the University should address this gap through a range of programs that should include:

- 1) Competitive course releases: Course releases awarded to researchers on a competitive basis for research purposes such as off-site data collection and manuscript preparation.
- 2) Small grants program: Competitive funding for low-budget research projects that do not require or lead to external funding applications. We envision this program to support research with budgets of \$10,000 or less, explicitly targeted to projects that do not require or lead to external funding applications.
- 3) Mid-career research awards: One-time funding available to mid-career researchers who are changing research direction, or who are planning to seek external funding for a previously unfunded project.

Working Group 2 membership included:

Jacquelyn Burkell (Working Group 2 Chair, FIMS)\*, Cathy Benedict (Faculty of Music)\*, Alison Doherty (Faculty of Health Sciences)\*, Charles Weijer (Faculties of Arts and Humanities and Medicine)\*, Emily Ansari (Faculty of Music), June Cotte (Ivey Business School), Amanda Grzyb (FIMS), Valerie Oosterveld (Faculty of Law), Don Abelson (Faculty of Social Science), Chris Brown (Faculty of Arts and Humanities), Stephen Bird (Faculty of Education), Jessica Polzer (Health Sciences, Women's Studies), Diana Moreiras (SGPS)

**Attachment 1 - URB SSAH Task Force Working Group 2 Report on Faculty Perspectives -**  
Prepared By: Crystal Gaudet and Jaclyn Nardone, in consultation with Jacquelyn Burkell and  
Jessica Polzer.  
- Thursday March 31, 2016

## **Table of Contents**

<b><u>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</u></b>	<b>2</b>
<b><u>OBJECTIVES AND MISSION</u></b>	<b>4</b>
<b><u>THEMES</u></b>	<b>6</b>
<b><u>1. ACKNOWLEDGING THE DIVERSITY OF SSAH RESEARCH AT WESTERN</u></b>	<b>6</b>
<b><u>2. DEMORALIZING INSTITUTIONAL CLIMATE</u></b>	<b>6</b>
<b><u>3. NEED FOR AN INCLUSIVE INTERNAL FUNDING MODEL</u></b>	<b>8</b>
<b><u>4. EXPANDING INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORTS</u></b>	<b>9</b>
<b><u>5. INTERDISCIPLINARY &amp; COLLABORATIVE WORK</u></b>	<b>12</b>
<b><u>6. RECONCEPTUALIZING VALUE</u></b>	<b>13</b>
<b><u>7. RECOGNIZING AND COMMUNICATING THE IMPACT OF SSAH RESEARCH</u></b>	<b>15</b>
<b><u>8. FACULTY CONSULTATION RECOMMENDATIONS</u></b>	<b>15</b>
<b><u>APPENDIX</u></b>	<b>18</b>

## *Executive Summary*

This report summarizes the findings of Working Group 2 of the URB Task Force, which explored faculty member perspectives on the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats associated with current support mechanisms for research in the Social Sciences, Arts and Humanities (SSAH research) at Western. The themes and recommendations that emerged from 152 SSAH researchers in individual and group consultations coupled with online survey responses from 347 respondents (in total representing more than 60% of faculty members in the 8 SSAH faculties) are outlined below.

The consultations revealed an impressive array of SSAH research at Western, the vibrancy of which is overlooked by a model of research that is founded on assumptions about research practices and success that are incommensurate with the needs, traditions and goals of much SSAH research, and that is therefore unable to recognize and communicate the value and import of SSAH research at Western.

The SSAH researchers consulted for this report emphasized the need for the University to shift its focus from *high budget* to *high impact* research. The University should reconsider the values that are embedded within and expressed by internal research funding programs and faculty evaluation practices – values that include a focus on external (specifically tri-council) research funding, that equate research impact with the amount of funding received, and that generally favour *input* rather than *outcome* measures of research as reflections of quality. A revised focus on a broad range of research outcomes as appropriate indicators of research excellence will better reflect the range of high-quality research carried out by SSAH and other researchers within our institution.

Some SSAH researchers fit, and have been very successful within, the model of research currently endorsed at Western that defines success in terms of high grant values and a high rate of production of multi-authored journal publications. Even researchers successful within this model, however, note that the institutional value of their external grants pales in comparison to that awarded to the larger grants typically seen in disciplines with higher base costs for conducting research. It is critical that the University recognize the achievements of SSAH researchers who secure tri-council funding for their research in an intensely competitive funding environment. Western must also provide strong administrative and research services support to ensure their future success in securing external grants.

Other SSAH researchers work within scholarly traditions that embrace different models of success, and these different approaches must be acknowledged and supported within Western University. If Western University is truly to realize its aspirations to become a world-class, research-intensive institution, it is critical that we acknowledge, value, and support the full range of research and researchers working within this institution. Within SSAH disciplines, there is a strong tradition of research practices where researchers work alone produce sole-authored publications. These researchers typically require less funding and more time to do their research, and thus produce fewer publications than do their colleagues who work with teams or co-authors. Researchers who work within this model report feeling pressure to publish in order to satisfy

metrics-based evaluative processes, which are inappropriate to fully capture the value and impact of their academic work.

In order to support researchers working in a variety of disciplinary contexts, the university should consider alternative outcomes, including pedagogical impact, peer review, policy contributions, citation in legal decisions, performance, and research narratives. The modes of evaluation should be rooted in disciplinary norms, and they should not focus solely on the amount of research funding, the number of publications, and citation counts.

It is critical that Western celebrate the contributions of SSAH research. SSAH research makes important contributions to knowledge, often on very small budgets. Communicating the value - or “telling the story” - of SSAH research requires Western to acknowledge the diversity and excellence of SSAH research, and support SSAH researchers in communicating the value and impact of their research, both within the Western community and beyond the institutional walls. Some SSAH researchers will benefit from assistance to develop and maintain profiles on discipline-appropriate research repositories, as these are becoming increasingly important venues for research promotion and dissemination.

Although many SSAH researchers require relatively small sums of money to conduct and disseminate their work, it is difficult if not impossible to carry out high-quality and high-impact research without some financial or in-kind support. Researchers whose financial requirements are relatively small have found it increasingly difficult to secure financial support for their research. Although the minimum value for SSHRC Insight and Insight Development applications is \$7,000, the average value of awards for the 2015/2016 Insight Development competition was \$60,000, and the average value of Insight Grants in the same year was \$174,000, suggesting that these agencies tend to support grants of much higher value. Moreover, the application process is onerous, regardless of budget, and success rate in the most recent competitions is approximately 20%. Thus, for SSAH researchers who do not require large budgets, it is not an efficient use of researcher time and energy to apply to external agencies for small amounts of funding, since the ‘return on investment’ for these applications is low, and the intensive effort required for the application process, with little chance of positive outcome, could have a negative impact on other spheres of their academic work.

The University should develop an internal funding model that is focused on supporting high-value and high-impact research, rather than specifically and solely targeted to improving tri-council grant success. This will involve continued support for SSAH researchers who are seeking external grants to support pilot research, to bridge between grants, or to launch new projects. At the same time, a program of smaller value grants for research, dissemination, and teaching release should be developed to support SSAH researchers whose work is not appropriate for external grant support (typically researchers working alone, producing sole-authored publications or other research products).

Recent changes to the internal funding model have been particularly damaging to mid-career researchers and their continued research productivity is at risk. These researchers experience difficulties getting research funding due to restrictive changes in requirements for internal funds. Although many of these researchers fall into the group that do not require high-

value external grants, some would be interested in seeking external funding. They require, however, internal support in order to develop competitive external funding applications. One proposal to support mid-career researchers in getting new projects off the ground is to offer a one-time “Kick Starter Grant” that would be available to every researcher at a critical point in their careers, designed to help researchers build toward future success.

In addition to an inclusive internal funding model, consultations revealed the need to build a supportive institutional infrastructure that includes knowledgeable and adequately staffed administrative assistance, and access to necessary research tools. One of the most significant supports requested by SSAH researchers is more time to do their research, attend conferences, and travel for the purpose of gathering data. Thus, it is recommended that the University offer competitive grants for teaching release time.

Strong administrative supports at all levels—department/school, faculty, and central—are required for tri-council and non tri-council funding. Sufficient and knowledgeable administrative support at all three levels will enable sensitivity to disciplinary differences and help to strengthen and streamline supports throughout the University. Existing successful approaches to administrative support at the University, faculty, and departmental levels may serve as useful models for fortifying administrative support across campus.

Many faculty members feel isolated and excluded from the model of research currently endorsed by Western and express a desire to create a more collaborative intellectual community. Providing matching funds and in-kind supports for interdisciplinary seminars and providing physical spaces on campus specifically for interdisciplinary research would help to bring academics together across faculties and disciplines and foster a more vibrant research culture at Western.

## *Objectives and Mission*

The social sciences, arts, and humanities are central to Western’s profile as a research-intensive institution. Indeed, world-class researchers in these disciplines are found across the University in eight of Western’s Faculties and Schools. Recent changes in the internal and external contexts make it timely to examine how social science, arts, and humanities (SSAH) research is valued and funded at Western. The URB Task Force Steering Committee was established and approved by Senate on Sept. 18<sup>th</sup> 2015 to recommend strategies and concrete action plans that will better support success, growth and leadership in research in these disciplines at Western.

The SSAH Task Force, in consultation with the URB and the Deans of Research from the SSAH faculties (ADRs), identified three main questions to examine:

- 1) How do external entities, including funding agencies and professional organizations, define leading edge scholarly activity in social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines?

- 2) What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities of and threats to social sciences, arts, and humanities research at Western?
- 3) How is research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities supported at Western and how can this be improved?

Working Group 2 was formed to focus on question 2 (above). In consultation with the ADRs, and recognizing that each unit deals with research issues differently, a Working Group was established that included members from each Faculty/School. The group members included:

Jacquelyn Burkell (Working Group 2 Chair, FIMS)\*  
Cathy Benedict (Faculty of Music)\*  
Alison Doherty (Faculty of Health Sciences)\*  
Charles Weijer (Faculties of Arts and Humanities and Medicine)\*  
Emily Ansari (Faculty of Music)  
June Cotte (Ivey Business School)  
Amanda Grzyb (FIMS)  
Valerie Oosterveld (Faculty of Law)  
Don Abelson (Faculty of Social Science)  
Chris Brown (Faculty of Arts and Humanities)  
Stephen Bird (Faculty of Education)  
Jessica Polzer (Health Sciences, Women's Studies)  
Diana Moreiras (SGPS)

\* indicates a member of the SSAH Task Force

Qualitative (individual and group consultations, face to face and by email) and quantitative (survey) consultations were conducted from November 2015 to March 2016. Qualitative consultations were conducted with 152 faculty members across the eight SSAH faculties (Arts and Humanities, Business, Education, Information and Media Studies, Law, Music, and Social Science) and focused on the following questions:

- a) How do units at Western define leading edge scholarly activity?
- b) How is research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities valued and assessed at Western?
- c) How is research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities valued and measured outside of Western?
- d) In what ways are these values and measurements aligned with the external context?

An online survey covering the same issues was made available to all SSAH faculty members, and a total of 347 individuals completed the survey. This report incorporates the qualitative and survey results.

## Themes

Seven overarching themes emerged from the individual and group consultations and the survey data. The themes are identified and explained in more detail below, followed by a list of recommendations.

*In these themes, our intention is to highlight the particular difficulties and inequities that many SSAH researchers at Western experience. We recognize, however, that many of these concerns and issues are not specific to SSAH research, but instead are experienced by at least a subset of researchers working in all areas. In relaying these themes, therefore, we have chosen not to use divisive “us vs. them” (e.g., STEM vs. non-STEM) language, in the hope that our findings will lead to further dialogue with those in other disciplines who may experience similar challenges.*

### 1. Acknowledging the Diversity of SSAH Research at Western

The consultations revealed the diverse range of SSAH research that is conducted by Western’s faculty members across a number of its faculties and disciplines. In this regard, it is important that SSAH research not be conflated with SSHRC research. Some of the researchers consulted did not see their research as fitting neatly within SSHRC’s mandate, and consultees included faculty members who apply to SSHRC, CIHR and non-tri-council funding agencies.

The breadth of SSAH research at Western includes projects that are investigator-driven, as well as multi-site, collaborative and community-based projects on regional, national and international scales, and research that draws on an array of disciplinary-specific theoretical perspectives, research methodologies (e.g., ethnography, discourse analysis, surveys, experimental research) and methods (quantitative and qualitative). These diverse projects yield a wide variety of research outputs or “products”, including single –and multiple-authored publications, which encompass peer-reviewed journal articles and presentations, books, book chapters, reports, as well as other forms of research dissemination, including artistic creation and performance, contributions to policy consultation, dissemination through news and social media, and community-based presentations. This impressive array of SSAH research is a testament to what makes Western a “comprehensive university” in terms of research and impact.

### 2. Demoralizing Institutional Climate

*“The current research climate at Western is one that is inimical, not only to responsible and effective teaching in the Arts and Humanities, but to Humanities “research” itself.”*

*“The shifts in internal funding and the emphasis on large grants sends a message to faculty who are very productive researchers (and widely published) that their research is not valued. If having a large grant is the only criteria for getting another grant, it acts as a barrier and is completely demoralizing.”*

Within this broad scope of SSAH research, there is a select group of researchers who find Western’s institutional climate supportive and who have been successful in securing internal and external funding. However, the consultations uncovered a general malaise and sense of discontent among the majority of consulted SSAH researchers who feel that their work is not valued within an institutional context that celebrates a corporate model of research, a model that neglects the unique needs of many SSAH researchers.

Within this context, the intrinsic motivations of many SSAH researchers are quelled, as their research outcomes often go unrecognized within Western and as the significant time and energy they invest in sustaining their research programs through the development of funding applications (internal and external) go unrewarded. This has resulted in a deep sense of demoralization for many SSAH researchers at Western, a sense that is shared by some consultees who are or have been tri-council grant holders.

Among the faculty members who were discouraged by Western’s research climate, mid-career researchers are particularly disenfranchised as they find their programs of research difficult to sustain given current internal funding conditions. Coupled with the absence of sufficient and appropriate institutional supports (see theme 4), this demoralization stifles the research productivity and capacities of the SSAH research community and threatens the optimal use of Western’s human capital and resources that are vital to making it a world-class, research-intensive institution.

Many SSAH faculty members expressed deep frustration that the University tends to celebrate the accomplishments and contributions of researchers according to a hierarchical system of values that recognizes and celebrates high budget research that is tied to technological “innovation” and industry interests, oriented towards transformative change, and yields high rate of research output (e.g., numerous and often multiple-authored publications). This implicit model of ‘ideal’ research is incommensurate with the nature and rhythm of much SSAH research, which does not typically require large sums of money and is often driven by one or a few investigator/s who require/s sustained blocks of time to implement their research methodologies in ways that meet professional and disciplinary standards (e.g., time to travel to research sites and to maintain research momentum). In contrast to the celebrated corporate model, the rate of research output for high quality SSAH research is comparatively low, as the mode of research requires more time-intensive analytic, writing, and publication processes that are often, though not exclusively, driven by a sole author. SSAH researchers working explicitly from critical, social justice perspectives and who work collaboratively with community, regional, national and/or international partners to effect long term social change through incremental impacts are particularly disadvantaged within this hierarchical model.



### 3. Need for an Inclusive Internal Funding Model

*“For a mid-career tenured faculty member, it is difficult to obtain the small grants necessary to launch a new research project.”*

A consistent theme that emerged from consultations with SSAH faculty was the failure of current internal funding mechanisms to recognize the research needs of the variety and breadth of researchers at Western. Although these mechanisms work for a small group of consulted SSAH faculty, they reinforce inequities between faculty members whose research aligns with the model outlined above and the many SSAH faculty members who are disadvantaged and “excluded” by the current system and who thus feel “unvalued”. Current internal funding mechanisms are a main contributor to the discouraging institutional climate for many of the consulted SSAH faculty who described them as “counterintuitive”, “demoralizing”, and “punitive”. This reinforces what many faculty described as a corporate model of research funding, which privileges a small group of SSAH researchers, contributes to the growing sense of disenfranchisement among SSAH researchers and is incommensurate with Western’s stated identification as a “research intensive” university.

Consultees identified the previous funding mechanisms, including the Internal SSHRC, SSHRC Travel, Academic Development Fund, and International Research Awards (none of which are in existence currently), as extremely important in enabling them to conduct pilot research to make SSHRC and CIHR proposals competitive. These funding schemes were critical for early career researchers to launch their research programs, and also enabled mid- and late-career SSAH faculty to extend their research programs in meaningful and creative ways.

The consultations further revealed that there are a number of disincentives for SSAH researchers to apply for tri-council funding. Some feel that it is not worth their time to apply, while others feel that their research does not fit the requirements for a SSHRC grant. For example, research that is necessarily conducted by a principal investigator working alone or research that is highly technical and disciplinary-specific is not perceived to be consistent with SSHRC’s requirements for highly qualified personnel (HQP) and a broad knowledge mobilization component.

Mid-career researchers commonly identified that they are particularly disadvantaged by the current internal funding mechanisms (e.g., seed, bridge, accelerator grants) that restrict eligibility to early career faculty or tie eligibility for funding to early career or recent previous success in securing tri-council funding. Within this context, mid-career researchers without previous SSHRC or CIHR funding are particularly at-risk of losing momentum for their programs of research. Moreover, mid-career researchers who wish to respond to the current restrictive internal funding environment by seeking external support are constrained by restrictive eligibility requirement in their efforts to seek support for preparatory/pilot research, and are thus unlikely to be successful in preparing competitive grant proposals and in procuring external funding. SSHRC researchers working at the intersection of health and social science are another specifically disadvantaged group, since they have been forced by changes in SSHRC eligibility to reorient their programs from SSHRC to CIHR, where they find little receptivity to their

SSAH-oriented research. Rather than supporting researchers who find themselves caught in this situation, the current internal funding program further disadvantages them by mirroring tri-council eligibility requirements in the internal competitions.

## 4. Expanding Institutional Supports

### *Funding*

*“If I could change the internal funding program at Western, I would create a system that recognized that worthy, institution-building, reputation-enhancing research can be carried out with comparatively small amounts of funding (\$5,000 - \$10,000 per year), and that would ensure that active researchers would have access to such funding.”*

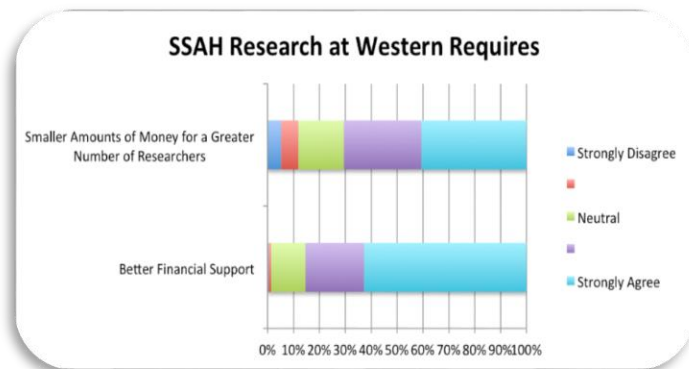
The costs associated with SSAH research typically include travel (e.g., to conferences, to archive sites, for collaboration with partners), dissemination costs (e.g., manuscript preparation, such as costs associated with indexing and editing) and costs associated with training graduate students (e.g., for research that requires research assistants). These costs are typically low, and SSAH researchers do not require large grants in order to be able to carry out excellent research with significant impact. This is something to be celebrated rather than discounted; moreover, Western should explore innovative research support programs that enhance the ability of SSAH researchers to access the small amounts of funding they require to support their work.

As the chart to the right indicates, an overwhelming majority of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed that SSAH research requires better financial support (over 70%), including a greater number of smaller grants distributed among a greater number of researchers (over 80%). Additionally, a number of researchers suggested that Western consider implementing a base level of non-competitive funding (e.g., \$2,500-\$6,000 per researcher) to support research costs. Providing financial support at this level to SSAH researchers would have significant positive impact in terms of research productivity and output at a very low cost.

### *Time*

*“The biggest challenge for me is to balance the teaching and service commitments with research time.”*

Lack of time was identified as a major barrier to SSAH faculty members wanting to advance their research. While this concern is no doubt also familiar to researchers from other disciplines, the form and demands of much SSAH research exacerbates the issue. Specifically, many SSAH researchers work alone, within a research model that is characterized by prolonged and intensive



engagement with research materials, often involving work off-site. Many of the consultees emphasized that they require sustained blocks of time so that they can conduct the activities associated with their research with the quality and at a level that is expected by their respective professional communities. These researchers consistently reported the need for time to think about their research inquiries, uninterrupted by the increasing demands imposed on them in the areas of service and teaching.

A number of SSAH researchers reported that the institutional pressure to apply for large external grants results in a major investment of time with little promise of return, particularly if the value of the grant sought is low (and this is the case for many SSAH researchers, who require relatively little in the way of funding for research). As such, the effort put into low-value competitive grant applications does not represent an efficient use of institutional resources, and the time and energy of these researchers would be better spent conducting their research and producing the high-quality research outcomes that can be achieved with little in the way of financial support. A number of mid-career researchers suggested that it was a much better use of their energies to self-fund their research, given the restrictions placed on internal funding opportunities and the time investment required to prepare external applications. Self-funding was viewed by some of these researchers as helping them overcome the demoralization and frustration associated with the amount of time spent on preparing external grant applications that are not successful. By placing SSAH researchers in positions where they feel compelled to finance their research out of their own personal resources in order to maintain their research productivity, the institutional pressure to apply for large external grants, and the celebrated model that informs this pressure, reinforce an institutional hierarchy of research that systematically rewards the careers of some faculty literally at the expense of other faculty. Note that several respondents reported the use of personal funds to fund research.

Faculty members also suggested providing relief time from teaching in order to make meaningful gains in their research. Competitive internal grants that allow for teaching release would help to facilitate research momentum and productivity, particularly since SSHRC no longer funds teaching release.

### *Administrative Research Infrastructure at Department/School, Faculty and University Levels*

*“The Office of Research Ethics has been understaffed for years. This means it is now taking months and months for a research ethics review application to be processed – often longer than it takes me to collect my data.”*

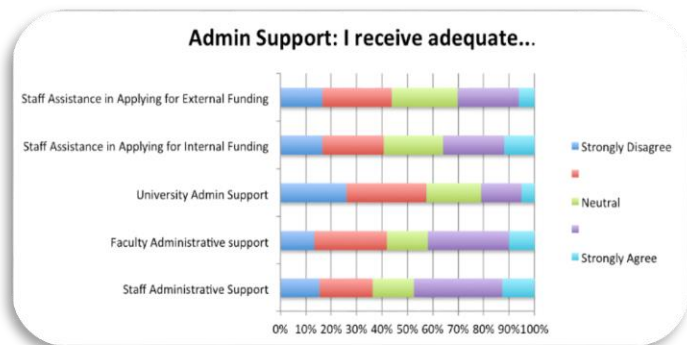
SSAH researchers would benefit from strong and coordinated administrative supports at all levels – department/school, faculty, and central - to help them understand and access tri-council and non tri-council funding. The level and quality of administrative support available to faculty members within their particular units and faculties varies considerably, and smaller SSAH faculties in particular have little in the way of research support. Faculty members in these smaller faculties, therefore, face additional challenges when seeking external funding for research, and they do not benefit from the significant assistance available to faculty members in larger units. Moreover, efficiencies would be gained if *some* supports were centralized, since this

would help to ensure coordination of activities, avoid duplicated effort across faculties, and ensure universal access to required supports.

Specifically, faculty members require assistance to:

- 1) identify funding opportunities;
- 2) review and provide feedback on grant applications;
- 3) navigate the university's software (that "the paperwork" associated with applying for funding – especially ethics and ROLA);
- 4) identify 'in-kind' contributions for granting opportunities requiring matching funds;
- 5) establish contacts with non-governmental agencies, governments, industry, policy-makers, educators, etc. for knowledge translation.

A number of SSAH researchers identified other models of administrative support at other institutions that they felt were more effective and that helped to relieve some of the time demands associated with applying for and administering research grants. For example, some universities have dedicated staff who develop budgets, along with computer software to help in this regard. Assistance with the budget development and justification and with constructing and updating common cvs would reduce the amount of time that faculty must spend on such administrative tasks. The institution should develop a University-wide framework for the identification and valuation of institutional in-kind contributions. Increasingly, these types of contributions are required (or requested) for external grant applications (e.g., SSHRC Connection and Partnership grants), and researchers need support to identify and document the in-kind contributions offered by the institution. Similarly, as the granting agency emphasis on knowledge mobilization increases, SSHRC researchers would benefit from institutional support to identify appropriate knowledge users in business, government, and not-profit sectors and to establish and maintain ongoing relationships with these knowledge users. In respect, Western should pursue membership in the *ResearchImpact* network ([www.researchimpact.ca](http://www.researchimpact.ca)). Participation in this network will assist researchers at Western to ensure the broadest possible impact of their work.



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Many faculty expressed frustration with inadequate staff support for the Research Ethics Board, which led to long processing times for ethics reviews for research involving human subjects. SSAH researchers report experiencing inappropriate delays, which hold up research progress and impede productivity. It was also recommended that the ROME and ROLA systems be streamlined.

SSAH researchers also called for free or subsidized access to the research support tools/software that are required for their work. Western provides free access to quantitative

analysis software for graduate students, and the University has negotiated a site license agreement so faculty members can purchase reasonably priced annual licences for SPSS. In contrast, Western currently does not provide central support for access to other basic research tools and software, including qualitative analysis software (e.g., HyperResearch, NVivo) and online survey software (e.g., Qualtrics). As a research-intensive university, Western should ensure that *all* faculty members and graduate students have access to the basic industry-standard quantitative and qualitative software needed to conduct their research at a reasonable cost.

## 5. Interdisciplinary & Collaborative Work

*“Given the demands for interdisciplinarity at SSHRC, especially for those of us in the Arts and Humanities, this lack of university support is a significant barrier to including our research and recognizing its value to the development of larger interdisciplinary research projects. Interdisciplinary research takes resources and support. It might help if we had an office of interdisciplinary research whose objective is to aid in the creation of interdisciplinary projects across faculties, with special attention to ensuring that the Arts and Humanities are included and supported -- and in a meaningful way.”*

Strong support for interdisciplinary and collaborative research was identified by SSAH consultees who noted the disjuncture between the policies and commitments of the granting councils and the research activities and approaches that are supported by Western. In particular, granting agencies promote interdisciplinary projects that involve multiple researchers distributed across institutions, and participation in these large multisite grants is an important aspect of research practice. The University, however, does not place the same positive emphasis on these types of research activities; some SSAH researchers reported negative evaluative consequences as a result of their participation in large interdisciplinary research initiatives.

Consultees noted that multi-researcher initiatives, particularly those that cross institutional boundaries, include participants from multiple disciplines, and involve community as well as academic partners, can be slow to produce identifiable impact. The development of fruitful collaborative relationships requires time and careful consultation; moreover, the outcomes of these collaborations will take forms that include but are not restricted to traditional academic dissemination, such as community presentations, performances, or participation in policy and service planning initiatives. Collaborative research projects must be considered and valued in light of these realities.

In keeping with this, administrative support is needed where people are knowledgeable about community partnerships and international collaboration. Furthermore, the significant amount of time that goes into cultivating relationships in community based and interdisciplinary research – before grants can be applied for and research can be undertaken - should be rewarded not penalized.

## 6. Reconceptualizing Value

*“To say you’re not doing it right if you’re not getting a \$500,000 grant is toxic, dangerous, and inimical to research that can stand on its own merits. If I can make contributions for \$10,000 a year, the university administration should embrace me, not punish me.”*

*“The modes of evaluation should be rooted in disciplinary norms and not based on the amount of research funding.”*

Many SSAH faculty conduct high quality research that does not conform to the model of research endorsed at Western, with the result that this research is less valued because it does not fit the traditional model. The University should broaden its definitions of “impact” and think *beyond* indicators like “impact factor” to consider how research shapes scholarship and academic debate. Western needs to recognize that “impact” can be incremental rather than transformative, local rather than on a broader geographic scale, and with effect that is realized only over the long term. One way to do this is by considering the local “impact” of research in and beyond the University, and by recognizing and understanding that work focused on social change has a slow pace. A number of SSAH researchers (as well as graduate students) point to the reciprocal relationship between teaching and research as integral to how they conceptualize value/impact.

Curiosity-driven research is critical, yet it is easily undervalued, especially when there is a focus on “excellence” and a disparagement of curiosity-driven research that is not partnered with industry. While much curiosity-driven research - indeed, perhaps *most* - will have little “impact,” it is impossible to predict a priori which lines of inquiry will, in the end, be most productive and lead to the greatest innovation. Leading edge research can only be known in retrospect. Anyone can say they are doing leading-edge research, but only time, uptake by scholars, and public response will tell. Researchers need room to pursue their passions.

In many cases, high quality SSAH research does not require large amounts of money, and researchers carrying out this work therefore do not need or seek out large external grants. Indeed, many SSAH researchers make *significant* scholarly contributions on very small budgets, an achievement which should be celebrated by the administration. Often, though not exclusively, this research is conducted by one researcher and has demonstrated impact outside the traditional realm of academic publishing, including contribution to legal decisions, artistic creation, contribution to policy, or contribution to community well-being. Respondents noted that valuing research according to monetary inputs discourages collegiality and contributes to a demoralizing institutional climate. Researchers at Western experience a climate that values large grants over other measures of research impact or success, suggesting that research *inputs* (i.e., financial support for research activities) are conflated with research *outputs* (i.e., impact of research activities, which can take a variety of forms). This conflation sends a strong message to SSAH researchers that their work is not worthy of recognition unless it brings in a great deal of external funding.

A more appropriate reflection of research quality or value is research output, in the various forms this takes for SSAH research. High-quality SSAH research is marked by meaningful

outputs with the potential for significant impact within academia and in the broader community. As discussed, much SSAH research requires little in the way of funding, and SSAH researchers can carry out and disseminate high-quality research if they have access to the small amounts required for their research and dissemination activities. Given this support, SSAH researchers will continue to make significant and meaningful research contributions, including contributions to Western's reputation for research excellence.

Many respondents noted that SSAH researchers often write sole-authored publications, and many SSAH researchers disseminate their work in the form of monographs. These forms of publishing are time-intensive, and as a result SSAH researchers tend to publish relatively infrequently.

SSAH researchers identify a number of inadequacies of existing assessment processes (in particular, APE) in capturing the value of SSAH research. Many felt that the time taken to apply for large grants should be recognized in the APE scores whether or not the application was successful. Additionally, some research that is attractive to other, non tri-council funding bodies is not valued in APE procedures or reflected in APE scores. Concerns were also raised that since APE scores are tied to a certain amount of merit pay, it may encourage "quantity over quality" This reinforces the idea that greater productivity is necessarily better, a sentiment with which many faculty disagree.

In this regard, traditional research metrics (e.g., citation counts) do not adequately reflect the impact and quality of much SSAH research. Metrics, when appropriate, must be applied *within* a disciplinary context, in order to account for different publishing and citation practices. The University must consider alternative methods of assessing outcomes, including pedagogical impact, peer review, policy contributions, legal decisions and research narratives. The modes of evaluation should be rooted in disciplinary norms and not based on standardized research metrics that privilege some modes of research production over others.

There is significant concern among some SSAH faculty members that particular metrics/indicators could become externally mandated standards for faculty assessments (e.g., Annual Performance Review, Promotion and Tenure). While some schools and departments will use metrics for evaluative purposes, SSAH researchers remain adamant that the evaluative use of metrics *must not* be imposed as the method of assessing faculty or individual researcher performance. In this respect, it is critical to remember that, although these tools may provide insight into the contributions and impact of an individual researcher or group of researchers, metrics/indicators are not easily comparable across disciplines or across researchers.

## 7. Recognizing and Communicating the Impact of SSAH Research

### *Better Storytelling and Knowledge Translation*

*“I would love to have a dedicated external affairs group that would work to distil my research and make it public. I find it a very daunting and onerous to think that I need to do the research and also build my own brand and popular outlets for disseminating that work outside of academia. Someone (a graphic designer) to make infographics, executive summaries with nice graphics, make tweets or blog posts would be amazing. This is work that I feel is necessary [...] but I do not have these skills.”*

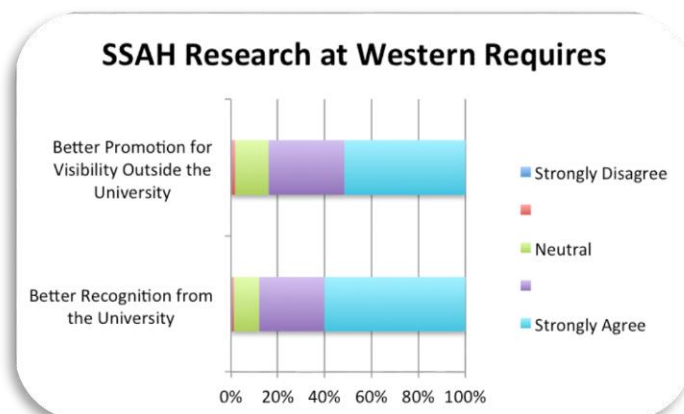
SSAH researchers, like other researchers across campus, would benefit from assistance to ‘tell their own story’ and promote their own research to the world at large (communities, policy, local and global contexts). Research dissemination begins with traditional publication and conference presentation, but now extends to open access publishing, and contributing to and maintaining a profile on research repositories. Increasingly, researchers are required to engage in knowledge translation beyond academia to professional audiences and to the general public, through means that include developing and maintaining an online and social media presence, reaching the public through traditional media, participation in professional conferences, and participation in public lecture series.

As illustrated in the chart above, over 80% of the survey respondents noted that SSAH research requires both better recognition by the University and better promotion to improve visibility outside of the University. The University must celebrate research contributions and not just research funding, and must recognize a broad range of impacts. For example, SSAH researchers make important contributions to policy and legal decisions, and engage in non-traditional forms of research dissemination, such as performance, which indeed serves as a great avenue for knowledge mobilization. These contributions should be promoted within the community, thereby promoting a strong relationship between the community and the institution.

### *Countering Exclusion by Cultivating a Vibrant Research Culture*

*“Every day, I look at those giant posters on the sides of our buildings and I feel that my students and I don’t belong here. The university only celebrates tech research, medical research, and entrepreneurialism. In fact, the vast majority of the research on this campus is about the social, about the world and its problems, about helping others, about critical thinking.”*

Respondents’ comments about their experiences of feeling excluded from the Western





culture of research reveals the gap between the research that is typically valued and celebrated and the diversity and scope of SSAH research that is being conducted at Western.

Several SSAH researchers report feeling isolated and expressed a desire to create a more collaborative intellectual community at Western. Researchers indicated that they would like more opportunities for collegial exchange, discussion, and collaboration on campus, as well as more venues for sharing between cognate disciplines. Several faculty said they felt that one of the reasons no one in the faculty knows what they do is because there is no place to meet and talk which signals the need to promote communication and camaraderie within Western. Communal spaces are important for faculty to share ideas as well as their accomplishments in the realm of research, which include receipt of major awards, keynote speeches, SSHRC grants, new books and journal article publications. Participation in interdisciplinary reading groups, the space to contemplate with others should be valued and supported. The University can help to cultivate a vibrant research culture at Western by providing support for some of these initiatives such as speaker series.

## 8. Faculty Consultation Recommendations

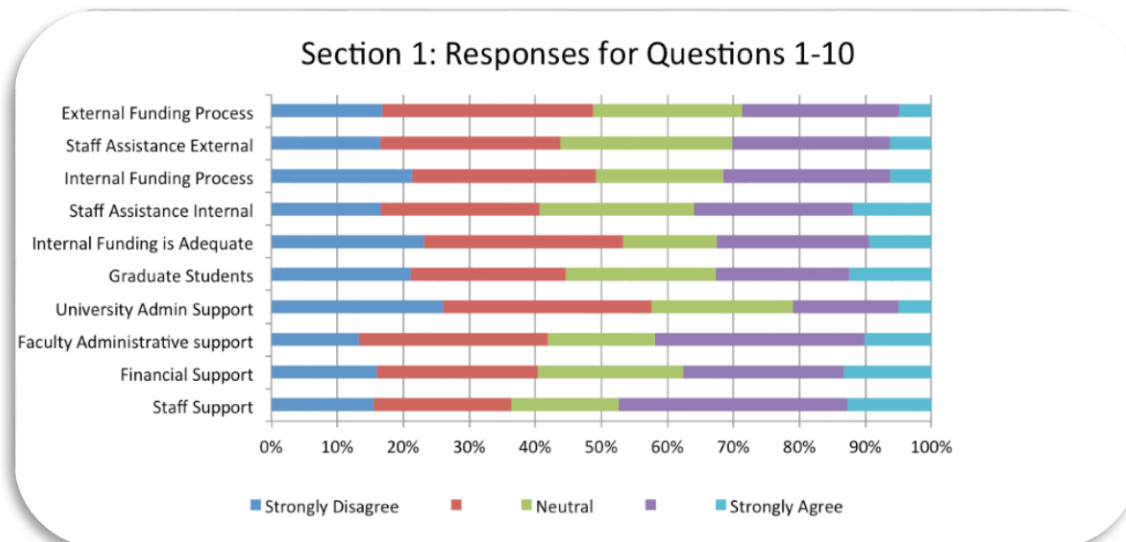
Based on consultations it is recommended that the University should:

- 1) Find ways to support and value the activity of curiosity-driven research that makes *significant* contributions to scholarship, policy and to the community and world at large. The University needs to privilege high impact research, not only high budget research.
- 2) Explicitly promote and identify with values that reflect research in a diversity of disciplines, including SSAH, without privileging the values of some research over others (i.e. committing to social justice and other values is more important than “branding,” which reflects business model and its associated values).
- 3) Support and value the contributions of all SSAH research, not just award-winning research. SSAH researchers request assistance in telling their stories, in a way that clearly communicates and promotes the value and impact of their research. See McMaster for good examples of how research is communicated across range of disciplines and in a way that makes all the featured research sound important and exciting.
- 4) Assist SSAH researchers to promote their own work by providing centralized resources and training for developing research narratives, identifying community outreach opportunities, reaching out to media, developing and maintaining a social media presence, and developing and maintaining profiles on relevant institutional and extra-institutional research repositories.

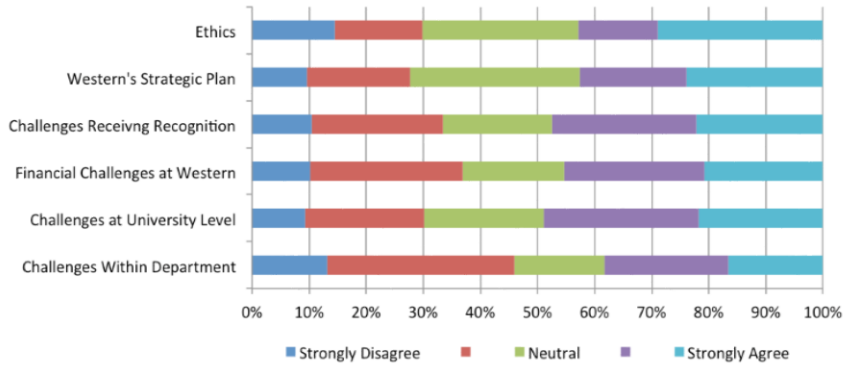
- 5) Identify and develop more nuanced forms of evaluation that recognize the work and accomplishments of diverse disciplines and scholarly fields. Change evaluation mechanisms to recognize the impact of SSAH Research and to reward community based and interdisciplinary research, some of which receives tri-council funding.
- 6) Recognize that people need money for research, but not everyone requires large sums. Smaller pots of money need to be made available to SSAH researchers in the form of standard research support, small competitive grants, and support for dissemination. One option supported by many SSAH researchers is for the University to introduce standard, non-competitive research support (between \$2000 and \$5000) that can be used for the purposes of research including data collection and dissemination. In addition to basic faculty level research support, it is recommended that the University implement a centrally administered competition for low budget projects (e.g., those requiring \$20, 000 or less). Such research has the potential to offer significant value per research dollar spent.
- 7) Mid-career researchers are at particular risk for their continued research performance due to a lack of existing institutional support. One solution is to offer a “Kick Starter Grant” that would be available to every researcher at one point in their career. This could include a one time/per career place you can get a reasonable amount of money \$10, 000 – to help researchers build toward future success – (potentially at the SSHRC level). It would have to be used toward a project that has scientific validity and that would also be evaluated. Mid-career researchers would also benefit from formal mentorship similar to that received by new faculty.
- 8) Strong administrative support is required at all levels – department, faculty and central - for researchers accessing both SSHRC and non-tri council funding. There are a number of SSAH researchers who need, go after and are successful at SSHRC/CIHR and they need be supported as much as possible in their efforts. One possibility is for Western to create a Research Support Centre (like the Teaching Support Centre) to foster research skills as well as grant application skills. This Centre could train faculty members on handling different workflows (ensuring that research does not become deprioritized), how to use bibliographic software, how best to undertake dissemination of research, how to measure our own impact, etc. Western should pursue membership in the ResearchImpact network to enhance support to researchers for knowledge mobilization activities.
- 9) Introduce competitive grants for teaching release, which would work to alleviate some of the time pressures experienced by SSAH researchers, particularly tenured faculty.
- 10) Devote resources to address unreasonably long processing times for ethics, which holds up research. Streamline the ROME0 and ROLA to make it easier for SSAH researchers interact with these systems.

- 11) Provide SSAH researchers with adequate research support tools, such as N-Vivo (qualitative analysis software) and Qualtrics. These are two examples of research tools that researchers are required to interact with and should therefore be available to all researchers at Western at a reasonable cost.
  
- 12) Cultivate a collaborative interactive and interdisciplinary research community by providing funding, opportunities and space for researchers to share ideas and talk. Supporting speaker series and reserving spaces on campus specifically for SSAH researchers across disciplines to gather would go a long way in producing a vibrant research culture at Western.

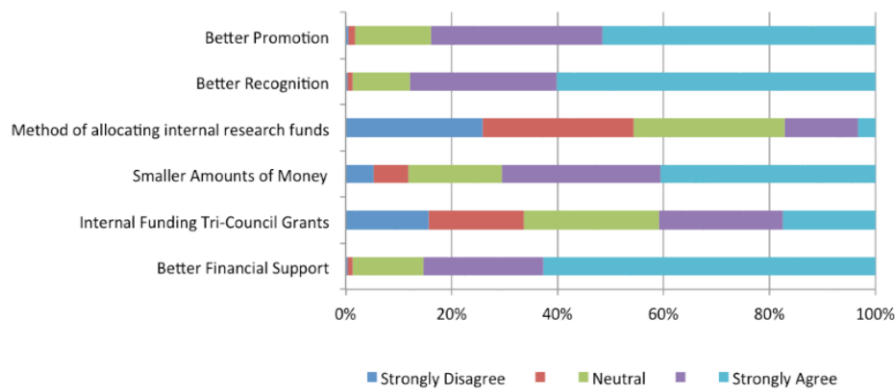
## Appendix



### Section 6: Responses for Questions 1-8



### Section 8: Responses for Questions 1-6



### **Attachment 3 – Submission of the SSHRC Associate Dean’s Research regarding research indicators**

This report was developed in response to a request by the Assistant Vice-President of Research, Mark Daley, to provide input on the issue of metrics that could be used (where appropriate) to reflect research output and research quality in the social sciences, arts, and humanities. The response was prepared jointly by the deans of research in the faculties of Health Sciences, Information and Media Studies, Music, Business, Arts and Humanities, Law, and Social Science, who consulted in turn with members of their respective faculties. The response does not represent a wholehearted endorsement of the use of metrics, but is rather a joint attempt to document indicators of research impact and outcome appropriate for the range of research activities in the social sciences, arts, and humanities.

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide input on the measurement of research impact/outcome. This is a complex issue in part because there is no single set of indicators that can capture the impact of all research. Moreover, some types of impact simply can’t be captured through quantitative metrics. Some faculty members have expressed concern that the use of research metrics legitimizes a general trend toward the metrification of quality in academia – in fact, for some faculty this concern is so significant as to lead them to reject the very idea of research metrics. Our discussions also lead us to understand that researchers need assistance in documenting the impact of their own work. Therefore, what we’re offering here is a summary of the kinds of metrics and other assistance that would help researchers from diverse disciplinary backgrounds to document research impact and excellence.

We understand that the goal of identifying research metrics/indicators is to provide *researchers* with the tools that they need to document the impact of their own work. To the extent that metrics are being used in this manner, they will be helpful for many (although not all) researchers across campus. To provide support to the broadest range of researchers at Western, it is critical that we support a wide range of approaches to identifying and documenting research impact, including traditional citation metrics, alternative metrics that capture a range of non-traditional sources where research and researchers could have an impact, and qualitative narrative approaches that support individual and individualized accounts of research impact using outcomes that are relevant to a specific researcher and/or a specific project. We also wish to stress that much of the support that would be helpful comes in the form of *people* rather than *tools*. If the goal is to enhance Western’s reputation, the importance of personnel who are talented at story telling cannot be overemphasized. That is, regardless of the tools/packages that might be purchased to document research success, personnel will be needed to ensure that these packages will be deployed in an accurate and useful manner.

Finally, it is worth making some general points, arising from our discussions, about access to metric supports/systems. First, we believe it is critical to ensure university-wide access to whatever metrics we purchase/license. *All* faculty members must have the option to use the tools

that we license or purchase for tracking research impact – i.e., access to these resources should *not* be determined on a faculty-by-faculty basis. Standard metrics, for example, may not be appropriate for all SSAH faculty; there are, however, some SSAH researchers whose work (or at least aspects thereof) is/are well represented by standard metrics, and we would not want to see their access to the appropriate tools restricted because there is not widespread applicability within their specific faculty. Second, faculty members who use any metrics system must have open access to their profiles, with the ability to monitor, revise, and correct errors or omissions. It would not be possible for one person to collate correctly data for any individual faculty member, let alone a large group of faculty members. There are too many issues with respect to, for example, properly counting citations from even something like SciVal, which, at least at first glance, seems like it should be straightforward. There are definite issues with regard to similarity among names, changing names across time or publications, and the changing name of our university. No central staff member will be able to hone in on the full correct set of citations in something like SciVal, let alone locating the correct white papers, policy briefs, and other important evidence of impact. This work can be done by staff, but we believe those staff will have to be situated within a given department, so that errors and confusions around the data can be resolved within the unit.

1. Expansion of existing metrics (citations of/citations in): SSAH and other researchers present their research in a variety of formats, including but not limited to peer-reviewed journal articles. When summarizing research citations, it is important that citations in and citations of the following types of outputs be included in a comprehensive citation tracking system:
  - a. Monographs, edited collections, critical editions
  - b. Chapters in monographs, edited collections, critical editions
  - c. Refereed conference proceedings
  - d. Theses
  - e. Papers in research repositories (e.g., Social Sciences Research Network (<http://www.ssrn.com/en/>), ResearchGate (<https://www.researchgate.net>), Scholarship@Western, etc.)
2. Citations of and citations in ‘grey literature’: Beyond even the expanded list of ‘traditional’ academic outputs listed above, SSAH research is disseminated and cited in a variety of ‘grey literature’ forms. These are not captured in traditional citation tracking systems, but they represent important avenues for dissemination and areas for potential impact of SSAH research:
  - a. Canadian and international court decisions (citation in, particularly for Law)
  - b. Hansard citations
  - c. Government reports
  - d. Corporate reports
  - e. White papers
  - f. Policy briefs
3. Non-citation researcher and research impact indicators: Systems like *altmetrics* are beginning to track research impact reflected, not in formal citations, but in social media discussions, media presence, and other forms of discussion/presentation. Collectively,

these reflect an influence on the field, on Western, and/or on society more broadly. These include:

- a. Social media mentions (blogs, twitter, etc.)
  - b. Press interviews
  - c. Keynote lectures
  - d. Exhibitions/exhibits
  - e. Contribution to policy (e.g., invitation to participate on consultation panels)
  - f. Contribution to course outlines, educational curricula and programs
  - g. Student training and placement
  - h. ‘Collaboration’ maps that show disciplinary and interdisciplinary research collaborations
  - i. There are currently several projects underway that seek to measure the impact of artists’ work on audiences (see Quality Metrics (<http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/what-we-do/research-and-data/quality-work/quality-metrics/>), in the UK, and Culture Counts (<https://culturecounts.cc/about/>) in Australia.) We should seek to better understand these efforts to see if they are relevant to constituencies of the SSAH community.
4. Getting the message out: “getting the message out” about research can be a time-intensive and challenging exercise – and SSAH researchers, like all researchers across campus, would benefit from hands-on assistance in this area. Specifically, we have two suggestions:
- a. Western should focus on enhancing the presence of Western researchers in a select number of online research repositories (e.g., SSRN, ResearchGate, academia.edu). Research repositories are increasingly important for access to (and therefore citation of) relevant scholarly research. If Western were to choose a small number of such repositories with the intention of enhancing the presence of research from Western (and researchers from Western) on those sites, there could be significant benefit for both the institution and individual researchers in terms of enhanced research visibility. The problem is that setting up and maintaining these profiles is time-intensive. One solution is to provide practical support to interested faculty members to develop and maintain profiles on the identified sites (e.g., assistance with setting up the profile, uploading relevant publications, ensuring that copyright provisions are respected, etc.).
  - b. Staff resources to assist individual researchers to develop a specific research impact ‘story’. Many SSAH researchers and research projects would benefit from an individual approach to research impact – the projects and researchers aren’t well reflected in standard metrics, but require instead a qualitative storytelling approach to research impact. Assistance with developing and writing these stories would be of benefit – and we have expertise at Western in this area.

Cathy Benedict, ADR, Music; Helene Berman, ADR, Health Sciences; Nandi Bhatia, ADR, Arts and Humanities; Stephen Bird, ADR, Education; Jacquelyn Burkell, ADR, FIMS; Robert Klassen, ADR, Business; Ken McRae, ADR, Social Science; Valerie Oosterveld, ADR, Law

## **Attachment 4 - URB SSAH Task Force: Graduate Student Consultation Recommendations**

Prepared by Joshua Lambier and Diana Moreiras

- May 04, 2016

### **Executive Summary**

While SSAH graduate researchers share many of the prevailing concerns expressed by faculty, the former also experience unique pain points that will remain invisible without careful attention to the important and distinctive challenges that arise for doctoral students at The University of Western Ontario.

### **2) The Western Context**

With the growing prominence of STEM disciplines, SSAH graduate students have noted an intensified pressure to shift the topics and methods of their research to adapt to the “STEM-bias” in evaluation criteria for internal and external grants, awards, and distinctions. Graduate students have also pointed out that the rhetoric of this University’s leadership is increasingly dichotomized into the needs of “STEM” and “non-STEM” disciplines, which flattens and diminishes the contributions of the social sciences and humanities. Students recognize that this rhetoric is a response to a general shift of tone coming from funding bodies in Canada, but would encourage senior leaders to advocate for the vital contributions of SSAH research.

### **3) Recognition/Advocacy**

Graduate students have expressed their desire to see university leaders make a more robust case for the value of SSAH research at its best within and beyond the university system. There is also a general impression that research is especially valued when it can demonstrate direct application or “impact,” which overlooks the intrinsic value of SSAH research (i.e., the humanities’ sake). If policymakers and the broader public have a better idea of the value of SSAH research, the career options of SSAH graduates might also improve. Recent reports indicate that only 20-30% of all humanities PhDs in Canada will secure a position in universities or colleges, highlighting the urgent need to make the case for the value of doctoral education beyond the academy.[1] Finally, participants noted that the University should profile and publicize the research excellence of *all students*, not just those who win national/international awards.

*Training for Research Careers:* Graduate students would like a broader range of professionalization activities to develop their scholarship and career opportunities, including an enhanced focus on collaboration, project management, grant writing, and knowledge exchange. Students noted the lack of opportunities to mobilize their research projects beyond their disciplinary boundaries, which limits the translatability of their projects to careers outside of the University.

*Graduate Level Teaching:* SSAH graduate students pointed out the high value of teaching while carrying out their research given that they gain valuable insights and perspectives on issues related to their research allowing them to feed ideas back into their research, thus fostering their interpretations. Graduate students hope more weight can be placed on this in relation to SSAH research by creating more opportunities to teach at the graduate level.



#### **4) Need for general research infrastructure supports**

*Removing Obstacles for Engaged Graduate Research:* Though the dissertation is the traditional outcome of a successful doctoral program in the social sciences and the humanities, graduate students are advocating for PhD programs that are designed for greater modes of participation with broader publics, including recognition for a *wider and more inclusive continuum of scholarly artifacts* beyond the article and the dissertation (e.g., research blogs, films, websites, digital and oral storytelling initiatives, community-based projects). Graduate researchers pointed to a dynamic list of publicly engaged projects they were building or working on as part of their doctoral education with little or no recognition of their efforts in terms of the adjudication of their success as a student, even if these activities ultimately make them stronger candidates for careers within and beyond the University. There is also an urgent demand to see new models for PhD programs, with the option to replace the dissertation with a coherent series of artifacts (e.g., dissertation by articles, applied PhDs, Workshop PhDs, project-based PhDs, internships, among others).

*Interdisciplinarity:* Doctoral research projects are enriched by interdisciplinary collaboration, and Western should encourage innovative opportunities for graduate students to approach new questions, methods, and communities. Many of the most intractable problems occur in the liminal spaces between disciplines, and require novel strategies for cross-fertilization between traditional disciplines. The University could enhance existing graduate programming by increasing resources for interdisciplinary clusters, by removing unnecessary barriers for graduate scholars to engage with faculty across the disciplines, and by recognizing research outcomes that might otherwise fall outside of the standard process of evaluation (e.g., community-based projects). Doctoral students also emphasized the need to foster “bottom-up” approaches to interdisciplinary collaboration, which would allow researchers to forge their own creative pathways.

*Ethics:* Graduate students are in need of better support in relation to the research ethics process. There is a need for faster turn-over timelines from the Ethics Board. Moreover, graduate students would find it much more beneficial to receive relevant feedback on their SSAH-specific research projects from SSAH faculty members (i.e., instead of the STEM-focused/quantitative feedback some SSAH graduate students have encountered in this process). Additionally, graduate students find it more appropriate and logistically sound to have the option to take more ownership of their research through the ROMEO system. We recommend to open up the option for graduate students to choose to be the principal investigator on ROMEO as well as developing a more clear and helpful guide on the UWO website about the Ethics procedures and corresponding forms.

*Graduate Designated Spaces:* Having physical spaces available on campus which are catered to the graduate researchers’ needs were highlighted as crucial (i.e., these are different from undergraduate student spaces). Specific spaces designed for graduate level research activities (i.e., reading, studying, writing, meetings, break rooms/lounges) are currently lacking in some SSAH departments and this situation turns more complicated for graduate student researchers who are over their funding period. As a result, senior graduate students are pushed off campus, isolating them from the collegial community and research environment of the university. We recommend that the University finds feasible opportunities to create spaces with graduate

students' needs in mind such as reading and writing rooms, office spaces available beyond year four, and faculty/graduate break rooms/lounges for each SSAH discipline.

### **5) Allocation of Internal Funds**

*International Students:* Given that international graduate students pay more tuition and are ineligible to apply for most governmental grants and scholarships (with the exception of the OGS which is limited to eight students across campus), they are left with minimal or no funds to allocate to their research projects. As such, we recommend that the University finds ways to create internal scholarships/awards with the main purpose of supporting international students, exclusively, with their research-related expenses (e.g., field and/or laboratory work, research dissemination, etc.).

*Transparency for Adjudicating Grant Proposals:* Students advocated for a more transparent process of evaluating grant applications at the major funding bodies (e.g., SSHRC). Graduate researchers are also concerned that innovative interdisciplinary projects are not being evaluated fairly in the “jury process” of review at the TriCouncils, especially if the project “falls between the cracks” of established disciplines (e.g., Humanities and Health Sciences) or funding councils (e.g., SSHRC and CIHR).

*Open Source Journal Publishing Subsidy:* It would be very beneficial for the University to have a specific fund which graduate students could apply to in order to help subsidize the cost of publishing in open source journals. This would encourage more graduate students to publish their work during their degree and have their research become more accessible, beyond their own field of study.

### **6. Conclusions:**

With the growing recognition and support of mental health issues on campus, graduate students would like to see adequate health services and resources. In some cases, the needs of graduate students may exceed those of undergraduate students (e.g., students with families and children). “*A healthy grad student,*” as one student said, “*equals a more productive grad student.*”

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[1] “White Paper on the Future of the PhD in the Humanities,” Institute for the Public Life of Arts and Ideas, McGill University, December 2013.

### **Appendix 3**

URB Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities Task Force  
Working Group 3 Summary Report and Attachments  
Andrew Nelson

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#### **Contents:**

1. Administrative practices and processes
2. Funding
3. Recognition / Communications
4. Advocacy

#### **Attachments:**

1. re: REB - memo on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 from Erika Basile, Director, Office of Research Ethics to the Deans and ADRs to be distributed to the research community, informing everyone that a new non-medical Vice Chair has been appointed, Prof. Randal Graham and providing further details of recent developments in the ORE.
2. Other Canadian and International Universities' internal funding programs – prepared by Andrew Nelson and Jane Toswell
3. URB Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities Task Force Working Group 3 Report on Research Communications – prepared by Jonathan Vance

#### Working group's initial remit:

1. How is research in the social sciences, arts, and humanities supported at Western and how can this be improved?
  - a. Specifically, how can (i) administrative practices and processes, (ii) funding, and (iii) recognition be improved?
  - b. How can Western better communicate the results of leading edge scholarly activities in social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines?
  - c. How can Western advocate for social sciences, arts, and humanities research more effectively?

#### **1. Administrative Practices and Processes**

Based on the findings of the Working Groups, our Committee identified four areas in which infrastructure should be strengthened to enhance social sciences, arts, and humanities research.

- Support for the preparation of research proposals
- Research ethics review and approval
- Access to research tools
- Fostering interdisciplinary and collaborative research

## Preparation of Research Proposals

Respondents to our Committee's consultation process revealed that there are large disparities among the different faculties in terms of the kinds and amounts of administrative assistance that they can provide individual researchers. Strong praise was in evidence for the quality of support from Research and Development Services, particularly in the area of grant preparation, but that support is currently limited to specific programs (e.g. ORF, CFI, SSHRC Partnership and Partnership Development grants), leaving many faculty members dependent on variable and typically more limited resources in their home faculty. Furthermore, specific kinds of support, such as staff members knowledgeable in areas such as granting agency regulations, best practices around the eligibility and evaluation of in-kind supports, and the details of graduate support are very unevenly distributed across the faculties. Thus, there was a strong sense that there should be a greater centralized presence in the areas of opportunity identification, grant preparation, the handling of in-kind supports, the facilitation of community based research, and research mobilization. In addition, the areas increasingly being emphasized by the Tri-Councils, including open access publishing, data curation, and knowledge mobilization are areas of strategic importance that would benefit from administrative assistance.

Several impediments to the grant application process were identified by individuals consulted by this Committee, focusing particularly on ROLA and recent changes in administrative practice.

*ROLA* – ROLA has long been an irritant to researchers and some administrators at Western. It is indeed a valuable tool for gathering signatures in a fast and efficient manner, but its interface is non-intuitive, the software is unforgiving of mistakes and its budget module seldom matches the modules of the actual grant application. From an administrative perspective, it does not easily allow ADRs to check specific items of information, the budgets are incomplete, there is no way to track Faculty or University commitments to grant proposals and there is no facility to monitor a Faculty's grant activities over time. Finally, it does not track the information necessary for many of the internal processes in RDS, including the allocation of internal funds and information for research contracts. A software package recently obtained by Western, Qlik, does allow the querying of the ROLA database and the production of reports (data that make up part of this report was obtained this way), but it is currently only available to a few individuals.

Recent discussions with Patrick Callaghan indicated that there is a willingness to examine the ROLA interface and the kinds of data that ROLA gathers. The Committee applauds this openness (which has not been apparent on this topic in the past) and encourages that a range of stakeholders be consulted to improve this product.

*Recent changes in administrative practice* – Several researchers, particularly those with large grants that require extensive administrative and HR support, have noted that the administration of these projects is extremely burdensome. In addition, the process of hiring research assistants has become very complex, and there appears to be increasing bureaucracy involved in making purchases and payments. A thorough review of administrative procedures and processes with an eye to increasing efficiencies and decreasing the load on the researcher would be timely and welcome.

## Research Ethics Review and Approval

Many researchers and students consulted by this committee expressed frustration with the University's ethics approval process, citing, in particular, Research Ethics Board comments that go beyond the accepted purview of ethics review and significant delays in procuring ethics approval. In addition, researchers involved in multi-university projects experience difficulties and delays in coordinating ethics approval across institutions.

Our Committee acknowledges that the REB is aware of these challenges and is taking steps to address them. Documents detailing the steps taken to improve efficiency in the Office of Research Ethics are included as an attachment here and are itemized below. We support their efforts and encourage the University to ensure that they are given adequate resources, both in terms of finances and training personnel, to promote timely review of submissions. Finally, if the REB is to reflect the ideal of local peer-review for ethical acceptability, social scientists, artists and humanists must dedicate their time to serving as members of the Board.

Actions undertaken in the last year in order to improve efficiency at the Office of Research Ethics (from an email from Erika Basile):

- “We have hired 2 new Ethics Officers (one for the Health Science review and the other for the Non-Medical REB)
- Documentation: In response to feedback, we have updated templates and guidance documents on our website to better support researchers in preparing their ethics submissions. These updates will help researchers interpret policies and regulations, and to create study documentation. Due to the breadth of research activities across campus, we have updated our non-medical application form to clarify information the REB requires for review.
- We are in the process of finalizing the contract with a vendor for a new REB management system to replace ROMEO. The goal is to have this new system in place by the end of the year.
- Re: the coordinated REB review with UofWaterloo, more information about this can be found at [http://www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics/about/coordinated\\_review.ht](http://www.uwo.ca/research/services/ethics/about/coordinated_review.ht)
- We have some new REB members from Cardiac Surgery and a new community member which has been a tremendous help. We also have some new post doc REB members aiding in the review of medical applications (mainly delegated submissions). This has been a big help on our health science REB side.

Some challenges remain, however. We have heard the research community's frustrations about delays and inconsistent reviews. This is where we need the research community's help. REB members play a vital role in the research ethics process by assessing whether research protocols adequately protect the rights and welfare of participants and researchers.

We greatly appreciate the work our current and past members have done; however, to review the number of submissions we receive monthly in a timely manner — and with sufficient expertise — we urgently require new REB members knowledgeable in various

subject areas. We require additional NMREB support from most faculties to help current members when they are unable to provide a review. Despite my initial Memo from Jan/2016 asking for additional REB membership and Grace's engagement with faculty we have not acquired any additional REB membership for the Non-Medical REB.

With respect to the HSREB, we are currently shorthanded in many areas, including, but not limited to: neurological sciences, dentistry, family medicine, medical imaging, oncology, ophthalmology and surgery. We need to ensure sufficient REB membership from the various faculties engaging in research involving human participants.”

Our Committee is grateful for the leadership being provided by Ms. Basile and the steps that have been taken over the past year. We support these ongoing efforts and trust that things will continue to improve. We also encourage faculty members to respond to Ms. Basile's requests for engagement. Clearly, further improvement requires coordinated effort.

See Attachment 1 for additional information.

#### Access to Research Tools

Many research tools, such as quantitative analysis software that is commonly used in the sciences and in some of the social sciences, arts, and humanities, are widely available to students and faculty members at Western either free or at a reasonable cost through a university-negotiated site license. There is not, however, comparable access to tools that would be of use particularly to social science, arts, and humanities researchers, such as qualitative analysis software and online survey software. Some Faculties are able to provide to their researchers access to these resources, but others do not have the funds to make these tools available. Lack of universal low-cost access to these tools compromises the ability of faculty members and graduate students to carry out research; moreover, it places grant applicants at a disadvantage relative to faculty members at other institutions because they must build into their budget relatively high acquisition costs for these tools. Thus, coordinated centralized support for these resources would be of inestimable benefit to social science, arts, and humanities research on campus.

Research tools that have specifically been raised include Qualtrics and NVivo which are used by researchers and students across all the social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines. These tools should be as readily available as SPSS is to researchers and students who utilize quantitative methods.

#### Fostering Interdisciplinary and Collaborative Research

The increased emphasis on interdisciplinarity at all the Tri-Councils makes support for this kind of research a strategic priority for the University. The current InterDisciplinary Initiatives program is widely recognized as a very important tool in this area that has fostered many vital and dynamic programs. The recently named clusters, the Brain and Mind and Bone and Joint Institutes, both held IDIs at some point along their development. Other research enterprises, graduate and undergraduate programs have emerged from this program as well.

At an individual level, however, faculty members who carry out interdisciplinary research report ongoing challenges. Our consultations revealed that there are still difficulties encountered by individuals who hold appointments that cross units, particularly in terms of the hiring and promotion and tenure process. In addition, there are clearly still rigid silos in many parts of the University. Thus, an ongoing concerted effort is required to further develop interdisciplinarity at Western.

One suggestion that came out of the consultations, both with faculty members and students, was that Western should “cultivate a collaborative interactive and interdisciplinary research community by providing funding, opportunities and space for researchers to share ideas and talk.” The libraries could play an important role in the establishment of such an environment as it exists outside of the disciplinary silos.

## **2. Internal Funding**

Our consultation revealed a belief that recent changes in the internal funding program at Western, while aligned with the Strategic Plan, had shut many researchers out from one of the key supports for their research programs, which in turn has profoundly affected researcher morale.

As discussed elsewhere in this Task Force’s final report, many social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers do not require large sums of money to undertake their research. The minimum grant request for both SSHRC’s Insight and Insight Development Grants is \$7,000, suggesting that these should be fruitful opportunities for researchers seeking to support small projects. However, data shared with this Committee by SSHRC revealed that the smallest amount actually funded from the fall 2015 Insight Grant round was approximately \$65,000 while the average award was 2 to 3 times that size. Figures for the January 2016 Insight Development Grant were also well above the \$7000 floor, at approximately \$20,000 for the smallest request, with an average request of approximately 3 times that size (the awarded amounts are not yet available). These data make it evident that successful SSHRC projects do not have small budget projects, which is consistent with the Tri-Councils emphasis on multidisciplinary and team grants. Although we have no direct evidence that lower budget projects would have a more limited chance of success, recent success rates in the low 30% range suggest that the return on investment for such applications would be limited at best.

Thus, it is important for universities to be creative about other ways to support small to modest research projects. SSHRC does provide Institutional Grants to eligible institutions and they allow institutions to retain unused grant funds (Grant Residual Funds) for repurposing. As discussed in the Summary Report on Working Group 1, these are the only funds that some universities deploy for internal funding. However, Western adds considerably more money from its operating budget to the internal support budget, for a total of ca. \$2M/year.

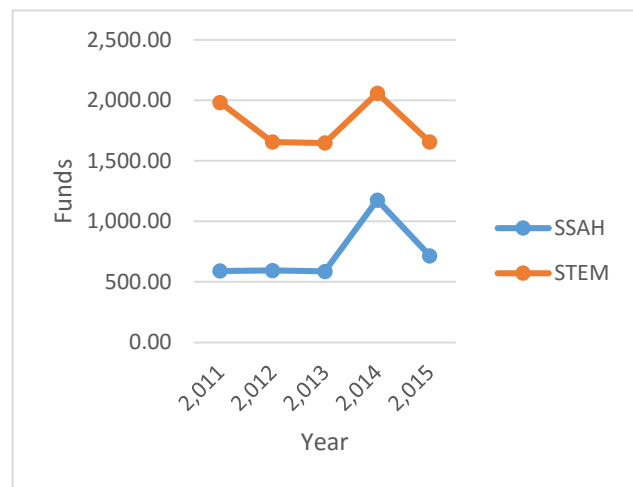
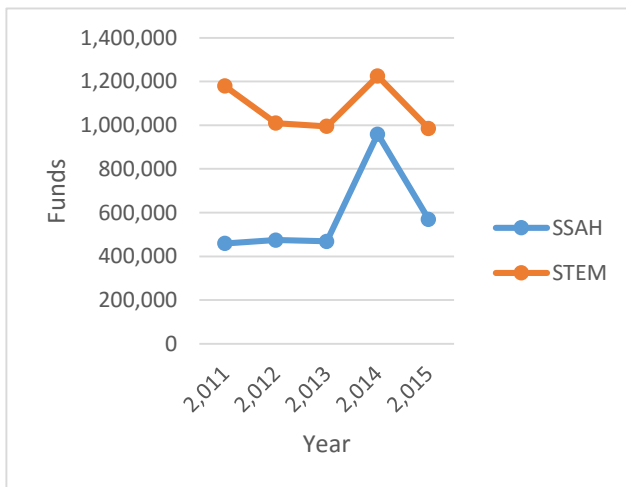
Patrick Callaghan, the Interim Executive Director, Research, generously provided some data derived from the ROLA database, allowing the Committee to undertake some basic analysis of how the internal funds were being deployed, and what effect that had on external funding success. A small portion of that analysis is presented here.

First, a tabulation of internal funds allocated to all Faculties indicates a somewhat fluctuating, but reasonably steady investment of funds for internally supported research:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
\$2,006,772	\$2,019,403	\$2,107,511	\$2,661,279	\$1,876,173

The brief rise in internal funds in 2014 is likely due to the overlap of programs that were being phased out, and new programs instituted in, 2013. The reason for the reduction in funding below \$2M in 2015 is not clear.

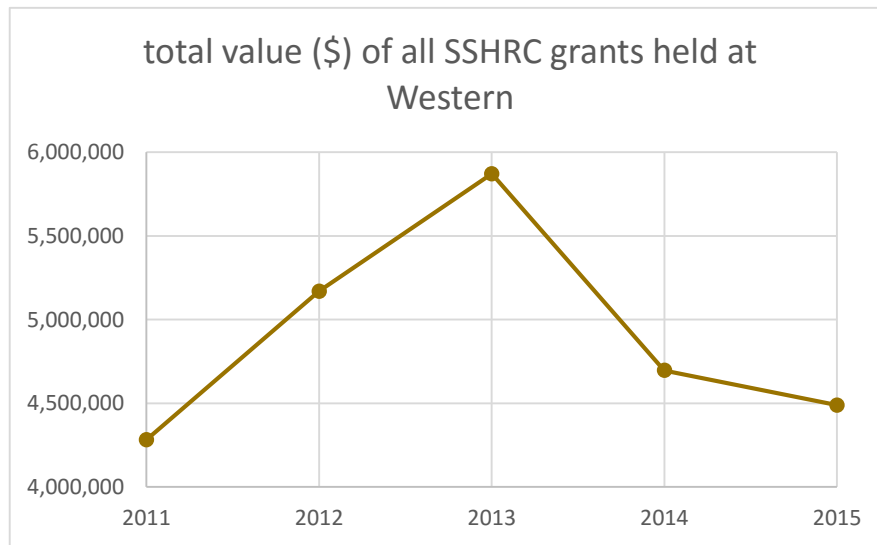
An examination of the core funds that faculty members can apply for directly (pre 2013 = Academic Development Fund large and small grants, SSHRC Internal Research and Travel Grants, International Research Grants; post 2013, Western Strategic Support for Success Grants and Faculty Directed Research Funds) showed that the social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines in aggregate receive approximately 30% to 40% of the funds apportioned to the STEM disciplines. The average social scientist, artist or humanist also receives about 30% to 40% of the amount of internal funds as the average STEM researcher.



This observation is not a rallying cry suggesting a systematic bias against the social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines and researchers. Rather, it is an important observation that deserves further discussion. Elsewhere in this report, we have noted that social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers tend to require smaller budgets than STEM researchers. However, there are more social scientists, artists and humanists at Western than there are STEM researchers, so one might also expect a more equitable distribution of resources. It is not the objective of this report to come to a conclusion on this matter; we merely seek to point out that this is something that should be explored more thoroughly in an examination of the internal funding program.



A third analysis undertaken is of the total value of SSHRC grants held at Western. There are many reasons that this number could vary over time, including a few very large grants, overall changing success rates at SSHRC, vagaries of the pool of researchers applying in any given year and so on. However, given that the funding regime instituted in 2013 had its explicit goal to increase success rates at SSHRC, this is a valuable indicator of the success of the Western Strategic Support for Success Program. The figures for the total value of SSHRC grants held at Western are plotted below:



The plot shows a sharp increase in SSHRC funds held under the pre-2013 funding programs, but a sharp decline thereafter under the Western Strategic Support for Success program. A detailed analysis of the specific outcomes for WSSS recipients at SSHRC application has not yet been undertaken, but an analysis of those received by the Faculty of Social Science by December of 2015 provides some anecdotal evidence of the effectiveness of this program. During the term of the WSSS program, FSS received 11 of these grants. Of those 11, only 2 were ultimately linked to successful SSHRC applications. This clearly merits a more detailed exploration.

A quote from one of the individuals consulted by our Committee might prove revealing in light of this analysis:

*“We need one-time stand-alone funding internal opportunities for research and conferences and less funding tied to massive tri-council projects and the pursuit of these... Ironically there is little room for testing novel ideas and projects given our current obsession with research projects that are massive and bureaucratic. There is little chance for small scale innovation and experimentation in our system.”*

**The upward trajectory from 2011 to 2013 may well reveal that a diversified, flexible and multilevel internal grants program actually permits more creativity, innovation and ultimately breeds more success than a program that assumes that one-size fits all.** Suffice to say, a more thorough analysis of the internal funding program is warranted.

The feedback we received during our consultation definitely showed that social scientists, artists and humanists at Western would prefer a more diversified portfolio of funding opportunities than currently exists. Suggestions include a Competitive Teaching Release, Mid-career Research Awards, and a Small Grants Program. An examination of internal funding programs at other institutions in Canada suggested precedents for each of these ideas (see Attachment 2). Discussions with the Associate Deans of Research of the social sciences, arts, and humanities Faculties suggests that there is strong support for the continuation of some sort of FRDF funding, that there is some value in strategic support initiatives to support grant success (although possibly in a modified way). ADR discussions and the enumeration of support programs at other institutions also suggested that grants to support the preparation of large and complex proposals (e.g., Partnership Grants) prior to the LOI stage would be valuable. These are discussed further in the final report document.

Finally, our survey reported that many faculty members have resorted to self-funding small research projects and/or research and conference travel. This “grant” is actually the allocation of a portion of a researcher’s own salary as an amount against which they can claim research expenses against taxes. This allows the researcher to recover at least part of their investment in research. There used to be two versions: one that would pertain when a researcher was on sabbatical, the other during a regular year. A CRA ruling in 2013 has been interpreted by many as ruling out the URG during a regular year, and Western’s current version (<http://www.uwo.ca/facultyrelations/>) applies only to sabbaticals. The description of this program is presented in complex jargon that is difficult for most non-lawyers to understand. It is therefore rarely utilized.

Similar programs exist at other universities, but the interpretation of the CRA position varies (see Attachment 2). Queen's has apparently has limited the use of grant in any form and the Committee was told that it is "controversial". Toronto's version is "under moratorium" (<http://www.research.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/SFRG-Moratorium-April-2013.pdf>). Lakehead has one that appears to support sabbatical and regular years (<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/research-and-innovation/forms/research-services/node/15025>) as does the University of Alberta (<http://www.rso.ualberta.ca/Applying/SponsorsPrograms/UofAFunding.aspx>). The committee received input from Ann Bigelow, a Lecturer in Management and Organizational Studies with expertise in the Income Tax Act. Ms. Bigelow suggested that Section 51(1)(o) of the Income Tax Act was subject to interpretation and that the employer should consider asking the CRA for a ruling on the restriction of this grant to sabbaticants only, and to clarify other aspects of this program (<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/E/pub/tp/ic70-6r7/ic70-6r7-e.html>). Given the lack of clarity on this matter, other universities would also benefit from clarification.

### **3. Communications**

The promotion and celebration of research achievements is a critical part of the research process. Researchers must feel that their work is valued by their institution and that success in all disciplines is equally valued. Communicating research achievements is also critical because of the priority that funding bodies place on public engagement, knowledge mobilization, broader impact, etc.

Anecdotal evidence from consultations thus far, indicates a perception among social sciences, arts, and humanities scholars that there is some inequality at Western, and that the institution places a higher premium on a STEM research achievement than it does on research achievement in the social sciences, arts, and humanities.

The detailed discussion of Research Communications can be found here as Attachment 3. The key observations are that:

1. there are vastly differing capacities and emphasis on communications between the different faculties at Western. Some have very sophisticated and well-resourced communications units, others have very small units, while many have no communications support at all
2. Western has an Office of Communications and Public Affairs (hereafter CPA), under Associate Vice-President Communications Helen Connell that is responsible for the overall communications strategy of the University. This office includes Alumni & Development Communications, Media & Community Relations, Creative Services, and Editorial Services.
3. there is a perceived and actual difference in the number of appearances of social sciences, arts, and humanities stories versus the number of STEM stories in Western communications releases.
4. this situation is the product of two competing processes
  - a. the difficulty that the CPA has in engaging social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers in the communications enterprise
  - b. a reluctance of social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers to engage in the communications exercise.

The key recommendation to emerge from this exercise is that Western needs to establish better mechanisms to connect the Communications and Public Affairs office with the Faculties, and social science, arts, and humanities researchers and social scientists, artists and humanists need to be better coached in the value of the communications enterprise. The latter involves examining how these efforts are valued and recognized within existing structures at the University, including annual performance evaluations and promotion and tenure.

#### **4. Advocacy**

The last component of the mission of this Task Force was to consider the question “How can Western advocate for social sciences, arts, and humanities research more effectively?” The answer to this question is a multifaceted one that draws on much of the material discussed above.

First, the clear message emerging from the consultation exercise is that the social scientists, artists and humanists on the Western campus do not feel that their efforts and accomplishments are valued by the current University administration. The University has already taken a major stride toward addressing that concern with the establishment in the 2016-17 budget of a \$5M endowment for the support of the social sciences, arts, and humanities at Western. This effort is to be embraced and encouraged.

A very simple and clear confirmatory/advocacy message would be for the University to embrace the Leiden declaration on *The Role of The Social Sciences and Humanities in the Global Research*

*Landscape* (<http://media.leidenuniv.nl/legacy/leiden-statement.pdf>) that celebrates the value of research in the social sciences and humanities and is signed by Canada's U-15 (of which Western is a part). However, this declaration is currently invisible on Western's website and in any of its literature. A quick look at other members of the U-15 suggests that our sister universities are not any quicker to the mark, so Western could be a leader in Canada in this regard.

An important external advocacy measure would lie in strengthening our relationships with the Tri-Councils and other granting agencies and national associations such as the Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences. The SSHRC Leader in particular has an important role to play in making our researchers' and students' concerns known to SSHRC, and in bringing policy and practice information back to the University. A more active relationship with the Federation would benefit our researchers, particularly with regard to their efforts to better understand *impact* in the social sciences, arts, and humanities.

Active and effective advocacy for the social sciences, arts, and humanities will require a concerted and coordinated effort on all fronts. It is our hope that this report will be an important contribution to these efforts.

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Working Group 3 membership included: Jonathan Vance (FSS), Andrew Nelson (FSS), Kelly Olson (A&H), Tamara Hinan (student, FSS), Vicki Schwean (Education), Scott MacDonald (student FIMS), Jane Toswell (A&H)

This report was informed by additional submissions by:

- Ann Bigelow (FSS)
- Erika Basile (ORE)
- Patrick Callaghan (Research Western)
- staff members from the: Office of Communications and Public Affairs, Alumni & Development Communications, Media & Community Relations, Creative Services, and Editorial Services
- communications officers from Faculties across campus

REB - memo on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2016 from Erika Basile, Director, Office of Research Ethics to the Deans and ADRs to be distributed to the research community, informing everyone that a new non-medical Vice Chair has been appointed, Prof. Randal Graham and providing further details of recent developments in the ORE.



Research Ethics

April 22, 2016

**RE: New Non-Medical Research Ethics Board Vice-Chair**

Dear members of Western's research community,

It brings me great pleasure to let you know Faculty of Law professor Randal Graham has accepted our invitation to serve as Vice-Chair of the Non-Medical Research Ethics Board (NMREB), effective July 1, 2016. Professor Graham has served as a valued member of the board since February 2012.

Professor Graham was appointed to Western's Faculty of Law in 2002 and currently holds the Goodmans LLP Faculty Fellowship in Legal Ethics. His principal teaching and research interests include ethics, statutory interpretation and legal theory. Professor Graham continues to act as a litigation strategist and technical consultant in matters related to his primary research areas, and his most-recent book – a satirical novel – will be published in 2017.

We anticipate this move will help relieve some of the administrative burden on NMREB Chair professor Riley Hinson and reflects the team's ongoing efforts to improve service delivery and turnaround times. As has been communicated previously, these efforts have included recruitment of two new ethics officers, implementation of new templates and guidance documents, and establishment of a new process for coordinated reviews for multi-site research with University of Waterloo.

Western's HSREB is also a qualified Board of Record for Clinical Trials Ontario (CTO). The CTO REB of Record Review process endorses any 'CTO-Qualified' REB in Ontario to provide ethical review and oversight of multi-centre clinical research – including industry-sponsored or investigator-initiated studies – on behalf of multiple research sites across the province.

Similarly, we are in the final stages of an agreement to replace ROMEO with a better REB management system. I will provide more information, including a timeframe for implementing this new system, once the agreement has been finalized.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to any member of the team if you have any specific questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Erika Basile', written in a cursive style.

Erika Basile,  
Director, Human Research Ethics  
Western University  
519-661-2111 ext. 86764 | [ebasile@uwo.ca](mailto:ebasile@uwo.ca)

## Attachment 2 - Other Canadian and International Universities' internal funding programs Andrew Nelson and Jane Toswell

### **Canadian Universities**

- prepared by Andrew Nelson
- abbreviated version – full version available on request

### Executive Summary

SSHRC provides funds to Universities under the SSHRC Institutional Grant (SIG) program. SSHRC and NSERC also allow Universities to retain funds that are unspent at the end of the terms of research grants. These are called General Research Funds (GRF). The SIG funds are determined using the following guidelines:

“SSHRC provides annual block grants for three-year terms. These are calculated according to the following formula:  
\$50 for each faculty member whose discipline falls within SSHRC's mandate; plus an amount based on the postsecondary institution's average performance, over the three previous competition years, in all SSHRC research support funding opportunities, calculated at the rate of:

- 23 per cent of the first \$100,000 awarded;
- 20 per cent of the next \$400,000 awarded; and
- 14 per cent of the remainder, if any.

This formula recognizes multi-institutional grants by distributing credit for performance to all co-applicants.

Grants will be calculated once per three-year funding cycle.

SSHRC guarantees a minimum grant of \$5,000 to each eligible institution deemed through the merit review process to meet the evaluation criteria.”

[http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/institutional\\_grants-subventions\\_institutionnelles-eng.aspx](http://www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programs-programmes/institutional_grants-subventions_institutionnelles-eng.aspx)

The SIG and GRF funds seem to form the basis of internal funding programs at most Universities. At McGill and McMaster the entire internal funding program appears to be based on SIG+GRF funds, so no internal funds are available for CIHR researchers. Most Universities supplement these funds with additional budget support. UofT, UBC, UofA and Waterloo rely heavily on endowment funds. In the case of UofT, the Connaught Fund is worth more than \$97M. UBC and UofA have funds from the Killam Foundation. Waterloo has the Bob Harding and Lois Claxton Humanities and Social Sciences Endowment Fund which was established with \$1M from a donor and \$1M from the University (during Amit Chakma's term).

Most Universities have a small research grant, a conference grant, and 4A funding, many have international research grants and several emphasize strategic priorities. Some are very focused, including Queen's & McGill, while others offer a wider menu of options, including Lakehead and Waterloo.

Highlights of the offerings that we may want to consider include:

- time release grants (esp. in light of the internal survey) – see Lakehead’s University Research Chair
- grants to support the development of large and complex grants such as Partnership Grants – see UTS, UTM, UofA and Waterloo. Note that the Waterloo has two programs in this area: one for International Partnerships and the other specifically for EU Partnerships. This is in alignment with SSHRC’s work on the Transatlantic Platform and Digging into Data
- grants specifically aimed at Arts projects – see Queen’s The Arts Fund, and McMaster’s Creative and Performing Arts component of the Arts Research Board
- equivalents to our University Research Grant. This is particularly relevant to the comments in the survey about people self-funding their research. This “grant” is actually the allocation of a portion of a researcher’s own salary as an amount against which they can claim research expenses. There used to be two versions: one that would pertain when a researcher was on sabbatical, the other during a regular year. A CRA ruling in 2013 has been interpreted by many as ruling out the URG during a regular year, and Western’s current version (<http://www.uwo.ca/facultyrelations/>) applies only to sabbaticals. However, UofT has suspended the program completely and other Universities appear to be continuing as before the 2013 ruling.
  - see summary report above for additional information



## Other Canadian Universities’ internal funding programs

### Queen’s

[http://www.queensu.ca/vpr/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.vprwww/files/files/QROF%20Page/15-0138%20VPR%20Research%20Opportunities%20Fund%20brochure\\_access.pdf](http://www.queensu.ca/vpr/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.vprwww/files/files/QROF%20Page/15-0138%20VPR%20Research%20Opportunities%20Fund%20brochure_access.pdf)

[http://www.queensu.ca/vpr/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.vprwww/files/files/Internal%20Awards/20151005%20FAQs%20\(revised%20December%202015%20for%20website%20update\).pdf](http://www.queensu.ca/vpr/sites/webpublish.queensu.ca.vprwww/files/files/Internal%20Awards/20151005%20FAQs%20(revised%20December%202015%20for%20website%20update).pdf)

### Queen’s Research Opportunity Fund

- result of a review in 2014 to align internal research programs with Queen’s institutional priorities
- The Queen’s Research Opportunities Funds will provide up to \$1 Million in research funding for its first year and a minimum of \$500,000 in funding for each of the next four years. The funds will be tracked annually to gauge how they are dispersed across scholarly disciplines and to determine the impact they are having in advancing the objectives of the Strategic Research Plan.
- \$500,000 will be available for the Research Leaders’ Fund in its first year.
- Preference will be given to researchers who use these internal research funding opportunities to leverage or match external funding, or to develop an external grant proposal. The Queen’s Research Opportunities Funds are not intended to replace external research funding.

Opportunity	Amount	Comment
The Research Leaders’ Fund	\$10,000 to \$25,000	for strategic institutional commitments to aspirational research in support of the University’s research strengths and priorities
The International Fund	\$10,000/year for a maximum of two years	to assist in augmenting the University’s international reputation through increased global engagement
The Arts Fund - support for artistic production - visiting artist in residence	\$5,000 \$25,000	designed to support artists and their contributions to the scholarly community and to advancing Queen’s University
The Post-Doctoral Fund - fellowship - travel fund	one year of salary support pre collective agreement \$1,000	to both attract outstanding post-doctoral fellows to Queen’s and to support their contributions to research and to the University

- Queen’s has also historically offered 4A funding
- with the adoption of the activity based funding model, much of this sort of stuff will be handled at lower levels
- limited use of a URG-like grant... “controversial”

Lakehead

<https://www.lakeheadu.ca/research-and-innovation/research-services/funding-prizes/internal>

Internal seed grants at Lakehead University are available from the Senate Research Committee and other sources to enhance research capacity development including the facilitation of external grant applications, and scholarly productivity of Lakehead University faculty members.

(this list does not include recognition awards)

Opportunity	Amount	Comment
Research Development Fund	\$7,000	facilitate successful tricouncil grants
Open Access Fund	\$2,500	
Conference Travel Grants	\$1,000	
Publication Assistance Funds	\$500	hard costs associated with publishing
Visiting Scholar Grant	\$1,000	
Leave/Non-Leave Research Grant in Lieu of Salary		Lakehead's equivalent of the URG
CFI IOF		
Lakehead University Research Chairs	\$50,000	research costs can include teaching buy out
Regional Research Fund	\$1,500-\$5,000	applied research relevant to Northern Ontario
VP RI Strategic Fund		funds from SIG
- SSHRC 4A	\$3,000	
- Sustainability Studies Research Grant	\$5,000	innovative solutions to sustainability challenges
- Strategic Research Opportunity Grant	open	support opportunities that cannot be supported through other means
- University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD) Research Collaboration Grant	\$3,000	support collaborative research with UMD
- Emergency Research Equipment Repair Fund	must be more than \$1,000	support emergency repairs

- Lakehead University's Research Bridge Fund	\$10,000 over 2 years	for faculty to restart research after administrative apt or personal issues
- International Research Collaboration Fund	\$5,000	support international collaborations
Internal Peer Review Programs		to encourage early completion of applications and submission for internal peer review
- CIHR	\$5,000	funds awarded if the grant is not successful but meets a specific bar
- NSERC	\$5,000	
- SSHRC Enhancement	\$1,000	- the SSHRC funds here are to support the preparation of an application (note the 4A fund above is separate)

UBC

SPARC - Support Programs to Advance Research Capacity - <https://sparc.ubc.ca/sparc>

- sounds like RDS & consultants
- supports all tricouncil & CRC applications

Internal Funding Program - <http://www.ors.ubc.ca/contents/internal-ubc-funding-sources>

- access denied
- apparently in the process of being “re-jiggered”

UBC is one of the Killam institutions. Thus, they have funds for SSAH related research.

<https://www.grad.ubc.ca/scholarships-awards-funding/killam-awards-fellowships>

They have a number of grad and post-doc and teaching awards, as well as

Killam Research Fellowships - \$15,000 salary top up for a researcher on leave (who has presumably been given a reduced salary) + \$3,000 for research or travel

Opportunity	Amount	Comment
Killam Research Fellowship	\$15,000 salary supplement + \$3,000 for research or travel	Assisting promising faculty members who wish to devote full time to research and study in their field during a recognized study leave  SSAH disciplines
Killam Faculty Research Prize	\$5,000	in recognition of outstanding research and scholarly contributions 5 prizes for NSERC/CIHR, 5 for SSHRC/Canada Council

UBC shows a number of additional prizes/awards, but these do not appear to be research grants.

McMaster

The Arts Research Board oversees a number of competitions

The key objective of the Arts Research Board is to cultivate a strong research base among the Faculties of Humanities, Social Sciences and Business. Specifically, ARB supports a) research programs of new faculty, b) new and/or collaborative, interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary research initiatives, c) ongoing research that has a budget less than the minimum required for SSHRC applications, d) research related conference travel and e) publication of peer-reviewed articles. It is expected that funding will lead to increased individual and group participation and success in external grant competitions.

<http://roads.mcmaster.ca/forms/forms-and-templates>

Opportunity	Amount	Comment
Arts Research Board		
- Conference Attendance and Representational Activities grant	\$4,000	
- Major Collaborative Project Seed Grants program	\$15,000 over 24 months	- designed to provide critical seed funding to facilitate the subsequent development of strong, competitive proposals of an interdisciplinary and/or multidisciplinary nature for submission to external research sponsors.
- Standard Research and Creative & Performing Arts and Scholarly Publications grants	\$7,000	

On this page, <http://roads.mcmaster.ca/forms/forms-and-templates>, there is a form for “Request for Internal Research Funds (IRF)”, but there is no obvious information about terms, amount etc.

McMaster also has a “Forward with Integrity” program that funds projects that support and advance the principles of the program <http://fwi.mcmaster.ca/fwi-projects/>

- each project can get \$5,000

The program is intended to: reinvigorate activity in four key and interconnected areas;

- the student experience,
- McMaster’s research environment,
- our relationship with the surrounding community and
- McMaster’s commitment to global activities.

University of Toronto

UofT Mississauga

<https://www.utm.utoronto.ca/vp-research/funding-opportunities/internal-funding-competitions>

Opportunity	Amount	Comment
Outreach, Conference and Colloquia Fund	\$500, \$1000 or \$1,500	The purpose of this fund is to provide financial support to organize conferences, colloquia, or other outreach activities that enhances the UTM research profile at local, national, and international levels.
Research and Scholarly Activity Fund	“normally” \$5,000-\$10,000	The purpose of this fund is to support direct costs of research and scholarly activity that will improve the competitiveness of external grant applications submitted by UTM faculty members, with an emphasis on Tri-Council grant applications, including collaborative and strategic grants.
Research Planning Grants	no amount specified	The objective of this funding is to provide support for UTM researchers to plan meetings that bring together a team of researchers and partners to develop <i>major</i> grant proposals (such as CFI Infrastructure Fund, Networks of Centre of Excellence, SSHRC or NSERC Strategic Partnerships, Global Challenge Awards, etc).

UofT Scarborough

<http://www.uts.utoronto.ca/research/university-toronto-internal-funding-programs>

Opportunity	Amount	Comment
Major Research Project Management Fund	expected to range from \$10,000 to \$100,000 - must be matched 1:1 by supporting units	The objective of the MPRM is to enhance the competitiveness of UofT-led research funding applications - for the development of large, complex, multi-institutional type grants
Research Completion Award	no specific amount – just that funds are limited	funds from NSERC & SSHRC GRF - to be used to complete the project or to advance the original project to be better positioned for the next one

UofT main campus does not appear to have a specific internal funds program.

Their self-funded research grant is currently inactive <http://www.research.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/SFRG-Moratorium-April-2013.pdf>

UofT also as a suite of programs under the Connaught Fund

<http://connaught.research.utoronto.ca/about/>

The Connaught Fund was founded in 1972 when U of T sold the Connaught Medical Research Laboratories for \$29 million. Connaught is the largest internal university research funding program in Canada. Since 1972, it has awarded approximately \$130 million to U of T scholars. The original \$29 million was endowed. Today, Connaught is worth over \$97 million.

Opportunity		Amount	Comment
Global Challenge Award	1 full award	\$1,030,000	currently under moratorium
New Researcher Award	~ 60 awards up to \$10K ~16 awards topped up to \$35K	\$1,000,000	to help new tenure stream faculty members establish competitive research programs
Innovation Award	Approximately 10 awards	\$500,000	to help accelerate the development of promising technology and promote commercialization and/or knowledge transfer
Summer Institute Award	Up to 3 awards	\$150,000	one new award will be made annually to bring together international graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, other scholars in order to foster rich interdivisional collaboration and creative new methods for research and innovation.
McLean Award	1 award	\$50,000	support an emerging research leader conducting basic research in physics, chemistry, computer science, mathematics, engineering sciences and the theory and methods of statistics
International Doctoral Scholarship	Numerous awards	\$1,000,000	
Faculty Recruitment Support	Numerous awards	\$50,000	

University of Alberta

<http://www.research.ualberta.ca/OfficeoftheVice-PresidentResearch/InternalResearchFunding.aspx>

link for Killam funds: [www.research.ualberta.ca/...PresidentResearch/.../vpresearch/.../Funding%20Documents/KRF\\_edited\\_guidelines\\_14nov\\_2012.pdf](http://www.research.ualberta.ca/...PresidentResearch/.../vpresearch/.../Funding%20Documents/KRF_edited_guidelines_14nov_2012.pdf)

Opportunity	Amount	Comment
Killam Research Fund - Cornerstones grant  - Research Operating grant  - Cornerstones conference travel grant  - Research connections grant	X<\$50,000  X<\$7,000  - amount depends on destination - \$1,200-\$5,000  - X<\$10,000	- Killam Funds available to the arts, humanities and social sciences The aim of Cornerstone Grants is similar to the Research Operating Grants, but usually involving a larger scale of activity, and both grants support similar research expense categories.  Research Operating Grants are designed to assist in the development of leading research projects that will lead to peer reviewed external funding (e.g. SSHRC grants).  to support <i>collaborative research activities</i> , hosted by the UofA
Distinguished Visitors Fund	not stated	This program supports visits by nationally or internationally distinguished scholars, artists, scientists, and professionals who will enhance the intellectual environment on campus.
Scholarly Journals	maximum of \$8,000 per journal per year	
NSERC & SSHRC General Research Funding	not stated	The GRF is intended to be reinvested by the University of Alberta in order to support and enhance the quality of research and training in the fields of natural sciences and engineering or social sciences and humanities. The funds may be used to provide small start-up grants to new professors or professors changing their research direction, bridge funding to professors who are between applications, or additional funds to further support existing research programs.

There is additional UofA funding through the Grants Assist Program:

<http://www.research.ualberta.ca/en/ResearchSupport/GrantAssistProgram.aspx>

This is a program whose “aim is to help UAlberta researchers improve their funding success via enhanced application preparation and support including concept discussion, internal review, feedback, workshops, and writing and editing.”

- however for the SSHRC side there are two small funding pots for people who submitted their proposal for internal peer review
- 4A GAP Fund – worth \$5,000
- Partnership Letter of Intent Preparation Grant - - up to \$10,000 for technical support, travel for networking, supplies, seminar etc.

<http://www.sshrc.ualberta.ca/en/BridgeFunding/PG-LOI-GAPfund.aspx>

McGill

<https://www.mcgill.ca/research/researchers/funding/internal>

The Office of the Vice-Principal, Research and International Relations, Internal Research Funds provide support to full-time academic staff in pursuit of their research programs and projects.

The disbursement of internal research funds is subject to:

- Availability of funds
- Support from the Dean
- Leverage of other funding sources; including matching funds from Faculty offices and departments; and other sources of funding to supplement the research activity.

Opportunity	Amount	Comment
Paper presentation grants	\$1,500 (every two fiscal years)	SSHRC researchers only – based on SIG funds
Social Sciences and Humanities Development grants	\$2,500 to \$7,000	SSHRC researchers only – based on SIG funds emerging scholar grants and seed grants
SSHRC and NSERC General Fund	NSERC – up to one year of funding from the original grant SSHRC – up to 33% value of original grant	- funded from the general residual fund for the “broad purpose of enhancing the quality - of research in the natural sciences and engineering, or in the social sciences and humanities”. - unspent grant funds automatically go into the GRF (no extensions). Applicants to this program must have had a grant that had unspent funds within 2 yrs of the application. - applications treated as a new grant

- no central support for CIHR, - the only central programs are SIG & GRF funded



University of Waterloo

<https://uwaterloo.ca/research/find-and-manage-funding/find-funding>

Opportunity	Amount	Comment
Bordeaux-Waterloo Research Grants	Category A – up to \$50,000 Category B – up to \$20,000	for collaboration between Waterloo and Bordeaux specific (mostly NSERC) topics specified
International Research Partnership Grants	Up to \$20,000 (requires 50% match)	this initiative aims to provide incentives to develop new or existing international research collaborations with institutions known for high quality research and global ranking. It's expected this funding will provide research groups with the enhanced capacity to leverage significant collaborative international research funding
International Research Partnership Grants – European Union	Up to \$20,000 (requires 50% match)	this program supports partnerships with researchers/institutions in the European Union. Additional projects will be funded under the International Research Partnership Grants program with the purpose of supporting projects with strong potential to leverage direct funding to Waterloo researchers from major European funding programs.
UW/SSHRC Seed Grants	Up to \$5,500	funds from SIG eligibility tied to participation in external SSHRC programs, but cannot hold a SSHRC or be 4A status priority to new and bridge projects
UW/SSHRC Travel Grants	amount depends on destination – between \$800 and \$2,200	funds from SIG must have held SSHRC within last 3 years or be junior
Bob Harding and Lois Claxton Humanities and Social Sciences Endowment Fund	Up to \$5,500	\$1M from donor matched by \$1M from Waterloo ( <i>under direction of Chakma</i> ) - for projects not eligible for Seed Funding (above)
Waterloo Research Incentive Fund (CIHR)	\$8,000	support the improvement of unsuccessful CIHR applications and increase the prospect of success for future CIHR applications.
University of Waterloo Gender Equity Research Grants	Up to \$10,000	support research that investigates and addresses gender equity with preference given to projects that advance Waterloo's three IMPACT 10x10x10 commitments or of demonstrated relevance to Waterloo.

## **International Funding**

– prepared by Jane Toswell

What funding is there at other major research universities for the humanities and social sciences?

The first point here is there are some big funding programs at all these universities, but also a lot of small pots. Second, most of the small pots of funding are hidden. For some of these universities I have been able to use personal knowledge or to activate colleagues. Generally, I've learned that the front of the research website tends to offer the bigger and splashier funding, but the nuts and bolts of small funds and options are not easy to find or not findable at all. Also, there is some researcher bias in here, as I found myself digging on the sites that I knew I would better be able to decode, or where I knew I had friends and colleagues. But, I think the remarkable sameness around the world of having lots of small pots of funding, administered by a broad range of faculty members, is telling. Also, I noticed in general that the social sciences and the humanities appeared very much at the front of all the university websites, in various ways. That is, at the large research universities in the world that have a liberal arts curriculum, efforts are very clearly made to put it front and centre on the website. On occasion, this even involved a report about a department in the absence of any specific accomplishment.

Aberdeen

Engagement is apparent on the front page of the university, which has at the top a new Dickens exhibition, and on the front pages of the sub-pages in “Research” and “Business.” The “Business” one opens with this sentence: “The University of Aberdeen has an outstanding history of pioneering discoveries which have changed thinking and practice in medicine, science, arts, and humanities over five centuries.” (British universities tend to conflate the social sciences into the arts and humanities.) The Business further includes amongst its planned “Strategic Partnerships” something entitled “Public, Cultural and City Engagement.” On the “Research” website the top sequence of crawlers includes two which are relevant: one which includes lists of research publications by all faculty members, and another on battlefield archaeology from the Second World War. The same sentence appears here too. And one of the sections of the front page is a list of recent publications from the university. Clearly as every piece is published, faculty members forward information to the central research facility to add to the listing. Research is first listed under four genuinely cross-disciplinary themes: Energy, Environment and Food Security, Pathways to a Healthy Life, and The North. Each theme involves people from the social sciences and humanities, and connects up several programs. For example, “The North” includes programs on climate change, the rise of early medieval kingdoms, the northern temperament, and northern colonialism. These are interdisciplinary themes, and each one receives extensive funding. Aberdeen also has a network of institutes and centres for research, each with stable funding. The College of Arts and Social Sciences is one of the three colleges at the university, and prominent on its website are the REF rankings of its departments and programs. It also features the Aberdeen Humanities Fund, whose mandate is as follows: “the Fund aims to seize the initiative in pursuing our academic ambitions by putting our historic collections, widely conceived, front and centre as we foster the cultural life and legacy of the University. Our approach is inclusive rather than restrictive: ‘the humanities’ are conceived of broadly, being best

defined by scholars themselves.” The Fund has both an academic board and an advisory board, clearly to ensure that awards made from the fund are adjudicated by peers. An incredibly helpful website also focuses on developing researchers and on consolidating information about local funding: <http://www.abdn.ac.uk/develop/develop/research-funding-273.php>

There appear to be several ways to acquire local funding, as well as highly-developed support systems for the REF process and for developing a career as a researcher, starting with students and moving forward through events for junior researchers. The local funds are called “Principal’s Interdisciplinary Fund,” “Principal’s Excellence Fund,” and “Researcher-Led Initiatives Fund.” The last of these is the most interesting, as it offers funds only for projects that are not directly relevant to the researcher’s own project, but otherwise will fund anything from a conference to a “careers event to an industry visit or even launching your own journal.”

## Stanford

At the top of the main website Stanford has four crawlers, one of which is an introduction to the Department of Philosophy with the catch-line “Stanford’s Philosophy Department trains the leaders and thinkers whose great ideas may change the world”. That is, even though there was no specific reason to put a department of humanities on the front of the website, Stanford did. The link to the department’s research website includes a description of the work of some members, images of books published in the department, links to the ten workshops and three reading groups, and a link to the North American Nietzsche Society, which the department sponsors. The department compares well to our Department of Philosophy. It has two visiting scholars and one visiting student researcher this year. Its radio programs called “Philosophy Talks” are organized through the Stanford Humanities Center, now in its 35th year. Its funding priorities include the Humanities Center Annual Fund, Manuscript Review Workshops (two to three senior scholars come to campus to read and comment on the book projects of especially junior faculty members), and the International Visitors Program which strengthens “Stanford’s global connections in the humanities and social sciences by bringing renowned public intellectuals, scholars, and political leaders to Stanford for short-term, high-impact residencies.” There are fifteen funded research workshops in the current academic year, and two manuscript review workshops per term.

In other words, the funding at Stanford runs very differently, in favour of building workshops and synergies, and establishing Stanford as a focus for research in a highly global way. For example, in addition to several endowed lectures each year, and presidential lectures, there is also a project for Humanities Journalism, in which graduate students are funded both to develop their own expertise in disseminating research and learning the precepts of journalism and also too raise the profile of the humanities in the university and abroad.

All of the material to this point is available on the university website. However, it is already clear to me that the kind of funding that we are talking about here—lots of small pots of money—rarely appears on university websites. So, I contacted a colleague at Stanford and asked. Here, stripped of personal references, is what emerged:

There is a lot of money here, even if all the senior managers are insisting there’s a squeeze on. We get \$7000 a year for our individual research pots, and there are multiple venues for additional funding. These range from money acquired through the Vice Provost for Undergraduate Education and the Vice Provost for Graduate Education, who can provide funding for Research Assistantships

for all kind of projects (usually departmentally sponsored, as opposed to individuals) to the Dean of Research's Office. Awards in the last few months to one person include \$10,000 to help organise a conference on artists' books and \$3000 to fund the plates for a volume in a Cambridge University Press series. Another colleague just got \$5000 from the Dean for a digital project.

Multiple divisions also run funding competitions. For example, the Denning Fund offers up to \$25,000 for projects that involve Technology and the Humanities. Four or five of these a year are awarded. Similar awards are made through other competitions throughout campus. There are probably three devoted to Digital Humanities. These are run by senior faculty members.

The Humanities Center also makes awards for workshops and fellowships. The former are important: \$8000 a year for three years to create a themed workshop for intellectually focused projects.

Departments, too, will fund group collaborative initiatives that are related to Centers or courses.

There are pots like the Arts Initiatives, which fund projects to do with music, art, etc. And there is the \$1500 ArtsCatalyst fund to finance a trip off campus or a special visitor. All programs have \$500 or so for us to bring visiting speakers to campus. The Europe Center and other major centers will assist in funding visiting speakers who speak to the theme. For example, a recent award was \$3000 to bring a colleague over from the UK.

The Library has a large amount of money for special purchases, like facsimiles and manuscripts. None of this money for faculty is predicated on the pursuit of large grants, but many colleagues do use the money to prepare their work for a major award.

Stanford is clearly a well-endowed university with a long history of small pots of money for various intellectual endeavours in the humanities and social sciences. More recently, it seems to have invested in the Humanities Center and in developing somewhat more high-profile funds. I find interesting the fact that many senior faculty members seem to run competitions and dole out money; there is not the wholesale centralization that we have at Western. This probably makes it easier for individuals to make good decisions about where to apply; for example, interdisciplinary research cannot be well supported in the faculties since it is so clearly cross-disciplinary in nature. At Stanford, with funding coming through various venues and kinds of competitions, there would be different approaches to adjudication..

## Harvard

Harvard is downright fascinating in its presentation of the humanities and social sciences. It's rather as though the whole front of the website is dedicated to the liberal arts, the assumption being that other areas get a sufficiency of notice. It perhaps helps that Toni Morrison gave the first of the Charles Eliot Norton six annual lectures this week, but it looks as though the focus on the liberal arts is a real decision. There's even a quite charming investigation of offices, with pictures and rather elegant details: <http://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2013/04/office-ours/>

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences has twenty departments, and nearly fifty research institutes, centers and societies. The faculty has four divisions, each listed up front with a significant number of departments and research centres (especially for the Arts and Humanities, Social Science and Science divisions). These institutes range from the Harvard Forest to Dumbarton Oaks to the Center for Hellenic Studies to the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts. These seem to have significant resources: for example, the Center for African Studies has eleven external visitors delivering papers,

and a website where the interested can sign up to register for each event, and receive the paper in advance. The six current Harvard South Africa Fellows all have tuition and expenses paid for the duration of their chosen postgraduate academic program. Other centres offer similar programs, the idea clearly being to bring in outside scholars and senior students for a period of time in which they can interact at Harvard, and also bring Harvard and its ideas back to their home appointments.

On funding, Harvard seems to take a very broad approach. For example, the president last year initiated a “Climate Change Solutions Fund,” a series of grants across the university from a twenty-million-dollar fund. In the second round of funding applications, ten projects spanning six departments were awarded funds totaling a million dollars. This suggests to me that none of these projects was massive, and indeed several have to do with behavioural changes or new approaches to thinking about climate change. However, the total research funding available each year at Harvard is 800 million dollars. The university categorizes its research, interestingly, under the general heading of “Academics and Research.” The Harvard Society of Fellows has a substantial cadre of post-doctoral fellows, junior fellows appointed for three years during which their principal job is to get on with their research.

For smaller pots of money, of which there are dozens both internally and externally, I have to admit I like the rubrics the research support people at Harvard use. Here are two examples: “I want to combine digital technology with the humanities or preserve a collection and/or make it easier for people to access” (nine funding options) or “I want to build the capacity of my home institution to support humanities activities”(three funding options).

And, to close, here are excerpts from a memo from the Dean to the members of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at Harvard. I admire the tone, the content, and especially the utter certainty that all research is important:

Even in these times of financial stress, we must continue to invest in faculty research—a perennial priority of the FAS. Therefore, it brings me great pleasure to announce the launch of two new initiatives in FY17 that expand FAS support of your scholarship. Together these initiatives represent an investment in faculty research of \$25 million over the next five years.

Before I turn to the details, I want to take this opportunity to say how deeply grateful I am to the members of Faculty Council and the Dean’s Faculty Resources Committee (DFRC), whose guidance helped identify and shape these programs. DFRC was particularly instrumental in the development of the principles behind these initiatives.

While the FAS continues to raise new funds to improve and strengthen our shared research resources (e.g., libraries, museum collections, core facilities, and research centers), these two new programs specifically increase the amount of research funding the dean’s office distributes to individual faculty. This increase comes in two pieces: an increase to the small amount of discretionary money the dean distributes to every ladder faculty member each year; and a new competitive grant fund that will provide faculty with timely research support in an increasingly challenging funding environment.

The letter continues for several pages, increasing the “Dean’s Distribution,” an annual distribution to faculty members that they can use for anything associated with the Harvard mission. It doubles to two thousand dollars for faculty with other funding, and will increase to four thousand annually for

all others. Next the Dean will in 2017 launch a new competitive grant fund adjudicated by a small faculty committee making awards once per semester (the fund has \$2.5 million), offering bridge funding, seed funding, and enabling subventions in support of an external fellowship or to purchase needed equipment. The program will require “only a bare minimum of paperwork to apply and no reporting during the award period.” The letter also discusses the research administration service, and their ongoing research support programs including publication funds and faculty development funds allowing tenured and tenure-track faculty to assemble scholars to provide feedback on their work (compare Stanford for this kind of project). Several other funds are listed, and the dean also indicates that he plans to launch a working group to review the funding opportunities at Harvard and consider their effectiveness. His particular concern is identifying disciplinary fundraising gaps that he can address. The letter concludes as follows:

I hope these significant investments in our faculty’s scholarship buoy your spirits. Each of you – sometimes individually and increasingly collaboratively – is pushing forward the frontiers of knowledge and often simultaneously having an immediate impact in the world. I look forward to seeing what you accomplish with the FAS’s additional investment in you. And as always, thank you for all you do to distinguish Harvard.

The entire letter makes it clear that the point and purpose of research funding at Harvard in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is to buoy up the researchers and support them wholeheartedly.

## Oxford

Funding in the humanities and social sciences at Oxford is a whirl of small pots of money. Most researchers hold tutorial appointments in one of the Oxford colleges (more than thirty of them) as well as lecturer appointments from the university. In the colleges, there is almost always a book fund for each fellow or tutorial leader, as well as small travel and research grants. Sabbatical terms are available in most colleges every second or third year (for a term, which is four months usually), and colleges do tend to fund travel and expenses for small conferences and research trips. Funding applications for these are easy and simple, sometimes simply involving a quick email. Inside the Humanities Division, which comprises twelve faculties, there is a significant amount of research funding. Six different funding schemes for early career researchers are highlighted, and the website makes it clear that there are staff members waiting to help with the applications. The Digital Humanities have their own massive website and a significant suite of projects. Notably the John Fell Fund, a transfer from the Oxford University Press of five million pounds per year, focuses on seedcorn and startup grants. Although it aims to stimulate applications to external bodies, it does not duplicate their purpose, and is therefore available for a broad range of purposes.

Inside the Humanities Division are about thirty research centres and institutes, all with separate funding and many with stand-alone locations and internal funding opportunities. For example, the “Future of Humanity Institute” affiliated with the Faculty of Philosophy has current vacancies for three researchers, four major research projects, and detailed information about its many programs on the website. In 2012, the Humanities Division started up a separate entity for interdisciplinary research, called TORCH: <http://torch.ox.ac.uk/> Here there is a home for up to ten new interdisciplinary projects per year—23 are currently listed on the front of the website ranging

from the “Ancient Dance in Modern Dancers” to “Global Brazil” to “Oxford Phenomenology Network” to “War Crimes Trials and Investigations.”

One of the great strengths of Oxford and Cambridge both is the focus on senior graduate students/junior faculty. Oxford has about ten different options at the university level for post-doctoral funding, and at the college level every single undergraduate college offers more than three, and most more than six JRFs or Junior Research Fellowships. Sometimes available to senior graduate students finishing up their theses, but mostly available for post-doctoral research, these fellowships run from one to three years, offering full funding, free accommodation and meals, and in most cases a stipend for other expenses. Moreover, many of the colleges offer visiting research fellowships for outside academics for a term, during which all expenses are paid, free accommodation inside the college is provided, and the only job of the visiting fellow is to wander about doing research and talking about it over meals, providing the fellows a sense of the larger world of research accomplishments (and, as one put it to me, a sense that someday they too would be able to get some real research done). Oxford and Cambridge are both set up to help senior graduate students and early-career individuals in the SSHRC disciplines in far more effective ways than the few available SSHRC post-doctoral scholarships provide.

Finally, I quote here from the Strategic Plan for 2013-18, a short 16 pages of pithy commitments and more detailed engagements:

Commitment 2. To empower the creative autonomy of individuals to address fundamental questions of real significance and applied questions with potential to change the world.

22. The unparalleled breadth and depth of Oxford’s expertise enables us to lead the international research agenda across the spectrum of the sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. Our commitment to the range and depth of our disciplinary work is reflected in sustenance of both applied research and that which may not necessarily yield immediate impact.

There are discussions elsewhere of the role of the independent researcher, clearly a valued commodity at Oxford, and commitments to funding research in innovation and interdisciplinary ways. The front of the website has a sequence of shots of the rainbow flag of the LGBT community along with information about a public lecture on the subject. Below that the three news items include two on social sciences and humanities subjects (an arts blog on health and safety in Tudor England and a sociology lecture on the effect on educational expansion on social mobility).

### Concluding Remarks

At this point I’m going to stop, and just offer a few tidbits from other universities that I have encountered. For example, here is the manifesto about research at Cornell:

The body of research, scholarship and creative works emerging from the College of Arts & Sciences is vast, with one common thread -- ALL of our research is curiosity-based. This model of inquiry confers intellectual flexibility, a precursor for innovation, creativity and discovery.

As the nexus of the only Ivy League, land grant university, we encompass both practical and theoretical approaches to knowledge: in science departments that integrate highly skilled experimentalists with researchers pondering the theoretical bases of natural laws; in an English department that joins critical literary theorists with creative writers expanding the boundaries of their genres; or in social science departments that offer rigorous theoretical and empirical analyses of the social, political and economic foundations of modern life.

What a fabulous and straightforward endorsement of research driven by curiosity, and then a clear set of statements about science, the humanities, and the social sciences, all with details and all at the core of the research plans for discovery and for learning. The title for this section is somewhat unexpected: “Research, Scholarship and Creative Works.” Mind you, Cornell has a large visual and performing arts mandate, and the incipient strategic plan already lists expanding in that area as critical.

The University of Sydney offers the exception that proves the rule about the transparency of funding at major research universities. Everything is on the front of the website, literally under tabs called “Research support” and “Find and apply for funding.” There are some seriously innovative funding envelopes here, including bridging funding for new faculty, the Sydney Research Network scheme for establishing new networks, the Equipment Grant scheme, the Industry Engagement fund, and a suite of three funds to aid researchers with disabilities or diseases, to aid women researchers, and to aid those whose careers have been interrupted by having to deliver sustained primary care (the latter three are together called the Equity Fellowships). Interesting funding all round, laid out very clearly and precisely.

That’s my report. I hope it is of some use.

Jane Toswell



## Attachment 3 - URB Social Sciences, Arts, and Humanities Task Force Working Group 3 Draft Report on Research Communications

- prepared by Jonathan Vance

The communication of research results, beyond the usual scholarly publications and academic conferences, serves many purposes. It is a way to recognize success and offer public congratulations for a research achievement. It is a way to boost a researcher's profile, which in turn may bring new and different opportunities for research and engagement. It is a way for the institution to demonstrate the breadth and quality of its research work to prospective students, faculty members, and donors, to governments, and to the private sector. It is a way to build a campus community, with researchers in disparate disciplines being aware of the research going on in buildings that they might never visit. Government funding bodies increasingly expect that researchers will pay particular attention to outreach, knowledge mobilization/dissemination, and public engagement, so that those who are ultimately funding the research, the taxpayers, can see what is being done with their money. In all of these ways, it serves as a means of validation that a researcher's efforts are valued by more than her or himself.

Western University uses a number of tools as part of its broader communication and public relations strategy. These include, but are not limited to:

- the University's website, [www.uwo.ca](http://www.uwo.ca)
- media releases – see <http://mediarelations.uwo.ca/media-releases/>
- *Western Trending*, a digest of international media coverage featuring Western – see <http://www.alumni.uwo.ca/newsletters/western-trending/>
- social media (including *Twitter*, *Facebook*, *Instagram*, and *YouTube* – a list of social media links can be found at [http://www.uwo.ca/social\\_media.html](http://www.uwo.ca/social_media.html))
- recruitment publications, including Viewbooks and faculty guides – for examples in pdf format, see [http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/news\\_publications/recruitment.html](http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/news_publications/recruitment.html)
- *Western News* – see <http://news.westernu.ca/>
- *Western Alumni Gazette* and *Western Alumni Newsletter* – for examples in pdf format, see [http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/news\\_publications/alumni.html](http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/news_publications/alumni.html)
- development publications, including *Impact Western*, *Annual Impact*, *Endowment Report*, and *Western Parent Connection* – for examples in pdf format, see [http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/news\\_publications/development.html](http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/news_publications/development.html)
- *Find an Expert* – see <http://mediarelations.uwo.ca/category/experts/>
- *Western Revealed* (on Rogers TV) – see <http://rogerstv.com/show?lid=12&rid=9&sid=5501>
- Alumni speakers' series, including *Classes Without Quizzes*, the *Senior Alumni Program*, and *Podcasts/Online Learning*
- the *Images of the Future* digital calendar (for the 2016 version, see <http://www.uwo.ca/research/about/publications.html>)
- banners displayed on various buildings on campus

These activities are coordinated by the office of *Communications and Public Affairs* [hereafter CPA], under Associate Vice-President Communications Helen Connell. This office includes *Alumni & Development Communications, Media & Community Relations, Creative Services, and Editorial Services*. Its webpage also provides links to faculty-based communications staff, as well as communications professionals at *Research Western* and *Western International*. In addition, communications services are provided at other levels by units not directly connected to the above, such as *Mustang Sports, the University Students' Council, the McIntosh Gallery, and Western Libraries*.

These various communications initiatives serve many purposes – information, recruitment, development and donor relations, community liaison – and not all of them are explicitly and primarily intended to highlight the research done by members of the Western community. However, regardless of the intent, many of them implicitly serve the purpose of validating research by using the University's researchers to attract attention and generate interest in Western. For example, a media release inviting local news outlets to contact members of the Department of Political Science in the context of an upcoming election may not explicitly refer to a particular research project in the department, but it does presuppose a level of research commensurate with the ability to provide expert commentary – and furthermore presupposes that the University values that research.

Consultations undertaken by Working Group 2 revealed a sense among social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers that their research work is not adequately publicized by the institution, and that the publicity spotlight shines much more frequently on research in the STEM areas. More than 80% of Working Group 2's online survey respondents noted that social sciences, arts, and humanities research deserves both better recognition by the University and better promotion to improve visibility outside of the University. Working Group 3 was keen to determine if there was any basis for such opinions. **Do the University's communications efforts actually privilege STEM research, at the expense of social sciences, arts, and humanities research?** The sheer amount and variety of public relations activity makes it a challenge to attempt quantification. However, by tabulating mentions of research activity across the various platforms over the past five to seven years (depending on the platform), some broad trends emerge. These are highlighted below.

It should be stressed that this mode of analysis is not without limitations. No attempt was made to distinguish between the different platforms – for example, one building banner has been given the same weight as one media release, although they might have dramatically different reaches. Single research “events” may get multiple mentions within a very short period of time – one mention that it is going to happen, one that it is happening, and another that it has happened. A liberal approach has been taken to the tabulation, counting social sciences, arts, and humanities subjects even where an individual department or researcher is not mentioned specifically and including inter-disciplinary projects that include social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers, regardless of the level of involvement. Nevertheless, the findings of this basic analysis reveal some interesting observations about the relative focus of research communications at Western.

There is wide variance when comparing results in one single platform to results in another. For example, *Western News* compiled a feature entitled *Newsmakers of 2015* (*Western News*, 17 December 2015 - <http://news.westernu.ca/2015/12/westernnewsnewsmakers2015/>), focusing on

eighteen individuals or groups, at least eight of which were connected to social sciences, arts, and humanities research. In contrast, in the booklet *51 Firsts* produced by Research Western ([http://www.uwo.ca/research/51\\_firsts/](http://www.uwo.ca/research/51_firsts/)), only ten of the fifty-one “firsts” relate to social sciences, arts, and humanities research.

When the results are aggregated, they reveal that a research achievement in the STEM disciplines is four to five times more likely to benefit from institutional publicity than one from the social sciences, arts and humanities disciplines. We do not mean to suggest or even imply that this disparity is intentional, and it must be stressed that the poor showing of social sciences, arts, and humanities research is not for lack of trying by CPA. Over a period of years, CPA has come up with many initiatives to involve social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers and begin conversations that could lead to greater publicity for social sciences, arts, and humanities research. In many instances, those initiatives have generated little response from social sciences, arts and humanities researchers.

Some examples:

- the *51 Firsts* booklet was prepared after two years of consultations in which all faculties were asked to suggest research success stories that could be promoted in this way. One faculty that includes social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers was very forthcoming with ideas for inclusion in the booklet. Of the other seven faculties that include social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers, four faculties generated a combined total of ten suggestions; three faculties did not send in anything.

- in 2014, the ADR at one faculty was approached by CPA to secure short (one-page), lay-language research profiles that could be used for publicity purposes to promote the research work done in the faculty. Of the roughly forty faculty members, three responded.

- in 2014, one department canvassed faculty members on three separate occasions with a request to provide information for an expanded webpage promoting the department’s research activities. From a department of over forty tenured, tenure-stream, limited-term, and limited-duties faculty members, two responses were received.

- for many years (dating back at least to 1998), CPA has endeavoured to convene meetings with social sciences, arts, and humanities area Deans and ADRs to open channels through which ideas for research stories could be transmitted. Despite the active encouragement of Deans and ADRs, none of these yielded any significant favourable response from faculty members.

Our research and consultations suggest that this lack of interest in research promotion is the product of a number of connected factors, some cultural, others systemic.

### The Self-Effacing Scholar

CPA’s communications professionals are very well informed about campus-wide research activities, but they cannot be expected to be aware of every research initiative that is underway. For a variety of reasons, social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers (particularly those who consider themselves

solitary scholars) are generally less attuned to and comfortable with the idea of using communications professionals to draw attention to and publicize their own research. As one survey respondent observed, “Our Faculty tend to be rather quiet and don’t often sing their own praises so uncovering research stories and achievements can be challenging.”

### The Solitary Scholar

The traditional model of the solitary scholar, still the norm in many social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines, works against efforts at recognition and advocacy. Large research grants of the kind that are common in other disciplines often include a budget line for communications, to allow a project’s publicity to be generated from within. Given that granting agencies are placing increasing emphasis on public engagement and the communication of results beyond the academy, this is eminently sensible. However, it will place small projects at a significant disadvantage. In a \$1.5 million research grant, a budget line for a communications professional would not be especially significant in overall spending terms. In a \$30,000 research grant, however, hiring even a part-time communications professional would consume most of the budget. The solitary scholar whose research is largely or entirely self-funded cannot be expected to engage their own public relations professional if it reflects added cost.

### Faculty-level support

In addition to looking for story ideas from individual researchers, CPA works through the offices of the Deans, where faculty-based communications professionals are generally based. However, there is great variance between faculties in the level of support for communications activities. This will be immediately evident to anyone who follows the links from CPA’s page on faculty-based communications staff ([http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/our\\_teams/index.html](http://communications.uwo.ca/comms/our_teams/index.html)). Clicking on the *Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry* brings up a separate page of eight communications professionals ([http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/communications/about\\_us/people.html](http://www.schulich.uwo.ca/communications/about_us/people.html)). At the time the Working Group undertook this study, clicking on *Education* brought up a single communications professional whose name was misspelled. There was no link for *Social Science*, the largest faculty on campus, as it did not have a communications professional in place until a new appointment was announced in early April 2016.

Our research turned up many successful initiatives on campus that might be adopted more broadly by social sciences, arts, and humanities departments and faculties. In the *Faculty of Science*, the office of *Communications, Public Relations and Science Engagement* adopts a team approach, with most departments naming a *Communications Pipeline Departmental Representative* (a faculty member) as well as a *Communications Pipeline Associate* (usually a PhD student). This has the dual benefit of creating a channel through which researchers can publicize their work, and giving the next generation of science researchers experience with such promotional efforts. However, it presupposes the existence of a staff member (or members, as in the *Faculty of Science*) whose dedicated task is to manage the process.

### A Vicious Circle

Perceptions tend to be self-perpetuating. According to our consultations, a typical conclusion reached by social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers is that the University must not be particularly interested in their research because they rarely see such research publicized. So, those researchers

decide that there is little point in alerting CPA to their research – which means that CPA never hears about it, and therefore cannot publicize it.

Some researchers reported the belief that outreach and engagement efforts are not rewarded in the promotion and tenure process, so they see relatively little to be gained by turning their efforts in that direction. If these researchers are not in receipt of Tri-Council funding, where knowledge dissemination is valued as a condition of holding a grant, there may in fact be little for them to gain by publicizing their work. And so they decline to accept invitations from CPA, which in turn means that CPA has fewer stories about social sciences, arts, and humanities research, and the cycle continues.

Some researchers are simply indifferent to the importance of publicizing their work, even when there are successful outcomes. Others, however, seem to be actively opposed to it. They might be put off by the idea that their research should be condensed and simplified into a one-page media release. In their view, this kind of “dumbing down” compromises the integrity of their work. At the extreme, some researchers expressed an active hostility to promoting their work because it would implicitly promote an institution which, in their view, does not value their work. For these individuals, the notion that research should be “publicized” in the way one might advertise a new kind of soup is part and parcel of what they see as the corporatization of the university. They see it as an affront to the liberal arts ideal of knowledge for its own sake and an outgrowth of the assumption that research is only valued to the degree that it can be monetized.

Breaking this cycle is critical if social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers are to be convinced that their work is valued, and by extension if they are to feel comfortable about publicizing it. Social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers need to be coached to see communications not as a breach of their scholarly integrity but as a way to engage with an audience they would not normally reach.

#### Summary:

The communication of research results, outside scholarly channels, serves many purposes: to offer public congratulations for a research achievement; to boost a researcher’s profile; to demonstrate the breadth of an institution’s research; and to build a campus community. Furthermore, government funding bodies increasingly expect that researchers will engage in knowledge mobilization and dissemination. In the broadest sense, recognition is a means of validating and valuing a researcher’s efforts. Western University uses a number of tools as part of its broader communication and public relations strategy. These activities are coordinated by the office of *Communications and Public Affairs*, whose webpage also provides links to faculty-based communications staff and communications professionals at *Research Western* and *Western International*. Consultations undertaken by Working Group 2 revealed a sense among social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers that the publicity spotlight shines much more frequently on research in the STEM areas. Working Group 3 was keen to determine if there was any basis for such opinions. **Do the University’s communications efforts actually privilege STEM research, at the expense of social sciences, arts and humanities research?**

**Conclusions:**

- a research achievement in the STEM disciplines is four to five times more likely to benefit from institutional publicity than one in the social sciences, arts, and humanities disciplines
- this is in spite of sustained efforts by CPA to engage social sciences, arts, and humanities researchers in the desirability of promoting their research
- there is great disparity in the faculty-level support for communications across campus
- given the research traditions in some social sciences, arts, and humanities fields, there is among researchers a certain amount of unease, indifference, and even resistance to promoting research achievements

**Recommendations:**

- the University should take steps to ensure that there is a more level playing field in terms of the communications support that is offered at the faculty level
  - start the discussion on campus about what is recognized as valid activities for APE assessment.
- Given the emphasis the funding agencies are putting on knowledge mobilization in all forms, and delivery of research results to the general public, the University should seek to recognize this activity. Note that SSHRC is starting to train graduate students in public presentations and the writing of op eds, so this may be a generational change that is coming.