

Brandon University Strategic Research Plan 2014-2017 Summary And Canada Research Chairs Administrative Process

The Research Committee of Senate established a sub-committee with representatives elected from each faculty council, with an additional faculty member representing those who research Aboriginal issues. The sub-committee carried out campus and community consultations with researchers and community stakeholders through town hall meetings and soliciting feedback from across the campus. The sub-committee drafted this report for referral to the Senate Research Committee for its consideration.

This plan is consistent with the BUILD strategic plan, recognizing that Brandon University promotes “excellence in teaching, research, creation and scholarship.” As academics, “We create and disseminate new knowledge.” The university places a special emphasis on working with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit populations. Those consulted as part of the preparation of this plan overwhelmingly sought to enhance research activities and to create increased collaboration across the campus.

Major Research Objectives

Brandon University’s major research objectives are to:

- continue to produce high quality research and creative activity building on existing strengths and partnerships;
- increase research capacity and to expand research partnerships and collaboration;
- maintain and to develop research that reaches and engages local, national, and international communities;
- ensure that research engages and benefits our undergraduate and graduate students;
- promote productive interdisciplinary research collaboration across the campus; and
- establish mechanisms to increase knowledge mobilization.

Priority Area: Community Connective Research

Brandon University encompasses a wide spectrum of research, spanning diverse disciplinary approaches to inquiry and methods of knowledge creation and dissemination.

Faculty-driven inquiry has created a particular emphasis on community connective research that can cross traditional faculty boundaries and facilitate inter-disciplinary approaches. Community connective research often engages the public directly as part of the research team and communicates research results directly to community stakeholders. In other cases, community connective research represents more traditional research that has direct relevance for society, leading to improved health outcomes for patients or providing evidence to guide policy-makers, educators, or practitioners.

Brandon University researchers have a track record of attracting external funding to support community connective research and have demonstrated excellent research capacity and

productivity. Community connective research directly affects local, national, and international populations and can lead to significant improvements in health outcomes, policies, environmental stewardship, and societal conditions. Community connective research can surmount barriers between traditional academic research and communication of research to a broader public audience.

The inter-disciplinary priority area of community connective research recognizes one predominant characteristic of scholarly and creative inquiry conducted at Brandon University. At the same time, the university emphasizes its commitment to an academic's freedom to pursue his or her own research inquiry outside the framework of any central plan; Brandon University continues to support and value all scholarly publication and creative work and will foster a creative research culture.

Recommendations

1. Brandon University needs increased seed funding for research. Currently, Brandon University funding available for research is largely distributed by the Brandon University Research Committee. Relatively little of this support generates subsequent replenishment of research funding, as few grants under BURC lead to Tri-Agency or other external funding. Brandon University will move to ensure that it is competitive with other institutions regarding provision of research funds for new faculty.
 - a. BURC members should continue to emphasize the ability of applicants to use their research grant as seed money in order to generate further research funding as part of their deliberations.
 - b. The Research Committee of Senate, working in conjunction with the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) and the Research Office, should establish a mentorship network that will link prospective applicants with mentors who have been successful in securing Tri-Agency or other external funding. The parties should establish policy to provide consistent, predictable amounts of seed money as an incentive for scholars to participate successfully in this mentorship program.
 - c. Brandon University needs to establish a policy to allocate appropriate start-up funds for new faculty members to enable them to establish and develop their research program.
 - d. Brandon University should have continuing, active discussions between Institutional Advancement and researchers regarding fundraising opportunities to support Brandon University researchers, graduate students, and research infrastructure.
 - e. The university needs a consistent policy framework regarding funding cash and in-kind contributions to Tri-Agency and other grant programs.

How do we measure success? Brandon University will increase both the numbers of Tri-Agency and other external funding applications and the success rate of external applications, and will increase awareness of fundraising opportunities to support research.

2. The Research Office is staffed by a single person. The Office of the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) is strained by the requirement to provide academic leadership and administrative support and to lead in supporting research. Currently, Brandon is under-represented in Tri-Agency deliberations, leading to direct and negative consequences for Brandon University researchers and students. The Research Office needs increased assistance to be able to provide sufficiently widespread support for grant applicants, researching faculty, and graduate students. Accordingly, it is essential to hire an Associate Vice-President (Research) and Dean of Graduate Studies and requisite support staff and establish an operating budget as soon as possible. The Office of the AVP (Research) will be able to expand our support for researching faculty and students, will improve administration of grants, will increase our national representation, and will be able to work with faculty, granting councils, and other external funders to increase the pool of research money available for Brandon University researchers.

How do we measure success? Brandon University will increase its over-all research income, our national representation, and research output.

3. Brandon University needs to increase dramatically its promotion of research and scholarly and creative activity. The university can do more to acknowledge and honour substantive research accomplishments, and many faculty members and students are largely unaware of their colleagues' research, whether within their own faculty or across the campus. The Vice-President (Academic & Provost) should work with the Research Committee of Senate to develop a program of recognition for Brandon University researchers. Faculty Deans should work with their faculty colleagues to ensure that research accomplishments are recognized both publicly and within the framework of university administration. Deans and researchers will work closely with the Communications Office to publicize Brandon University research through the university website and with media sources. Brandon University should support colleagues' discussion of research interests and issues through events such as enhancement conferences, workshops, and webinars.

How do we measure success? Brandon University will establish an explicit policy framework to provide increased recognition of research accomplishments and create appropriate mechanisms for increased recognition of university research and scholarly creative activity.

4. Brandon University researchers, and especially those who seek funding through the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada, must demonstrate their ability to train Highly Qualified Personnel [HQP] as part of their application. The new Master of Environmental and Life Sciences degree provides an opportunity to recruit and train HQP, but there is limited scholarship funding available to attract high quality students until the faculty can restore previously higher rates of success in securing NSERC funding. In the interim, Brandon University needs to provide bridge scholarships

in order to establish a good quality program that will attract HQP, thus enabling faculty to compete successfully for NSERC grants and ensuring funding for future students.

How do we measure success? The Vice-President (Academic & Provost) will work with the Dean of Science to establish bridge scholarship funding for the first three to five years of the Master of Environmental and Life Sciences degree.

5. A continuing theme of research active scholars during the consultation was the difficulty of balancing high teaching loads and a substantive research output. Brandon University has traditionally higher teaching loads than some other Canadian universities, and these loads impede scholarly research. Brandon University needs to attend to these concerns.

How do we measure success? The Vice-President, Deans, Directors, Departments, and Programs should actively consider research and scholarly creative activity as part of their continuing effort to establish fair and equitable workloads across campus.

6. Establishing research centres, institutes, or groups can increase collaborative and inter-disciplinary research and can spark increased productivity and strengthen grant applications. Brandon University researchers should pursue cooperative research partnerships with colleagues where possible.

How do we measure success? Brandon University will increase its research output and its research funding.

7. Brandon University needs effective measures of research output that are sensitive to disciplinary and inter-disciplinary norms. Data will allow us to assess the appropriateness of policy decisions meant to improve research outcomes.

How do we measure success? The Vice-President (Academic & Provost), Associate Vice-President (Research), Deans, the Coordinator of Research Services, and researchers will develop methods for reporting research accomplishments on an annual basis to establish effective data on research productivity.

Recommendations and Implementation

A recommendations and implementation table can be found within the complete version of the Brandon University Strategic Research Plan. Specific objectives are outlined in addition to who is responsible for their undertaking and the anticipated timelines for completion.

Brandon University Canada Research Chairs (CRC) Administrative Process

Brandon University has four Tier II Canada Research Chair Allocations. Please see the table below for the current status of CRC allocations as of February 2014. The two filled CRCs and one pending CRC nomination were submitted under Brandon University's Strategic Research Plan 2007. All future nominations will be submitted under the Brandon University Strategic Research Plan 2014-2017. Under the new plan, Community Connective Research is the identified institutional research priority area.

Brandon University Canada Research Chair Allocations as of February 2014

CRC Allocation	Status	Term	Final Renewal
Tier II Special NSERC	Active	May 1, 2012 – April 30, 2017	Potential renewal in 2016
Tier II Special CIHR	Active	January 1, 2014 – December 31, 2019	Potential renewal in 2018
Tier II SSHRC	Pending	Anticipated term of July 1, 2014 – June 30, 2019	Potential renewal in 2018
Tier II Special NSERC	Recruiting	Anticipated term of July 1, 2015 – June 30, 2020	Potential renewal in 2019

The recruitment of Canada Research Chairs is outlined in the *Brandon University Faculty Association Collective Agreement*, under section 7.19: *Canada Research Chairs*. Under the direction of the Vice-President (Academic & Provost), or designate, the Senate Research Committee (SRC) is notified when a CRC position is to be filled. The Dean of each academic faculty is then notified of the vacant position and asked to consult with faculty members and to submit proposals to fill the CRC for consideration by the SRC. The SRC reviews all proposals and selects the one that best fits with Brandon University and the Strategic Research Plan. The SRC then determines the composition and working procedures of the CRC Selection Committee, to be chaired by the VP (Academic & Provost).

The CRC Selection Committee Chair ensures that the search is conducted in a manner consistent with the letter and spirit of *Article 7: Appointments* and *Article 30: Positive Action to Improve the Status of Women* of the Collective Agreement. The CRC Selection Committee makes a recommendation to the Vice-President (Academic & Provost), who may only offer an appointment to an individual so recommended. If the Vice-President (Academic & Provost) does not accept the recommendation, the CRC Selection Committee will be provided with reasons and the process shall be repeated. An offer of appointment shall be made by the Vice-President (Academic & Provost), to the recommended candidate, subject to the final approval of the President. Application for CRC renewal shall be on the recommendation of the Senate Research Committee to the President, or designate. Renewal of a Canada Research Chair is subject to the approval of the Canada Research Chairs program.