

Report to Senate
September 13, 2019
T. Kenyon

Report to Senate of the Vice President, Research

It was a very active summer at Brock from a research perspective, with considerable activity both on new projects, and continuing to develop projects already underway.

1. New program roll-outs: In late May, the Office of the Vice-President Research announced the piloting of a new internal award. The Research Initiative Award (RIA) is designed to recognize and support researchers who have made efforts to build the research enterprise at Brock University through the development and submission of a grant funding application to eligible external funding agencies. The award is meant to acknowledge and provide resources to researchers whose proposal was unfunded in a prior competition, strengthening their application for funding in future competitions. Researchers who receive an RIA are expected to submit a future application to an external funding agency within a year of the award and to abide by the general terms and conditions of the award. This program supports the Strategic Plan priority area, *Build Research Capacity Across the University*, and specifically the goal *Nurture a culture of research and creative excellence*. Details on the RIA are posted on the SharePoint site at: <https://brocku.sharepoint.com/Research-Services/SitePages/Research-Initiative-Award.aspx?web=1>

A new fund supporting Brock researchers wishing to integrate their work with the 2021 Canada Games was also developed and rolled out over the summer. Details are available at: <https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2019/08/funding-available-for-canada-summer-games-research-and-scholarship/>

2. BrockLINC: The Executive Director, LINC, position was finalized and advertised over the summer. The advertisement may be viewed at: <https://www.academiccareers.com/job/executive-director-brock-linc-cjze8uizq0rqy0152js5yfh5>
3. FedDev proposal: On September 3, Brock University was awarded \$5M in funding through the Federal Agency for Economic Development of Southern Ontario (FedDev). The funding is to develop a facility and initiative prospectively titled the Brock-Niagara Validating, Prototyping, and Manufacturing Institute, a proposal developed by a team based in the Faculty of Mathematics and Sciences, and led by Dr Debbie Inglis, Dr. Paul Zelisko, and Dr. Feng Li. The announcement means the

start of processes to begin creating the envisioned facility and initiative. An executive summary of the proposal is attached as an appendix.

4. Preparing for the future of Cannabis research: Brisk industry interest in engaging with Brock faculty in Cannabis related research, has led ORS to commission the services of Cannabis Compliance Inc. to prepare the submission of a Research and Development license with Health Canada. The license application process required the Office of Research Services to draft several technical and administrative guiding documents, including scientific protocols, data management, sample tracking, usage and destruction plans. Additionally a security floor-plan was drafted, a critical component of the application. The license application process allows for additional research projects to be added to the license as new Cannabis research projects are identified. The license application was submitted to Health Canada in early August and we are expecting a protracted review period by Health Canada staff.
5. Internal communications and transparency: To promote better access to internal ORS resources, a new SharePoint site was developed and launched in the spring and early summer. The site provides updated information on funding programs, policies and procedures and links to ORS services. A highlight is the 'News' section which is focal point for the announcement of new funding opportunities and ORS events. The new SharePoint site can be found at: <https://brocku.sharepoint.com/Research-Services/SitePages/Home.aspx>

Work continued over the summer on a web portal for research funding requests. The system is designed to ensure that information about the kinds and ranges of funding available is widely accessible, to share information as part of the request process, to regularize the allocation of internal resources, and to free Research Officer time from answering the most common questions about matching funds, processes, and program details. Launch date for the portal depends on some technical details, but a September launch is the plan.

6. Canada Foundation for Innovation - Innovation Fund Round: In spring 2019, The Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) released a Call for Proposals for the 2020 Innovation Fund competition. Soon after, the Vice-President, Research invited Brock University researchers to submit Notices of Intent for consideration. An internal competition was held to determine which NOIs will be submitted to the CFI. In total, five strong NOIs were received from Brock research teams, and two projects were selected by the adjudication committee. An NOI from researchers in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences entitled "Health Span Trajectories: Scientific Wellness Via-Transdisciplinary Research" and a proposal for Brock to participate as a collaborating institution on a McMaster University led initiative entitled "Building a Future for Neutron Scattering" will be forwarded to CFI in September with a full application due in January 2020. ORS staff are facilitating these submissions, and have now met with most of the research teams who submitted internal NOIs to provide feedback on unsuccessful proposals.

7. Canada Research Chairs and CFI-JELF: One Canada Research Chair appointment was completed at the internal stage, with an external application to the CRC Secretariat and affiliated CFI-JELF proposal in development. An announcement with full details will follow upon completion of the CRC/CFI adjudication process. Five CRC appointments remain in progress.

Brock University's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan awaits its final approval from the CRC Secretariat. The plan is intended to continue as a work-in-progress, with opportunities to improve. However, it is a much improved document and process owing to the ongoing revisions and consultations; Brock is repeatedly listed as an example of best practices in the Secretariat's working guide to universities. The revision process has been primarily led through the joint work of the AVPR, the Director of Human Rights and Equity, and the Office of Research Services.

8. CFI-JELF: In June, Award Notices were received for applications made to the John Evans Leaders Fund (JELF) of CFI. A total of five applications were submitted to CFI in February, with three receiving full funding. Information on the projects which received funding can be found in the Brock News: <https://brocku.ca/brock-news/2019/08/funding-helps-researchers-land-state-of-the-art-equipment/>

Brock's CFI-JELF allocation has moreover been augmented by \$350,000, concomitant with the addition of two CRCs to the university's allocation in September 2018. Much of the remaining CFI envelope will be reserved to support the five remaining CRC appointments; however, some funding is likely to be available for an internal open round of allocations in 2020.

9. Research Centres and Institutes: In June, the VPR and AVPR met with directors of research centres and institutes at Brock to discuss their experiences, challenges, and opportunities. This is part of a consultation process, looking ahead to an institutional strategy on centres and institutes that emphasizes clear policy and operations, sustainability and support, and makes good on Strategic Plan aspirations.
10. Implementations of the Strategic Plan: The Strategic Research Plan required by CFI and CRC as part of those federal support programs has now been posted to the CFI site, and may be viewed from the CRC Accountability page in the Brock Research Sharepoint site. Moreover, a Research Enterprise Strategic Plan has been drafted, integrating the research implementation plan with the research strategic priority of the university's strategic plan.
11. To promote better access to internal ORS resources, a new SharePoint site was developed and launched and revised in the spring and summer. The site provides updated information on funding programs, policies and procedures and links to ORS services. A highlight is the 'News' section which is focal point for the announcement of new funding opportunities and ORS events. The new SharePoint

site can be found at: <https://brocku.sharepoint.com/Research-Services/SitePages/Home.aspx>

12. Research Accounting has finished the annual financial reporting cycle on-time with the addition of a New Research Accountant. Research accounting has also started a new initiative to proactively address the most common expense report issues encountered by researchers. The new series, entitled "Tracey's Tips" will be a recurring feature through e-mail and SharePoint.
13. Events: In July, ORS held an information session on the newly launched NSERC Alliance program. The Alliance grants encourage university researchers to collaborate with partner organizations, in the private, public or not-for-profit sectors under the umbrella of a single partnership funding program. Representatives from MITACS and NSERC were on-hand to meet with researchers and to share information about the new program's eligibility.

Hosted by the Offices of Research Services and Human Rights & Equity, a day-long workshop attended by over 20 Brock researchers explored critical topics in funded partnership development and offered one-on-one consultation time with in-house experts. Topics included principles of effective interdisciplinary research collaborations, legal issues in collaborative projects, formalizing collaborative agreements and accessing institutional support. An overview of SSHRC partnership funding including [Partnership Engage Grants](#) (\$7,000 to \$25,000), [Partnership Development Grants](#) (\$75,000 to \$200,000), [Partnership Grants](#) (up to \$2.5M) was provided.

14. The summer months also saw the VPR representing Brock at a range of provincial and national organization meetings, including:

OCUR Executive meeting held July 29
Research stakeholder summit organizing committee (t)
SHARCNET board meetings (t) June 25 and Aug 30
OMAFRA meeting July 31

The AVPR represented the University at ACCRU (Ottawa, May) and SSHRC Leaders (Vancouver, June).

15. There were multiple government visits, meetings, and consultations, including:
Regional Council presentation on Brock LINC, June 20
Ministry of the Environment Assistant Deputy Minister, May 28
Economic Advisor (Ontario), Ministry of Research, Innovation, and Science, May 27
16. Associate Vice-President, Research Appointment: The AVPR Advisory Committee was struck in the spring, and held two meetings; an advertisement for internal applications to the position was posted, with review slated to begin in September. Information on the progress of the search is posted on the VPR webpage, under the

AVPR Advisory Committee tab: <https://brocku.ca/research-at-brock/office-of-research-services/office-of-vice-president-research>

Appendix: FedDev VPMI Stakeholder proposal