

SECTION 3: RESEARCH

Questions:

- 13. What research activities are we known for currently? What research do we want to be known for in the immediate future?***
- 14. What should we do to better align teaching and research activities?***
- 15. How might we better support our research activities?***
- 16. How do we provide more research-related learning opportunities to our students (at both the graduate and undergraduate levels)?***
- 17. How do we best ensure that our research activities complement those of other institutions and the needs of the city, province, country and international community?***

NOTES:

Background

Over the last decade significant change has occurred with respect to supporting research activities at UWinnipeg. This has included important additions to the physical campus (e.g., Richardson College for the Environment and Science Complex, Buhler Centre, Gupta Faculty of Kinesiology and Applied Health), changes to the Collective Agreement, a rise in faculty-funded

research, and the expansion of the Canada Research Chairs program, which has greatly benefited UWinnipeg.



The additions and renovations to the physical campus have provided many faculty with leading edge infrastructure from which to carry out and disseminate their work. Faculty have also gained the capacity to undertake more research through the bargaining process and changes to the Collective Agreement. Specifically, new faculty are provided with a reduced teaching load and the standard teaching load for faculty was reduced by three credit hours. These two measures have given faculty additional time to devote to research and other scholarly activities.

One of the measures of research success in a university setting is to assess the value of the grants obtained by faculty members. Over the past decade research funding has grown from \$2.5 million (2003/04) to just over \$7.5 million in 2013/14. This growth is based on many factors, for example: the number of Canada Research Chair (CRC) positions increasing from one to seven; Tri-Council funding (Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC), Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) and Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR)) increasing from \$1.1 million to just under \$2 million; Canadian Foundation for Innovation (CFI) funding increasing from \$150,000 to nearly \$1 million; and external research revenues increasing from \$660,000 to over \$2.8 million.

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The Canada Research Chair program has strengthened key research areas and also developed and supported several research clusters and programs which are consistent with the Strategic Research Plan.

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The federal government, and more specifically SSHRC, increasingly treats small institutions as inappropriate custodians of large grants (over \$300,000), their rationale is that the largest universities are a better investment because they have the “research-intensive” infrastructure (research office support, graduate students, critical mass of expertise in an area) to support large research projects. A danger for small universities is that they will be unable to recruit research faculty.

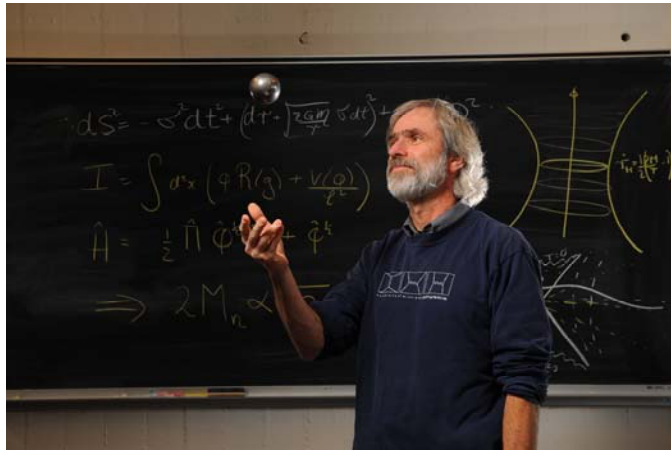
Success rates for the bread-and-butter SSHRC “Insight” grants (\$75,000-500,000) that fund humanities and social science faculty research have been declining, and small universities including UWinnipeg have been harder hit than large universities.



Although the dollar value amount of funding may be declining, the most recent Maclean’s rankings (2014) showed that UWinnipeg researchers are receiving SSHRC grant at a greater rate per capita (12.85 SSHRC grants per 100 full-time faculty members) than their peers at the University of Manitoba (11.90/100).

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Statistics taken from the NSERC search engine indicate that in the 2009/10 fiscal year, the number and total dollar amount of Discovery Grants (individual and team) at UWinnipeg peaked at \$35,000 and \$775,000 respectively. After four years of steady declines from that point, the number and total dollar amount in 2013/14 were down to \$28,000 and \$670,000 a significant decrease.



In 2007, NSERC introduced changes to the Discovery Grant evaluation procedures. There is a danger that these new procedures, coupled with the federal government's increasing focus on applied research, could make it more difficult for researchers at smaller universities with high quality but modest scale research programs to compete for Discovery Grant funds.

The UWinnipeg Research Office has a staff of four. In a comparison to similar universities (based on research revenues) the following Research Office Staff complements were noted: Lethbridge, 12 staff; University of Northern British Columbia, 10 staff; Saint Mary's, 9 staff; Moncton, 20+ staff (at two campuses); Saint Francis Xavier, 6 staff; and Acadia, 6 staff.

At these other institutions, emphasis is placed on research development that includes having grant writing support specialists and liaisons working directly with industry to connect researchers and grow research opportunities. As well, there is a focus on finding funding. The greatest growth in research activity at UWinnipeg is within external research areas and not Tri-Council funding.

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UWinnipeg has seen growth in the number of graduate students. Graduate students participate in more research than undergraduate students and are eligible for Tri-Council funding (e.g., scholarships and/or research fellowships) and other external awards. UWinnipeg currently has one internal award for graduate students, the Manitoba Graduate Scholarship (MGS) valued at \$15,000. This award is supported by the provincial government.

Current Direction

Canada Research Chairs (CRC) are competitively awarded based on the level of grant funding and are recalculated on a three year cycle. The thematic direction of each CRC was determined by UWinnipeg's Strategic Research Plan. At present the following areas are noted: Applied Health and Medical Research, Cultural Studies, Environmental Studies, Experimental Physics, Fresh Water Ecology and Hydrology, Indigenous Development, and Urban Studies.

An important internal influence on research activity at UWinnipeg has been through the supports provided to faculty. These include: Discretionary Grants, Major Research Grants, Research Workshop and Conference Grants, and Travel/International Travel Grants (Faculty and Student). In addition, the establishment of the Chancellor's Research Chair program also provides emerging faculty with an award and funding in the amount of \$22,500 over three years. Overall, internal funding has grown over the last decade from \$191,000 to \$250,000. In addition, an internal "seed" money program offers Faculties access to an additional source of funds to distribute to members. With the inclusion of the Chancellor's Chair and the seed money, the total allocated annually is over \$300,000. It must also be noted that many researchers are highly productive with minimal research dollars.

Several units at UWinnipeg (e.g., Richardson College for the Environment, Institute of Urban Studies) have also pursued grants outside of the Tri-Council framework. Research dollars have been received in the forms of grants or fee-for-service contracts from various departments in the federal

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and provincial governments, private foundations, and industry partners.

More recently, UWinnipeg has begun to develop several crosscutting research platforms capable of supporting and/or enhancing academic research (e.g. capacity for large data analytics, immersive technologies, video development, and production facilities).



UWinnipeg made a strategic decision to fundraise for academic and research initiatives with the development of the Future Fund. The Future Fund has a goal of raising \$15 million, which will be used to provide UWinnipeg with flexible and critical resources required to execute current academic priorities, such as academic research, academic collaboration, and innovative academic programming.

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