

**University of Windsor  
Senate**

5.10: **Report of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation**

Item for: **Information**

Forwarded by: **Shanthi Johnson**

Research, scholarship, creative activity, and innovation play a pivotal role in shaping the University's local and global influence, reputation, and impact. The research and innovation ecosystem directly impacts our ability to recruit and retain undergraduate and graduate students and build a robust education and training capacity pipeline. The Office of the Vice-President, Research and Innovation (OVPRI) is committed to inspiring and advancing inclusive research, scholarship, creative activity, and innovation in alignment with the University's institutional strategic plan - *Aspire: Together for Tomorrow*. Our goal is to engage our community, creating strong, meaningful collaborations, actively involving both our internal and external stakeholders. The following provides an overview of the recent activities and initiatives undertaken by the OVPRI.

### **Spotlight on Canada Research Chairs – Update**

The Canada Research Chairs (CRC) Program supports Canadian research excellence, investing more than \$310 million annually to recruit and retain world-class researchers. There are two CRC types: Tier 1 Chairs for established researchers, and Tier 2 Chairs for early-career researchers. The program addresses equity and diversity in Chair representation through targets prompted by federal legal action. These equity targets relate to the federally designated equity deserving groups.

At the University of Windsor, the CRC program is a strategic institutional resource that promotes and grows our research and innovation opportunities. The allocation of CRCs to universities is based on a three-year average of the Tri-Agency funding received by the University. This past year, we took the opportunity to streamline the application processes. It is worth noting that the value of the Tier 1 (\$200,000/year) and Tier 2 (\$100,000) programs hasn't changed in 25 years. This strategic investment is seen as a lever for growth, with one Tier 2 NSERC Chair gained at the University of Windsor in the last federal reallocation exercise.

### **Current UWindsor CRCs**

We currently have 3 Tier 1 CRC's (Naryan Kar, Hugh Maclsaac and Aaron Fisk) and 3 Tier 2 CRCs (Catherine Febria, Jennifer Willet and Ning Zhang). We have had 1 Tier 1 CRC (Charlene Senn) and 1 Tier 2 CRC (Shijing Xu) complete their terms as of September 30, 2024 and we are undergoing the CRC cessation process.

Our current Tier 1 CRC's are providing research leadership in Engineering and Science:

Dr. Narayan Kar – Electrified Vehicles

Dr. Hugh Maclsaac – Aquatic Invasive Species

Dr. Aaron Fisk – Trophic Ecology

Our current Tier 2 CRC's are providing research leadership in Science, Engineering and FAHSS:

Dr. Catherine Febria – Freshwater Restoration Ecology

Dr. Jennifer Willet – Art, Science and Ecology

Dr. Ning Zhang – Edge Computing and the Internet of Vehicles

### **Current CRC Searches**

There are three ongoing CRC searches, focusing on Public Health: FAHSS – Health Disparities and Public Health, Science – Environmental and Public Health Genomics and HK – Health Bioinformatics. The search process has

concluded for the FAHSS and Science searches and we have moved to the federal nomination process., with applications anticipated by December 2024 and Spring 2025 respectively. The HK search is ongoing and a selection of the preferred candidate is anticipated shortly.

### **Future Planning**

We will be starting the search for 5 vacant CRC positions in 2025. Future utilization and planning (allocation process) will involve a comprehensive combination of metrics (40%) and strategic focus (60%). The emphasis will be on interfaculty partnerships in key strategic areas and that will aid in meeting our equity targets required in the CRC program. We are currently engaging with the Deans, Associate Deans of Research and the Executive Leadership Team to identify areas for investment and growth to ensure alignment with Aspire and the cascading strategies/priorities.

### **Conclusion**

The Canada Research Chairs (CRC) program is essential to our institution's research and innovation excellence and commitment to equity and inclusive diversity. By strategically investing in CRCs, we address historical inequities, foster interdisciplinary collaboration, and enhance our impact in key areas.