Report on Member Consultation
Recommendations for BCIT: CRC Selection Process
April 2016

Preamble

In response to concerns raised by FSA members involved in research regarding the CRC selection process at BCIT, the FSA conducted a consultation session in January 2016.

The FSA's intentions are to ensure that the faculty and staff at BCIT are adequately consulted and involved in this process and to ensure that the process adheres to the guiding principles recommended by members.

The session also included a proposal by the FSA to its members for the development of a caucus to address issues related to research. The proposed caucus is separate and apart from this report and more information about it will be coming from the FSA in the future.

Method

To address these questions the FSA held a meeting on January 20, 2016 for members currently participating in, or interested in, research at BCIT. At the meeting, we took members through two exercises:
  ➢ Brainstorming and ranking of guiding principles for a CRC selection process
  ➢ Review and editing of the first two columns of the CRC Application Process Map obtained from Applied Research (as posted on the Loop) asking the questions:
    ▪ What's good?
    ▪ What are the flaws?
    ▪ What's missing?

Results from the exercises were clear:
  ➢ The absence of a fully representative BCIT-wide research committee is evident
  ➢ A vision for research at BCIT is required
  ➢ There is general consensus on some high level guiding principles
  ➢ Members appreciate the existence of a process map but many did not know about it and there are many changes to be made for the map to meet the identified principles
  ➢ Consistent with previous consultations regarding research at BCIT, our members do not have confidence that decision-making processes regarding research are being led by people with the appropriate skills

Findings

Guiding Principles for CRC Selection Process

The conclusions drawn from the recent consultation process indicate FSA members rank the following principles as vital and necessary for a CRC Selection Process at BCIT:

- ➢ Transparency including clear accountability and genuine consultation
- ➢ Fairness and equity
- ➢ Faculty-driven including an element of peer review, a standard of excellence, and skilled decision makers at every stage of the process
  - o *A full outline of a faculty driven process should be developed in consultation with the FSA Caucus on Applied Research and Advanced Studies (CARAS)*
- ➢ Strong strategic relevance for BCIT

> *BCIT FSA members involved in research activities want a clear, transparent, and accountable CRC selection process.*

The Canada Research Chairs also require that ``All Canada Research Chair recruitment and nomination processes at universities must be transparent, open and equitable[1].'' Their expectations for a fair and transparent process are laid out clearly on their website and include such criteria as:

- ➢ The position was the subject of open advertising that included a statement of commitment to equity in the nomination and appointment process and encouraged designated groups to apply

- ➢ Efforts were made to identify a diverse pool of potential applicants (in particular, to address any underrepresentation among the designated groups as per the CRCP target-setting exercise), which may have included tapping into special caucuses or focus groups.

> *The BCIT FSA recommends that the guiding principles developed by our faculty and staff and the requirements of the Canada Research Chairs be adhered to in the current, and all future, Canada Research Chair nominations. A start to establishing an open and transparent process to allow for a fair nomination would begin with the following recommendations.*

Recommended Changes to CRC Application Process Map

Overarching Changes

1. BCIT should provide strong mentorship and professional guidance on an on-going basis to faculty and staff with active research interests to build an applicant pool at BCIT.
   - ▪ Strong mentorship and professional guidance are foundational building blocks for achieving eligibility for a CRC. While the Applied Research Liaison Office can provide information on what is required to apply for a CRC, it cannot assist in positioning

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[1] http://www.chairs-chaires.gc.ca/program-programme/equity-equite/recruitment-recrutement-eng.aspx

researchers to achieve the eligibility requirements. BCIT needs to recognize those faculty and staff with the potential to be CRCs in coming years and give them encouragement and support to meet the criteria. Beyond simply understanding the criteria, this requires managers who can identify a researcher's potential and assist with finding developmental opportunities within the potential applicant's discipline.

2. Throughout the CRC selection process there must be:

- ➢ Clear dates and timelines
    - ▪ The lack of any detail aside from the April 15 and October 24 dates is concerning for potential applicants. What's particularly missing here is any indication of the processes for schools to make their recommendations. The sense among the research community within the FSA is that the vetting process is already well underway with managers making decisions about what proposals they will back while potential applicants are still formulating their proposals.
    - ▪ Our recommendations for the flowchart also include building in consultation around the Strategic Research Plan as that document should be a basis for making this decision. Subsequent to the application deadline, there's no timeline for a decision from the committee, no indication of when applicants will be told whether they were successful, and no indication of when any subsequent approvals need to be made internally. There is a lot of work for any candidate to complete well before the October deadline for submitting the application.

- ➢ Transparency regarding the number of candidates at each stage
    - ▪ Applicants would benefit greatly from knowing if each school would be bringing forward one or more candidates and if BCIT would be submitting one or more proposals to the secretariat. These statements would go far to explain the BCIT process. As it is, potential candidates are navigating rumours and expectations that seem to differ from school to school.

- ➢ Clear consideration of CRC eligibility requirements
    - ▪ The Internal Applicant Information form sets out what information is required from the applicants but it does not articulate what BCIT's standards are. BCIT seems to be leaving the field wide open, but potential applicants feel that's either not really the case or would like more express criteria so that they can judge whether to invest in this process.

- ➢ Support and resources for those wishing to express intent and apply

- ➢ Consideration of how BCIT employees access information and provide input
    - ▪ Although some of this information is available, posting documents on The Loop does not address the disaffection and trust issues among BCIT's research committee that we identified and made recommendations about more than a year and a half ago. The inadequacy of the Institute's response to those concerns undoubtedly is fueling the misgivings with which members are regarding this process.

3. For each group, including committees, involved in the process it must be clear to our members:
   - ➢ How to access committee membership lists and committee members

- ➤ Committee membership selection criteria, procedure, and membership duration
- ➤ Guiding principles and terms of reference for the committee, including decision making criteria
- ➤ Access to minutes/decisions/actions of the committee
- ➤ What current research is being funded/supported

Although this information may be posted, many FSA members who have identified interests in research report not being aware of it, indicating that the information is not reaching its intended audience.

> *At each stage of the process it must be ensured that the correct group is assigned to the appropriate area of responsibility and that the members of that group have the required skills and information to make the decisions assigned to them.*
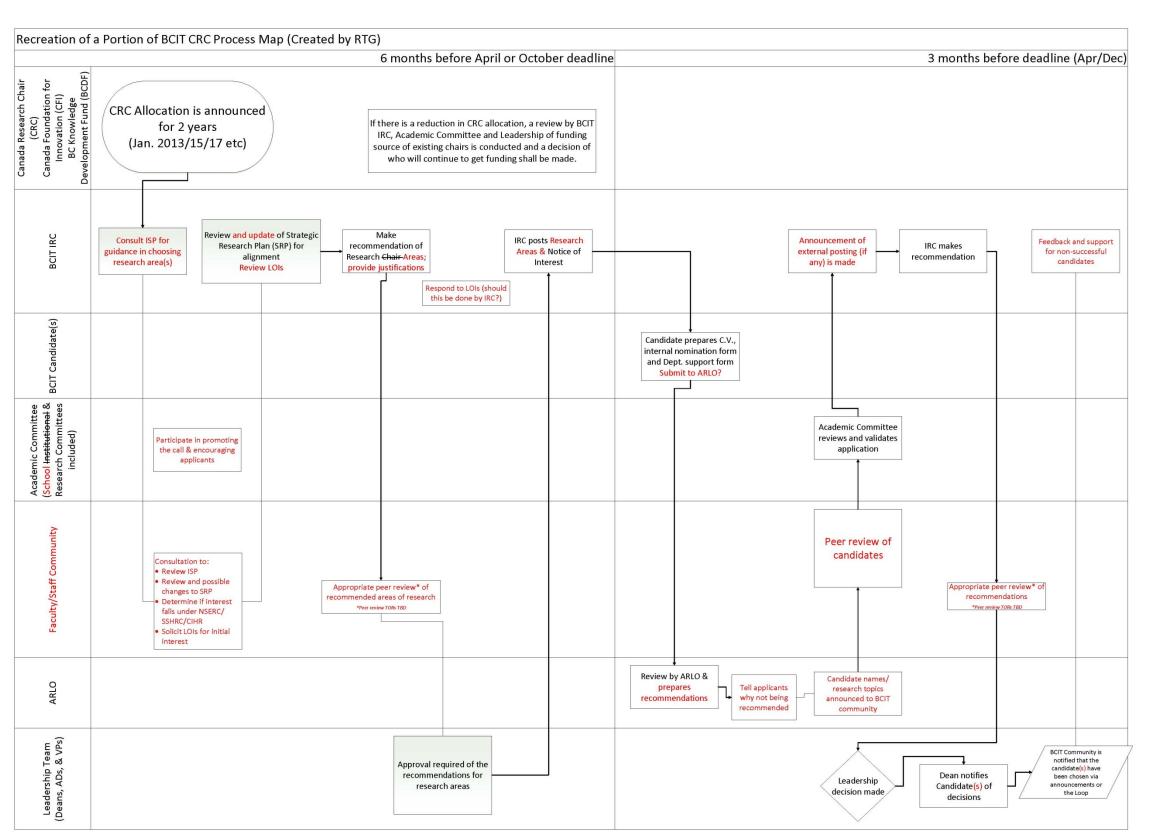
Specific Changes

At the consultation session with FSA members, we conducted an exercise by blowing up the CRC Application Process Map, placing it on the wall, and identified the answers to the questions outlined in 'Method' above by placing post-it notes on the map. The data was then entered as edits to the existing map (below) to arrive at recommended changes. *All changes are indicated in red text.*

Comment

Although this report pertains specifically to the CRC selection process, the findings reflect the problems with engagement that BCIT struggles with more broadly. Employees see managers going through the basic motions of engagement but they don't experience the genuine engagement that comes from active listening followed by actions that meaningfully address the concerns being raised.

The desire expressed by our members for support and resources seems to go back to the desire for more direction on BCIT's decision-making process and criteria. While some schools may be better or worse at communicating about research, most of our interested members feel they are lacking the information they are looking for about how these applications might fit into their schools' priorities and how their applications might be supported at the IRC. Strong viable candidates in some schools may be overlooked because they lack the support and direction of a strong institutional model. Inconsistent practice across the Institute contributes to the sense that some potential candidates will be privileged in the process because they have better access to information and are better supported by a functioning research structure at the school level and by an engaged and supportive manager.

FSA Additions in red text

Recreation of a Portion of BCIT CRC Process Map (Created by RTG)

	6 months before April or October deadline	3 months before deadline (Apr/Dec)

Canada Research Chair (CRC) / Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) / BC Knowledge Development Fund (BCDF)

CRC Allocation is announced for 2 years (Jan. 2013/15/17 etc)

If there is a reduction in CRC allocation, a review by BCIT IRC, Academic Committee and Leadership of funding source of existing chairs is conducted and a decision of who will continue to get funding shall be made.

BCIT IRC

- Consult ISP for guidance in choosing research area(s)
- Review and update of Strategic Research Plan (SRP) for alignment Review LOIs
- Make recommendation of Research ~~Chair~~ Areas; provide justifications
- Respond to LOIs (should this be done by IRC?)
- IRC posts Research Areas & Notice of Interest
- Announcement of external posting (if any) is made
- IRC makes recommendation
- Feedback and support for non-successful candidates

BCIT Candidate(s)

- Candidate prepares C.V., internal nomination form and Dept. support form Submit to ARLO?

Academic Committee (School ~~Institutional~~ & Research Committees included)

- Participate in promoting the call & encouraging applicants
- Academic Committee reviews and validates application

Faculty/Staff Community

Consultation to:
- Review ISP
- Review and possible changes to SRP
- Determine if interest falls under NSERC/ SSHRC/CIHR
- Solicit LOIs for initial interest

- Appropriate peer review* of recommended areas of research
  Peer review TORs TBD

- Peer review of candidates

- Appropriate peer review* of recommendations
  Peer review TORs TBD

ARLO

- Review by ARLO & prepares recommendations
- Tell applicants why not being recommended
- Candidate names/ research topics announced to BCIT community

Leadership Team (Deans, ADs, & VPs)

- Approval required of the recommendations for research areas
- Leadership decision made
- Dean notifies Candidate(s) of decisions
- BCIT Community is notified that the candidate(s) have been chosen via announcements or the Loop

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