



AFMC

The Association of Faculties of Medicine of Canada
L'Association des facultés de médecine du Canada

The AFMC Standing Committee on Research and Graduate Studies

Report to the AFMC Board of Directors

May 2011

**Research and Graduate Studies Standing Committee
Annual Report April 7 2011**

1. Members

The membership of the Research and Graduate Studies (R&GS) Standing Committee includes the Assistant, Associate, Senior Associate and Vice Deans involved in research and graduate studies in the 17 Faculties of Medicine. We have a total membership of 38; 14 of the Faculties have dedicated Assistant or Associate Deans responsible for Graduate Studies. Dr. Penny Moody-Corbett (Memorial University) is the current chair of the committee.

2. Meetings

- a. Canadian Student Health Research Forum, Graduate Studies Deans meeting, June 4, 2010, Winnipeg MB.
- b. Research and Graduate Studies Standing Committee meeting, November 18, 2010, Gatineau QC.
- c. Research Careers Data Development Initiative (RCDDI), February 10, 2010, Ottawa ON.
- d. Strategic Planning Session, February 11, 2011, Ottawa, ON.
- e. PMC also attended meetings on behalf of the Research and Graduate Studies committee: Deans on the Hill, Ottawa (Oct. 4-5, 2010); Leadership Retreat, Gatineau (Nov. 17-18); Canadian Research Integrity Forum, Ottawa (May 19 and Dec. 16, 2010).

3. Highlights 2010 – 2011

- a. **Career Paths Survey** Following from the Survey, completed in 2009, Steve Slade presented a detailed report for our committee (November 18 meeting). A working group is preparing the material for publication. The response rate was about 28% and although this is low, there are a number of meaningful observations on health research careers in Canada. The survey demonstrated that health researchers are a diverse population that due to multiple workloads, such as teaching and patient care, are only able to spend about half of their time devoted to purely research activities. The health research community is primarily non-clinical; and although the respondents to the survey were in about equal proportions of male and female there are a disproportionately higher number of females in early career stages. There are a number of health researchers supported by external salary awards and the majority of these are entering the final years of their salary awards. The career challenges for health researchers on external salary awards are quite different for clinician and non-clinician researchers, in terms of job security. The survey provided an estimate of the extent of the health research workforce; that is, the number of individuals in highly skilled jobs and the number of trainees in health research. By extrapolation it is estimated that there is perhaps as many as 35,000 individuals in health research positions.
- b. **CIHR Strategy on Patient Oriented Research (SPOR)** The Research and Graduate Studies Standing Committee was pleased to endorse the strategy, recognizing the many changes that have occurred in clinical research over the past ten years and the increase in interdisciplinary research approaches to address health issues. We raised concerns regarding financial support for the strategy, challenges that still exist with

respect to regulatory oversight in Canada and the importance of promoting healthy lifestyles and disease prevention.

c. Ethics and Integrity

- i. The second draft of the Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS2): Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans was released December 2010.
- ii. Dr. Moody-Corbett has been the AFMC representative on the Canadian General Standards Board to develop a voluntary standard for “Research ethics oversight of biomedical clinical trials”. The standard is now undergoing final corrections before being released.
- iii. In a meeting of the Canadian Research Integrity committee in May 2010 it was decided to rename the group the Canadian Research Integrity Forum (CRIF) which will act as a body for the discussion and sharing of information about issues related to research integrity. AFMC is a member of CRIF and participated in a discussion on the Council of Canadian Academies publication: *Honesty, Accountability and Trust: Fostering Research Integrity in Canada*.

d. Graduate studies and postdoctoral scholars

- i. The annual Canadian Student Health Research Forum (CSHRF) was held in Winnipeg June 2-4. Over 100 PhD students from most of our 17 Faculties presented posters at the event. The CIHR provided travel support for about 30 students and poster winners (Gold, Silver and Honourable mention categories) are provide on the CSHRF website:
http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/medicine/research_days/national_competition2010win.html
- i. Following the student forum the graduate studies deans met June 4. Invitees to this session included Krissy Davidge to talk about the research capacity development office of the CIHR Three main topics were discussed: (1) the CIHR support of graduate students, in particular ... (2) the MD-PhD programs and (3) the status of post-doctoral fellows in our Faculty of Medicine programs.

e. Canada Council on Animal Care new appointment

Dr. Ed Kroeger is the new AFMC representative on the Canadian Council on Animal Care. Dr. Jim Thornhill had been our representative on this committee and completed his term with our committee last year.

Submitted by
P. Moody-Corbett, Chair
Research and Graduate Studies Standing Committee
April 15, 2011