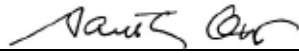


SUBJECT	INDIGENOUS RESEARCH SUPPORT INITIATIVE (IRSI) - STATUS AND FUTURE PLANS
MEETING DATE	FEBRUARY 8, 2019

Forwarded on the Recommendation of the President

APPROVED FOR SUBMISSION



Santa J. Ono, President and Vice-Chancellor

FOR INFORMATION

Report Date	January 13, 2019
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Presented By Gail Murphy, Vice-President Research & Innovation
 Helen Burt, Associate Vice-President Research & Innovation
 Lerato Chondoma, Associate Director, Indigenous Research Support Initiative

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

For many years, university research has followed an extractive model, with detrimental impacts on Indigenous communities, operating in circumstances of unequal power and without regard for community concerns, needs or interests. The Indigenous Research Support Initiative (IRSI) was established as a pilot program, funded through Excellence Funds. This report provides an overview on the current status and future plans of this initiative, established following extensive consultations with Indigenous community partners and researchers at UBC.

Attachments

1. Indigenous Research Support Initiative Briefing

STRATEGIC CORE AREAS SUPPORTED

- People and Places Research Excellence Transformative Learning Local / Global Engagement

DESCRIPTION & RATIONALE IRSI provides professional research support and services to Indigenous communities and university researchers to undertake collaborative projects.

BENEFITS Enabling collaborative partnerships; developing and supporting better practices of Learning, Research, Financial, Sustainability & Reputational engagement; supporting excellence in research.

RISKS Recruitment of IRSI support staff; pilot program and ongoing funding.
 Financial, Operational & Reputational



Briefing on the status and future plans of the Indigenous Research Support Initiative (IRSI)

Prepared for: Indigenous Engagement Committee of the Board of Governors

Prepared by: Helen Burt, Associate Vice-President Research & Innovation

Date: January 13, 2019

Background and context:

For many years, university research has followed an extractive model, with detrimental impacts on Indigenous communities, operating in circumstances of unequal power and without regard for community concerns, needs or interests.

However, research developed and conducted in collaboration with Indigenous communities that addresses community concerns can produce more equitable research that makes positive contributions to community autonomy, strength and resiliency.

TRC Call to Action #65 charges governments and institutions “to establish a national research program with multi-year funding to advance the understanding of reconciliation.” One of the most important ways in which research initiatives can “advance understanding of reconciliation” is to directly address both systemic imbalances of power and assumptions about knowledge and agency that have structured research practices of the past.

Furthermore, Article 31 of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides important implications for research, as follows: “Indigenous peoples have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as the manifestations of their sciences, technologies and cultures.....They also have the right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over such cultural heritage, traditional knowledge, and traditional cultural expressions.”

The Indigenous Research Support Initiative (IRSI) was established as a pilot program, funded through Excellence Funds, following extensive consultations with Indigenous community partners and researchers at UBC. Consultations highlighted the need for better support of collaborative research with Indigenous communities. The initiative formed in December 2016 with the hiring of an Associate Director. An inaugural community gathering was held in June 2017 where a proposed structure for the initiative was presented and discussed with Indigenous community partners and UBC researchers.

Mandate:

The mandate or intent of IRSI is to provide professional research support and services to Indigenous communities and university researchers to undertake collaborative projects based on community-led interests, reciprocal relationships, and principles of mutual accountability.

IRSI is committed to:

- 1. Enabling collaborative partnerships** by identifying and supporting collaborative research with Indigenous communities and creating opportunities for dialogue and open exchange of views.
- 2. Developing and supporting better practices of engagement**, building university and community capacity to undertake collaborative projects, and co-creating principles and effective practices of engagement that advance the transformation of research policies at institutional, regional and national levels which respect and benefit communities.
- 3. Supporting excellence in research** and the development of emerging projects and research clusters among Indigenous communities, university researchers and other partners.
- 4. Accountability**, by establishing Advisory Committees on each campus, comprised of individuals from Indigenous communities as well as and faculty and staff from both UBCO and UBCV. This will allow for the local and regional contexts at each campus and ensure that our work is reflective of the needs and processes of the Indigenous communities with whom we collaborate and partner.

IRSI Strategic Framework:

UBC's strategic plan "*Shaping UBC's Next Century*" references the Indigenous Strategic Plan and IRSI's strategic framework is Appendix II in the ISP.

IRSI's strategies are aligned with *Next Century's* Research Excellence strategies, #6 (Collaborative Clusters), #7 (Research Support), #9 (Knowledge Exchange) and #10 (Research Culture) and also with Local and Global Engagement strategy #17 (Indigenous Engagement). A summary of strategies and actions in the IRSI strategic framework are provided below and the complete document may be found at

https://research.ubc.ca/sites/research.ubc.ca/files/vpri/Indigenous-Research-Support-Initiative-strategic-framework_VP.pdf

- **Collaborative clusters:** IRSI will assist in the development of interdisciplinary research clusters through creating relationships, connecting researchers and Indigenous communities and promoting the principles of community-based research.
- **Research support:** IRSI will develop supports and services for Indigenous communities and researchers engaging in ethical and collaborative research relationships and projects. Specifically, IRSI will facilitate appropriate Indigenous research data management practices, and co-develop with Indigenous communities and partners, principles of engagement, protocols and templates, resources, repositories and a communications portal.
- **Knowledge exchange:** IRSI will assist in finding resources for the development of partnerships and supporting Indigenous communities and researchers to implement research outcomes for social and economic impact.
- **Research culture:** IRSI will co-develop training programs with Indigenous community partners for researchers and students entering or wishing to enter collaborative

relationships, and promote the adoption of inclusive, positive, ethical and respectful research practices that strengthen research relationships with Indigenous communities.

Progress: projects and initiatives:

1. Metrics highlights:

- 6 Research Protocol Agreements
- 12 new projects in areas including, housing, health and wellbeing, fisheries, language reclamation
- Supported 8 successful research grants
- Leveraged \$165K in support of research collaborations from SSHRC, CIHR, VanCity, BC Housing, Community-University Engagement Support fund and UBC Partnership Recognition Fund
- Hosted 8 gatherings/workshops for Indigenous communities and scholars (>320 attendees)

2. Principles of engagement and Indigenous data:

IRSI organized a “*Building Principles of Engagement*” workshop on October 26, 2018. There were approximately 100 participants from Indigenous communities, Indigenous associations, partners, and UBC researchers. The goal of the workshop was to co-develop a draft framework for Indigenous engagement to transform research practices at UBC. Additional workshops are planned in 2019 that are focused on Indigenous research ethics (with the First Nations Health Authority and other partners).

IRSI is partnering with the Indian Residential School History and Dialogue Centre and approximately 50 Indigenous community and academic partners to begin a series of dialogues (funded by a SSHRC Connection grant) shaping and collaboratively developing a model of engagement for Indigenous data, information and records.

A collaborative partnership is being developed between BC First Nations Data Governance Initiative and UBC to implement a provincial strategy to increase First Nations’ capacity in data governance, surveillance and research.

3. Examples of projects underway:

- **Heiltsuk Nation Research Collaboration:** a cooperative research protocol agreement was signed between the Heiltsuk Tribal Council and IRSI in May 2018. The signing ceremony was held in Bella Bella and was followed by a Heiltsuk cultural “Blessing of the Grounds” ceremony for the Heiltsuk Tiny Homes project; the goals of this project are to design and build 8 culturally and environmentally suitable tiny homes. Eight community members were trained in a first year carpentry trades program at Camosun College in order to build internal capacity and Builders Without Borders were engaged to support the construction efforts.
- **Teslin Tlingit Council Research Collaboration:** a research protocol agreement was signed in July 2018. The first project involves community-based participatory research on a Teslin Tlingit land-based healing program, focused on coping with the lasting and

inter-generational impacts of Indian residential schools on the Teslin Tlingit people. IRSI facilitated CUES funding of \$15K for the partnership and Dr Helen Brown (UBC School of Nursing) and the community were awarded CIHR funding of ~\$74K.

IRSI status update:

As noted earlier, IRSI is a pilot program funded until 2019/20 from Excellence Funds. Additional Strategic Funds have been awarded in 2019/20 for an Indigenous Engagement Training Pilot Program. There is a high demand for engagement training support from students, staff and faculty. Although courses and other forms of training exist across campus, most of the training is disciplinary focused. There is a need for generalized approaches and flexible delivery of training modules and other tools. A request for ongoing central budget support for IRSI will be submitted in the fall of 2019 and some additional staff recruitment is anticipated.