



Centre for the Study of / Centre d'études sur la

# Reproduction

## Annual General Meeting

RI-MUHC, Glen Site, room EM1.3509

June 8, 2015 2:00 PM

### MINUTES

**Present:** Daniel Bernard, Charlotte McCaffrey, Milena Taibi, Yasmin Schuermann, Cristian O'Flaherty, Hugh Clarke, Cindy Goodyer, Aimee Ryan, Yojiro Yamanaka, Terry Hébert, Rima Slim, Martine Culty, Sarah Kimmins, Makoto Nagano, Mahmoud Aarabi, Anna Naoumova, Loydie Jerome-Majewska

#### 1. Welcome

Dan thanked attendees for coming - better turn out than expected based on historical normal, but still room for improvement! The purpose of the AGM is to open up discussion about the Centre to the general membership, rather than only the executive committee.

#### 2. Review of major CSR activities in 2014-2015

##### 2.1 Staffing/leadership changes

-There were major changes in staffing this year:

-Daniel Bernard and Sarah Kimmins were elected as Director and Associate Director, for a three year term, last June.

-Charlotte McCaffrey took over as administrative secretary in October. Changes and improvements to the Centre since then are thanks to her efforts.

-Terry Hébert joined as external member – this was in response to a new requirement by McGill, which has increased oversight of its centres

-Aimee Ryan and Rima Slim were elected to the executive last June and have just completed the first year of their three year terms.

-Yining Li was elected by the trainees as Student Rep. She was unable to attend this meeting because she was at the Frontiers in Reproduction course. Yasmin Schuermann acted as proxy and has expressed interest in becoming the next Student Rep.

-Cristian O'Flaherty has completed 2 years of his term and will need to be replaced next June. Open invitation to Faculty who have not yet served on the executive to put their names forward for next year.

##### 2.2 Research Day 2015

-We had a very good turnout, with 140 participants.

-The speakers were excellent.

-We are currently collecting evaluations online. So far, we have about a 20% response rate; Bernard indicated that a 35% response rate is generally regarded as good. The results of the survey will be publicized. It was noted that the annual report is also now available online, as per Faculty of Medicine reporting requirements.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Charlotte to solicit further responses to the evaluation survey by email.

**2.3 Funding activities**

• **Grants, scholarships, awards**

- \$15K was disbursed in Bridge funding (Kimmins, Naumova)

- There is one more bridge grant pending from the spring competition

- \$15K was disbursed in Seed Grants (Head, Clarke)

- \$25K was disbursed in MSc/PhD scholarships (5 in total) – We decreased the number given (by 1) in the spring due to lower application pressure and in anticipation of decreased funding from RQR for fiscal year 2015-2016

- \$15K was disbursed in PDF fellowships (2)

- \$11K was disbursed in travel awards (21), including one award for participation at FIR. It should be noted that RQR automatically gives \$2,000 to students attended FIR. While this has not been added as a line item on next year's budget, Dan would like to see continued support for this sort of course. Travel Awards were increased from \$250 to \$500 this year to make them more helpful. Some awardees received a bit less if they needed less.

• **Current review processes for Seed/Bridge Grants and Scholarships**

- All Trainee Fellowships, Bridge and Seed Grant Applications are reviewed by a committee of three members, with different committees for each competition (MSc, PhD, Postdoc, Seed, Bridge), and with care to avoid conflicts of interest. Legitimate conflicts of interest were found and eliminated in this year's reviews.

- There was only 1 application for the seed/bridge grant competition this spring but we are still going through the review process.

- There followed a discussion about: review criteria; whether to fund only those in dire need; whether to offer only bridge grants (not seed); whether to increase the number of student awards, etc.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Fellowship competitions will be run first and the number/amount of Bridge/Seed grants offered will depend on the application pressure from trainees (i.e., it was agreed that the priority should be funding of trainee awards).
2. An Awards Subcommittee, with at least one executive member, will be formed to assess and amend (as needed) the various award mechanisms and their review processes. Ana indicated that she has some ideas about review criteria. She should be considered for membership on this subcommittee. The Exec will identify and

invite CSR members to serve on this subcommittee. A member of the Exec will be asked to Chair.

### 3. Items for discussion/approval

#### 3.1 'Rebranding'; increasing visibility

Dan's mission, as Director, is to increase member value and attract more funding.

- **Name Change** Proposal to change the name of the centre to Centre for Research in Reproduction and Development/Centre de recherche en reproduction et développement (CRRD) to better reflect the activities of all members and added advantage of acronym being the same in French and English.  
-Bernard Robaire explained that historically, 'reproduction' encompassed both reproduction and development. He agreed that the fields of reproduction and development have evolved since the Centre began and that Development should therefore be added to the name. There was agreement by all in attendance. Loydie motioned to put the name change forward to Faculty members for approval.
- **New Logo** – A draft logo for the Centre, developed with McGill's Graphic Design Department, was presented. Dan asked for feedback, but did not expect uniform support.  
-Much discussion followed. Loydie suggested that presenting different options would help people feel like they had a say in the final decision. Aimee wants people to feel proud of the new logo but questions how many iterations we should go through. There was general consensus that the sperm head in the present design needs to be better delineated from the oocyte.
- **Newsletter** – The first was published electronically in April. We plan to have 2/year.
- **New Website** – Charlotte created a new website, using the Faculty of Medicine template, and updates it regularly. We want to continue developing it further.
- **Greater social media presence** (FB, Twitter) – We need to increase our presence even more!
- **Wikipedia** – Since people use Wikipedia as trusted source of information, Dan believes it is the responsibility of experts to make sure their area of research is accurately described. We successfully piloted this by updating the entry on IGSF1. Dan sent Charlotte the information in a Word document and Charlotte entered it into Wikipedia. Interestingly, formatting occurred automatically as she entered the data!  
-We also tried, unsuccessfully, to create an entry about the Centre but there are strict rules about who and what can be published.  
-Charlotte will work with other Centre members to update Wikipedia sites relevant to their research.
- **Videos** – This is something we really want to develop but haven't managed to pull off yet. We eventually want to create a promotional video about the Centre

as well as 3 minute videos about each member lab to put on the website, describing what each lab does. We also want to post videos about exciting papers that are published, outlining what is significant about the findings. We have asked for volunteers and have had definite interest.

- **Other** – Bernard would like to see invited lectures, supported and promoted by the Centre, a couple times per year to increase visibility. Dan noted that this is in the budget.

-Loydie asked if we are still doing the Paper of the Month. Yes!

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Charlotte will create a poll for faculty to vote on the proposed name change. A 2/3 majority will be required to make the name change.
2. Charlotte will go back to the graphic designer with the recommendation to outline the sperm head in white. The result will be presented to faculty members for input. The executive will have the final decision.
3. Members will be encouraged to forward anything they would like featured in the Newsletter to Charlotte
4. Members will be encouraged to review entries in Wikipedia related to their research and send updates to Charlotte for input.
5. Members (trainees too!) will be encouraged to think about creating videos about hot papers. Charlotte can help!
6. Charlotte will continue to solicit papers of the month.

#### **3.2 2015-2016 budget (FQRNT cut)**

We have RQR funding through 2017. RQR received a 20% cut in their budget from FQRNT and has spread the cut across their funding envelope. An RQR executive phone discussion took place and the proposed budget was approved. CSR will receive \$45K instead of \$55K for 2015-16. Nothing has been decided yet regarding the 2016-17 budget.

#### Previous (FY15)

\$55K RQR

\$35K VPRIR

\$6K Fac Med

Total \$96K

(about \$72,000\* rollover from FY14)

#### Current (FY16)

\$45K RQR

\$35 VPRIR

\$6K Fac Med

Total \$86K

(about \$20,000 rollover from FY15)

\*There was an unusually large amount of carryover funding from FY14 to FY15, in part because a number of expenditures from FY14 had not yet been charged to the accounts and because the spring competitions were postponed when the previous executive assistant, Aliea Jamal, left her position in March 2014. On July 1, Dr. Bernard assumed the role of Centre Director and identified Charlotte McCaffrey as the new Executive Secretary, but she was only available to start working for the Centre in October 2014. Because of the rollover funding, we were able to fund one additional fellowship and one

additional seed grant. In addition, we piloted a bridge grant competition and made two awards with the help of the rollover funds. We budgeted to allocate all of our funds by the end of the fiscal year by funding one seed and one bridge grant, and three graduate student and one PDF fellowship in our spring competitions. However, the changes in provincial funding of the FQRNT this spring, and therefore funding of our centre by the RQR, caused us to modify our budget. We decided to fund one fewer student fellowship (\$5K) and one fewer seed/bridge grant (\$10K). We reasoned that some carryover funding may be needed to offset the impact of the provincial budget cut.

-Dan presented the draft budget for 2015-2016 (attached)

-Discussion followed about how to solicit funding from the MUHC Research Institute. Hugh commented that while the Programs have bigger budgets than the Axes did, they also have less flexibility in how the money can be spent. We should also look at the private sector (e.g., Pharmascience) and fundraise for specific events (like Research Day).

-Dan wants to cap costs for Research Day in 2016 at \$15K.

-Cinq à Sept was well attended by faculty, but not trainees. This is viewed as an important networking event within Centre. We need to discuss ways to increase participation among trainees (e.g., holding these events closer to the Glen)

-About half our budget is going to fellowships and grants. It was suggested that we could decrease seed/bridge grants and extend the reach to more labs through more fellowships.

-While we had no workshops last year, we do want to offer some this year. Workshops are open to RQR members as well. In the past RQR, has picked up the tab. If this remains the case going forward, money currently budgeted for workshops can be applied to seminars or travel awards.

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Approach RI Programs about funding. RI members of the Exec who are located at the Glen will need to take the lead in this effort.
2. Fundraising from private sector. It was agreed that a subcommittee will be struck to tackle this important initiative.
3. Organize Spermatogenesis workshop and look into other workshops.

#### **3.3 Bylaws**

Elise Boivin-Ford gave Charlotte a box of old CSR papers, including old bylaws. Terry, Cristian and Charlotte updated them and the executive provided additional comments.

#### **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Charlotte will forward the new bylaws to the faculty members and implement an electronic vote for their approval. A 2/3 majority will be required to pass.

#### **3.4 Nomination/election of new trainee representative**

Not enough trainees were in attendance.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Charlotte will put forth a call out for nominations and then implement an electronic vote among the trainees.

## **4. Outlook for 2015-2016**

### **4.1 Workshops/seminars**

No time to discuss, tabled for email.

### **4.2 Research Day 2016**

We brainstormed ideas about possible speakers for RD – one local, not in Centre, and two from outside, one reproductive and one developmental. One speaker will be the Clermont Lecturer.

Robert Viger, Laval University, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology (Development)

Benoit Bruneau, Gladstone Institutes, California (Cardiac Development)

Richard Oko, Queens University, Biomedical and Molecular Sciences

Laurie Boyer, MIT, Department of Biology

Bill Crowley, Harvard, Reproductive Endocrine Unit

Corrine Welt, University of Utah Health Care, Endocrinology and Metabolism

Sylvie Breton, MGH Harvard, Centre for Systems Biology

Margaret Petroff, Department of Pathobiology & Diagnostic Investigation, Veterinary Medical Center, Michigan State University

Jodi Flaws, Comparative Biosciences, University of Illinois-Urbana

Ursula Kaiser, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Harvard, Department of Medicine, Endocrinology

The date was chosen for Research Day 2016: Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016

## **ACTION ITEMS:**

1. Martine and Bernard to forward previous list from exec to Charlotte
2. Charlotte to request suggestions by email
3. Charlotte to book NRH for May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2016

### **4.3 Fundraising** (e.g., new funding opportunities?; food sales, clothing, etc.)

-Fundraising will be our main focus for the next two years. We need to identify new opportunities as we can't depend on RQR past 2017. A subcommittee is needed to work on identifying new sources of revenue for the Centre.

-We discussed soliciting private donations (Sarah suggested including reproductive cancer scientists/clinicians in the Centre, partly for this reason). Bernard explained that there is a process to follow through the Faculty of Medicine. Cindy emphasized that MUHC foundations need to be approached as well. We currently have leverage, with FQRNT and McGill money, to approach the Foundations.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

1. Form a Fundraising Subcommittee, including trainee rep. They will identify PR people at McGill and MUHC and identify new sources of funds.

#### **4.4 Networking events**

No time to discuss

#### **4.5 New executive committee member (July 2016)**

Think about it for next year!

#### **5. New business**

Let us know if anything comes up after the meeting.

Next exec meeting will be scheduled for the fall.

Minutes submitted by Charlotte McCaffrey

**Draft Budget**  
**1 May 2015 - 30 April 2016**

**REVENUE**

**Available Funds**

(1-May-2015 - 30-Apr-2016)

Rollover (approximate, at this point!)

**TOTAL funds**

**\$106,000.00**

**McGill -**  
**216804\***

**RQR -**  
**232957**

\$41,000.00

\$45,000.00

\$10,000.00

\$10,000.00

\$51,000.00

\$55,000.00

\*\$35,000 has been received from McGill OSR and expect \$6,000 from Faculty

**EXPENSES**

**Budget**

Executive Assistant Payroll	\$20,000
Executive Assistant Benefits	\$3,000
Research Day	\$16,550
Cinq a Sept	\$750
Fellowships (3 studs, 2 PDF)	\$30,000
Seed/Bridge Grants (1 of each)	\$20,000
Workshops (for all or course for 1 or 2)	\$2,000
Seminars (visiting speakers)	\$2,000
Travel awards (20/year @500 each)	\$10,000
Miscellaneous Office Supplies/Phone	\$500
Rebranding	\$1,200

Total Projected Expenses

**\$106,000**