

**COUNCIL OF CHAIRS OF CANADIAN EARTH SCIENCE DEPARTMENTS  
CCCESD**

CARLETON UNIVERSITY, 4351, HERZBERG LABORATORIES  
17-18 NOVEMBER 2011

Present: Greg Dipple (UBC-Vancouver, chair), Bob Dalrymple (Queen's), Altaf Arain (McMaster), Bob Dalrymple (Queen's), André Desrochers (Ottawa), Ian Ferguson (Manitoba), John Greenough (UBC-Okanagan), Michael Higgins, (UQàC), Andrew Hynes (McGill), Becky Jamieson (Dalhousie), Stephen Johnston (Victoria), Pierre Jutras (St. Mary's), Steve Kissin (Lakehead), Roger Mason (Memorial), Francine McCarthy (Brock), Russ Pysklywec (Toronto), Rob Raeside (Acadia), Claire Samson (Carleton), Iain Samson (Windsor), Martin Sharp (Alberta, Thursday only), Nancy Van Wagoner (Thompson Rivers), Barry Warner (Waterloo, Friday only)  
Visitor: Elisabeth Kosters (CFES, Friday morning)

1. **Welcome:** in a pre-meeting lunch, Dean Malcolm Butler brought greetings from the Faculty of Science at Carleton University.
2. **News and Views from Departments**  
A summary of departmental reports was provided, and is posted on the website.
3. **New members: Vancouver Island University and Thompson Rivers University.**  
J Greenough moved that the starting Earth Sciences programs at Vancouver Island University and Thompson Rivers University be admitted to the CCCESD; seconded by R Jamieson. Carried unanimously.
4. **News and views from departments**  
In a round table discussion, various issues arising at the universities were noted.
5. **Open discussion on NSERC issues**  
Martin Sharp will attend a meeting of the Committee on Research Grants and Scholarships. Concerns were expressed:
  - that top scholarships are very high – in some cases higher than a post-doc
  - students are being pushed into roles too early in their careers.
  - new entries into NSERC are challenged by the lack of HQP.
  - funding has effectively decreased overall, so the NSERC system had to change.

CRCs starting mid-career are well supported in new NSERC system.

Key points for the discussions with NSERC:

- Transparency by committees in funding decisions.
- Returning responsibility to the evaluation committees for where the cut-off line is drawn.
- Can committees have more discretion on the relative weighting of all criteria?
- Impending shortfall of geoscience professionals at all levels – can this be justified in the elitist approach to grant allocations?
- Do we have enough data to assess the success of the system?
- Ask NSERC what they want universities to provide.
- What has been the impact on undergraduate education?
- How do we track what is not being funded?
- What counts as innovation in Earth Science?

- Differences between the disciplinary allocations.
- How is the current system adhering to the basic philosophy of NSERC?

### **Visit from Geological Survey of Canada**

Donna Kirkwood, director of central and northern Canada branch of GSC provided an overview of GSC activities, including the NRC-ESS-GSC structure, focusing on the GEM and TGI-4 projects. She provided the presentation to be posted and requested feedback from CCCESD. She stressed interest in better collaboration and communication between CCCESD and the GSC.

### **Visit from CFES**

Elisabeth Kosters provided an overview of CFES projects, focusing on CanGeoRef and noting the bid for the IGC2020 in Vancouver will be submitted in August. The chair of the program will be announced on 19 November. [Marc D'Iorio]

She concluded with a comment on student membership in societies, comparing the GeoConnection Recruitment Packet system by AGI.

In discussion:

- Suggestion to combine registration procedures among societies.
- Societies need to become more significant for members.
- Professional societies require ongoing supply of knowledge developed by the learned societies.
- Students are very interested in the professional societies, but need to be more aware of the learned societies that preserve and supply knowledge.
- CFES limited by lack of office in Ottawa.
- What would be the cost to establish an advocacy office in Ottawa? Suggestion to prepare a proposal action CCCESD: B Warner moved that CCCESD add an agenda item to the upcoming CFES meeting to develop a proposal to set up an advocacy office in Ottawa. This would require developing a vision of what the geoscience community needs.
- Noted that CGU, CSSS, CMOS are not members of CFES

### **Visit from NSERC**

Tiffany Lancaster, Program Officer for the Geosciences Evaluation Group provided an overview of NSERC activities

#### ***News from NSERC***

- A Deficit Reduction Action Plan is in operation – the Discovery Frontiers program call for second round proposals has been put on hold.
- \$35M has been allocated for climate research in the Climate Change and Atmospheric Research Program – first call in spring 2012. Lump sums will be provided to early career researchers (in 2009-2013 competitions), from a \$15M pool.
- The Northern Research Supplement was doubled for 2011, arising from consolidation of programs; resulting in more awards, addition of an education and outreach criterion; awards now range from \$10K to \$25K.
- CREATE has two new streams: an industrial stream and an international collaboration stream (Canada-Germany).
- Information videos are now available on NSERC website, replacing the university site visits – available for student applications
- Revisions to Form 101 – page limit for budget justification; no minimum or maximum for students, postdocs, etc.; streamlining of training plans for HQP; increased the references list to two pages
- Discovery Accelerator Supplement nominations can be for applicants in any stage of their research career – looking for high-risk transformative researchers on the point of a major breakthrough

### **2011 DG competition results**

- Overall success rate for early career researchers dropped from 58% to 54% - this reflects an increase in re-applying researchers reapplying without funding. The average award dropped from \$23930 to \$22481.
- Success rate for applicants who held a grant dropped from 74% to 72% ; the average dropped from \$36333 to \$25045.
- Applicants not previously holding a grant dropped from 33% to 29%; the average dropped from \$27552 to \$28082.
- In the Geoscience competition, the 2011 success rate was 45% (average award \$21071) for early career researchers, 74% (average award \$32621) for renewals, and 31% (average award \$23994) for others (mostly non-academic/adjunct applications or non-Canadian entrants). The 2010 success rate was 48% (average grant \$20118) for early career researchers, 74% (average grant \$33085) for renewals, and 23% (average grant \$25687) for others.
- Geoscience success rates are lower than overall success rates
- In response to questions, it was noted that cut-offs should occur between bins, not inside bins, although the data presented showed some exceptions.
- Total funding in Geoscience = \$3.899 million.
- Funding rate for all committees = 24%, in geosciences 29%
- RTI success rate was 25% (14% for early career researchers).
- Early career researches can be tagged as priority for RTI by evaluation committee.
- Discovery Accelerator Supplements: in Geosciences 13 recommendations were received, 9 awards were made.
- Ship time allocation: 13 applications, 11 awards
- Northern Research Supplements: 36 applications, 20 awards

### **Questions:**

1. Visibility within the system for bin cut-offs: the executive committee is aware of the cut-offs in the binning procedures. Committee members are also shown this at the end of the process.
2. Different institutional environments set different HQP standards – is there any recognition of this? Answer: the committee members look at the cohort of the community, quantity and quality of HQP are both taken into account.
3. What percentage of early career researchers are coming back for funding in the second round? Is the new system becoming clearer? Unable to respond.
4. NSERC funding appears to be becoming more “elitist” – both in DGs and scholarship funding. Is NSERC aware of the trickle-down effect, e.g. fewer graduate awards means less available student teaching in the universities, and reduction of researching faculty members. This is particularly the case at smaller institutions. CCCESD emphasized that people teaching must also be researching. Answer: this issue is being discussed at the scholarships committee meetings.
5. Is there any help that CCCESD can give to help improve the system? Answer: it is still two years out before any changes to the system will be considered. It is unknown what criteria will be used to evaluate the system.
6. How is the funding among disciplinary groups evolving? This is currently under review – no new process is in place.
7. CCCESD emphasized the importance of the DG system within NSERC overall, and the need for appropriate time lines for the introduction of new programs. Answer: in some cases the time lines give to NSERC are also very short.
8. Where/why was the success rate intention of 50% success established? Unable to respond.

### **CCCESD Finances**

John Greenough presented a review of expenses for the year, noting a \$2K gain in bank balance; and nearly 100% contribution from universities.

### **CCCESD Statistics**

Rob Raeside reviewed the statistics for 2010. Suggestions for improvements:

- include instructors as faculty positions
- include geological engineering students with GEOL + GEOPHYS
- ask for numbers of honours students

It was also requested that we seek information about the number of people joining professional organizations.

### **Executive Changes**

Martin Sharp's term as Western rep. will end at this meeting – we await his response if he is willing to renew.

Dave Eaton's term as chair ends in June 2012. After some discussion about the term for the chair being out of sync with the meeting, it was agreed to retain the term as is. Greg Dipple was nominated, declined. Further follow-up will occur by e-mail.

### **Timing, Location and Content of Meeting**

It was agreed to continue to meet in Ottawa, but earlier in November. CCCESD could tap into other resources or people in Ottawa – government deputy ministers? CFI? Geoscientists Canada? CFES and CFGS (Can. Federation of Geophysical Sciences)? Group chair from previous year. GSC, but with a more focused presentation – CCCESD to provide questions in advance. It was suggested that we could meet in part at the NSERC offices if that would ensure better representation from NSERC, and at U of Ottawa. It was agreed that priority be given to NSERC, GSC, CFI, and Geoscientists Canada if changes are happening. It was recommended that we invite the chair of CFES, as that also gives interaction with industry. It was recommended that we provide more focused questions to visiting groups.

CCCESD requires more focus itself – it was recommended that canvassing begin early in the fall term to develop agenda items. It would be beneficial for heads/chairs to meet regionally or at other opportunistic events. The intent is to use CCCESD meetings to make progress on our action items.

**Action items:** what is happening in the area of professional registration?

F McCarthy to invite Greg Finn to provide input to the registration processes.

I Ferguson will follow up similarly with CFGS.

### **Graduate student funding**

Graduate student funding is highly variable across the country. Endowment funding is becoming increasingly important, but this can take a long time to build up. Because investment return rates are low, it is currently preferred to seek capital funding to be used directly.

### **Budgeting models**

Discussion about budgeting models revealed a range of mechanisms: activity-based budgeting (although research is not considered an activity); costing lab space into department budgets; “bums in seats”; majors “bums in seats” are all in use in different campuses.

### **Advocacy**

The motion concerning a proposal for an advocacy office will be taken to CFES tomorrow. It was suggested that an approach be made to CGF for funding to develop a full-blown proposal. It was agreed that attempts should be made at all levels to advocate toward government. It was noted that the GSC approach of extracting key areas to develop from the Speech from the Throne could be helpful.

### **Adjournment**

Meeting adjourned at 3.20 p.m.