Review of Grant and Contract Support Services within Memorial University’s Vice-President (Research) Portfolio

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Revised November 20, 2013
Acknowledgement

The preparation of this report required the sincere support and input of many individuals who participate in Memorial University’s research enterprise.

The consultation process was thorough and was performed in two phases. The first phase commenced in July 2013 and consisted of meetings with individuals or small groups. This included approximately 100 participants, representing seven faculties, Grenfell Campus, the School of Graduate Studies, the Marine Institute, Financial and Administrative Services, and employees within the portfolio of the Vice-President (Research). This initial phase was concluded within three months of Dr. Marceau taking office.

The second phase followed the public release of a draft report and spanned a six-week period from September 30th to November 15th. Comments were invited from the university community at large and approximately 40 written submissions were received. This also included participation from stakeholders external to the university.

The comments, from all participants, were greatly appreciated and instrumental in guiding the recommendations of this review.
Executive Summary

A review of Memorial University’s Vice-President (Research) Portfolio was initiated by Dr. Marceau in July 2013. This study was intended to develop a proposal for streamlining and formalizing institutional processes related to research grant and contract support services within the Office of the Vice President (Research). The review relied upon broad consultation with many stakeholders.

Memorial is very fortunate to be experiencing an economic climate that is favorable to growth in its research enterprise. To realize this potential, 13 recommendations are proposed as follows:

Recommendations

1. **Information Management:** The Vice-President (Research) should work closely with the Vice-President (Administration and Finance) to gain process efficiencies through the use of technology based tools. Any investment in information management tools should give careful consideration to a seamless interface with Banner and to the interests of Memorial’s multiple campuses.

2. **Contract Overhead and Risk Management:** Simplify Memorial’s policy on Indirect Cost of Contract Research and establish an overhead rate that is more generally acceptable. The resulting revenue could be used to establish sinking funds for equipment maintenance, or reserves that will provide a tool for managing risk.

3. **Informed Consent and Intellectual Property of Students:** Though the informed consent process is a valuable one, and though the Office of the Vice-President (Research) has willingly filled this gap in the past, this function does not normally fit within the mandate of the Office of Research Services or the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships. It is recommended that the progressive transfer of this process be discussed with the School of Graduate Studies and academic units at all campuses. It is also recommended that the existing process be streamlined.

4. **Contract Research and Intellectual Property:** Review the policies related to the ownership of intellectual property and clarify the principles governing its implementation on research contracts.

5. **Start-up Funding:** Modify current guidelines associated with start-up funds for new tenure-track and tenured faculty, so that academic units at all campuses can exercise greater autonomy in the administration of the start-up process.
6. **Account Opening**: Establish account openings as a discrete activity within the research grant support enterprise and provide adequate resources so that the average time to establish a research account does not exceed one week. Look to a technology based solution to help provide future capacity and consider the impact for each campus.

7. **Account Opening**: Review the requirements for the establishment of unique research accounts and determine if there are more effective mechanisms to address minor awards.

8. **Grant and Contract Review and Approval**: The relationship between the faculty member and research grant and contract support services should be brought in line with best practice. The existence of two units within the Office of the Vice President (Research) with significant similarities, despite significant differences, is creating an unnecessary degree of confusion within the research community. To rectify this confusion, all pre-award activities, currently performed within the Vice-President (Research) portfolio, should be concentrated in one unit.

9. **Grant and Contract Review and Approval**: Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the faculties, multiple campuses and the Office of the Vice-President (Research), as well as ensure the ongoing and consistent communication of these functions to the University Community.

10. **Customer Service**: Provide a modest investment in personnel to ensure that the customer service level satisfies or exceeds the expectations of the institution at every campus, and provide continued mentorship to the individuals in the Vice-President (Research) portfolio so that a customer focused environment becomes embedded in the culture.

11. **Customer Service**: For each unit in the Vice-President (Research) portfolio, establish clear objectives and performance metrics which include ongoing input from major users at all campuses.

12. **Customer Service**: Ensure each academic unit at each campus has the minimum capabilities to interact with the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and its component parts. Specific recommendations will be made on an individual academic unit or campus basis.

13. **CREAIT**: Consideration should be given to establishing an updated funding model for CREAT and implementing the recommendations of the 2012 review. An effective governance structure for CREAT is required and the original model should be given careful consideration.
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Introduction

A review of the Vice-President (Research) Portfolio has been undertaken to develop a proposal for streamlining and formalizing institutional processes related to research grant and contract support services at Memorial. This review was initiated by Dr. Marceau, Vice-President (Research) in July, 2013 and was intended to examine the following:

1. Internal approval processes, including signing authorities, account creation, post-award project administration, partnership agreements, consistent interpretation of existing IP policy, and software needed to support effective business practices and enhance productivity
2. Role of the Office of Vice-President (Research) and its component parts and affiliates relating to grants and contracts
3. Role of the Office of the Provost, Faculties and other Campuses (i.e., deans, associate deans, finance managers, research coordinators, etc.)
4. Role of the Office of Vice-President (Administration and Finance) in pre- and post-award administration and support of research (i.e. financial services, human resources, facilities management, enterprise risk management, health and safety, etc.)

To ensure that the perspective of the various faculties, campuses and functions were considered, this process relied upon broad consultation with the stakeholders. For each faculty, input was typically invited from the Dean, Associate Dean Research, Manager Finance and Administration, and Grants Facilitator. Also, individual faculty members were interviewed and several open faculty meetings were held. Consultations also took place with the Grenfell Campus Research Office and the Associate Vice-President Research (Grenfell Campus). The Marine Institute provided feedback through the Director of the Office of Research and Development. Input was also provided by individuals from within the Vice-President (Research) portfolio.

A draft report was released on September 27th and feedback was invited from stakeholders both internal and external to the University Community during a consultation period which ended November 15. This initial draft with recommendations was presented to: Employees of the Office of Research Services and the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships, the Research Council, the Senate Committee on Research, and the Deans’ Council. Upon the request of a group of faculty members, a meeting was held to discuss matters specific to CREAT. Following the release of the draft report, approximately 40 written submissions were received.

It should be noted that the University Community expressed a significant interest in this review and that there was willingness from many individuals to participate. The feedback received from the participants was constructive and greatly appreciated.
The overall, success of the research enterprise at Memorial relies upon the success of each individual faculty member. To create an environment that encourages and supports this success while maintaining effective administrative controls is challenging. Therefore, any recommendations that may require modification to the current structures or processes should give consideration to the following:

1. Creating a “Customer First” environment for all users of services within the Vice-President (Research) portfolio
2. Respecting Memorial’s existing organizational structures at different campuses, including the responsibilities of individuals within the various units
3. Developing an environment that encourages and supports research activity
4. Developing administrative practices to effectively manage the wide range of research programs
5. Managing risk for the institution and its stakeholders

1.0 Observations

During the review, input was received on many aspects of the research enterprise at Memorial, in particular those which contributed to a less than desirable customer service experience within the research grant and contract support services of the Office of the Vice President (Research). A series of factors were highlighted regularly and others impacted the process generally. An examination of these factors is contained in the following sections.

1.1 Information Management

Context

The grant and contract review process at Memorial is predominantly a paper based system and this appears to be the case for all campuses. Generally, applications proceed from the principal investigator to the Department Head and then the Dean. Once departmental approvals are received, the package is forwarded for review by the Office of Research Services or the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships, and when required, to the Vice-President (Research). Upon award, additional approvals are required to establish the account and to notify the grant holder, the faculty, and the Department of Financial and Administrative Services. Forms indicating approvals travel with the documents and each stage in the process requires signatures on the appropriate forms. Copies of approved documents are maintained by various units, faculties or campuses and the subsequent retrieval of documents requires a search of physical files. Multiple touch points are inherent with this process.

Other inputs to this process include participation of co-applicants or collaborators on research projects, clearances for research with human subjects or animals, and informed consent for graduate student participation on research contracts. These inputs have their own process with corresponding forms and approvals.
When considering the number of applications that are processed annually, along with the number of faculties, the various campuses, and the administrative units that require access to these documents, it becomes apparent that the implementation of technology based solutions could offer many benefits.

Banner is Memorial’s core finance and business management system. It should be noted that the Banner installation at Memorial currently has a workflow module. A document management suite is also available.

**Recommendation**

The Vice-President (Research) should work closely with the Vice-President (Administration and Finance) to gain process efficiencies through the use of technology based tools. Any investment in information management tools should give careful consideration to a seamless interface with Banner and to the interests of Memorial’s multiple campuses.

### 1.2 Contract Overhead and Risk Management

**Context**

Memorial’s Indirect Cost Policy describes conditions for calculating and collecting overhead fees for research activity. The current policy differentiates between a research contract and a grant. Overhead charges are collected for research contracts but not for grants. The calculation considers a variety of factors such as the nature of graduate student involvement, inclusion of the faculty members’ time and equipment cost. Additionally, it is often difficult to determine if a given research activity should be categorized as a grant or a contract and there is potential that overhead rates may vary from 0% to 40%. Consistent administration of these factors is difficult and this is contributing to perceptions that are contrary to a trusting, transparent environment.

For applications that are processed through the Office of Research Services or the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships, it is observed that overhead costs are regularly waived. The rationale for these deviations vary but the frequency at which deviations are requested suggests that there is both an issue with overhead rates provided for by policy, and a potential for a significant increase in overhead revenue if more appropriate rates were defined.

As the research enterprise grows, there is a need to establish a sustainable and scalable revenue stream in support of research grant and contract support activities. This will aid in creating flexibility for the enterprise and help to mitigate some risks. Under Memorial’s current structure and business model, each grant or contract is examined as a discrete activity, regardless of scale. If the institution can gain confidence that overheads from research activity represent a reliable source of funds, and that these funds are appropriately distributed, then financial risks for some activities can be mitigated. This can be
accomplished though initiatives such as creating a sinking fund for research equipment maintenance, or establishing appropriately distributed reserves allowing academic units at all campuses to comfortably accept projects with strong merit, even if some degree of risk exists.

At the time of this review, Memorial’s indirect cost policy was being revised. This is considered to be a positive initiative.

**Recommendation**

Simplify Memorial’s policy on Indirect Cost of Contract Research and establish an overhead rate that is more generally acceptable. The resulting revenue could be used to establish sinking funds for equipment maintenance, or reserves that will provide a tool for managing risk.

### 1.3 Informed Consent and Intellectual Property of Students

**Context**

Memorial has an obligation to inform students when the intellectual property (IP) environment changes and if, as the result of that change, there are restrictions that impact the student’s ability to publish their work. A change in the funding source can drive a change to the IP environment such as in the case of some contracts with industry. Research activities can be funded through a variety of regimes, from publically funded granting agencies to commercial contracts.

A growth in the number and complexity of research contracts along with the trend for industry sponsors on research programs is fundamentally changing the IP environment. This is forcing Memorial to examine its obligations to students and is also driving some process changes. With the intention of protecting Memorial’s graduate students, the Office of Research Services and the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships have accepted greater responsibility in setting up and implementing a process to ensure the informed consent of graduate students.

Currently, for all research contracts that employ graduate students, the Office of Research Services and the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships prepare background documentation to support the informed consent process. This requires that employees in the Office of Research Services and the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships prepare lay summaries, checklists, and acknowledgement forms. This is intended to help the student understand the terms of each contract and to mitigate the potential for a conflict of interest for some supervisors. The supporting documentation is provided to the School of Graduate Studies who accepts responsibility for interfacing with each student. At the time of this review, the responsibility for student contact was transitioning to the Faculties (through Associate Deans Graduate Studies).
A unique code in Banner is used to identify Contracts with terms that limit intellectual property. This serves as notification to Financial and Administrative Services and to the School of Graduate Studies that informed consent is required prior to graduate student involvement. Material or data transfer agreements may also significantly impact the intellectual property environment.

Under Memorial’s Contract Research Policy, it is the responsibility for the principal investigator to ensure that graduate students are aware of contractual conditions that may impact their program.

(5) The principal investigator informs all researchers - faculty members, research assistants, research associates, post-doctoral fellows, graduate students or others - of the conditions attached to the research contract in which it is proposed that they will be involved.

Additionally, the School of Graduate Studies Policy on Intellectual Property requires each supervisor to define the intellectual property environment for their students.

4.4 In cases where there are IP restrictions integral to the intended research project, a graduate student is responsible for deciding to participate in the program under these circumstances and it is the role of the School to provide the students with all of the information that is available and support in evaluation of the impact of such restrictions on their programs.

4.5 The potential supervisor is responsible for filing an Intellectual Property Environmental Review (Appendix A) with the School of Graduate Studies at the time of admission to the School is recommended by the academic unit.

4.6 In the absence of a Review, the best practices set out in this document will constitute the IP Environment for the Graduate Student.

4.7 It is the responsibility of supervisors to update the Review in a timely manner if any of the matters covered in it change.

4.8 It is the responsibility of the School to ensure that any restrictions are reasonable before approving the graduate student’s program and to review and approve subsequent changes to the intellectual property environment in the same light.

With greater than 300 contracts annually, administering this procedure represents a significant increase in resource commitment within the Office of the Vice-President (Research). Specifically, it appears that the interpretation of policy related to the ownership of intellectual property and a clear understanding of the University’s obligation to its graduate students is contributing to significant increase in overhead within the Office of Research Services and the Office of Collaboration and Partnerships. Normally, student issues should be dealt with by faculty representatives, faculty members, or personnel within the School of Graduate Studies, rather than units within the Office of the Vice-President (Research). Additionally, the current practice deviates from University policy by reducing the responsibility of the
principal investigator and transferring commitments to the Vice-President (Research) portfolio. The increased focus on the students’ ownership of intellectual property is also creating an impression in some faculties that the principal investigators’ right to hold intellectual property is eroding.

**Recommendation**

Though the informed consent process is a valuable one, and though the Office of the Vice-President (Research) has willingly filled this gap in the past, this function does not normally fit within the mandate of the Office of Research Services or the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships. It is recommended that the progressive transfer of this process be discussed with the School of Graduate Studies and academic units at all campuses. It is also recommended that the existing process be streamlined.

### 1.4 Contract Research and Intellectual Property

**Context**

There is significant confusion in the research community related to the University’s position on the ownership of intellectual property and how it is shared with project sponsors. There is general concern, that this issue is hindering Memorial’s ability to advance contracts with its industry partners.

**Recommendation**

Review the policies related to the ownership of intellectual property and clarify the principles governing its implementation on research contracts.

### 1.5 Start-up Funding

**Context**

Memorial recognizes that new faculty members require access to resources that will help accelerate their research programs and improve their potential for early success with the Tri-council or other funding agencies. As such, Memorial has been actively working with provincial government agencies to establish funding programs that support this objective. Currently, the University relies upon the Research and Development Corporation’s Ignite program as a source of start-up funding for new faculty.

The RDC Ignite program provides up to $100,000 for projects that fall under their mandate. The Ignite program favors projects in priority areas such as oceans, environment, energy, and natural resources. Faculties or research programs aligned with RDC’s mandate are having a high rate of success while others are experiencing limited or no benefit.
In addition to funds from RDC, the University also provides support to assist with start-up for new faculty but the value of the internal award is typically far less than what may be available from the Ignite program. Financial support from the Vice-President (Research) is shared 50:50 with the respective Dean and is contingent upon each new faculty member making an application to the RDC. The University guarantees its commitment but expects that if the RDC application is successful, the institutional funds will be returned to the source. This approach encourages the maximum benefit from external funding sources while trying to preserve limited internal resources.

The principles supporting the existing strategy have significant merit and the funding opportunities provided by RDC are supportive of Memorial’s interests. Unfortunately, a number of complexities exist within the process. All new faculty members are expected to submit a letter of intent to RDC summarizing their research interests. If their area of research aligns with the Ignite program, a complete application is requested. Alternatively, in disciplines where the probability of success is very low, this initial step can be demoralizing and create a negative impression for the new faculty member. There are also occasions where access to the internal award may be delayed for several months and there is a risk that some early purchases may not be covered under the approved Ignite project. Because of the difference of expectations of funding agencies, some new faculty members believe that projects approved by RDC may not always aid in producing publications that help improve success with agencies such as the Tri-council.

Consideration should be given to modifying the current practice. A program where a new faculty member is guaranteed the University’s contribution and the RDC Ignite program becomes an additional opportunity for researchers with suitable interests, would be received positively by the research community. A consistent source of funds, with well understood limits and fewer administrative steps, would represent a significant improvement to the program.

**Recommendation**

Modify current guidelines associated with start-up funds for new tenure-track or tenured faculty, so that academic units at all campuses can exercise greater autonomy in the administration of the start-up process.

**1.6 Account Opening**

**Context**

Most participants report that the time required to establish research accounts is having a negative impact on their ability to complete research programs. The expected duration from notification of award to account opening is typically two to three months, though in some cases, account openings have exceeded nine months. The time required to establish research accounts is a concern for most researchers. In addition to significant frustration, protracted timelines compound administrative effort.
For example, a delay in project start may result in the need to request an extension. Additionally, principal investigators often use existing accounts to allow activities to commence. However, this dictates the need for future journal entries to reverse expenses. The delay in account openings impacts the ability to submit project claims and in some cases has resulted in inquiries from funding agencies. A delay in the receipt of a claim suggests a lack of progress.

Research accounts are created in Banner by Financial and Administrative Services and this is initiated once approval is received from either the Office of Research Services or the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships. This check is performed to ensure that the completed application, the award letter, and the confirmation of clearances are on file. This check must also ensure that approval of the faculty or campus is in place, that the start and end dates are defined and that the principal investigators eligibility has not changed. FAS provides notification to the units and requests that the primary and secondary signing authorities be identified.

Currently there are greater than 1000 account notifications annually and the activity of processing account openings is combined with other duties within the Office of Research Services and the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships.

Several faculties have reported that aspects of their programs rely on regularly reoccurring student awards with relatively small total values (less than $10,000). Under the current practice, each award is processed as a separate account and often, the activity is complete before the account is established.

Until recently, projects requiring clearances for ethics, or for experimentation with animals, could not commence until all required clearances were granted. The Tri-Council has relaxed this requirement and under its current guidelines, some activities may proceed provided that the work requiring clearances does not. This change in regulation by the Tri-Council is considered to be a positive development. Under the current practice, projects with duration greater than one year are required to have the clearances renewed annually and a failure to do so will result in the account being frozen.

**Recommendation**

Establish account openings as a discrete activity within the research grant support enterprise and provide adequate resources so that the average time to establish a research account does not exceed one week. Look to a technology based solution to help provide future capacity and consider the impact for each campus.

Review the requirements for the establishment of unique research accounts and determine if there are more effective mechanisms to address minor awards.
1.7 Grant or Contract Review and Approval

Context

Although there is some variation in process between Grenfell Campus, the Marine Institute campus and the St. John’s Campus, generally, pre-award contract administration takes place in either the Office of Research Services or the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships, depending on the type of grant request. The following table is intended to provide an indication of where the various stages of the grant or contract administration activities may be performed. Also, this table is not inclusive to all possible configurations, and multiple funders may participate on one project.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grant Activity</th>
<th>Source of Funding</th>
<th>Pre-Award</th>
<th>Account Opening</th>
<th>Post-Award</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRC</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>OCP</td>
<td>OCP</td>
<td>Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRC</td>
<td>Federal</td>
<td>ORS</td>
<td>ORS</td>
<td>Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industrial Chair</td>
<td>Private</td>
<td>OCP/ORS</td>
<td>OCP/ORS</td>
<td>Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIF (contracts)</td>
<td>Federal/Prov</td>
<td>OCP/Unit</td>
<td>OCP/Unit</td>
<td>OCP/Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFI</td>
<td>Federal/Prov</td>
<td>OCP</td>
<td>OCP</td>
<td>Unit/CREAIT</td>
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<td>OCP</td>
<td>OCP</td>
<td>OCP</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Federal</td>
<td>ORS</td>
<td>ORS</td>
<td>Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Awards</td>
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<td>RDC</td>
<td>Provincial</td>
<td>OCP</td>
<td>OCP</td>
<td>Unit / MRP</td>
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Over time, different granting programs have been attributed to either ORS or OCP on the basis of workload. This has resulted in a lack of clarity on which unit being responsible for which program.

In the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships, the focus is on Institutional Programs including Research and Development Corporation (RDC), Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI), Canada Research Chairs (CRC), and Petroleum Research Newfoundland and Labrador (PRNL). Contracts associated with these programs differ from most others in that, they are institutional in nature, they dictate a limited number of points of contact, and they require some centralized post award administration with respect to financial and status reporting. Some Atlantic Innovation Fund (AIF) programs are also administered in the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships as part of Major Research Partnerships. Pre-award administration for all other contracts is performed by the Office of Research Services. Currently there are 280 active projects being managed by the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships and the contract administration is being performed by three individuals.
The Office of Research Services is currently processing approximately 270 contracts and agreements annually. This work is performed by a group of 4 individuals, (1 manager, 2 contracts coordinators, and 1 assistant contracts coordinator). It should be noted that the number of contracts and agreements administered by this unit has more than doubled since 2009. At that time approximately 135 agreements were processed, however the staff compliment has remained unchanged.

In this review, many researchers have indicated that there is significant confusion related to the process of submitting grant applications or contract proposals. In many instances, it is not apparent whether an application should be processed through the Office of Research Services or the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships. As mentioned above, the evolution of responsibilities over time, and the absence of policies or procedures, to adequately delineate the respective roles of both offices, contributes to the perception. This is creating frustration with the research community and contributing to delays in the review and approval process. Clarifying the roles and interrelationship of these offices is essential for creating a strong sense of customer service and improving overall effectiveness of the Vice-President (Research) portfolio.

The Office of Research Services has been working with the academic units to transfer the Discovery Grant application and approval process. Starting October 2013, Associate Deans, or their equivalents at the respective campuses, will perform the submission and provide institutional approval for these grant applications. This process is being performed on a trial basis and if successful, will continue.

There is an impression that the grant and contract review and approval process focuses on compliance but does not sufficiently emphasize factors that would improve success rate in grant competitions. Mentorship for new faculty members, internal peer review, or retention of grant writers, have been proposed as mechanisms to improve the content and presentation of submissions. These mechanisms require varying degrees of commitment from the academic units and from the Office of the Vice-President (Research). A greater degree of clarity along with consistent communication of the roles and responsibilities between the respective organizations would aid in developing an environment that maximizes Memorial’s potential for success.

**Recommendation**

The relationship between the faculty member and research grant and contract support services should be brought in line with best practice. The existence of two units within the Office of the Vice President (Research) with significant similarities, despite significant differences, is creating an unnecessary degree of confusion within the research community. To rectify this confusion, all pre-award activities, currently performed within the Vice-President (Research) portfolio, should be concentrated in one unit.

Clarify the roles and responsibilities of the faculties, multiple campuses and the Office of the Vice-President (Research), as well as ensure the ongoing and consistent communication of these functions to the University Community.
1.8 Customer Service

Context

The general impression within the institution is that the timelines currently required to review and approve research contracts has become an impediment to the continued growth of research activity. Members of the research community also believe that the current responsiveness is negatively impacting Memorial’s reputation and that of its faculty members. Some feedback has also suggested that Memorial has a greater degree of sensitivity to risk than other similar institutions, but this opinion is countered by those who believe that the feedback related to research contracts is in the best interest of Memorial, its students and the faculty members.

Frequent staff turnover in the Office of Research Services is contributing to the inability to maintain adequate service levels. The skill sets currently required by the unit do not align with the traditional classifications for the office, and workload demands are considered to be well beyond the norm.

The rapid growth in research activity along with the corresponding change in the expectations of the sponsors has also contributed to the current challenges. For example, the case load for the Office of Research Services, which consists of contracts or agreements, grant applications, account notices, and internal applications, has grown from 938 in fiscal year 2009-10 to 1878 in fiscal year 2011-12. It should be noted that the resource allocation has not kept pace with the growth. A parallel situation exists in the Office of Collaborations and Partnerships.

The addition of grant facilitators to each of the faculties or campuses has been widely accepted as a very positive development. Although the duties vary slightly from unit to unit, these individuals are seen as providing a valuable contribution to the enterprise.

Recommendation

Provide a modest investment in personnel to ensure that the customer service level satisfies or exceeds the expectations of the institution at all campuses, and provide continued mentorship to the individuals in the Vice-President (Research) portfolio so that a customer focused environment becomes embedded in the culture.

For each unit in the Vice-President (Research) portfolio, establish clear objectives and performance metrics which include ongoing input from major users at all campuses.

Ensure each academic unit at each campus has the minimum capabilities to interact with the Office of the Vice-President (Research) and its component parts. Specific recommendations will be made on an individual academic unit or campus basis.
1.9 CREATI

Context

The Core Research Equipment and Instrument Training Network (CREAIT) is a pan university organization intended to maximize the impact of Memorial’s institutional investments in research through enhanced access, utilization and maintenance, of major research equipment. CREATI maintains and operates thematic clusters of multi user equipment located in ten satellites across the St. John’s campus and the Ocean Sciences Centre. In the past five years, the number of users has increased by 116%, the latter being primarily graduate students seizing the opportunity of working in this unique high technology environment. CREATI represents a highly valuable asset to Memorial University’s faculty members, students, and to the Province as a whole.

During consultations, it was highlighted that an internal review of the CREATI facilities was conducted during the spring and summer of 2012 and was never made public. As a result, this document was made available to the University Community as an integral part of the consultation process of the present review. It was also determined that the governance structure, proposed for CREATI at its inception, was unfortunately never implemented.

Recommendation

Consideration should be given to establishing an updated funding mode for CREATI and implementing the recommendations of the 2012 review. An effective governance structure for CREATI is required and the original model should be given carefully consideration.
2.0 Conclusion

Memorial University is very fortunate to be operating in an economic climate that is creating many opportunities to expand research activity at all of its campuses, and this has contributed to the substantial growth that has been experienced in recent years. Along with the increase in total funding, the number of sponsors and programs has also increased. With the requirement for industry participation to match funds from some granting programs, the contractual arrangements have become more complex.

The systems that currently exist within the Office of the Vice President (Research) were developed some years before to support a modest degree of research activity with well-defined parameters. This situation no longer exists and under the current structure and business model, aspects of the research enterprise at Memorial are at capacity. Also, Memorial has well defined policies related to such topics as intellectual property, indirect costs, and contract research, but past practice has permitted deviations to the point that the intent of some policies is becoming unclear. As a result, Memorial’s researchers are frustrated with the responsiveness of the institution and those individuals that are responsible for providing the service, are experiencing unmanageable workloads.

The massive growth in research activity of recent years at Memorial has occurred as a result of the talent, commitment, generosity, loyalty and effort of Memorial University’s faculty members, students and staff on behalf of their institution and this report wishes to recognize this invaluable contribution. Some of this growth can also be attributed to rapidly growing partnerships with granting agencies and industry as paradigm-shifting changes have occurred to Newfoundland and Labrador’s economic climate. However, further growth in research activity will also require the development of far more appropriate institutional structures and processes that adequately support Memorial’s research community, which are responsive to an entrepreneurial environment, and focused on delivering a superb customer-service experience to all of their stakeholders at all campuses.