

MEMORIAL UNIVERSITY
MEETING OF THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON RESEARCH
Monday, January 11, 2021, 4:00 p.m.

A meeting of the Senate Committee on Research (SCOR) was held virtually, via GoTo Meeting, on Monday, January 11, 2021, at 4:00 p.m.

In Attendance:

Dr. Svetlana Barkanova
Ms. Jessica Canning
Dr. Bing Chen
Mr. Jin Chen
Ms. Alison Farrell
Dr. Ray Gosine
Dr. Emmanuel Haven
Dr. Darron Kelly
Dr. Edward Kendall
Dr. Chris Kozak, Co-Chair
Mr. David Miller, Executive Director
Ms. Marie Murphy
Dr. Nancy Pedri, Chair
Dr. Aimee Surprenant
Dr. Roza Tchoukaleyska
Dr. Kelly Vodden
Dr. Kim Welford
Dr. Benjamin Zendel

Regrets:

Dr. Robert Bailey
Dr. Neil Bose
Dr. Anne Burke
Dr. Steve Carr
Dr. Maisam Najafizada
Dr. Arthur Sullivan

1. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

The Chair asked for approval of the agenda.

Motion 1: To approve the agenda for the January 11, 2021 meeting.

First - Dr. Bing Chen
Second - Dr. Edward Kendall

All members present voted and the motion was carried.

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2. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF November 6, 2020 MEETING

The Chair asked for approval of the minutes of the November 6, 2020 meeting.

Motion 2: To approve the minutes of the November 6, 2020 meeting with the correction to Dr. Chen's name being moved to Regrets.

First - Mr. David Miller

Second - Ms. Jessica Canning

All members present voted and the motion was carried.

3. CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS

A. Developments with the President's Awards on Research

The Chair and Co-Chair met with Ms. Ellen Steinhauer who advised that all applications have been received, although the number of applications are lower than in previous years. Once again Ms. Steinhauer outlined that there had been modifications to the terms for the awards – which the Chair mentioned in the previous meeting. Ms. Steinhauer said that the committee will start reviewing EDI and has asked for an invitation to SCOR when they are ready. The Chair said she is hoping to have that happen in April/May to see how the EDI discussions are progressing.

4. BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

A. Presence on Senate web page

The Chair sent out an email last week with a sentence to go on the Senate web page (in lieu of a form as was discussed in the previous meeting) directing any research related inquiries to the Chair. After a brief discussion, it was decided that inquiries should be directed to the Secretary of SCOR.

Action: The Chair to coordinate with Mr. Miller to find out how to go about populating SCOR's web page

5. NEW BUSINESS

A. Open Discussion about best practices and resources available to Memorial researchers (faculty, personnel, students and postdocs) for data storage and sharing.

- Historically, data storage has been one of the parameters that a faculty member needed to address if they had really large data needs. MUN is currently sitting on 6-7 Petabytes of research data storage capacity in total.

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- The creativity of researchers to generate research data is limitless
- The discipline to only keep one copy of data is also a challenge
- Should there be a design hierarchy for University data storage?
- Is there a best practice for information/data generators to follow for “filing” short, medium and long-term data?

Potential design considerations for MUN data management:

- 1. Storage/Archival**
- 2. Computational Requirements**
- 3. Collaborative Requirements**
- 4. Security and Contractual Obligations**

The following points were raised:

- Working from home has highlighted some problems on this front, namely creating new data that needs to be properly backed up as well as a need to access shared data of a research group
- OneDrive accounts through MUN are limited to 5GB; however, if an annual subscription is paid by an individual, 1TB is available
- Unsure of what is permitted to store (student assessments and evaluation spreadsheets, for example)
- Which ‘cloud’ based tools are preferred, or are people encouraged to rely on their own network attached storage
- Grad students using Google Drive with their Gmail based email accounts, faculty are on non-Gmail accounts using Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive, Slack and Basecamp (mostly because individual services do not provide enough space and are not suitable for sensitive content)
- Majority of researchers don’t use that much storage space, but there are a handful that use a ton of data storage space – there are different needs for different researchers
- Vulnerability and security assessments are holding the researchers back from using any share-based products. The assessments take so long that once done, the products are sometimes obsolete
- Does Canada have something in place to share vulnerability assessments so MUN doesn’t have to wait to do their own assessments? *(part of the new Digital Research Infrastructure Organization of Canada is research infrastructure (research software) that may be a role they could take on and share some of those vulnerability assessments with other universities)*

Action Item: The Chair to reach out to Alison Randell about this

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- Is there discussion/interaction on a nation-wide level? Using some of the database servers such as OneDrive or Google Drive etc. - the servers are outside of the country and so there is the issue of security and access to data and confidentiality of the data. What is Canada doing to address these issues? There is AceNet in Atlantic Canada and there is WestGrid providing some of the storage capacity to us. Sync (which functions like Dropbox) has been approved by Health Canada as a potential data storage system for Canadian medical records
- Consider characterizing all the data to be shared into different categories and look at the corresponding solutions
- Functional/collaborative data sharing space – both within MUN as well as outside MUN

Suggestion: As there already are hundreds of data storage solutions, direct I.T. to become as familiar as possible with as many solutions as possible and do what they can to support researchers in how they want to manage their data rather than the reverse (so a bottom up approach instead of top down one) i.e. I.T. doesn't have to endorse Dropbox but they should be familiar with it so they can address issues with it

- Concern: Constantly changing Terms of Reference for some of the data sites – limits can be increased or decreased for example – decisions to make these changes are not in MUN's hands
 - Possible internal solution: Have a reliable storage of data, at least an archival of what has been produced at MUN
- No one scenario will satisfy confidentiality rules for some data sets – have to find localized solutions and keep complete control of where data goes and who has access to said data. Due to NDA's when adding students and post-docs, there is no data security system that the Library could generate that would make researchers confident that their data could be placed on it without compromising contracts and dealing with redundancies. Data agreements can be tied to a particular student and when that student is gone, all copies of the data have to be deleted. If the data is put in a repository, what assurances do the researchers have that the data has been deleted?

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6. ADJOURNMENT

The Chair asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion 3: To adjourn the meeting at 4:51 p.m.

First - Dr. Chris Kozak

Second - Dr. Bing Chen

All members present voted and the motion was carried.

Dr. Nancy Pedri, Chair

Mr. David Miller, Executive Secretary