

Researcher Council Governance Model Consultation Paper

Researcher Advisory Group

In June 2020, NDRIO announced the creation of an interim Researcher Advisory Group to lead the next steps in the formation of a permanent Researcher Council.

The Researcher Council is a critical component of NDRIO's commitment to establishing a culture of service to, and engagement with, researchers as it designs a new service model for the delivery of Digital Research Infrastructure (DRI) across Canada. The interim Researcher Advisory Group will consult with NDRIO Members Canada's academic researchers and others in the DRI community to:

- Develop and propose the governance model for a permanent Researcher Council.
- Launch the nomination process for the appointment of the inaugural Researcher Council.
- Assess and recommend nominees for the inaugural Researcher Council, for approval by the Board of Directors for announcement at the fall Annual General Meeting.
- Initiate the researcher needs assessment process, to help inform the development of a new service delivery model and strategic plan for NDRIO.

Context: NDRIO Governance Consultations

NDRIO undertook a significant governance stakeholder consultation process across the country in Fall 2019. NDRIO is a not-for-profit organization governed by an independent Board of Directors. The new organization is membership-based, where the roles and rights of Members are critical elements of its overall governance.

- Membership is not required to access the programs of NDRIO and its programs will be made available to eligible researchers and research institutions across Canada. However, the new organization's governance will rest and draw upon its committed membership. There are two types of members of NDRIO:
 - Primary (Voting) Members include post-secondary institutions and research hospitals and their affiliated institutes that conduct research and are eligible for Tri-Council grants. In addition to voting privileges at Annual General Meetings, Primary Members can nominate candidates to the

Researcher Council. Primary Members can advise the Board on the strategic direction, policies and programs of the new organization and have the opportunity to sit on advisory and ad hoc committees established by the new organization to fulfil its responsibilities.

- Associate Members are organizations that have significant activities in the any of the three domains of NDRIO including: advanced research computing (ARC), data management (DM) and research software (RS). Associate Members can attend annual meetings but do not have voting privileges. Associate Members can participate on advisory and ad hoc committees as appropriate.

The consultations also provided critical initial feedback on the establishment of a Researcher Council. The concept of the Researcher Council was recognized as an important component of the governance of NDRIO and is included in its By-Laws.

The inaugural NDRIO Board was tasked with giving further consideration on how to best constitute the Researcher Council as a priority activity. The establishment of the Researcher Advisory Group is in keeping with NDRIO's commitment to seek expert advice as it develops as an organization.

The following are the results of the Fall 2019 consultations:

Researcher Council: What We Heard So Far

- The Researcher Council will be essential to establishing a culture of service to, and engagement with, researchers.
- Members of the Researcher Council will be nominated by the Primary (Voting) Members with the overall membership approved by the Board.
- The Board will be responsible to ensure that the Researcher Council is multi-disciplinary and representative of the broader research community, and may appoint Members as needed to fulfil this requirement.
- The Researcher Council will oversee the researcher needs assessment process, provide advice to the new organization on matters related to the delivery of services and programs for the research community, and be a conduit for engagement with the broader research community.
- The Researcher Council will be responsible for working with discipline-specific communities to ensure that the perspectives of researchers from across all disciplines are reflected when it provides advice.
- It will also be responsible for working with staff to ensure that its advice to the Board aligns with the vision, mission, and goals of the organization and is within its funding and operational parameters.

Consultation Questions

Role of the Researcher Council

The key role of the Researcher Council is to represent the diversity of the Canadian research enterprise and make recommendations to the Board and NDRIO management on researcher needs for DRI infrastructure and services. To that end, the Council will:

- Ensure that a diversity of researcher voices is represented to the NDRIO Board. It will provide strategic advice to the Board on researcher needs.
- Work with NDRIO management at the operational level to develop a researcher-needs assessment to ensure that researcher-priority needs inform strategic plans, activities and work planning. The researcher-needs assessment will not only indicate researcher needs, but also provide the current and future context along with foresight for those identified needs.
- Develop processes to engage researchers across disciplines to identify, synthesize and validate current and future priorities. Identification of needs includes prioritization of those needs in situations of limited resources.
- Establish a culture of service to, and engagement with, researchers.

Considerations/Questions

- Are we missing any roles or responsibilities that the Researcher Council should be undertaking?
- How can the Researcher Council ensure that the diversity of the Canadian researcher enterprise is represented?
- Do you have any suggestions on how to make the Researcher Council more effective in its mission?
- Is the Researcher Council relationship with the NDRIO Board and management sufficiently clear?

Governance and Operations of the Researcher Council

The Researcher Council will elect its own Chair and Vice-Chair from within its members who have been approved by the Board. The Researcher Council Chair sits on the NDRIO Board as an observer to ensure that there is a strong linkage between the Council and the Board.

The Researcher Council is supported by NDRIO management to ensure that it delivers on its mandate. The Researcher Council will work with, and be supported by, expert and working groups of technical staff and experts to help translate researcher needs into programs, services and infrastructure. The Council will make recommendations on the types of expertise required that can

be drawn from a variety of sources including: NDRIO staff, Members, stakeholders and specialized expertise. The Researcher Council will work closely with staff to ensure that its recommendations are viable and reflective of the diverse needs of the research community.

Researcher Council members will serve terms of up to three years. To ensure continuity of Council membership, terms will be staggered and determined by the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Researcher Council will operate with a consensus approach to synthesize researcher needs. Special care will be taken to ensure that it represents the diversity of the Canadian researchers.

Considerations/Questions

- Are the suggested supports for the Researcher Council sufficient to ensure that the Researcher Council can fulfill its role and mandate?
- Is three years the right length of term for Researcher Council members?

Composition, Size and Nominations to Researcher Council

Given the breadth of responsibilities as well as the diversity of researcher disciplines, a 15-20 person Researcher Council is recommended.

It will be critical to ensure that the Researcher Council represents the diversity of the national research enterprise. This includes research disciplines along with diversity between established and emerging researchers.

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) considerations will be front and center for selection of candidates for the Researcher Council. Best efforts will be made to ensure EDI principles are applied, including 50% female members.

Researcher Council members will also reflect the gender, geographic and linguistic diversity of the country. Researcher Council candidates will also have experience in any of the three pillars of NDRIO including ARC, RS and DM.

Researcher Council membership candidates will be nominated by Primary (Voting) Members, as well as an open call, assessed and recommended by the Researcher Advisory Group to the Board that makes the final decisions. Selection will be transparent through an open-posting process and targeted outreach to Members and researchers.

Considerations/Questions

- Is a Researcher Council of 15-20 members appropriate?
- Is there a preferred process for recruitment of potential Researcher Council members?
- What is the best way to ensure diversity of the researcher voice in identification of researcher needs?

Next Steps

We invite you to review this document and provide your input no later than **Friday, July 10** by emailing us at NDRIO-NOIRN@EngageDRI.ca.

We will also host information sessions, which will include a Q&A, by videoconference on:

Tuesday, July 7, 2020 at 1 pm to 2:30 pm EDT (English)
Thursday, July 9, 2020 at 1 pm to 2:30 pm EDT (French)

Call-in details will be emailed to everyone on NDRIO's mailing list in advance. You can also access call-in details on the NDRIO [website](#) in advance of these meetings. Note these sessions will be recorded and housed on the NDRIO website.

June 30, 2020