



External Review | BANTING & BEST DIABETES CENTRE (February 4, 2016)

Dean's Response

The Faculty of Medicine is most grateful to the external reviewers Professor Steven Kahn, University of Washington and Professor André Marette, Laval University, for their comprehensive review of, and subsequent report on, the Banting and Best Diabetes Center (BBDC). I would also like to thank Professor Gary Lewis, Director of the BBDC, and his staff for the comprehensive self-study report that was provided in advance of the review. Professor Lewis has provided an excellent response to the external reviewers' comments and recommendations, which I am pleased to endorse strongly.

I will comment on the specific points the reviewers made:

1. Relationships:

The reviewers expressed some concern about the relationship between BBDC and UHN, and more specifically, the degree of reliance of the BBDC on the UHN Foundation for funding, and the importance of the BBDC improving relationships with relevant Departments other than Medicine.

The leadership of the Faculty of Medicine and the Director of the BBDC are committed to enhancing links with other affiliated hospitals and to broadening the fundraising efforts in order to engage other hospital foundations to support the BBDC's mission. In addition, the Director has included one member of each university affiliated hospital and basic science department that have major diabetes research interest on the BBDC Executive, which is the administrative body that makes all important strategic decisions regarding the Centre.

2. Research:

The reviewers commented on aspects of the the Discovery Research Program that are not functioning optimally. As an example, they stressed the need for better communication between Discovery Research programs and the Applied Research Programs. Recognizing that the program structure was only created in 2012, it is the view of the Faculty of Medicine (FoM) and the Director that overall the program structure has been very beneficial to the BBDC, facilitating the expansion of diabetes discovery research. The Director is, however, committed to exploring ways to strengthen the newly created structure and to making the necessary changes improve it. In terms of grant reviews, the reviewers make several suggestions to decrease the workload on individual members of the review panel, especially the chair. These include having separate

committees to review the discovery and applied applications, increasing the membership on the review panel, and including outside reviewers to ensure adequate expertise. The FoM and the Director think these are very helpful suggestions and we will implement these going forward.

3. Education:

The reviewers encourage the Program to create additional opportunities for junior faculty/scientists to meet with visiting faculty and for them to interact with Toronto faculty. The FoM and the Director think this is an excellent suggestion and new opportunities for such interaction will be implemented. In addition, the BBDC provides funding for 10 trainees to travel to either Boston or Copenhagen to present their work at the BBDC-Joslin-UCPH conference. This is only one of many opportunities (scientific days, seminar series, and student conferences) for our trainees to interact with international scientists and to present their work.



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