

a. **Name of Research Centre/Institute:** Social Justice Research Institute

b. **Description and Justification.** *The purpose of the Research Centre/Institute, the scope of activities envisaged, the proposed start date, likely research benefits and opportunities, why existing departments or Centres are unable to accommodate the initiative.*

i) Purpose:

The Social Justice Research Institute (SJRI) was developed in response to Brock University's strategic priority to develop transdisciplinary spaces and scholarly engagement. The purpose of the SJRI is to establish Brock University as a Canadian and international leader in advanced transdisciplinary social justice scholarship, innovative knowledge mobilization strategies, and community-university partnerships for the betterment of society in the 21st century in Niagara and beyond. This overarching vision is deeply rooted in an ethical and substantive commitment to social justice already well established at Brock University and explicated in Brock's Integrated Plan. The SJRI will thus be a campus-community hub for innovative transdisciplinary work in social justice.

ii) The scope of activities envisaged:

- Cluster research: Five transdisciplinary research clusters will be the initial engines of new knowledge in the SJRI. They are Global Justice; Jobs & Justice; Gender & Justice; Animals & Justice; and Epistemic Justice. Clusters involve scholars from different disciplines and faculties, coalesce around a thematic focus, and generate a research program involving one or more projects. Each cluster has a lead researcher who, together with the SJRI's Projects Facilitator, is responsible for animating the cluster in a collaborative and transdisciplinary plan of work. Clusters are eligible to apply to the SJRI for Cluster Project Funding and for Local Partnership Development Grants, but are ultimately geared to securing external funding.

- Cluster Project Funding Grants: These grants are intended to support pilot and seed research projects and related activities. This annual internal grant competition will be available to clusters (or sub-groups therein). Funding will be available for up to three years and initially up to \$10,000 per year. Applicants will submit a well-developed project proposal linked to a larger research agenda, with specified outcomes and plans for external funding applications.

- Local Partnership Development Grants: The Local Partnership Development Grants program provides incentive to Affiliated members and Participating members to focus on identifying and cultivating partnerships in the Niagara region. Local Partnership Development Grants will assist the creation of partnerships between groups of SJRI members and local community organizations toward the development of partnered transdisciplinary research projects. There will be an annual competition for an initial maximum of \$6000 per grant. Local Partnership Development Grants are intended to fund direct costs for community-linked pilot and seed research projects and related relationship-building and knowledge-exchange activities that will nurture durable

research partnerships. Activities could include workshops or mini-conferences. Eligible costs include honoraria, printing, and Research Assistants.

- Project Development and cluster support: the SJRI will organize occasional workshops designed to strengthen specific aspects of clusters' work, such as: building transdisciplinary research teams; building effective community partnerships; and developing new approaches to knowledge mobilization. These workshops will be open to all members and targeted to those applying for Local Partnership Development Grants and Cluster Project funding.

- Events and activities for mobilization and dissemination of knowledge: SJRI will host a flagship event each year, e.g. a prominent speaker and or mini-conference focused on one of its thematic areas. These will be advertized locally as well as digitally, open to the public and, where appropriate, live-streamed and audio-visually recorded for web-posting. SJRI will also contribute to enhancing the size, scope, and visibility of the Niagara Social Justice Forum, a flagship public event of the SJES program, linking campus and community groups in the Niagara Region working on diverse social justice issues. The SJRI plans to launch a refereed on-line journal for transdisciplinary social justice scholarship. An editorial assistant will be hired on a part-time basis to assist with the production of the journal.

- Opportunities to nurture academic relationships: SJRI will provide research fellowships to two graduate students a year who will support the SJRI's core functions, attract post-doctoral students, and invite visiting scholars.

iii) Proposed start date: July, 2013

iv) The likely research benefits and opportunities:

- To foster connections among academics, activists and community partners to produce knowledge that addresses urgent social problems and opens new pathways to social change.
- To advance transdisciplinary research in social justice.
- To enhance Brock's reputation in the area of social justice, locally and abroad.
- To inspire students in the transdisciplinary pursuit of social justice.

v) Why existing departments or centres are unable to accommodate the initiative: The closest match to the SJRI is the Brock's MA program in Social Justice and Equity Studies. This program is primarily a teaching unit. The SJRI envisions a close working relationship with this graduate program while uniquely focusing on transdisciplinarity in social justice research.

c. **Constitution.** *The objectives of the Research Centre/Institute, its organizational structure, responsibilities and roles of its committees, criteria for and categories of membership, privileges and responsibilities of membership, voting procedures and the terms and conditions of any involvement by other universities, organizations, or personnel.*

i) Objectives:

1. To encourage transdisciplinary knowledge production in social justice.
2. To mobilize and disseminate knowledge locally, nationally and internationally through community research partnership, workshops, technological infrastructure for digital knowledge mobilization and a journal, Transdisciplinary Studies in Social Justice.
3. To educate and mentor in transdisciplinary, collaborative research through MA research fellowships, Post-doctoral fellows, PhD program development in Social Justice and Equity Studies, and mentoring of junior faculty members.
4. To establish a stable, enabling and adequately-resourced infrastructure to support transdisciplinary knowledge production in social justice through effective democratic governance, administrative and research support, CRI-funded work space and the mobilization of the fund-raising capacity of research clusters.
5. To establish long-term financial sustainability through high quality and quantity of knowledge outputs, fundable projects by major public granting institutions like SSHRC, and quality community partnerships that form the basis of major external grants (e.g. SSHRC Partnership Grants).

ii) **Organizational structure:** The SJRI is constituted by its Affiliated members. The SJRI will be governed by a Director, Faculty Steering Committee (FSC) and Affiliated members, with input from a Community Liaison Committee (CLC) and Participating members, and supported by a half-time Administrative Coordinator and a full-time Projects Facilitator.

- Director: The Director will be nominated from among affiliated faculty, and will be elected for a 3-year term. The Director will be selected through the following procedure: during the fall term of the final year of a Director's term, a search committee will seek out potential candidates. A vote of all Affiliated members will be held to select the next Director at the fall general meeting. All Affiliated members will be given information on all potential candidates and two week's notice for a general meeting. The Director, in collaboration with the Faculty Steering Committee (FSC), will:

- a) Develop, implement and monitor a strategic plan for the SJRI, in consultation with FSC and affiliated members
- b) Provide leadership in advancing the vision, goals and objectives of the SJRI

- c) With the FSC, be responsible for the financial management of the SJRI, including the protocols for adjudicating funding competitions and fellowships, the disbursement of funds, and financial reporting.
- d) Chair the FSC
- e) Oversee staff
- f) Speak at events, deal with the media, and liaise with community partners.
- g) Network to build relations among researchers and across units in the university.
- h) Provide a yearly written report and presentation to the FSC, Affiliated members, and the Dean of FOSS. The report and presentation summarizes the activities of FSC and seeks advice on future strategic directions. It will be distributed at least two weeks before the annual meeting.

- Faculty Steering Committee: Along with the Director, the FSC is the day-to-day governing body of the SJRI. It is composed of Affiliated Members.
- Affiliated members: Affiliated members are Brock tenured and tenure-track faculty members and professional librarians who have successfully applied for affiliation to the SJRI. Affiliated members are expected to participate in the governance of the SJRI.
- Participating members: Participating members are students, stipend instructors, LTAs, activists, artists, community members and people from other universities who wish to have a relationship with the SJRI. Participating members do not have a right to vote or stand for office.
- Community Liaison Committee: The CLC is composed of Participating members from social justice-related organizations or groups to provide feedback and foster community linkages to the SJRI.
- Half-time Administrative Coordinator: This staff position provides administrative support to the Director, the FSC, and the CLC. S/he will coordinate internal and external communications, manage the web site, administer finances, and interface with other Brock administrative units as needed. S/he will coordinate the use of space and support the organizing of special events.
- Full-time Projects Facilitator: This professional in knowledge mobilization/development and transfer works with the SJRI's clusters to assist them in refining their research plans, developing appropriate community partnerships and enhancing strategies for communicating results, and will connect the SJRI clusters with training resources in these areas. The Projects Facilitator will liaise with staff in Research Services in the preparation of external grants. S/he will oversee the development and updating of the website as a digital knowledge mobilization device.

iii) Responsibilities and roles of its committees:

•Faculty Steering Committee: The FSC will meet at least several times each term. Additional meetings of the Committee can be called at the discretion of the SJRI Director or through petition by at least half of the FSC membership. Two weeks' notice must be given before each FSC meeting. Responsibilities of the FSC:

- a) Provide leadership and decision-making in advancing the vision, goals and objectives of the SJRI
- b) Make operational decisions
- c) Financial management of the SJRI
- d) Oversee the process of affiliation and re-affiliation
- e) Oversee adjudication of cluster funding
- f) Adjudicate community research grants
- g) Appoint CLC members and liaise with the CLC
- h) Review the annual report of the SJRI Director.
- i) Amend the SJRI Rules and Procedures as necessary.
- j) Oversee the hiring of staff members.

• Affiliated members: Affiliated members are expected to participate in the governance of the SJRI and are also eligible to be Principal Investigators in applications for funding from the SJRI. Affiliated members each have a vote at semi-annual general meetings and are eligible to put their names forward for the FSC and the Directorship. Affiliated members are normally expected to be participants in at least one associated research cluster. Through semi-annual general meetings, Affiliated members are responsible for voting on Affiliated membership, voting on the Directorship and membership in the FSC, as well as any changes to Rules and Procedures.

• Research clusters: Clusters will be self-managed but each cluster will designate a representative to liaise formally with the SJRI's Director and FSC. Clusters are expected to seek out funding and to participate in knowledge production and dissemination. Clusters will each submit an annual report on their activities and use of funds for review by the FSC and CLC.

•Participating members: Participating members have a less formal relationship to the SJRI and limited rights and responsibilities. Participating members may be part of research clusters but may not be the Principal Investigators applying for cluster funding from the SJRI. Participating members may be involved in organizing SJRI events but may not be part of the FSC. Tenured and tenure track faculty and professional librarians at Brock are normally expected to seek Affiliated membership.

•Community Liaison Committee: The CLC will initially be made up of five Participating members from social justice-related organizations or groups. The CLC conveys feedback to the FSC on SJRI's activities; assists the SJRI in identifying research-related community needs and opportunities for collaboration; and provides avenues for knowledge mobilization. The CLC will meet at least once each academic year; meetings of the CLC are called by the SJRI Director or by the FSC.

iv) Criteria for, and categories of, membership: All members are expected to share a commitment to social justice and transdisciplinary scholarship.

- FSC: FSC will initially be between five and seven voting members, including the Director and members from a variety of disciplines, at least two Faculties, and at least two SJRI Research Clusters. Additionally, the Social Justice and Equity Studies Program Committee will appoint a representative to sit on the FSC as a non-voting ex officio member. Membership is for a staggered three year term. Any Affiliated member in good standing can make nominations and stand for election to the FSC. All positions on the FSC are elected by simple majority vote of the Affiliated members at a general meeting.

- Affiliated members: Affiliated membership is normally made up of tenured and tenure-track Brock faculty members and professional librarians and Affiliated members will be required to apply for re-affiliation with the SJRI every five years. The process for becoming a member of the SJRI is as follows:

- Prospective applicants must submit to the Director a CV and a one-to-two page statement of intent outlining the relevance of their research to social justice, their links with one or more research clusters, and their planned contribution to SJRI. A sub-committee of the FSC will review all applications and recommend affiliation or not. Taking recommendation from the sub-committee, the FSC will also vote to recommend affiliation or not. Final voting on membership will take place by all Affiliated members at a semi-annual general meeting. Members of the SJRI may resign their membership through a letter of resignation to the Director.

- Participating members: Participating members can include students, stipend instructors, LTAs, activists, artists, community members and people from other universities who wish to have a relationship with the SJRI. Anyone actively involved in a research cluster or organizing SJRI events is considered to be a participating member. In extraordinary circumstances, participating members can have their status rescinded by a two-thirds majority vote of the FSC.

- Community Liaison Committee: CLC members will be appointed by the FSC for staggered three-year terms. Members can be nominated by participating faculty, clusters, or can self-nominate. In selecting members of the CLC, consideration will be given to ensuring that equity-seeking groups are well represented.

v) Privileges and responsibilities of membership:

- FSC: Attend FSC meetings, participate in sub-committees, provide leadership in advancing the vision, goals and objectives of the SJRI, recommend affiliations and re-affiliations, decide on CLC members, be responsible for the financial management of the SJRI, review the annual report of the SJRI Director, amend the SJRI Rules and Procedures as necessary, oversee adjudication of grants and hire staff.

- Affiliated members: Principal applicants for cluster research funding grants and for local partnership grants. Affiliated members also participate in the governance of the

SJRI, may attend FSC meetings (without a vote), attend general meetings (with a vote), vote for the next Director and FSC members and disseminate research findings. Clusters, through Affiliated members, will submit an annual report on activities and use of funds, and designate a representative to liaise with the Director and the FSC.

- Participating members: Participate in organizing events and attend workshops, participate in clusters and cluster projects.

- Community Liaison Committee: Provide feedback to the FSC, assist the SJRI in identifying research-related community needs, disseminate knowledge, facilitate their organization applying for local partnership grants.

vi) Voting procedures:

- **FSC:** The FSC will attempt to make decisions as much as possible through consensus, except in cases of hiring. Failing to reach consensus, the following voting procedures apply:

- Members of the FSC, including the Director, each have one vote.

- For in-person votes, quorum for the Committee is a simple majority of the FSC membership. For electronic votes, no quorum rule applies since all members will have an opportunity to vote. Decisions of the Committee will be taken by majority vote.

- Voting on hiring decisions and recommendations for faculty affiliations will be held by secret ballot.

- E-voting is permitted according to the following process: the director emails regarding an e-vote and asks for objections to the e-vote. If no one objects to an e-vote within 48 hours the e-vote can proceed. All FSC members have 5 working days from the initial email proposing the e-vote to vote.

- Affiliated members clusters may attend FSC meetings but do not have a vote.

- **General meetings:**

- Proposed motions for general meetings must be made available to all affiliated members 10 working days prior to the general meeting.

- Affiliated members, including the Director, each have one vote.

- For in-person votes, quorum for the Committee is 25% of Affiliated members.

- Decisions at general meetings will be taken by majority vote.

- Voting on faculty affiliations will be held by secret ballot.

- Amendment of the SJRI Rules and Procedures can be proposed by any Affiliated member and must be passed by a majority vote at a general meeting.

vii) Terms and conditions of involvement by other universities, organizations or personnel:

- Involvement by other universities, organizations or personnel is addressed through the category of Participating members.

*d. **Management.** The University officers to whom the Research Centre/Institute will report and in whom financial responsibility is vested.*

- The SJRI would report to the VP Research. The Director and the FSC are responsible for maintaining fiscal records and ensuring that all funds are spent according to the budgetary principles of Brock University.