

Comments from CERC Review Committee

1. John Hepburn
2. Helen Burt
3. Richard Johnston
4. Aslam Anis
5. Eric Vatikiotis-Bateson
6. Gren Patey
7. Mike Blades
8. Don Brooks
9. John Richardson
10. Matthias Militzer
11. Janice Eng
12. Ralph Matthews
13. Gabe Kalmar
14. Anna Celler

2. Digital Media: “CERC in Digital Media Research & Innovation”

- Combination of Vancouver companies and UBC is unique. Best in Canada.
- Overall reaction from the group was disappointment, given the fact that Vancouver is a large base for digital media. We need to take advantage of this - UBC would be an ideal match for potential chairs.
- Vancouver is unique in its configuration with a thriving digital media and technology industry.

Weaknesses:

- ICICS will be the home base, but key area missed: inter-institutional connections (collaborations with Great Northern Way, Emily Carr etc.)
- People are much better qualified and accomplished than they are described as in proposal, no mention of SLAIS.
- Nothing said about Washington head offices already in Vancouver (i.e. Microsoft)
- No track record of playing well together – individually phenomenal, but quite independent - need someone to pull them all together?

- External review was generally positive.
- Proposal seemed to cover everything in digital media – need more organizational/specific goals.
- Not clear or well-defined what the chair would actually do?
- Asia: need to expand on this point. There are already many Asian connections – capitalize on this?

Dig econ.

Burt, Helen

Dear Helen,

Have taken time to read the material you sent carefully, and here are the feedbacks I have on the two criteria:

- Is the group and the proposed field ranked highly against global standards of excellence? For example, in this field of research, would you consider this group to be the best in Canada? If not, who is better?

The researchers in Pillar C are excellent ones and I know their work better than others listed here. In general, UBC's work in digital media, based on the knowledge I have on these researchers' work, has been among the top of the world, perhaps in parallel with U of Toronto in the same field. Hard to say which is better, UofT or UBC, but they are certainly better than other groups in Canada.

- In your opinion, will the work associated with the Chair be relevant and advance the frontiers of research in the field globally?

It all depends on the kind of Chair you would find. If the Chair has additional expertise in artificial intelligence or intelligent information processing that complements the existing research in digital media, then surely this will advance the state of the art in an impressive way and elevate the current already very strong and admirable work to a new level.

Dig econ.

Burt, Helen

From:
Sent:
To:
Cc:
Subject:
Attachments:

Importance:

Dear Helen,

Please find below my evaluation of the following proposal file (1) that I received on 3/23/2012, in light of the guidelines included in (2).

1. The Letter of Intent for the Canada Research Excellence Chair in Digital Media Research and Innovation
2. FYI: the guidelines used by the team in preparing their submission

A) Qualifications of the reviewer

Attached is a file (my CV) that contains my qualifications.

B) Summary of the evaluation (answers to the questions below)

- Is the group and the proposed field ranked highly against global standards of excellence? For example, in this field of research, would you consider this group to be the best in Canada? If not, who is better?

Yes - It is my assessment that, the proposed group and proposed research trajectory rank highly against global standards of excellence.

- In your opinion, will the work associated with the Chair be relevant and advance the frontiers of research in the field globally?

Yes - the associated Chair/Center and the proposed research are highly relevant, valuable and timely in a Canadian and global context, on academic, research and industrial levels.

3) More comments on the the proposal

The proposal "Canada Excellence Research Chair in Digital Media Research and Innovation" is a very high quality and articulate document, which outlines a coherent plan of research in light of the specific instructions provided for LOI.

From a technical research perspective, the proposal benefits from an ecosystem that includes ICICS, excellent researchers and infrastructure, and prior history of successful research deliveries. In such an ecosystem, there are four pillars of strength (aka research directions) that will focus the research on (a) Content creation tools, (b) Interaction and Experience Design, (c) Digital media economic and policy issues (with specific focus on digital content protection), and (d) Digital infrastructure (with specific focus on context-aware networking and cloud-based solutions, among others). These research directions are highly relevant and timely, from both an academic and research perspective.

From an industry perspective, the proponents are clearly aware and committed to making the proposed research relevant to actual products. Their strong ties with media companies and standardization bodies such as MPEG), provide high visibility, impact and practicality to the relevant solutions being explored (or planned to be explored).

Overall the proposal does a great job in outlining the main directions, and further, the main priorities of research in digital media, along with the supporting components. The foreseen impact on UBC, British Columbia, Canada and beyond, is summarized thoughtfully in the last page of the proposal. Finally, the authors are well aware of the work of other Canadian organizations, which is also mentioned in the last page of the proposal.

In comparison with such work, the present document clearly outlines the outstanding advantages that UBC has with the proposed directions in digital media research, existing expertise and prior history/results.

It is my assessment that the proposal for "Canada Excellence Research Chair in Digital Media Research and Innovation" would be an excellent competitor if it will be one of the three proposals selected to represent UBC in the CERC competition.