

Bone and Joint Institute (BJI)
for
Research and Innovation in Musculoskeletal Health



WESTERN UNIVERSITY, LONDON, CANADA

Criteria and benefits of membership in the
Bone and Joint Institute (BJI)
and the
Cluster of Research Excellence in Musculoskeletal Health

1. BACKGROUND

Our Vision: *Lifelong mobility*

Our Mission: *To lead in transdisciplinary research, innovation and education in musculoskeletal health*

The *Institute* and *Cluster* focus on:

- ***Excellence in innovation*** – We seek improved understanding of debilitating musculoskeletal disorders. Our discoveries will lead to novel patient-centred preventive, rehabilitative, medical and surgical therapies, and medical and assistive devices for widespread bone and joint diseases. We emphasize innovative health care strategies and the development and transfer of intellectual property to private sector partners, with the goal of developing thriving industries and associated economic benefits.
- ***Collaboration*** – Transdisciplinary breakthroughs depend on the cohesive integration of skilled researchers in basic, applied and clinical sciences working together in a team-based environment. This “*Molecule to Community*” approach is fundamental.
- ***Education*** – A core principle is commitment to undergraduate, graduate, postdoctoral and clinical education, with an emphasis on research skills, leadership, mentorship and ethics. Our transdisciplinary collaborative training program continues to produce the next generation of research leaders in musculoskeletal health and related fields.
- ***Knowledge translation*** – We emphasize translation of innovative discoveries, efficiently moving new knowledge from the laboratory to the community, marketplace and clinic. A focus is guiding policy related to bone and joint health care.

The *Bone and Joint Institute* provides administrative and logistical services for the following activities: promotion of transdisciplinary collaborative research; research training; the preparation of applications for major funding; fostering of outreach, partnerships, globalization and knowledge translation; internal and external communications; and performance evaluation.

In addition, the *Cluster of Research Excellence in Musculoskeletal Health* provides: stipend support for outstanding graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the *Collaborative Training Program in Musculoskeletal Health Research*; funds for the recruitment of 3 junior faculty; and seed grants to foster new transdisciplinary research initiatives. The Institute and Cluster will provide a home for three *Western Research Chairs in Musculoskeletal Health*.

2. RELATIONSHIPS AMONG THE INSTITUTE, CLUSTER AND COLLABORATIVE TRAINING PROGRAM

The *Bone and Joint Institute* and the *Cluster of Research Excellence in Musculoskeletal Health* are complementary initiatives. The BJI provides administrative and operational support for the Cluster. As well, the BJI will sustain Cluster initiatives beyond the 5-year term of Cluster funding. All members of the Institute automatically are members of the Cluster.

The Institute also provides administrative and logistical support for the *Collaborative Training Program in Musculoskeletal Health Research* at Western. BJI faculty members who wish to participate in the Collaborative Program can apply to become mentors. As well, graduate students, clinician-scientists in training, and postdoctoral fellows working in the area of bone and joint/musculoskeletal health research are encouraged to join. Application forms are available at: <http://cmhr.uwo.ca/Forms/index.html>

3. CRITERIA FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE INSTITUTE

Membership of Faculty

Western faculty (including engineers, basic scientists, social scientists, clinician-scientists and clinicians) are invited to self-identify as members of the *Bone and Joint Institute*, with the following conditions in mind. Expectations of faculty who are members of the Institute are the following:

- conduct research relevant to bone and joint/musculoskeletal health (including research to enhance active living, mobility and movement; and/or to address the causes, prevention, diagnosis, treatment, support systems, and palliation for a wide range of conditions related to bones, joints, skeletal muscles and connective tissues). Research involves all themes – basic biological and biomedical; physical sciences and engineering; clinical; health services; and social, cultural, environmental and population health.
 - promote a positive atmosphere of collegiality, teamwork and mutual respect – creating a productive collaborative environment for education, research, innovation and outreach
 - maintain a publication list on ResearcherID (www.researcherid.com) and provide the Institute with a copy of your annual academic report
 - pay the membership fee of \$50 per year
- and most, if not all, of the following expectations:**
- supervise graduate students and postdoctoral fellows in the *Collaborative Training Program in Musculoskeletal Health Research*
 - participate in teaching in the collaborative program, when asked to do so
 - participate in the annual research retreat
 - participate in the monthly musculoskeletal seminar series
 - participate in focused research workshops (i.e. attend and, from time-to-time, help organize or facilitate)
 - participate (or be willing to participate) in transdisciplinary collaborative research and large applications for major funding (e.g. Networks, Teams, CFIs, etc.)

Membership will be reviewed every 3 years by the Institute's *Research and Business Advisory Committee*. Faculty are expected to demonstrate an appropriate level of participation to maintain membership in the Institute.

Membership of Trainees and Research Staff

All trainees and staff, conducting research relevant to bone and joint/musculoskeletal health under the supervision of a BJI faculty member (and trainees enrolled in the *Collaborative Training Program in Musculoskeletal Health Research*) are eligible for membership in the BJI (no membership fee for eligible trainees and staff). These include undergraduate trainees (conducting 4th year or summer research), graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, clinician-scientists in training, and research associates. It is expected that trainees and staff who are members of the BJI will participate actively in:

- research relevant to bone and joint/musculoskeletal health
- the annual research retreat
- the monthly musculoskeletal seminar series
- focused research workshops
- outreach and professional development activities

In addition, information on academic and Institute-related activities must be reported annually.

4. BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP IN THE INSTITUTE

Goals of the Institute are: to integrate and expand research and training programs, to help recruit outstanding faculty and trainees, to help members obtain major external funding, and to develop a sustainable program that is recognized nationally and internationally.

Priorities include:

- *Promote transdisciplinary collaborative research* – We provide a website, venues and web-based conferencing for interactions among members (faculty, staff and trainees), including monthly musculoskeletal seminars, focused research workshops, project planning sessions, and an annual research retreat. Seed funding for new research projects and proof-of-principle grants is offered on a competitive basis. Projects must be transdisciplinary, relevant to bone and joint/musculoskeletal health, and provide outstanding training opportunities.
- *Training and education* – A priority is the *Collaborative Training Program in Musculoskeletal Health Research* at Western. We continue to expand the program to broaden engagement and to aggressively recruit outstanding Canadian and international trainees. Stipend support is provided on a competitive basis for outstanding graduate students and postdoctoral fellows within the collaborative program.
- *Co-ordinate applications for major funding* – We provide logistical support for major grant applications relevant to bone and joint health and involving Institute members (e.g., CFI Innovation Fund, Team Grants, Ontario Research Fund, NCEs).
- *Foster outreach, partnerships, globalization, and knowledge translation* – We serve as a point of contact for external inquiries regarding training, partnerships, industry contract research, etc. As well, we advise and assist members on opportunities, finding collaborators, and liaison with WORLDdiscoveries®, the London Medical Innovation and Commercialization Network, the Ivey International Centre for Health Innovation, the Schulich Office of Global Health, and other partners.
- *Communications* – We provide website, social media, liaison with Western Media Relations, advertising of training opportunities and core facilities and services, face-to-face meetings, web-based video conferencing, hosting of national and international meetings and workshops, etc.

5. SUMMARY

Western's collaborative researchers in musculoskeletal health have established a track record of working together to achieve high-impact scientific results, to obtain significant research funding, and to acquire world-class infrastructure. The Institute will enhance Western's reputation by producing high-impact results in an area of increasing societal importance, related to the growing impact of chronic musculoskeletal conditions. We are confident that Western will be recognized as an international leader in bone and joint health research as a result of Institute activities.

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