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Alberta Gambling Research Institute

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The Alberta Gambling Research Institute

Business Plan

For the Three Year Period – April 01, 2016 to March 31, 2019

Introduction

The Alberta Gambling Research Institute is a consortium of the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge. Its mandate, as determined in an agreement with then Solicitor General and Minister of Public Security (now, Minister of Finance), is to support academic research related to gambling. It seeks to achieve this mandate through:

- sponsoring research into specific investigator-initiated and stakeholder-identified priorities,
- building research capacity at the partner universities,
- organizing colloquia and conference events, and
- disseminating information via the library and resource service program and other publication mechanisms, both print and electronic (www.abgamblinginstitute.ualberta.ca).

Collaboration among Alberta's principal research universities (University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge) provides the Institute with considerable versatility and the opportunity to match research expertise with specific projects. The Institute also fosters interdisciplinary and inter-university research both provincially and internationally. The Institute is an entity which links policy-makers, regulators, community organizations, the gambling industry, other major stakeholders, and the general public to improve the understanding of gambling behaviors.

Principal funding in the amount of \$1.5 million annually is received from the Alberta Government through the Alberta Lottery Fund and is administered by the Alberta Gaming and Liquor Commission under a five year funding agreement. The current agreement ends on March 31st 2016 and we have been advised discussions will begin for a new agreement. This Business Plan is being prepared on the assumption that the new agreement will be renewed for a further five year period with the same or similar reporting requirements. Appended to the Funding Agreement is a *Memorandum of Agreement*, an undertaking signed by the Partner Universities which sets out the operating rules for the Institute. Another important guiding document to the Institute's planning is the annually updated *Stakeholder Priority Action Plan* (Appendix A of this document).

The operational/administrative hub for the Institute is located at the University of Calgary (Social Sciences Building, Room 820) and is staffed by a full-time Executive Director and an Administrative Assistant. A part-time Research Director is located at the University of Calgary and a full-time Librarian & Information Specialist at the University of Lethbridge.

Alberta Gambling Research Institute Governance

The Institute is governed and managed by a Board that consists of two Directors appointed by and from each partner University, an external appointee (appointed by the Minister of Finance). Internal Board Chair appointee (appointed by Vice-Presidents, Research). Other members may be added as agreed by the Board and/or required by funders. The Executive and Research Directors serve in non-voting *ex officio* capacities. The Research Director is engaged on a contract basis. The role of the Research Director is to provide research advice to the Board and to promote and develop collaborative research arrangements provincially, nationally, and international

Partner Universities

The Partner Universities that comprise the Alberta Gambling Research Institute are the University of Alberta, University of Calgary, and University of Lethbridge. In addition to promoting specific research initiatives, each university engages a research coordinator whose primary responsibility is to identify and stimulate interest in gambling research and to promote interdisciplinary as well as cross-university and external collaborative arrangements on behalf of the Institute. Support for capacity- building and sustainability includes funding faculty positions and research assistantships, providing graduate and doctoral level student scholarships and research allowances, funding of post-doctoral fellowships, sponsoring visiting scholars, and contributing to research development costs.

Vision

To maximize the benefits while minimizing the negative impacts of gambling

Mission

To facilitate evidence-based broad research that informs gambling public policy and educates Albertans and the wider audience about the effects of gambling.

The Values of the Institute

- Independent and excellent multi-disciplinary research
- Evidence-based knowledge and information
- Collaboration
- Accountability and informing public policy

Goals:

- To encourage, foster, and solicit research in order to better understand the role and impacts of gambling on the individual and society
- To ensure that research is collaborative and has stakeholder support
- To support the development of research capacities across broad research disciplines
- To contribute to making research findings accessible, useful and applied

Core businesses:

Since its inception, the purposes and core businesses of the Institute have remained relatively constant, albeit with some shifts in program emphasis and specific research focus. Increasingly, through consultation and developing affiliations with stakeholders there has been a migration toward collaborative undertakings, provincially, nationally and internationally.

The Institute has four core businesses:

1. Develop and promote gambling-related research, disseminate results, and facilitate take-up and external impacts;
2. Develop and sustain gambling-related research infrastructure;
3. Establish and encourage national and international gambling-related research linkages; and,
4. Establish and efficiently conduct gambling-related research administration.

Core business #1: Develop and promote gambling-related research programs and disseminate results

The Institute’s purpose is to produce research findings that can be used to frame and implement both effective decision- making relating to gambling and gambling practices and, more generally, to expand the depth and breadth of research knowledge about gambling.

Goal	Key Strategies
<p>1.1 To conduct leading-edge research into all aspects of participation in gambling</p> <p>1.2 To increase visibility of gambling-related academic research in Alberta</p> <p>1.3 To translate the knowledge acquired from the conduct of research</p> <p>1.4 To facilitate the knowledge uptake acquired from the conduct of research</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and oversee the conduct of academic research into stakeholder identified key priority areas • Provide opportunities and support for new scholars to conduct research in this field • Promote and support interdisciplinary/inter-organizational research across all disciplines • Uphold peer review practices that ensure the highest quality of research • Encourage researchers to publish and promote their research and to make it accessible to varied stakeholder audiences • Encourage publication of Institute-sponsored research in peer-reviewed journals • Support researcher-to-researcher link within, among, and outside the Partner Universities • Utilize the Research Director role to fulfill the research objectives as outlined in Core Business #2 • Contribute to AGLC and other stakeholder held events and colloquia • Initiate cross-disciplinary linkages with AGRI funded research (e.g. longitudinal research with genetics study) • Expand range of stakeholder representation • Present evidence-based findings and research outcomes to a wide audience (lay and expert) through various <i>knowledge transfer</i> processes • Develop and implement effective measures for evaluating research impact

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES:

- Impact of international gambling research published by AGRI supported researchers
- Percent of stakeholders who indicate AGRI has been effective in providing information on current gambling research
- Institute funded evidence-based research has a demonstrable impact on building knowledge based policies, programs, and treatment services
- Percent of funded projects that have implemented demonstrable *KT* (knowledge transfer/knowledge translation) Strategies
- Increase participation in stakeholder-initiated events
- Increase cross-linkages between AGRI and other research organizations/researcher

Core business #2: Develop and sustain a gambling-related research infrastructure

The Institute has a Research Director in addition to research coordinators (capacity-building) and research chairs (sustainability) at each Partner University. Research chairs are the most recent investment to engage new high potential researchers who are committed to working on priority research topics. The primary purpose of the research coordinators is to identify research opportunities, stimulate faculty interest, and support interdisciplinary and collaborative initiatives within and among university researchers. Each coordinator liaises with other researchers and the Institute’s administrative hub. The Research Director, in an advisory capacity to the Institute Board, provides overall research leadership. Through a range of initiatives and research affiliations, the Partner Universities continuously develop gambling research capacity in Alberta.

The Institute Library Collections and Clearinghouse program, overseen by the Institute Librarian (with complementary librarian assistance at each of the other Institute Universities), coordinates inter-university and external library reference and information services, collection development, library liaison activities and website currency.

Goal	Key Strategies
2.1 To increase the capacity and range of disciplinary representation to undertake gambling-related research at each of the Partner Universities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure Institute presence and representation at each of the Institute Universities
2.2 To develop broad-based research capacity (with particular reference to addressing stakeholder identified priorities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide developmental opportunities for new scholars (e.g. scholarships, small grant program, presentation opportunities, sustainability positions, etc.)
2.3 To provide comprehensive library resource support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify collaborative gambling-related research opportunities • Maintain tri-university library liaison • Provide access to a comprehensive collection of print and electronic research materials related to gambling research • Maintain website currency • Engage Research Services Offices in identifying and promoting AGRI grant, scholarship, and developmental opportunities

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES:

- Ability to address ‘research gaps’ in stakeholder identified high priority areas
- User satisfaction with service provided by Librarian/Information Specialist and library resources
- User satisfaction with Institute website
- Increase number of disciplines conducting AGRI funded research

Core Business #3: Establish and encourage national and international gambling-related research linkages

The Alberta Gambling Research Institute is committed to achieving national and international recognition for its role in building the knowledge base in gambling-related research.

Goal	Key Strategies
3.1 To forge strong collaborative links with national and international scholars and organizations involved in gambling research and studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Engage the services of outstanding academic peer reviewers from outside Alberta• Identify, initiate, and develop mutually beneficial national and international collaborative research initiatives• Host regular gambling research conferences and solicit stakeholder input on research topic sharing priority• Present workshops on gambling-related research• Participate in national and international conferences to ensure Alberta-based research is presented and the Institute profile is promoted• Utilize the Research Director role to fulfill the research objectives• Communicate role of Institute to stakeholders and general public about the contribution of sponsored research• Sponsor, organize, and support conferences, symposia, and colloquia as forums for communicating research

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES:

- International and inter-organizational groups undertaking collaborative opportunities with the Institute
- Percent of affiliates providing positive feedback on their involvement with the Institute
- Percent of researcher projects with joint funding by Institute as well as other granting agencies

Core Business #4: Establish and efficiently conduct gambling-related research administration

Annual audits are conducted of the Institute’s financial statements as well as internal process audits by the University of Alberta as the administrative Partner University. Annual narrative and financial progress reports are required for all funded research initiatives, capacity-building allocations and sustainability position funds provided to each of the partner universities.

Goal	Key Strategies
4.1 To administer the operations of the Institute in a way that is effective, efficient and transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oversee conduct of peer-review and other research reporting processes• Ensure compliance with the terms of the Memorandum of Agreement and Funding Agreement and respective policies and procedures of each of the partner universities, and transparency in meeting audit requirements• Pursue supplementary sources of funding• Ensure accountability for grants, scholarships and other AGRI provided funding

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES:

- Institute supported research is peer reviewed and endorsed
- Compliance with external audit requirements for financial statements
- Compliance with internal process, policy and procedural requirements to University of Calgary (as administering university)