



Michael Smith Foundation for  
**Health Research**

## REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON THE 2005 MSFHR RESEARCH UNIT INFRASTRUCTURE PROGRAM

### BACKGROUND

The Michael Smith Foundation for Health Research has two major funding categories to build BC's capacity for health research:

1. Personnel support programs – career scholar awards and trainee awards; and
2. Infrastructure funding awards – designed to create the environment for BC's health researchers to excel.

The principles of the Infrastructure Program are:

- Funding is for support of health research
- Will evolve to meet needs, with emphasis on increasing productivity of researchers and institutions
- Work with partners to explore ways to build in areas where capacity is desirable but lacking
- Funds are awarded based on the vision and excellence of research development plans
- Graduated levels of support
- Funds are to **augment**, not to replace, existing budgets
- Ability to leverage MSFHR funding is a priority

Based on MSFHR's experience to date with our Research Unit Infrastructure program, combined with the recommendations of the extensive Forward Planning findings derived from community stakeholders last year, a Task Force was created in the summer of 2005 to review the Research Unit program and make recommendations to revise the program to better meet the needs of the community.

### TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Task Force recommended a flexible approach to enable teams of researchers to come together at different stages of team development. Groups of investigators will have options in choosing an award category that best matches their stage of development.

#### Recommendation A: Team Building Awards

Two types of Team Building Awards are recommended:

1. Team Planning Awards: provide start-up funds to bring groups of investigators to plan to do the due diligence required to prepare a business plan for development of new research programs.
2. Team Start-up Awards: provide funds for teams to implement the start up phase and demonstrate the validity of the research plan, i.e. the increased productivity that will result from their research plan.

## Recommendation B: Research Unit Awards

These Awards currently provide infrastructure support to established teams to work in focused areas of health research. The Forward Planning consultations and the Task Force recommend revising the eligibility criteria to teams/units focused on health related methodology research, and technology development and assessment.

The following is graphic representation of the Team and Unit Award categories. A copy of the proposed guideline principles is attached.

