

Alberta Gambling Research Institute

2013/15 Business Plan

Introduction

The primary aim of the Alberta Gambling Research Institute, a consortium of the Universities of Alberta, Calgary, and Lethbridge, is to support academic research related to gambling. It is achieved 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 linking policy-makers, community organizations, the gambling industry, other major stakeholders, and the general public in improved understanding of the impacts of gambling.

Principal funding, in the amount of \$1.5M annually is received from the Alberta Government through the Alberta Lottery Fund and is administered by the Alberta Gambling and Liquor Commission under a five year (April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2016) funding agreement (signed September 27, 2011). Appended to the Funding Agreement is a *Memorandum of Agreement* signed by the partner universities on May 30, 2011 (also effective April 1, 2011) which includes consent by the partners to change the name to the *Alberta Gambling Research Institute* (previously called the *Alberta Gaming Research Institute*) to more accurately reflect its research orientation. Another important guiding document to the Institute's planning is its *Stakeholder Priority Action Plan* (Appendix A of this document)

The operational/administrative hub for the Institute is located on the University of Alberta campus (8909S HUB Mall) and is staffed by a full-time Executive Director and Administrative Assistant. A full-time Institute Librarian is located at the University of Lethbridge.

Alberta Gambling Research Institute Governance

The Institute is governed and managed by a Board consisting of two Directors appointed by and from each partner University, an external appointee (by Minister of Finance), and an external Board Chair appointee (by Vice-Presidents, Research). Other members may be added as agreed by the Board and/or required by funders. The Executive Director serves in an advisory role and as the Board's secretary.

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 'university 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. Institute support for capacity-building includes funding faculty positions and research assistantships, providing graduate and doctoral level student scholarships and research allowances, sponsoring visiting scholars, and contributing to research development costs.

Vision

Understanding gambling in society**Mission**

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

AGRI Values...

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

Goals:

- To encourage, foster, and solicit research 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, AGRI's purposes and core businesses 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.

AGRI has four core businesses:

1. Develop and promote gambling-related research and disseminate results;
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
1.1 To conduct leading-edge research into all aspects of gambling behavior 1.2 To increase visibility of gambling-related academic research in Alberta 1.3 To identify and adopt appropriate <i>knowledge transfer/translation</i> processes and practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate and oversee the conduct of academic research into stakeholder identified key priority areas (see Appendix A: Stakeholder Priority Action Plan) • Provide opportunities and support for new academics to conduct research in this field • Promote and support interdisciplinary/inter-organizational research across all domains • Conduct peer review processes that ensure the highest quality of research • Present evidence-based findings and research outcomes to a wide audience (lay and expert) through various <i>knowledge transfer</i> processes • Encourage researchers to publish and promote their research accessible to varied stakeholder audiences • Publish Institute-sponsored research in academic journals • Maintain researcher-to-researcher link within, among, and outside the Partner Universities

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES:

- Percent of international gambling research published by AGRI supported researchers
- Percent of stakeholders who feel AGRI has been effective in providing information on current gambling research
- AGRI 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

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

The Institute has research coordinators at each Partner University. Their purpose is to identify research opportunities, stimulate faculty interest, and support interdisciplinary and collaborative initiatives. Each coordinator liaises with other researchers and the Institute's administrative hub. 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 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 researchers (e.g. scholarships, small grant program, presentation opportunities, 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 • Establish collaborative arrangements with similar Institute collections • Maintain website currency

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES:

- Capacity to address ‘research gaps’ in stakeholder identified high priority areas
- User satisfaction with service provided by Librarian/Information Specialist and library resources

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 • Identify, initiate, and develop mutually beneficial national and international collaborative research initiatives • Host regular conferences on stakeholder identified issues in Alberta • 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 • Pursue awards for gambling research and/or Institute • Communicate role of Institute and contribution of sponsored research • Sponsor, organize, and support conferences, symposia, and colloquia as forums for communicating research outcomes to various stakeholder groups

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES:

- International and inter-organizational groups undertake collaborative opportunities with AGRI
- Percent of affiliates that provide positive feedback on their involvement with AGRI
- Percent of AGRI research projects with joint funding

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). Bi-annual narrative and financial progress reports are required for each of

Alberta Gambling Research Institute Business Plan 2013/15 - Approved March 30, 2012

the funded research initiatives and annually for capacity-building funds provided to each of the partner universities prior to the disbursement of next funding.

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 ,with the respective policies and procedures of each of the partner universities, and transparency in meeting audit requirements• Pursue supplementary sources of funding

PERFORMANCE OUTCOME MEASURES:

- AGRI supported research is peer reviewed and endorsed
- Sponsored research for other governments and organizations
- Compliance with external audit requirements for financial statements
- Compliance with internal (to U of A as administering university) process, policy and procedural requirements