1. Mission Statement

The Social Policy Research Centre, housed within the Faculty of Social Work supports social justice and equity-focused research that addresses issues faced by vulnerable, marginalized and oppressed groups. Our community-engaged research utilizes both Indigenous and Western research approaches with specific attention to social action that will inform changes in policy, practice and education for a sustainable future.

Our researchers explore and address issues such as poverty and income equality; child and youth welfare; newcomers, refugees and immigrants; mental health and addictions; mixed ability issues; and needs of older adults. A cross-cutting theme focuses on social work education, where we apply new knowledge and innovative methods to incorporate into the curriculum.

By identifying gaps and emerging issues and engaging with policy makers to implement meaningful change, our research seeks to improve the lives of Saskatchewan residents. Involving students in the research process contributes to the development of future researchers who will in turn strengthen society through their knowledge, compassion and action.

2. Research Principles

- To facilitate social policy and practice research that promotes social justice and fosters individual, family and community development
- To support social justice and equity research that focuses on marginalized and oppressed groups
- To support research that focuses on community-engagement and research-to-action through informing changes in policy and practice

3. Research Focus

The Social Policy Research Centre brings together investigators with common research interests, allowing for meaningful ways to foster interdisciplinary and community collaboration and produce sustainable and relevant research. The centre supports social work scholarship and pedagogy, and provides research training opportunities at the undergraduate and graduate levels.
Our areas of focus shift over time as new faculty join the centre and in response to emerging issues.

Current research areas include:

- **Mixed Abilities** research involves responding to individuals with impairments and their families who often experience disability, the result of negative interactions that take place between the person(s) with impairment(s) and his/her/hir social environment; and supports inclusive service provision and policy development.

- **Newcomers, refugees and immigrants** research examines the integration and adaptation of newcomers, refugees and immigrants in various areas of the welfare state including the labour market, education and a range of services and programs.

- **Child and Youth Welfare** research examines the conditions, including knowledge, policies and practices that disproportionately affect disadvantaged populations, leading to the involvement of child welfare services in their lives and families.

- **Poverty and Income Inequality** investigation has historically been a prominent focus of social work. Scientific investigation of low-income and need leading towards developing poverty line(s) was pioneered in the UK during the 1960s. Income inequality expands the research focus beyond only those who are poor to examine the disparities of income (and wealth) among the whole population.

- **Mental Health & Addictions** research examines policy, organizational and community level interventions in mental health and addictions within the Canadian and global political and socioeconomic realities.

- **Older Adults** research examines the conditions that affect the health and well-being of rural, urban and northern older adults and that link these to policy and practice interventions that will support successful aging in place.

- **Ecological Justice** research examines the concerns emerging from the interrelationship of social and environmental issues including global warming, climate change and sustainability and the development of interdisciplinary policy and practice interventions.

- **Indigenous Peoples and Decolonization** research features the perspectives of researchers focusing on rejecting colonizing histories, definitions and reconciliation project among Indigenous populations. Research emphasizes rejecting the colonial project (historical or current) as a means of decolonized people creating their own postcolonial identity.

### 4. Roles of the Social Policy Research Centre

- Raise community awareness of social issues and advocate social change through various publications and public forums

- Facilitate collaboration and capacity building by providing opportunities for researchers to share their work and explore new research partnerships

- Support and develop research intensity by informing faculty of new opportunities and assisting with application submissions
• Support funded research projects by assisting with financial and data management and recruitment of project staff
• Support the dissemination of research findings by providing guidance and assistance with publication submissions and development of dissemination materials
• Engage undergraduate and graduate students in research activities to foster sustainable research intensity
• Track and monitor SPR Centre success by developing and maintaining an inventory of research activity and impact indicators

5. Administrative Structure

The SPR Centre is seen as an inclusive resource to all campuses where the social work program is located. Where possible, the positions outlined in the administrative structure (in particular the Director and Associate Director) will be located at different sites in recognition of our provincial focus.

a) Director

The SPR Centre will be guided by the Director who will provide research leadership and strategic planning and assume overall responsibility for the centre’s research and administrative activities. The Director will hold a tenured position within the Faculty of Social Work and report directly to the Dean. The term of appointment will be for three years with the possibility of renewal. Course release will be negotiated with the Dean.

Responsibilities

• Facilitate the development and implementation of research initiatives, dissemination, capacity-building, and partnership opportunities
• Communicate the goals and activities of the centre to the Faculty of Social Work, the university and wider community
• Explore research opportunities, facilitate proposal development and review applications for submission by SPR Centre Research Associates
• Manage the centre budget and submit a quarterly report to the Dean
• Provide supervision and guidance to centre staff
• Prepare an annual report of centre activities for submission to the Dean
• Chair SPR Centre meetings (minimum 2 meetings per year)

b) Associate Director

Working in collaboration with the Director, the Associate Director will oversee on-site activities of the centre and assume responsibility for the centre in the absence of the Director. The term of appointment will be for three years with the possibility of renewal.
c) **Research Coordinator**

The research coordinator supports research activity at Faculty of Social Work campus sites in Regina, Saskatoon and Prince Albert, and has primary responsibility for the daily tasks of operating the centre.

**Responsibilities**

- Identify research opportunities and communicate those to research faculty in order to facilitate funding submissions
- Develop strategies and provide support to improve the quality and quantity of grant submissions to tri-council and other research funding agencies and opportunities
- Facilitate and support collaborative research teams within the research centre
- Enhance research activity within the research centre through the development of expert knowledge relevant to research funding opportunities
- Develop and maintain a research database to track research activities and outcomes for annual reporting
- Develop and implement knowledge translation and outreach activities, including the research centre website and other communication strategies both internal and external to the Faculty of Social Work
- Ensure that the research centre website is maintained and regularly updated
- Prepare and present regular reports on progress to the director and social work faculty members

d) **Administrative Coordinator**

The administrative coordinator assists research faculty at both the application and project management stages and provides administrative support.

**Responsibilities**

- Work with research faculty to prepare grant proposal budgets
- Assist research faculty with recruitment and hiring of research assistants and project staff
- Develop and deliver research related workshops for research faculty (i.e. budget development, funds management, data management)
- Provide research administrative support to the Director as required

e) **Research Associates**

Research Associates are social work faculty members and other academic or non-academic individuals who wish to actively engage with the SPR Centre and whose research interests directly fit with its principles. Research Associates may hold permanent, contract or adjunct appointments at the University of Regina or another academic institution, or may be associated with a non-academic organization. Research Associates will have access to the supports
provided by the centre including assistance with development and submission of research proposals, management of grant funds and dissemination of research results.

**Responsibilities**

- Attend scheduled SPR Centre meetings
- Contribute to the creation of research ideas
- Mentor junior faculty and research trainees
- Provide research opportunities to students
- Provide updates on research projects and present research findings
- Inform the SPR Centre Director of all planned application submissions and provide follow up information and documentation on funding decisions

**Appointments**

- Research Associates are appointed by the SPR Centre Director for a 3-year term, renewable upon mutual agreement
- Appointments are considered upon submission of a request to the Director including:
  - A listing of current and past research activity including submissions, awards and publications
  - An outline of current and future research plans and how these connect to the principles of the SPR Centre

**f) Research Advisory Networks**

Research Advisory Networks consisting of students, professionals, and community leaders will be established to collaborate with Research Associates on specific projects being undertaken under the auspices of the SPR Centre. Network members will be called upon to lend specific expertise and local perspective to the development and implementation of research ideas that advance the centre’s mission statement and research principles.

**Responsibilities**

- Contribute to the generation of research ideas and advise on research direction and strategy
- Communicate the research needs of member communities and/or constituencies
- Assist in the dissemination of SPR Centre activities and research findings
- Assist in facilitating local and provincial support and partnership opportunities
- Attend ad-hoc meetings and discussion groups as needed

**Appointments**

- Nominations for appointments are submitted to the Director who will invite individuals to submit a statement of interest for working with SPRC researchers on a research project or program
• Research advisory network members will be appointed by the Director in consultation with the Associate Director and Research Associates
• Appointments will be for a three-year term, renewable upon mutual agreement

6. Financial and Resource Management
The Faculty of Social Work is committed to providing the SPR Centre with the supports required to sustain the ongoing success of the centre including office space and funding of research administrative staff positions.

• Funding for the centre is provided from the Faculty of Social Work operating budget and includes:
  • One FTE APT 5 research coordinator position (SWD 027)
  • .3 FTE research administrator position
  • annual discretionary budget
• Quarterly financial reports are submitted by the Director to the Dean
• Management of the centre’s budget will be done in accordance with university policies and procedures

7. Reporting
An annual report of the centre’s activities for the previous year will be prepared by the Director and submitted to the Dean by June 15. As stipulated in University of Regina policy RCH-010-005 (7-July-2015) the report will include:

• an application of the specific performance metrics found in the centre’s foundation documentation, including a discussion of progress on meeting performance objectives
• a listing of publications attributable to centre activities
• a listing of presentations and workshop and conference activity attributable to centre activities
• a listing of communications or media activities attributable to centre activities
• an assessment of any outreach or public service activities attributable to centre activities
• a listing of contributions to undergraduate, graduate or internship training
• a university-year financial statement noting all monies received and expended by the centre in each of its University accounts (i.e. FOAPALs)
• an assessment of the status and continued viability of the centre

Performance Metrics
Information on research and dissemination activities below will be retained in a database to identify both the centre’s research activity and research impact:
a) Level of Research Activity
   - External grants and contracts awarded (#, type, amount)
   - Internal grants and contracts awarded (#, type, amount)
   - Applications submitted (#, type, amount)

b) Impacts on Scholarship
   - Publications completed (#, type – i.e., peer-reviewed articles and chapters; conference proceedings, conference presentations, research reports)
   - Document downloads from SPR Centre website and oURspace (#, type)
   - Presentations (#, type – i.e., conference presentations, community and stakeholder)
   - Nominations, prizes and awards received by SPR Centre Research Associates (#, type, amount)

c) Impacts on Research Capacity
   - Research opportunities for students:
     - research assistants hired – #, level
     - research practicum undertaken – #, type (i.e. setting)
     - scholarships issued – #, level, amount
   - Development of innovative teaching tools:
     - explorative research projects (#, funder, amount)
     - publications (#, type, audience)
     - innovative tools incorporated in curriculum (#, type, institution, course)
   - Students applied/admitted to MSW research practicum (# applications, # current students, # completed; type, organization)

d) Impacts on Society, Practice and Policy
   - Partnerships (#, type [i.e. community group, policy maker], % projects involving partnerships, % researchers involved in partnerships, # invitations to join)
   - Speaking engagements (# of requests, audience type & reach)
   - Media coverage (#, type, audience type & reach)
   - Research interventions (#, type, # sustained post-research)
   - Invitations to contribute research knowledge on expert panels or committees (#, type)
   - Invitations to submit applications or contract bids (#, type, funding organization)

8. Communications

All SPR Centre communications will be governed by the University Web Governance Committee (UWGC) and OPS-080-040 Website Naming, Hosting, Risks and Security. Any social media will be governed by the University of Regina Social Media Guidelines.

The SPR Centre website will be hosted by the Faculty of Social Work at https://www.uregina.ca/socialwork/research/sprc/index.html. The website will disseminate information relevant to current research projects and research interests of the Faculty of Social
Work and other Research Associates. An inventory of publications and reports will be housed on the Faculty of Social Work’s oURspace server.

9. **Connection to the U of R Strategic Research Plan (2016-2021)**

The Social Policy Research Centre is an excellent fit with the draft U of R Strategic Research Plan (2016-2021). The centre will contribute to the objectives of strengthening student and researcher support and advancing the profile of research success locally, provincially and nationally. The research focus of the centre will contribute to two thematic research priorities: Social Justice and Community Safety and Integrated Human Health: Equity, disease and prevention.