

IRGF Final Report

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Project Title: “Leadership Succession at Canadian Universities”

1.1 Project Summary

The project explored leadership succession at Canadian business schools, focusing on cultivating sustainable, equitable, and inclusive leadership pipelines. The study examined the experiences of academic leaders to identify best practices and provide actionable insights for addressing the leadership crisis in post-secondary institutions.

1.2 Project Outcomes and Impacts

The project outcomes were achieved successfully. Data collection was successfully completed, including qualitative interviews with 19 academic leaders across U15 institutions. The interviews were all transcribed; data analysis began on November 1, and dissemination of findings begins in January 2025. The first of the dissemination activities will occur in January 2025 when the research team will make a presentation titled "Cultivating a Sustainable Leadership Pipeline in Canadian Business Schools: Strategies for Equitable and Inclusive Succession" at the Twenty-first International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic & Social Sustainability at Florida International University, Miami, United States (self-funded using PD funds). The first manuscript detailing the study's results and implications is also in progress, with plans for submission to a peer-reviewed journal in the field of higher education leadership in February 2025. Additionally, findings will also be shared at national and institutional conferences. The research contributes to advancing the understanding of leadership development in post-secondary education and offers actionable insights to address the leadership succession challenges facing Canadian universities. Beyond academia, the study has the potential to influence leadership practices in other sectors that face similar success challenges.

2.1 Use of Awards Funds

The \$7,000 received were utilized as follows: NVivo Transcription Subscription: \$704.20 was used to purchase a subscription to NVivo Transcription Services. Research Assistant Salaries & Benefits: The remaining \$6,295.80 were used to hire and compensate research assistant support.

2.2 Additional Outcomes/Research Issues

Hiring and training the research assistants proved to be more expensive than initially anticipated due to the time and effort required to equip them with the necessary skills for supporting qualitative research. However, the research equipped the research assistants (MRU students or alumni) with valuable qualitative research skills and significantly contributed to their professional growth. As a result of the experience gained through this project, one of the RAs (MRU alumni) was accepted into a competitive graduate program and secured a full-time position as a research assistant at another postsecondary institution.

2.3 Dissemination of Project

The project outcomes have been or will be disseminated through the following channels: Conferences: The presentation "Cultivating a Sustainable Leadership Pipeline in Canadian Business Schools: Strategies for Equitable and Inclusive Succession" will be presented at the Twenty-first International Conference on Environmental, Cultural, Economic & Social Sustainability at the Florida International University, Miami, United States (January 23-25, 2025). Manuscript: A manuscript detailing the study's findings and implications is in preparation, with plans for submission to a peer-reviewed journal specializing in higher education leadership by February 2025. Internal Presentations: The findings will be shared at Mount Royal University's Research and Scholarship Days to engage the university community and highlight the significance of leadership development in Canadian business schools. External Presentations: Plans are underway to submit abstracts for additional national and international conferences in 2025 to further disseminate findings to academic and professional audiences.

2.4 Future Research Plans

This project lays the foundation for a larger research agenda focused on leadership development and succession in post-secondary institutions. Future research plans include expanding the scope of this study to explore leadership pipelines across various academic disciplines, beyond business schools, to identify discipline-specific challenges and strategies. I also plan to investigate the role of mentorship and leadership training programs in preparing faculty for administrative roles, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of equity-deserving groups. Additionally, we intend to develop policy recommendations and pilot interventions based on the findings to address systemic leadership succession challenges.