

Strategic Plan 2012-2016

Introduction

The Ryerson Centre for Immigration and Settlement (RCIS) is a new University-wide initiative that is still in its formative stage. This strategic planning document establishes the objectives that enable RCIS to mature into an effective research institution over the coming years.

Background

RCIS was established by Ryerson Senate in March 2011 and has been in operation since July of the same year. The overall goal of RCIS is to advance policy-related research and scholarship in the areas of immigration and settlement studies, both nationally and internationally.

Immigration and settlement studies holds a strong presence at Ryerson and has generated high-caliber research and teaching at the University. For example, Ryerson was a founding member of CERIS, the Ontario Metropolis Centre. Furthermore, planning for RCIS has taken into account the following successes:

- In 2004, Ryerson launched the interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Immigration and Settlement Studies. The first such program in Canada is devoted to the advanced study of immigration policy, services, and experiences. It is also the only graduate program in the country that focuses exclusively on the consequences and opportunities arising from transnational human mobility.
- In 2009, Ryerson launched an interdisciplinary PhD in Policy Studies. One of the three fields in which students can specialize is Immigration, Settlement, and Diaspora Policies.
- The faculties of Arts and Community Services deliver a wide range of courses that expose students to historical and contemporary issues affecting transnational migration.
- Through its Gateway for International Professionals, The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education has established Ryerson's leadership in helping newcomers bridge the gap between the credentials and experience they bring with them and rewarding careers in Canada.
- A range of research centres address issues of diversity and international migration, including The Diversity Institute, the Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity, and the International Research Institute at Ted Rogers School of Management.

In the context of this university-wide institutional and intellectual infrastructure, RCIS aims to be a leader in the transdisciplinary exploration of international migration, integration, and diaspora and refugee studies. In addition to supporting research in these areas, the Centre's mission

includes mentoring students and consolidating Ryerson's reputation as the pre-eminent site of knowledge development and exchange with governments, community organizations, and academics.

RCIS is committed to integrating theory with social practice. The transformation of Canadian society through immigration is experienced most deeply at the level of public life and work. Governments, community-based organizations, healthcare facilities, and businesses must all grapple with the new ethno-cultural realities of Canadian life. The significant challenges they face include urban (re)development, labour market integration, and equitable access to health services, housing, and education.

Strategic Objectives

The following objectives are aligned with RCIS's founding document passed by Ryerson Senate in 2011 and the Ryerson University's planning document [*Shaping Our Future: Academic Plan for 2008-2013*](#).

1. Scholarly Research and Creative Activities (SRC)

Ryerson's Academic Plan identifies SRC activities as "central to the mission of the University." Among the seven areas of research activity that carry special opportunities for Ryerson as a whole, *health and well-being* and *cultural prosperity* fall within RCIS's mandate. Specific strategies which RCIS will pursue include:

Strategy 1: Providing stimulus and support to increase both the quality and quantity of SRC activities: RCIS benefits from a high level of research expertise in immigration and settlement among its affiliated faculty. With the uncertain future of CERIS and the possible termination of CERIS operations in 2013 there is an imminent need to consolidate research energies in immigration and settlement at Ryerson. To pursue this strategy, RCIS is actively exploring and developing synergies among researchers with interests in immigration and settlement within the Ryerson community, seeking funding from SSHRC, CIHR and other sources, and, in the long run, will consider securing endowments for a Research Chair in Immigration and Settlement.

Strategy 2: Transferring knowledge to the community and engaging policy making: A range of activities, including public seminars, roundtables, workshops, symposia, and conferences, will connect RCIS researchers, the settlement community, and policy makers in government and other relevant organizations. In preparation of the establishment of RCIS, the conference Migration and the Global City was held in October 2010, which resulted in the edited volume *Immigration & Settlement*, published by Canadian Scholars' Press in 2012. Similar conferences and publications are planned for the future. Furthermore, community and government partners will be involved in SRC activities. RCIS will play an important role in disseminating SRC outcomes of Ryerson faculty through organizing special events, distribute SRC documents, and using its network and social media.

Strategy 3: Pursuing partnerships and collaborations that support SRC activities:

RCIS is uniquely positioned in the heart of Canada's main immigrant gateway city where an infrastructure of settlement and immigration institutions converges. At the same time, immigration and settlement research conducted at Ryerson enjoys a growing international recognition. Thus, opportunities for collaboration exist at the local level involving the settlement community and government, the national level drawing on Canada-wide research networks as well as the international level encompassing international research institutions. Furthermore, other research units on campus provide opportunities to bundle SRC expertise and resources.

2. Student Engagement

SRC activities of RCIS complement the educational activities of the MA Program in Immigration and Settlement Studies (ISS). Belonging to the same field of Immigration and Settlement, RCIS and ISS are in an ideal position to integrate research and education. Furthermore, the PhD Program in Policy Studies offers a field of specialization in Immigration, Settlement and Diaspora Policies.

Strategy 4: Engaging students in SRC activity opportunities: RCIS can play an important mentoring role at all levels of post-secondary education. At the graduate level, research assistantships and internship/placement opportunities will involve students in the ISS and Policy Studies PhD programs. At the undergraduate level, RCIS will provide Work Study opportunities. Students will also be involved in event-organization, activity-planning, and the administration of RCIS. Furthermore, participation in RCIS activities connects students to researchers within and beyond the Ryerson community.

3. Research and Learning Environment

RCIS aims to provide an environment and infrastructure in which new ideas develop, knowledge creation flourishes, and quality SRC activities can take place.

Strategy 5: Providing a stimulating working environment and creative space for affiliated faculty and students: Basic requirements include equipment and furnishing. In addition, RCIS requires a permanent space in which meaningful and stimulating interaction between researchers and students can occur. This space should be coordinated with student space allocated to the ISS MA and Policy Studies PhD programs. A central location on campus would ensure that RCIS is accessible and visible to researchers and students across campus as well as guests and visitors from other universities and communities.

4. Funding

Stable core funding is required to conduct ongoing research and dissemination activities and for the administration of RCIS (see objective 1 for funding of individual SRC projects).

Strategy 6: Developing a sustainable funding model for ongoing RCIS activities and administration: Basic funding has been provided by the Office of the Provost, Dean of Arts and Dean of Community Services for the first five years of RCIS's operation (until May 2016), after which RCIS is expected to be financially self-sufficient. Funding possibilities include endowments, community and private-sector partnerships, user- or membership fees, and pooling available resources from research affiliates.

5. Administration and Governance

RCIS has a Director with a 3-year term (with a two-term limit) and an Advisory Committee consisting of the Director, VPRI or designate, 5 faculty members (elected among RCIS affiliates for one or two-year terms), 2 elected graduate student members, and stakeholder representation. The committee meets at least once each academic year. Faculty affiliation occurs through invitation and/or application, based on a record of research in the area of immigration and settlement studies, including international migration, integration, and diaspora and refugee studies.

Strategy 7: Maintaining effective governance and administration to meet RCIS objectives: While the Director manages the daily operation of RCIS and provides leadership to meet RCIS's objective, the Advisory Committee will continue to offer feedback to the Director, operational assistance with regard to ad-hoc sub-committees, input in the strategic direction of RCIS, and advice on fundraising initiatives. The Director will hire research and administrative staff as required to successfully conduct SRC and other activities. In addition, the Director will reach out the Ryerson community and faculty and students with SRC interests in immigration and settlement to participate in RCIS activities and governance.

6. Reputation

RCIS strives to enhance the reputation of Ryerson University and of the Ryerson community by conducting internationally-recognized SRC activities related to immigration and settlement. The locally-relevant and applied nature of RCIS activities will contribute to Ryerson's role as a City Builder.

Strategy 8: Communicating effectively with the external community and stakeholders about the value and quality of RCIS activities: Effective communication can be achieved through tools such as a website, mailing lists, and the use of social media. Close relations to the Office of the VP University Advancement will complement RCIS networking activities with community and government stakeholders.

Conclusion

To meet the above strategic objective, the Director of RCIS will annually assess the Centre's activities. It is recommended that this assessment occurs in the context of the annual report to be submitted to the Office of the VP Research and Innovation in accordance with the Senate Policy on Research Centres (#144).

Harald Bauder, RCIS Director

In consultation with the RCIS Advisory Committee

March 6, 2012