



Western BrainsCAN

Transforming brain research.

Accelerator Townhall

Program Chairs:

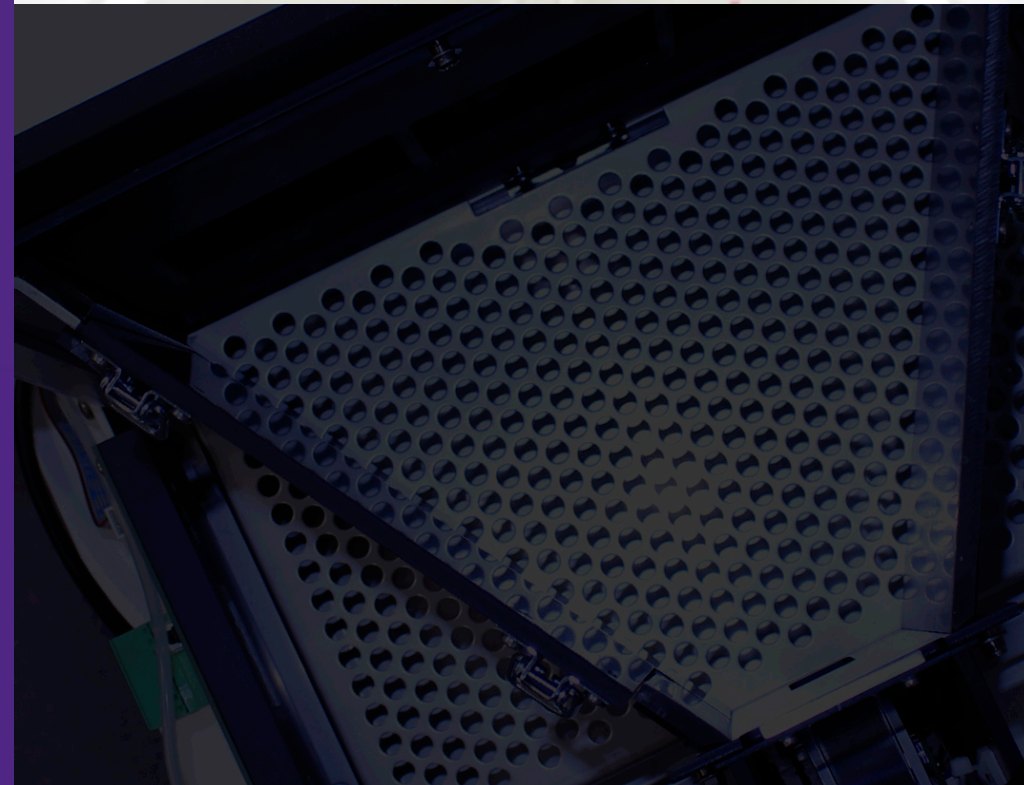
Stefan Kohler & Marco Prado

March 22, 2019



Agenda:

- ✓ Program Outline
- ✓ Results & Metrics
- ✓ Forecasting
- ✓ Q&A Session



Program Outline

Key Values:

- Supporting fundamental, blue-sky scientific research that will advance our understanding of the brain with focus on **Cognition**—in health and disease—across the lifespan
- Facilitating high-risk / high-reward research programs that could not be funded through traditional channels
- Increasing interdisciplinary research within the BrainsCAN initiative and, where appropriate, with our partners

Program Outline

Idea to Stimulus to Full – Workflow:

- What's my **transformational idea**?
- What is the foundational area of **risk/uncertainty**?
 - Apply for a Stimulus Grant (~1y, \$50K-\$100K)
- After stimulus results, is my transformational idea feasible at the **programmatic level**?
 - Can I seek external funding? or
 - Apply for a Full Grant (~3y, \$100-\$150K/y)

Program Outline

Review Process:

- Using the LOI, the panel is assembled to reflect expertise needed, and ensure no COIs.
- 3 reviewers (incl. 1 external to Western) are assigned to each application to provide detailed written feedback/scores.
- Final score and recommendations are determined by full panel consensus

Program Outline

List of Review Panelists:

Daniel Ansari (Chair)	Erin Heerey	Ravi Menon
Jody Culham (Chair)	Jessica Grahn	Robert Cumming
Marco Prado (Chair, SO)	Jorn Diedrichsen	Sandrine DeRibaupierre
Stefan Kohler (Chair, SO)	Julio Martinez-Trujillo	Shawn Whitehead
Robert Bartha (SO)	Kevin Shoemaker	Susanne Schmid
Ali Khan	Laura Batterink	Timothy Bussey
Andrew Pruszynski	Martin Duennwald	Alison Sekuler (EXT)
Arthur Brown	Michael Poulter	Graham Collingridge (EXT)
Brian Timney	Paul Gribble	Mark Fenske (EXT)
Elizabeth Hampson	Paul Minda	Melaine Woodin (EXT)
Elizabeth Osuch	Penny MacDonald	Robert Zatorre (EXT)

Results & Metrics

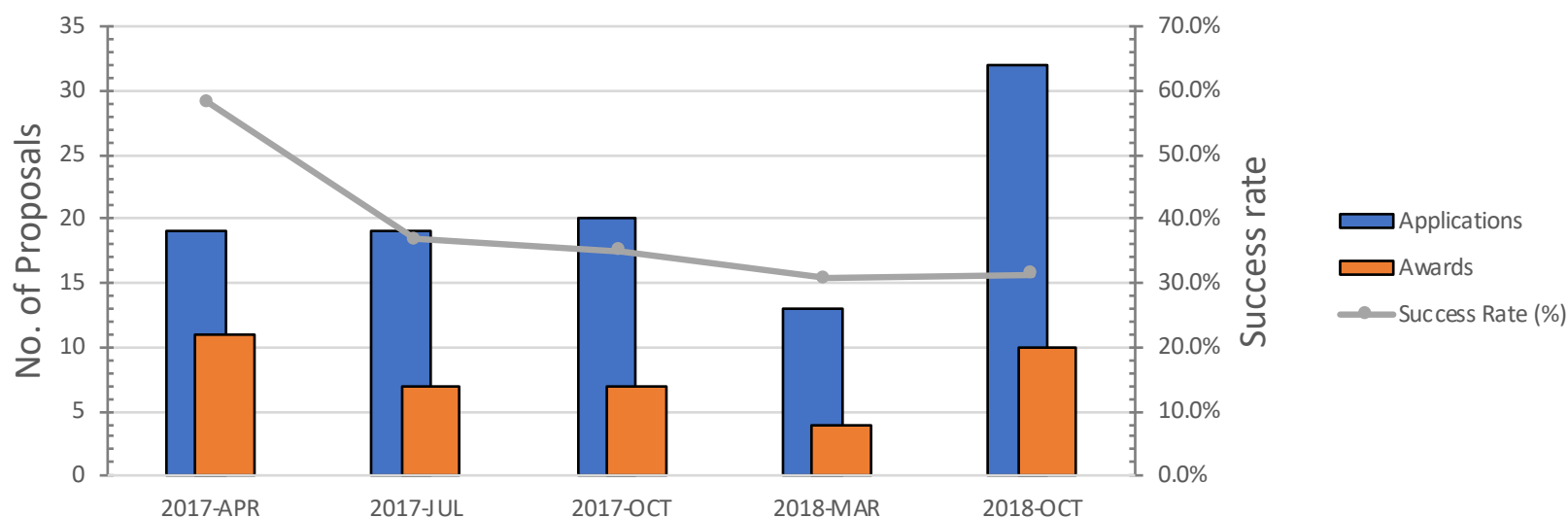


Results & Metrics

*https://brainscan.uwo.ca/uploads/accelerator/Accelerator_Results.pdf

	All Submitted	Funded
Total Number of Proposals	103	39
Total Budget	\$8,464,026	\$3,212,275
Mean Budget - <i>mean (s.e.m.)</i>	\$82,175 (\$4,083)	\$82,641 (\$3,386)

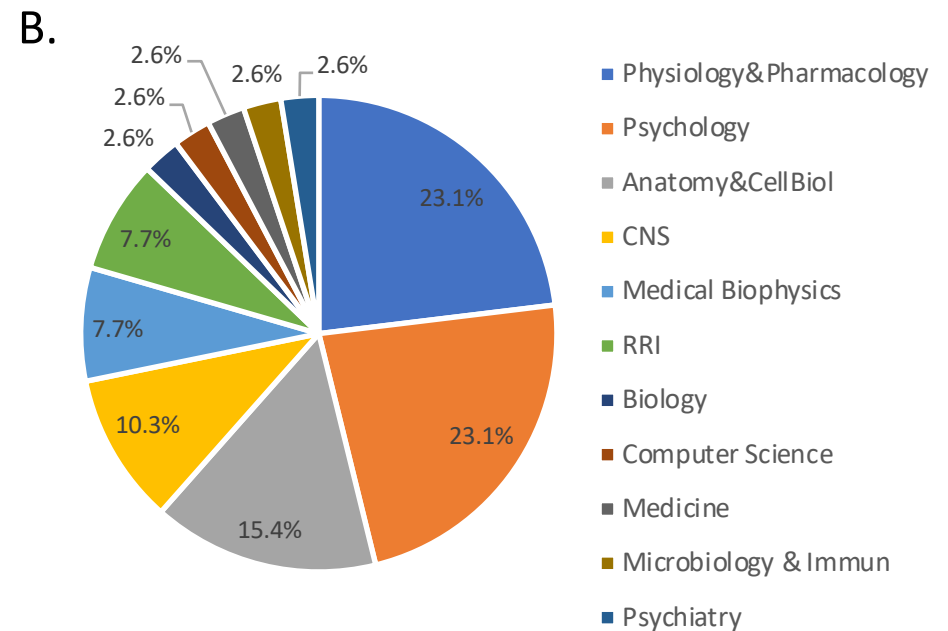
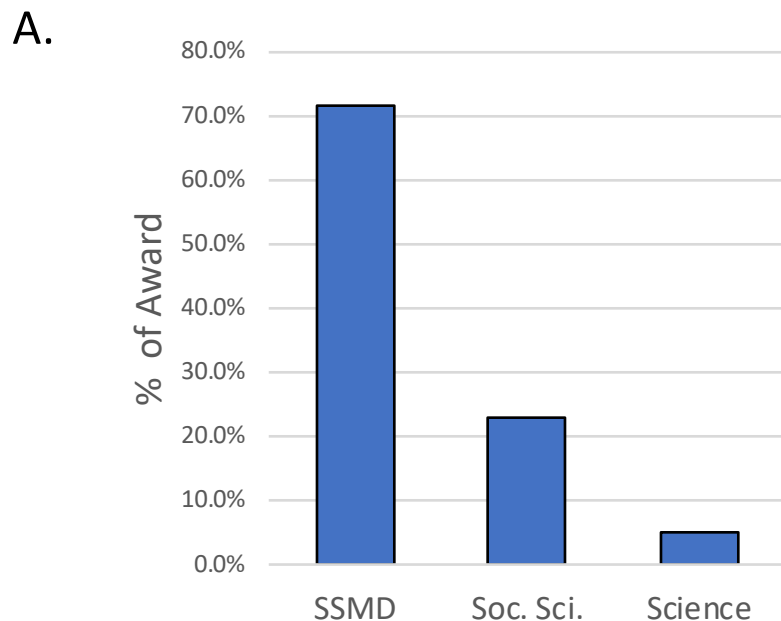
Results by Round



Results & Metrics

*https://brainscan.uwo.ca/uploads/accelerator/Accelerator_Results.pdf

Funded Projects by Lead PI's **Primary** appointment – **(A)** Faculty; **(B)** Department



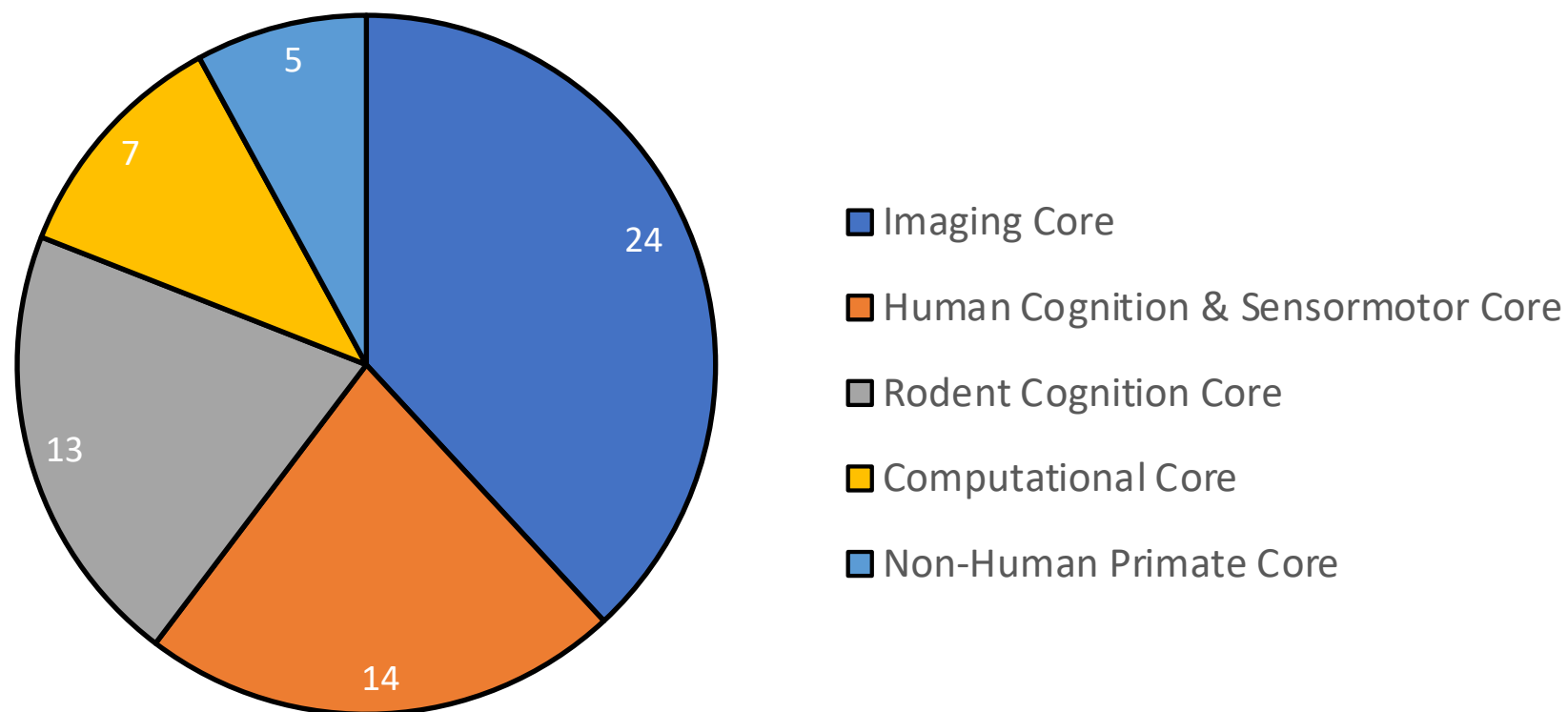
NB: All affiliations impacted by the Accelerator Program (all research team & appointments)

- **5 Faculties** (above + HS, Eng)
- **25 Departments**

Results & Metrics

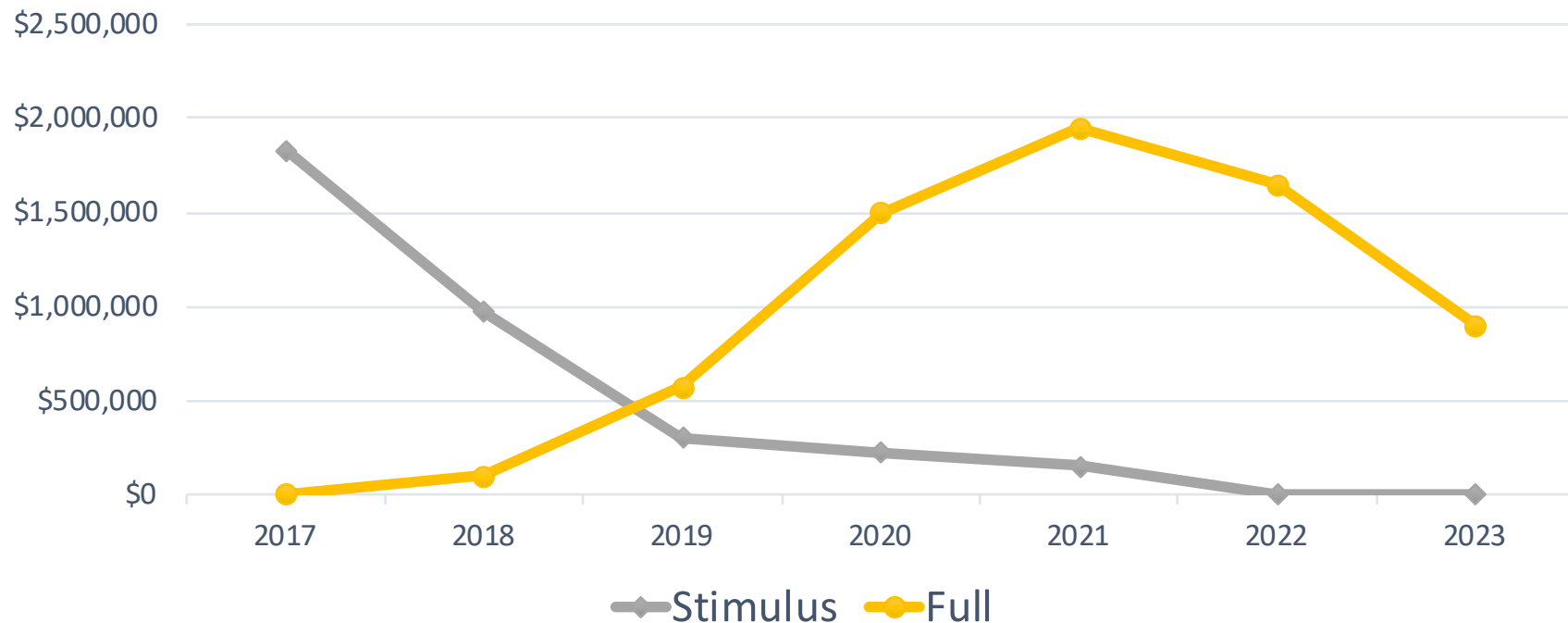
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Awards by BrainsCAN Core



Future Forecasting

- Decrease the volume of funded Stimulus proposals
- Encourage more transitions to Full Proposals
- The forecast depends heavily on the “Stimulus to Full” transfer rate



Future Rounds

- Two rounds in 2019
- Spring
 - LOI deadline – April 8
 - Application deadline – May 20
 - (anticipated results second half of July)
- Fall
 - LOI deadline – October 28
 - Application deadline – December 9
 - (anticipated results mid February 2020)

Future Rounds

- Changes to application process since last round
 - Stimulus and Full application forms – additional question:
Have you held other BrainsCAN Accelerator grants already: Yes/No. If Yes, please briefly describe the project(s) and milestone outcomes, next steps taken or to be taken in each case. If previous Stimulus applications have not resulted in a related external grant application, explain why.
 - Full Accelerator application form – expanded length:
Summary of related, preceding Stimulus grant is now 3 pages max (up from 1 page). Detailed project proposal is now 6 pages max (up from 2 pages).
 - PI can only hold one existing Accelerator grant at time of application

Common Feedback in Funded Proposals

“Well aligned with BrainsCAN priorities. Very high-risk but also highly innovative and could result in important outputs”

“The project responds very well to the priorities of the program, is a solid balance between basic science, development of new protocols, and generation of eventual valuable information for clinical applications”

“Highly innovative and could result in some extremely valuable data and methods development”

Common Feedback in Funded Proposals

“Stimulus milestone clear in context of larger program”

“Although high-risk, the proposal provided a strong rationale for this scientific approach”

“A core strength of the project is the transfer of knowledge that will occur which could be extremely useful for other neuroscience researchers at Western”

Common Feedback in Rejected Proposals

“Poor alignment to program mandate. The research proposed appears to only continue on-going work”

“The proposal failed to justify its value to the wider BrainsCAN research community or cognitive neuroscience at Western”

“The proposal poorly articulated the project’s novelty and/or transformational potential. The panel had difficulty identifying what innovation that would arise in the field as a result of this project”

“Limited details on experiment design made it difficult for the panel to evaluate the proposal feasibility”

Common Feedback in Rejected Proposals

“A clearer description of what this stimulus project will be a stepping stone to would have strengthened this application. The relation of a critical milestone in terms of a full program was not well defined”

“Although the application met the remit of this program, the project failed to convince the panel of being transformational in nature”

“How does this work go beyond simply an incremental increase on what we already know about ...?”

“The consensus of the panel was that the proposal did not seem especially innovative. It takes well-known principles from one domain and applies them to another domain. The transformative potential of the combination was not obvious.”

Q&A

