

CALL FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS
Factors that influence Leaders in Academia
Business Schools Association of Canada
August 2022

The Business Schools Association of Canada (BSAC) invites proposals for research, which examine the future of business education and inform leaders responsible for the strategic direction of business schools in Canada. The research must be conducted within the context of a changing business and educational landscape, which includes new expectations from varying stakeholders in relation to diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice and social impact.

Over the last two years, economic uncertainty, organizational change, and workplace stressors associated with Covid has resulted in significant employee stress. Prior research has demonstrated that workplace stress is a key precipitating factor for workplace bullying and incivility. In contexts of high stress, people become more reactive, instrumental, and self-focused. Moreover, ample research has demonstrated that such behaviors are associated with a range of negative outcomes for employees and organizations, including lower mental health, job satisfaction, work engagement, commitment to the organization, and performance, and higher grievances and turnover. These costly outcomes can adversely affect the reputation and success of the academic unit.

This call for research aims to provide insights for business schools as they navigate the post-pandemic society and economy and to seek to establish leadership in a critical agenda for Canada. The objective is to investigate workplace leadership and organizational culture challenges associated with workplace incivility and/or bullying. Research has demonstrated that workplace bullying, and organizational tolerance for workplace mistreatment, results in an array of detrimental effects for organizations. Though some research has focused on academic institutions, more research is needed to understand this unique context.

Academic institutions differ in several ways from other organizations. First, the power distance between leaders and employees is lower in academia than in industry. Academic institutions are democratically managed such that employees and not Deans make many key decisions. Deans do not have the same span of control over employees as they do in industry. Second, at least in Canada, academic environments are generally unionized and performance management is dictated by collective agreements. Compared to industry, leaders in academic institutions (e.g., Deans, Associate Deans, and area heads) are less able to dictate work assignments, set goals, and provide feedback. Likewise, employees are less inclined to follow or adhere to performance management processes that one would find in industry. Third, tenure affords academics the latitude and freedom to engage in behaviors that would be more easily managed in other work environments. Tenure also creates a power dynamic between tenured and untenured faculty, as well as staff, that places professors at the top of the hierarchy. In Canada, full professor positions as well as research chairs and professorships are overwhelmingly occupied by a homogenous group of individuals (white men), which places equity-deserving individuals in vulnerable low power positions.

Collectively, these factors mean that academic employees have considerable freedom to engage in acts of incivility and bullying, and leaders have much less latitude to manage these behaviors. Due to these differences, leaders in an academic context may also be more likely to be targeted with uncivil and bullying behaviors than leaders in industry. This may be particularly likely as the number of Deans from equity-deserving groups has risen significantly in the last several years.

This call for proposals aims to investigate and understand the complexities associated with academic environments and how bullying and incivility plays out in these contexts. More specifically, the call is for research to address questions such as:

1. How prevalent, systemic, concerning, or destructive is workplace bullying and incivility within business schools and other academic units, in particular as a challenge to leadership positions such as Dean, Associate Dean, or Department Head?
2. What impact has the COVID 19 pandemic, and restrictions associated with 2020 to 2022 period had on workplace bullying and incivility, and employee health and safety in academic units?
3. To what extent does bullying and incivility experiences differ for leaders and employees from equity-deserving groups? To what extent does toxic masculinity and entitlement influence the bullying and incivility experiences of majority (white male) leaders, versus leaders from equity-deserving groups?
4. How do the unique attributes associated with academic faculties and schools, such as tenure and academic freedom, interplay with workplace bullying and incivility?
5. What are the leadership characteristics or approaches that are effective at addressing unique challenges linked to workplace bullying and incivility, and employee health and safety?

This call is part of the Business Schools Association of Canada (BSAC) initiative to evaluate the role of business education in promoting a more purpose-driven economy.

Researchers and faculty from BSAC members are invited to submit a research proposal including any of the above or related topics. The proposal should clearly indicate the topic of interest. We welcome any and all disciplines, methodologies and frameworks.

Important Deadlines:

Research Study proposal due:	October 25, 2022
Award of grant:	November 25, 2022
Report submission deadline:	May 15, 2023

Grant value:

BSAC will provide a financial award of \$10,000 to the successful proposal, \$5,000 upon award and \$5,000 following receipt of the full report, subject to terms and conditions as outlined in agreement with the successful candidate.

Award recipients may be invited to present their report at the annual BSAC Deans' Conference in fall 2023.

For any queries, please contact Tim Daus, Executive Director of BSAC at daus@bsac-aegc.ca.

GUIDELINES FOR PROPOSALS FOR RESEARCH PROPOSALS

Please refer to *Factors that influence Leaders in Academia, Business Schools Association of Canada (August 2022)* for specific details on project. Proposals should be 3 to 5 pages maximum, exclusive of appendices, and should be organized in the order described below.

Proposal Abstract

Resume of research focus, objectives, methodology, and primary deliverables.

Proposal Summary

Primary researcher's name, contact information, and credentials.

Explain how, in your view, this research will support the BSAC overall mission to expand the organization's knowledge and understanding of the issue.

How could the report be used to further our knowledge and understanding of the problem in a way can be of value to BSAC, its members and important stakeholders in the Canadian management education sector?

Research Description

There are a number of issues addressed in the call for proposals document. Please describe the particular approach you would choose for this research. What would be the focus of the research? What is your understanding of the key issues? Why is this topic important?

Methodology

Describe your proposed methodology and explain how it will answer or lead to a better understanding of the research problem.

Expected Results / Deliverable Description

What do you see in terms of length of final document?

What information would be included and how does this coincide with the proposed methodology?

Appendices

Curriculum vitae of researcher.

For more information please contact:

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