

PRESIDENT'S REPORT
CAPPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Dalhousie University, Halifax

May 22, 2024

Introduction

This meeting marks the end of my exceptional additional term as president of CAPPA, a term that could only be described as eventful. Since I was asked by the Executive to resume this post last December, due to the unexpected departure of my successor as president, CAPPA has encountered a number of challenges that highlighted the need for some procedural and constitutional changes to enable greater clarity and flexibility in our operations. Happily, and due largely to the willingness of everyone on the Executive to undertake additional workloads, CAPPA has overcome almost all of these challenges and, as this conference demonstrates, has once again delivered a first rate event for our members.

Annual Conference

Let me begin by noting that this year's conference here at Dalhousie would not have been possible without the exceptional commitment of time and effort by our past president, Andrea Rounce. With the planning and organization of this conference far behind the usual timeframe when she was approached to lend a hand, it was only through Andrea's commitment to take over the reins and work with the excellent team on the ground, led by Dr. Dominika Wranik, that we were able to make this in person meeting possible. And I think everyone would agree that it has been a real success.

I believe it is also important to recognize the relevance, once again, of the subject matter examined this year. As outlined in our program overview, "The simultaneous climate crisis, escalating inflation, resource scarcity, and the looming recession imperil our citizens' quality of life. While governments strive to find solutions, these often prove to be temporary and short-term, underscoring government officials' challenges in reacting swiftly and effectively. " Our theme this year, "Standing at the edge of the cliff?" invites participants to discuss ways and means for governments "not only to learn to navigate this new reality but also to craft innovative, sustainable, and inclusive solutions to the social, economic, and environmental difficulties they encounter."

As in past years, the conference has attracted a well-balanced group of participants from the academy as well as practitioners, a strength highlighted in several of our panels. And, exceptionally this year, the conference has also operated in both official languages to a substantial degree.

Case Competition

One of the highlights of the year is the annual CAPPa Case Competition, which brings together students of public administration in our member programs from across the country. As many of you will know, with the exceptional help and dedication of former CAPPa president Rob Shepherd and his support team at Carleton, CAPPa was able to continue to hold this important event virtually throughout the pandemic. One positive result of this transition to virtual sessions was that it allowed for the participation of a greater number of teams from member programs, due to the elimination of travel costs and organizational challenges.

Although it was agreed by the Executive and Board last year that CAPPa should attempt to move towards resumption of in-person events in the future, it was decided to once again hold the competition virtually in 2024. With that gradual transition in mind it was sponsored by the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, ably led by Justin Longo and his team, who shouldered much of the burden for this most recent competition working in tandem with Rob Shepherd.

The competition took place between February 14 and 24. A total of twelve teams participated in this year's extremely timely case, "Phoenix Rising Again? Taking Control of Public Procurement." The expert panel of judges were effusive in their praise of all of the competitors, who demonstrated an excellent grasp of the issues and bureaucratic intricacies. The three winners were Queens, Johnson Shoyama and the University of Toronto. The presentations of all of the teams can be found on the CAPPa website.

Accreditation

The accreditation of member programs by CAPPa's independent Accreditation Committee is another extremely important element of CAPPa's contribution to the discipline. As with other professional accreditation programs, it is designed to provide objective recognition of the quality and contributions of academic programs. At present six of CAPPa's member programs have been accredited, and an additional three programs have been or were considering applying for this process. However the pandemic has had a significant impact on this aspect of CAPPa's work, as many schools have delayed their application due to the more pressing and immediate concerns imposed on faculty and administrators by the crisis. Meanwhile the terms of the current Accreditation Committee members have either expired or will do so shortly, and

one of the important tasks facing the new Executive will be to appoint a new team and re-launch the accreditation process.

Awards

As I indicated in my report last year, CAPPa is now responsible for two major annual awards for faculty in our member programs. This year the ***Pierre DeCelles Award*** for excellence in teaching has been awarded to Professor Tim Mau of the University of Guelph.

A parallel award for excellence in research, the ***Ken Kernaghan Award***, was awarded for the first time last year, to Professor Michael Howlett of UBC. This year's winner is Professor Martin Goyette of l'Ecole national d'administration publique.

Finally, in conjunction with IPAC, CAPPa offers the ***National Student Thought Leadership Award***. This award provides an opportunity to recognize outstanding students from member programs who have made important contributions to research, scholarship and community leadership. The top three student submissions are recognized with this award and are also recognized at the annual IPAC conference. Details of the winners and their presentations can be found on the CAPPa website. Here, too, I would be remiss if I did not mention the tireless dedication of past president Andrea Rounce, who has taken charge of these awards for the last four years.

Governance

As I reported last year, CAPPa has made significant progress in addressing the recommendations of the Governance Review Committee concerning communications. In addition considerable efforts were made to enhance our functional bilingualism on the website and in meetings. As a result I had anticipated in last year's report that most of our governance issues had been addressed. However the exceptional circumstances in which we found ourselves in late 2023 led to a new series of concerns, including most importantly that of financial management.

As a result I and Jean-Francois Savard (l'ENAP) as treasurer have spent much time over the past few months attempting to establish a new series of protocols with respect to the management of the CAPPa account and procedures such as signing authority. I am pleased to report that progress has been made and it is expected that the uncertainty of the past several months will soon be resolved. Here I must recognize the time and effort put into this situation by Jean-Francois, and the various accommodations that he has made to allow us to continue to fulfill our financial commitments. I look forward to completing this new process shortly with his assistance, as our incoming president, as well as that of our new treasurer, Charles Conteh of Brock University.

In addition, the various problems posed by the unexpected developments of the past year have led me to conclude that it is imperative to revisit the issue of constitutional reform, a subject

which I had originally identified as one of my objectives as president, but which was unavoidably put aside by the contingencies of the pandemic. As a result I will be proposing that such a constitutional review take place over the following year.

Concluding Thoughts

I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the Executive for their assistance during the difficult period of the past six months. Without them it is not at all certain that CAPPa would have been able to conduct the full range of its activities that our members have come to expect and value. I am confident that the new Executive will continue to demonstrate such commitment and take CAPPa in new and interesting directions, and I look forward to assisting in whatever ways may be useful in my capacity for the next two years as Past President.