



Canadian Political Science Association
Association canadienne de science politique

President's Report
William Cross
2015-2016

I must begin with a big 'thank you' to the many, many colleagues who volunteer their time and skills to make our Association work. We are a largely volunteer organization and over time our tasks have increased and become more complex. Nothing has been more gratifying during the course of my two years on the Executive Committee and as your President than to experience the willingness of so many colleagues to step up and contribute to our collective work. That said, we are also very fortunate to have a dedicated and talented staff. Our Executive Director, Silvina Danesi, is the consummate professional. Her commitment to our discipline and to the Association is unparalleled and her wise counsel has made my job during this past year infinitely easier. Michelle Hopkins, our long time Administrator, continues to supply much of our institutional memory and to be a valued member of the CPSA team.

Speaking of those providing service, it is appropriate that I begin with the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*. Graham White and Jean-François Godbout, together with their editorial teams composed of Peter Loewen, Carolyn Johns, Bryan Evans, Frédéric Boily and Jack Lucas continue to produce a journal we can all be proud of. Several recent innovations include the introduction of two forthcoming special issues, one celebrating the Journal's 50th anniversary and another on the theme of 'Finding Feminisms,' promise to bring an interesting new dimension to the Journal. Looking ahead we will face challenges relating to the continuing discussion of 'open access' policies and the near constant pressure on library budgets.

This has been a year of transition for both of the Association's internship programmes. The year began with the Board renewing its commitment to the programmes after considering thoughtful reports from colleagues Grace Skogstad, Chris Cochrane, Jonathan Malloy and Pierre Coulombe. Shortly thereafter, Henry Jacek ended his decade long tenure as Director of the Ontario Legislative Internship Programme and a search committee that included Grace Skogstad and Graham White selected Peter Constantinou from York University as the new Director. The transition has been a smooth one and the Legislature has taken on more of the programme's administrative responsibilities as we work with them in reconfiguring the relationship between the programme's two principal sponsors, CPSA and Queen's Park. Long-time Director of the Parliamentary Internship Programme, Garth Williams, is moving on from the position later this month. After much consultation, a search committee that included

Yasmeeen Abu-Laban, Luc Turgeon and Jonathan Malloy, selected Anne Dance to the position. The appointment of strong Directors of these programmes is essential to ensure that they are largely self-functioning and not pose too great a drain on CPSA resources. This will continue to be an issue for the Association as our relationship with the internship programmes evolves.

The organization of our annual meeting is a significant task. This year, Laura Stephenson and her committee have put together a robust and diverse program that reflects the breadth and excellence of the research enterprise in our discipline. Some of the highlights of the conference include panels around the legacy of the Harper government, the 2015 federal election and issues relating to Indigenous politics and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The program also includes a number of 'professionalization' panels that are of increasing interest to our members. An innovation this year was the revamped online submission process which proved quite successful. We are also grateful to our members for their financial contributions which allow us to support the participation of graduate students in the conference. David Stewart and his team at the University of Calgary have done a terrific job of taking on the arduous task of local organization. We owe them a significant expression of gratitude. Moving forward we are discussing with the Federation of Humanities and Social Sciences the need to obtain commitments from host universities to provide the support that local organizers of the larger associations like ours require to allow them to do this time-consuming job.

Patrick Fafard has worked diligently towards improving communication between the Association and the Federation and we have seen progress in this regard. The Federation has been reaching out to us more frequently to seek our input on issues such as Congress speakers and to identify political scientists for various events they organize. We have recently met with their Board member for Associations to discuss issues of concern to the larger associations and are pleased that they seem keen to continue this dialogue. Patrick's tenure as our representative ended this spring and we are delighted that Elizabeth Goodyear-Grant has now taken on this role.

Under the leadership of our Communications Officer, Tamara Small, we have worked to provide more information to our members through our website. I think all will agree that it is now a more attractive site and together with POLCAN2, which we now produce 'in house', provides members with a good source of information about the Association, the Canadian political science community, and events and conferences hosted by universities and associations around the world. We are also pleased to announce the launch of a new portal on the site providing information relating to the discipline and our members. Inspired by the old *Bulletin* publication, fondly remembered by members of my generation, this innovation provides opportunity for members to share news from their departments, their research projects, teaching innovations, etc. Accompanying this, Board member Chris Alcantara is

working on an interactive blog that will be devoted to issues of career development for those at all stages of the profession.

To assist in making our colleagues, and their work, available to the media we inaugurated this year a 'media contact list' on our website. The Association receives numerous requests from journalists looking for experts on various topics and this list provides them with a valuable resource. While this was created during the 2015 federal election, it is an ongoing project and members are encouraged to contact the secretariat should they wish to be included.

In January, we hosted the annual meeting of departmental chairs at Carleton. This was an impressive group, of approximately 30, representing departments big and small from all parts of Canada. Much of the discussion concerned common issues and challenges facing political science departments and by all accounts participants enjoy the opportunity to learn from one another and to hear about experiences at other universities. We were joined for part of the day by Ted Hewitt, President of SSHRC, who discussed the priorities and challenges of the Council and early relations with the new government. Chairs also discussed ways of helping our students transition to the workforce and heard a very challenging and thought provoking presentation from Carleton Faculty of Public Affairs Dean André Plourde on what constitutes a 'strong' politics department from a Dean's perspective.

This year's nominating committee took on the task of securing volunteers for our numerous prize juries in addition to recruiting candidates for the Board. This is a big task and we owe Joanna Everitt, Jay Smith, and François Pétry a big thank you. They recruited an outstanding group of our colleagues to serve on the various committees and to stand for the Board. There are too many to name, but those who serve on the prize juries undertake a significant task and we are indebted to them. Jay also took on the job of chairing and recruiting the jury for the poster competition at this year's meetings.

The Board appointed a committee chaired by Cheryl Collier to review all of the terms of reference for our various prizes and to strive for uniformity among them. This committee, which included Erin Tolley and Frédéric Bastien, made many suggestions which have brought our prize envelope up to date. Of particular note is the streamlining of requirements for nominations for the Teaching Prize. One concern of the Board was that these were too onerous and were resulting in too few nominations. This change brought immediate results as evidenced by the three outstanding colleagues who are honored through their placement on the shortlist for this year's award.

An important challenge facing Canadian universities in the coming months and years is developing and incorporating appropriate responses to the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Political Science departments will no doubt be at the centre of many of these efforts. To assist with this, the Association, under the leadership of Yasmeen Abu-Laban, has recruited a committee of respected colleagues to work on this issue with a

mandate to propose a plan of action for how we as a discipline can contribute to this essential task. The Committee is just beginning its work and will report to both the Chairs' meeting and the Board of Directors during the coming year.

The Board has also been considering how we might better support the formation of research groups within the discipline and generally encourage community-building within the sub-fields. To this end, a committee chaired by Jill Vickers and including Meenal Shrivastava and Geneviève Tellier prepared a report recommending that we begin a process with an aim of encouraging and supporting the organic growth of sections within the membership. It remains to be seen how these will develop and much of this will depend on the will of the membership but it is envisioned that they may play a role in developing the program for future annual meetings and in providing a space for colleagues with similar research interests to connect, collaborate and learn from one another. Members can expect to hear more about this during the coming year. Related to this, Loleen Berdahl has led the Board in consideration of how to strengthen the Teaching and Research Skills Development section at our annual meetings.

Our Association remains in a solid financial position. We are fortunate to have received significant royalties from our Journal in recent years. It is not clear how long these will last and so we must remain vigilant to keep our expenses in check. We are very fortunate to have Luc Turgeon as our Secretary-Treasurer. Luc not only manages our finances, together with Michelle, but also provides leadership and wise counsel on all issues facing the Association. This is a big job and the time commitment Luc provides to it is substantial.

The terms for four of our Board members come to an end with this year's AGM. We thank Cheryl Collier, Marc Doucet, Jessica Kolopenuk and Past President Jill Vickers for their many contributions to the Association.

As we look to the year ahead, I am confident that the Association is in good hands as Yasmeen Abu-Laban assumes the presidency. Yasmeen has much experience in Association affairs having served twice on the Board of Directors and organizing the program for the annual meetings in Edmonton. As all know, Yasmeen is extremely competent and will no doubt provide us with outstanding leadership.

Finally, let me conclude by saying what an honour it has been to lead the CPSA during the past year. For more than two decades I have benefited significantly from the Association and having the opportunity to give back in this way has been a real privilege. Best of all has been the wonderful chance to get to know and work with so many talented and collegial colleagues from across the country.