

CIRPA Newsletter – August 2013



President's Message

Welcome back to the CIRPA Newsletter – I sincerely hope you are having a pleasant and relaxing summer wherever you are. But first, I would like to extend my best wishes to any members or their families and friends who were affected by the early summer floods that occurred in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. I sincerely hope you are getting back to normal.

As you can see, we decided to bring back “CIRPA News” after a two-year hiatus. A new Newsletter editor (or editors) will soon be appointed, and we will again be seeking out members for articles, interviews and items of professional interest. We had originally intended to replace the newsletter with a “blog” through the new website, but a variety of issues intervened (generally lack of time to set it up!).

Also, as you are probably aware, I am completing my final few months as CIRPA President. It has been a wonderful experience for me over the past 4 years, both personally and professionally. Over this time, I have had the privilege of working with many outstanding people, and have made some great friendships. It has been very gratifying to see so much growth and development of the association – however, this didn't happen by accident: it was only possible through the hard work, dedication and collective vision of many people (and too many to name individually), so I will simply salute all of my CIRPA board colleagues – well done everybody!



Nevertheless, I will certainly miss the hands-on involvement, having served on the Board continuously since 2002! However, I won't be totally out of touch, since as Immediate Past-President, I take over the Nominating Committee Chair's role from former chair Jeff Donnelly. Jeff also recently retired as Director of Institutional Research at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology – our best wishes to you Jeff! Other retirements the past year or so have included Alan Vladicka (Grant MacEwan University), Liz Lane (Dalhousie University), Ian Calvert (Carleton) – best wishes to them all! Is there anyone else we missed?

And rest assured that the new cohort of CIRPA Board colleagues will continue the tradition - I am very pleased that Sharon Shultz will be taking over the reigns as CIRPA President following the 2013 Annual General Meeting in Regina. Sharon has been one of our most dedicated cheerleaders and a great team builder and organizer, so I leave the association in very good hands.

Of course, welcome to incoming Vice-President Mike Krywy, Treasurer Jamie Graham and Members at Large Sonia Richards and Brian Beacham, along with continuing members Miranda Pearson (Secretary),

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and Jennifer Murray and Luc Simon (Members-at-Large). They all bring great skills and experience that will carry the association forward into the future.

Over the past 4 years, we have collectively accomplished a lot of great things; most notably, the development and implementation of our new website, which went live in August 2011 thanks to the wonderful work done by former Board members Anna Burke. The new website was designed using tools (Drupal) that facilitates ongoing updates, and does not require extensive programming support.

One of our objectives in the project was to centralize our business processes, including: electronic payment for membership renewals, conference registration, and sponsorships; full integration of membership database, listserv, and conference proposal submission, scheduling, and the annual elections) - with the 2013 conference in Regina, all of these items are now in place!

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to our current webmaster Luc Simon, Treasurer Caroline Lachance, and our contract programmer Jonathan Lynch for their dedication and effort in bringing this work to fruition.

Since 2009, here are a few highlights of our accomplishments.

- Reviewed and updated of our Constitution and By-Laws to conform with new Industry Canada legislation; the revised By-Laws to be presented prior to the 2013 Annual General Meeting for approval
- Developed and implemented a Code of Ethics
- Ongoing negotiations with AIR for preferential rates for AIR's webinar series and access to AIR's electronic library; this will be concluded in 2013/14.
- Implemented an annual recognition award for outstanding members, and best practices award for demonstrated excellence in processes or procedures
- Despite making significant investments in the development of the new website, CIRPA's net assets increased from \$131k to \$172k between fiscal 2009 and 2012.
- Membership dues remain frozen, and conference registration fees maintained as much as possible.
- Maintained a stable level of membership (235 on average)
- Sustained at least 90% overall satisfaction with annual conferences
- Formalized and maintained regular communication linkages with executives at European AIR, SCUP, and AIR. CIRPA conference announcements circulated through these organizations.
- Developed ongoing relationships with several regular sponsors and continue to seek new connections with companies in both Canada and the USA. Sponsorship revenue in support of the annual conference continues to climb, averaging \$25k the past several years.
- We continue to operate entirely on a volunteer basis, having determined that with our business processes now automated, it is not necessary to commit funds to office support.

So there you go – a lot has been done, but our work is never done! For example, I believe that we have the potential to build a stable membership base of over 300 (electronic payments will help).

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I also think we need to develop more professional development opportunities (in addition to the annual conference). With the threat of continued budgetary compression in most institutions across the country, conference travel will become more challenging for many members – thus, we need to come up with some new and innovative options to reach out to those who are unable to attend the annual conference.

Lastly, with our 2010-2015 strategic plan coming to a conclusion soon (and in light of current economic conditions), the Board should consider undertaking a review and make adjustments if/where necessary.

Meanwhile, enjoy the rest of your summer and hope to see you in Regina this October!

Cameron

CIRPA-ACPRI 2013 Conference

The 22nd Annual Conference of the Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association will take place in Regina, Saskatchewan, from October 27 to 29, 2013 at the Hotel Saskatchewan Radisson Plaza.



CIRPA 2013: Rising to the Challenge: Adding Value and Embracing Change will focus on helping institutional researchers and planners assume an active and effective role in supporting post-secondary institutions confronted with the challenges of this rapidly shifting PSE environment. The conference's four thematic tracks address the role and function of IR offices at every level, from the broad perspective of "The Big Picture" and ensuring "The Right Fit" from an wider organizational and professional standpoint to "Getting Dirty" with specific analytical tools and techniques, or "Closing the Loop" with meaningful reporting.

The Conference Program Committee recruited top-notch key note speakers including Dr. Geoff Scott who will present "Successful quality management & change leadership in 21st century higher education and Dr. Ken Coates who will discuss "Seeking partnerships: global understanding and Canadian actions in Aboriginal education." Lastly our popular "local colour" key note speaker will be Dr. Randy Widdis who will engage us in seeing "Much more than meets the eye: the cultural landscapes of Saskatchewan."

Please join us for our social evening on Monday, October 28. Spend a memorable evening with colleagues and friends at Regina's RCMP Heritage Centre located on the grounds of the RCMP "Depot Division" Training Academy. The Centre features state of the art exhibits that take



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visitors on a journey through the history of the Mounted Police and its evolution from a frontier police to a modern police force known the world over. The story is told through six core exhibitions that will be open for viewing.

There will be something for everyone. See you in Regina!

Therapy Corner

Sometimes dealing with a challenge requires an expert's opinion. Here are a few for starters.

For those budgets that include liberal usage of "restraint", "sustainable" and/or "efficiencies"

"Research is four things: brains with which to think, eyes with which to see, machines with which to measure and fourth, money." Albert Szent-Gyorgyi

For those days when the projects and priorities and data sources and reports keep changing.....

"If we knew what it was we were doing, we wouldn't call it research." Albert Einstein

For those times when people feel threatened by our data and reports.....

"All I'm armed with is research." Mike Wallace

"I come in peace, take me to your lizard." Douglas Adams



Canadian Big Data