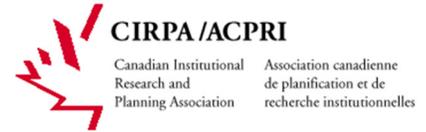


CIRPA NEWS



Volume 13, Number 1

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President's Message



**Cameron Tilson,
CIRPA President**

Welcome to 2011. I would like to wish you all the best of health and happiness in the New Year!

The year 2011 marks some very special milestones for our association. First of all, we will be holding our 20th Annual Conference in Fredericton, New Brunswick, beginning on Sunday October 23rd. I hope you will make plans to attend and even consider submitting a proposal for a presentation (the call for papers will go out later in the winter).

And secondly: although CIRPA was officially "constituted" in 1994, the association's seeds were firmly planted at the first formal get together of Canadian institutional researchers and planners in Ottawa between November 6-8, 1991. The theme of the first conference was *Helping Enhance Canada's Future: The Role of Institutional Researchers and Planners*

in Postsecondary Education. The proceedings were published and are found in many institutions' libraries under ISBN 0-9696088-0-2. It is interesting to look at the delegates' list and see the names of many people who are still active or were recently active in the association.

And I also believe the 1991 theme was very appropriate: Executives at many universities and colleges were increasingly cognizant of the key role played by the planning/analysis function in providing data and expert analysis for decision-making. Since this time, many new offices were created, at both large and small institutions, which meant that new professionals were being hired (which obviously contributed to the growth of our association); so clearly, our profession must be making a difference!

The theme of the 2011 conference will naturally feature a certain retrospective view of the association and our profession, but will also challenge us to take a look forward to the next 20 years. We have certainly come a long way since the early 1990s and frankly, I find it hard to imagine what the next 20 years will bring (or even ten for that matter!). For example, when I began working in the institutional planning office at Concordia in 1994, we were thrilled to receive brand-new "state of the art" Macintosh Centris 610

desktops (20 mhz processor, 4 Mb RAM, 80 Mb hard drive – costing about \$2,500 per machine).

Not only that, we were just starting to experiment with electronic mail while shortly thereafter the Web was just beginning to make its presence known – mind you, on those computers, it took forever to load most web pages.

Now we can do most of our work remotely using hand-held mobile devices among numerous modes of electronic communication and data collection methods. Moreover, we have electronic fact books, OLAP cubes, online surveys, data mining tools, data-sharing consortia and so much more. Can you imagine working without access to any of these things? I'll leave speculation on what the future might hold for a subsequent issue of the newsletter!

Returning to the present: I'm very pleased to report on our very successful conference held in late October at the Ottawa Marriott. Just under 180 delegates turned out (second-highest attendance) as well as a record number of corporate sponsors and exhibitors. Our plenary speakers were particularly engaging this year and there were many outstanding presentations. The bar (not the type that serves beverages!) seems to be raised higher each year, which of course places an additional challenge to the following year's

conference committee. Also, construction in the Ottawa Marriott's lobby/reception area was a bit of an irritant and we apologize for any inconvenience. We had been assured that the work would be completed by late summer, but anyone who has done renovations will know that delays are often the norm. However, the Marriott was extremely responsive to our needs and I think we all managed to work around the inconveniences quite well – I commend everyone's patience!

And finally, I'll take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in planning this year's conference. Co-chairs Tony Eder (University of Victoria) and Caroline Lachance (AUCC) and their teams did a magnificent job.

Conference Program:

Tony Eder, Co-chair
 Joanne Heslop, Simon Fraser University
 Miriam Kramer, Canadian Education Project
 Ashley Lambert-Maberly, University of British Columbia

Elizabeth Lane, Dalhousie University
 Nathasha Macdonald, Carleton University
 Jan O'Brien, Okanagan College
 Cheryl Sivertson, University of Victoria
 Bruce Winer, Carleton University

Local arrangements:

Caroline Lachance, Co-chair
 Marta Arnaldo, AUCC
 Victoria Díaz, University of Ottawa
 Sue Gilmour, Carleton University
 Christine Pelland, University of Ottawa

I know that CIRPA-ACPRI 2011 co-chairs Liz Lane (Dalhousie) and Garry Hansen (St. Thomas U.) are already working hard at getting ready (and there's no construction planned at the Lord Beaverbrook Crowne Plaza!). By the way, the 2011 conference marks the first time CIRPA-ACPRI will convene in the province of New Brunswick! So there's another reason to attend.

And lastly, in early 2011, we are planning to roll out the new CIRPA-ACPRI website – when you see it,

I think you will agree that this represents a dramatic step forward for the public face of the association; those who saw its preview in Ottawa certainly gave us that impression! We are also beginning work on the implementation of various elements of our strategic plan; Board members have their to-do lists – expect to hear more through the new website and listserv messages.

So there you go; a new year and new challenges for us all! Please feel free to contact me or any member of the Board should you have any questions or comments.

Best regards,



Cameron Tilson, Concordia University
 President, CIRPA-ACPRI

A Short History of CIRPA since our First Conference in 1991

Thanks to Robert Schultz and Kate McGovern for this history

In November 1991 the first Canadian Institutional Research and Planning conference took place in Ottawa, which brings us to our 20th anniversary in 2011. The possibility of forming a national organization was first discussed in 1989 at a Western Canadian regional conference. Ottawa conference delegates voted to hold another conference; a second one was held 16 months later in Vancouver. At this conference, delegates voted in favour of forming a national organization. A committee was formed, which drafted a constitution and laid out a process for incorporation. In August 1994, at the third national conference in Halifax, delegates accepted the proposal to form a national committee.

Members of the first executive of the organization were:

- President, Barrie Dubray, University of Saskatchewan
- Vice-President, Jean-Pierre Adam, University of Quebec
- Treasurer, Thelma Lussier, University of Manitoba
- 1995 Conference Program Chair, Garry Milton, Concordia University
- Members at Large:
 - Paul Chancey, Memorial University of Newfoundland
 - Jeff Donnelly, Northern Alberta Institute of Technology
 - Doug Lynd, Statistics Canada
 - Alison McNeill-Hordern, Brandon University
 - Walter Wattamaniuk, Simon Fraser University

The new executive set out to formalize the association and advance the study of institutional research and planning in Canada, recognizing the wide geographic dispersion and population of the potential membership across our country. The organization was incorporated as the Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association (CIRPA)

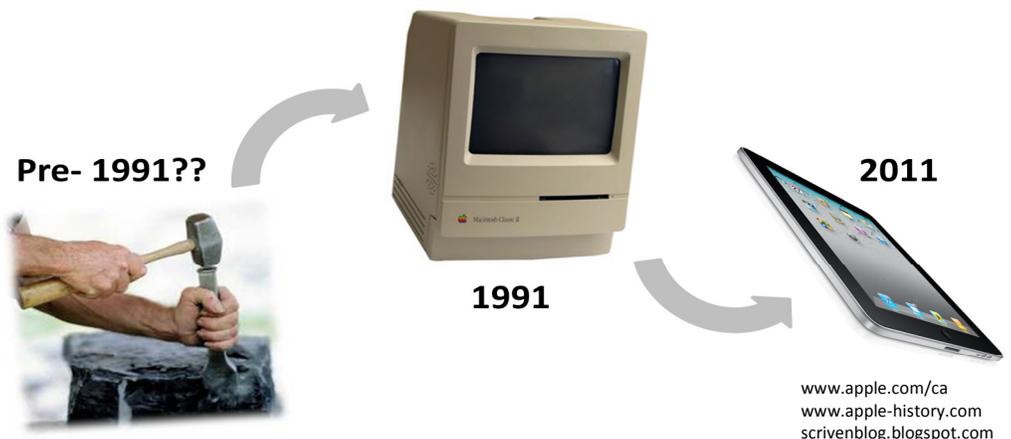
and in French as l'association canadienne de planification et de recherche institutionnelles (ACPRI). A single web site domain name was chosen, recognizing both official languages www.cirpa-acpri.ca. Federal legislation for incorporation required an annual general meeting, and it was decided that the annual general meeting would be coordinated with the annual conference. In order to respect the meeting and work cycles of IR professionals, October was chosen as the optimal time for the annual meeting and conference.

Conferences typically alternate between Western, Central and Eastern Canada. The annual conference is the premier event for the association, where member presentations are the mainstay of networking and displays of professional work. CIRPA has developed a strong slate of pre-conference workshops that have been developed to meet the needs of the membership.

CIRPA collaborates with several agencies and organizations, some of whom are: the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC), the Consortium for Student Retention Data Exchange (CSRDE), the Canadian Graduate and Professional Student Survey (CGPSS), the Canadian Association of University Business Officers (CAUBO), the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada (AUCC), the Association of Canadian Community Colleges (ACCC), the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP), Association for Institutional Research (AIR), and Statistics Canada.

CIRPA has advanced and matured a great deal over the past twenty years. One of CIRPA's objectives was to build a critical mass of research professionals across the country; this has been demonstrated by the growth of the current membership to almost 230. Membership is comprised of 55% from the university sector, 30% from colleges and 15% from government or private business.

As CIRPA approaches its 20th conference in 2011, the



association has renewed its strategic plan to further respond to member needs and the changing environment. As an organization, CIRPA continues to strive to demonstrate that it delivers the best value for its members: a responsive dynamic organization that is the pillar of institutional research in Canada. ■

Member Q & A: Then and Now

In light of this 20th Anniversary issue, some of CIRPA's longest-serving members have shared their experiences in IR in 1991 and 2011.

Lucie Durand

Data exchange coordinator for a group of Canadian universities hosted at McGill University

Q: When and where did you start in IR? Where are you today (still working in IR; at same or another institution; etc.)?

A: I have been working in IR for over 20 years. In 1989, I started at the University of Ottawa's Office of Institutional Research and Planning as programmer-analyst; the next year, I obtained a position as research officer, which I would occupy for the following 11 years. It is around that time that the idea of holding the first Canadian conference on institutional research and planning came about. In 1991, I had the privilege of attending that first event of its kind, in Ottawa, and even to contribute a presentation.

In 2001, the experience acquired over the years led me to engage as coordinator in a project on behalf of a group of Canadian universities, which aimed at setting up a functional process of strategic data exchange needed for decision-making. This remains in the realm of IR, but at a different, more global level. I'm still working for this group, hosted at McGill University, and remain an active member of CIRPA.

Q: What is one job you did when you started in IR and how has it changed, e.g.: gathering information, quantity/quality of national/international statistics available, use of technology, etc.?

A: Because of the different nature of my present role, it is difficult for me to compare the tasks I used to do 20 years ago to those I do now. Still, it is clear that the advent and development of new technologies over the last 20 years have largely contributed to making data collection, processing and analysis - a central aspect of our work - a

lot easier; it also increased the quality and speed of deployment of the results obtained. I would add that the Internet, for one, has without a doubt favoured the growth of the IR expert community locally, nationally and internationally.

Q: Over the next 20 years, what do you see as new developments in IR or wish to see as significant progress for IR?

A: On the one hand, IR related activities belong to a process of change amongst postsecondary institutions. The studies and projects that arise for this process, whether dealing with the student population, human resources, subsidized research, finances, etc. must all sustain better decision-making. In my opinion, the next 20 years won't be much different in that sense. On the other hand, such factors as budgetary cuts, quality control, the "international universities" phenomenon, ratings, performance, benchmarks, etc. will require the constant updating of institutional strategies and policies. I believe that in order to do this, and it seems to be the present trend, we will need to focus more on creating networks of interest and collaborations, which contribute to the development of IR along common themes favouring the sharing of knowledge, of experiences and of best practices.

Thelma Lussier

**Director
Office of Institutional Analysis
University of Manitoba**

Q: When and where did you start in IR? Where are you today (still working in IR; at same or another institution; etc.)?

A: I started in IR at the University of Manitoba in 1974 in an office called Information Systems. We were three people, the Director, me as a Research Analyst and a Research assistant. I had previously worked two years as a Student Advisor in the Faculty of Science. I became Director in 1978, actually Acting Director. I had to prove I could do the job before they gave it to me. It wasn't my boss who made it permanent but the President, who told my boss: "for goodness sakes, enough already, go take something and scrape that "Acting" off her door.

Q: What is one job you did when you started in IR and how has it changed, e.g.: gathering information, quantity/quality of national/international statistics available, use of technology, etc.?

A: The difference in technology is the biggest change. I remember having to have the SPSS program punched on cards, then you had to take your box of cards to the computer centre and have the operator run them through the card reader. If the program did actually run, then you had to wait for your printed report - which might have results or an error message.

Repeat as necessary!

Q: Over the next 20 years, what do you see as new developments in IR or wish to see as significant progress for IR?

A: I see a continuing growth and emphasis on IR as institutions increase their understanding of what the IR office can do for them.

Judith Murray

**Vice-President
Open Learning
Thompson Rivers University**

Q: When and where did you start in IR? Where are you today (still working in IR; at same or another institution; etc.)?

A: I started in IR at Mount Saint Vincent University as Coordinator of Institutional Research and then moved on to Saint Mary's as Director of Institutional Analysis and Planning. I am currently Vice President Open Learning at Thompson Rivers University.

Q: What is one job you did when you started in IR and how has it changed, e.g.: gathering information, quantity/quality of national/international statistics available, use of technology, etc.?

A: The internet changed everything. Google, Google analytics, Cognos, Vocii, and other web based tools make a proliferation of facts, figures and data available to anyone and everyone. In my view this makes the IR role ever more important to ensure that you focus on the most pressing questions, gather the relevant data and synthesize information from disparate sources into answers that help guide decision making at your institution. Unfortunately, the proliferation of government reporting at many institutions may leave little time to help your institution have the information it needs to make strategic choices.

Q: Over the next 20 years, what do you see as new developments in IR or wish to see as significant progress for IR?

A: I see IR aligning more with Business Intelligence and taking on responsibility beyond market research and institutional metrics, to also include business analytics, process management and project management.

Tony Podziemski

**Research and Data Specialist
Georgian College**

Q: When and where did you start in IR? Where are you today (still working in IR; at same or another institution; etc.)?

A: I started out on a student co-op placement in 1986 at Georgian College, Barrie ON, as a humble research assistant. I was contracted for a year until this turned into a full time Research Analyst position in 1987. Although I've taken several contracts and taught research courses, I have stayed at Georgian all these years in various IR and data specialist roles.

Q: What is one job you did when you started in IR and how has it changed, e.g.: gathering information, quantity/quality of national/international statistics available, use of technology, etc.?

A: In the 80s it was common to handle data analysis using mainframe computers. The college set me up with an SPSS mainframe account, much less costly than a new dual 5 1/4" floppy IBM PC. A dramatic change from today where processing power and hard disk space is cheap and data are collected electronically. In the early days, I recall doing manual data entry, employment equity / salary analysis using regression, program review surveys and entering student surveys. Today we do more accountability work, dashboards and web data collection.

Q: Over the next 20 years, what do you see as new developments in IR or wish to see as significant progress for IR?

A: I continue to hear this gem: somehow intelligent new software will make the IR role vanish! I attended an AIR conference in the 90s where a speaker suggested artificial intelligence imbedded in software was on the horizon,

which would make IR somehow go away. With the complexity of our data systems and technology, IR is needed more than ever to make sense of massive datasets, along with high level research design and analysis. We'll certainly have to continue to explain ourselves to those not understanding the IR role.

Paul Chancey

**Director
Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning
Memorial University of Newfoundland**

Q: When and where did you start in IR? Where are you today (still working in IR; at same or another institution; etc.)?

A: I was at the first conference in Ottawa as acting Manager of Institutional Analysis and worked in the Department of Budgets, Audits and Institutional Analysis. I am now the Director of the Centre for Institutional Analysis and Planning. I still work in IR, but my focus has changed dramatically. At the time, most of my work efforts were focused on the computing effort required to create the information that was needed to support decision-making.

If I remember correctly, Harold Squires and I wrote a paper on course section costs at that conference. Harold got sick at the last minute and I had to deliver his part of the presentation along with my own. I remember being pretty anxious about that and started the presentation by apologizing on Harold's behalf and wishing him a speedy recovery so that I could kill him when I got home.

Q: What is one job you did when you started in IR and how has it changed, e.g.: gathering information, quantity/quality of national/international statistics available, use of technology, etc.?

A: One aspect that we spent a lot of time looking at in those days was total quality management or TQM. At that time, you could not go anywhere without hearing about how TQM was going to revolutionize the world of higher education. With the benefit of hindsight, I am not sure if it is possible for anything to truly revolutionize higher education, though technology has come pretty close! You hear very little about TQM these days.

Technology, and our use of it, has changed dramatically. When I started in IR, we used IBM 8086 and 8088 desktop computers. They cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000. A big

computer hard drive had 30 megabytes of storage and the programs that ran them (Multimate, Visicalc) would fit on a couple of 5 1/4 inch floppy disks. Data was stored on mainframes with different operating systems and there were really no tools to integrate data across platforms. You had to have a really good understanding of computers and computing to be able bring all the necessary pieces together. Joining files from two datasets could take 8 hours to run. You set them up at the end of a workday and hoped the computer did not crash overnight. I think we take the ability to process data completely for granted now.

Our ability to manage and analyze data now is infinitely better, and the software is sophisticated enough that information is much more broadly available. We have the ability to know more about our institutions now than ever before. We are only limited by our ability to imagine new ways of looking at the information.

The internet was really in its infancy then as well, so if you wanted information from other institutions you could not go to a website to try and find it yourself. You really had to develop relationships in the IR community to do your job.

Q: Over the next 20 years, what do you see as new developments in IR or wish to see as significant progress for IR?

A: The technology will continue to evolve and there is no question it will allow us to do things that we could not have even conceptualized 20 years ago. It will also make information even more accessible, which should provide an even better foundation for decision making. However, the issues that we deal with will no doubt be increasingly more complex, perhaps driven by the fact that there is so much more information available. ■

Annual General Meeting October 2010

**Kate McGovern, University of Regina
Secretary, CIRPA-ACPRI**

This year's Annual General Meeting (AGM) was held in Ottawa, Ontario on October 26, 2010 at 7:30 am. Forty-two members were in attendance.

Cameron Tilson, the President of the Association, commented on the organization's major initiatives undertaken in 2009/2010, including the development of the 2010-2015 Strategic Plan and the development of a new website.

Vice-President, Peter Seto, reported that the membership in 2009/2010 reached 223. Most of the members (74%) originated from the Banff conference. There is a strong relationship between conference locale and membership, as made evident by the stronger regional representation from Alberta and BC institutions.

The Treasurer, Caroline Lachance, reported a decrease in net assets. As of June 30, 2010 the Association's net assets were \$126,140, a decrease of \$4,103 over June 30, 2009. The decrease is due to budgeted expenditures for specific projects, such as the new website and strategic planning.

Sharon Shultz, Communications Committee Chair, thanked the newsletter co-editors -- Joan Bessey (Memorial University) and Kristen Hamilton (Thompson Rivers University) -- and extended thanks to all of the newsletter contributors.

The Nominations Committee Chair, Jeff Donnelly, thanked the members of the Nominating Committee for their service and assistance in conducting the election. They included Heather Friesen (College of the North Atlantic, Qatar), Jan O'Brien (Okanagan College), Shauna Lehtimaki (Laurentian University) and Jim Doran (University of Alberta).

Additional reports were provided on the past year's activities and future objectives of the Data Advisory Committee (co-chaired by Peter Seto and Herb O'Heron) and the Website Committee (chaired by Anna Burke).

Tony Eder, 2010 CIRPA-ACPRI Conference Co-chair, reported on the 2010 Conference. He indicated that 176 delegates attended the 2010 conference. He

Conference 2011



Herb O'Heron (AUCC), Paul Davidson (AUCC), Jeff Donnelly (CIRPA Nominations Committee; NAIT), Cameron Tilson (CIRPA President; Concordia U)



Tyler Kealey Trio



Caroline Lachance (treasurer, CIRPA Conference Co-Chair; AUCC) and Cameron Tilson (CIRPA President, Concordia University)

acknowledged his co-chair, Caroline Lachance, who was responsible for the local arrangements and thanked the many committee members and volunteers who assisted with the program planning and local arrangements.

Cameron Tilson recognized Joan Bessey (Memorial University) and Lise Tremblay (McGill University & Concordia University) as members Emeritus and acknowledged their contributions to CIRPA over the past several years. Cameron Tilson also recognized the three recipients of this year's Outstanding Service Award, Jeff Donnelly (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology), Herb O'Heron (AUCC) and Thelma Lussier (University of Manitoba).

The 2010 AGM saw numerous changes to the Board. Cameron Tilson thanked departing members for their contributions, acknowledged remaining members and welcomed newcomers.

Departing members:

2010 CIRPA Conference Program Chair - Tony Eder (University of Victoria)

Nominations Committee - Heather Friesen (College of the North Atlantic, Qatar)

Remaining members in NEW positions:

2011 Conference Co-chair - Elizabeth Lane (Dalhousie University; formerly Member at Large)

Remaining members in same position:

President - Cameron Tilson (Concordia University)

Vice-President - Peter Seto (Mount Royal University)

Treasurer - Caroline Lachance (AUCC)

Secretary - Kate McGovern (University of Regina)

Member at Large - Anna Burke (Nova Scotia Community College)

Member at Large - Sharon Shultz (Keyano College)

Member at Large - Mardere Birkill (Portage College)

Nominations Committee Chair - Jeff Donnelly (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology)

Nominations Committee - Jim Doran (University of Alberta)

Nominations Committee - Shauna Lehtimaki (Laurentian University)

Nominations Committee - Jan O'Brien (Okanagan College)

New members:

Member at Large - Luc Simon (Université Laval)

Nominations Committee - Chris Conway (Queen's University)

2011 Conference Co-chair - Garry Hansen (St. Thomas University) ■



Outstanding Service Award winners, Herb O'Heron (AUCC), Thelma Lussier (University of Manitoba), Jeff Donnelly (Northern Alberta Institute of Technology)



Susan Gottheil (University of Manitoba; speaker)



Mark Horseman (University of Saskatchewan; left)

Photos courtesy of Luc Simon (Université Laval)

We would like to share a poem that was published in the first CIRPA conference proceedings.

Oh, Where are We Going? (Or What could We have been Thinking?)

John S. Cowan, University of Ottawa

Oh, where are we going and where have we been?
Are we part of the world or just locked in a dream?
Don't you love how we do things? The reasons are
lost
In the sea of tradition; we're left with the cost!
So if you've a feeling that everything's sinking,
It's time that you asked, "What could we have been
thinking?"

Budget's the topic that everyone hates,
And the only true fix is a good set of plates.
If we don't fix the roofs, then the roofs start to leak.
If we do fix them all, we'll be broke by next week.

Yet the empire builders still levy their toll,
As the cost of their status goes out of control.
It would be a lot simpler to cut some positions,
If we offered the cutters some worthwhile
commissions.

Must we subsidize everyone's hobby and lunch,
From the Faculty Club to the squash-playing
bunch?
Must we strike a committee for each minor choice,
Do we honestly do it so each has a voice,
Or is it just weakness and spreading the blame
In a constant collegial trivia game.
We all know of colleagues addicted to meeting

As a classy avoidance of research and teaching.

Can we get back to basics? Were we ever there?
And what are those basics, when they are laid bare?
Is our teaching effective; are courses well planned,
Are they driven by vanity or by demand?
Do we publish new knowledge or merely new books?
Can we nurture our scholars, not pamper our
crooks?
Freedom of speech, and of study and thought,
The rights that the faculty treasure a lot,
Were never intended to confer on some jerk
The right not to think, and the right not to work.

We must change the culture, get others on side,
With courage and luck, and a very thick hide;
We could do it faster, and with much less stress
If the point of departure were less of a mess.

Oh, where are we going and where have we been?
We've been rolling by vistas still largely unseen,
But to press on half-blind would be very unwise;
To stay on the road we must open our eyes.

1991-11-06

Cowan, John S. (1991). Oh, where are we going? (Or, what could we have been thinking?) In J. Lloyd-Jones (Pub.), *Helping enhance Canada's future: The role of institutional researchers and planners in postsecondary education*. University of Ottawa.

*Kristen and Joan would like to once again thank members for their contributions to this newsletter. We look forward to your submissions (research, editorials, monographs, practitioner guides, etc.) for the **Spring 2011** issue. Submissions should be themed on the topic: "the next 20 years of IRP".*

CIRPA Executive

President (Term 2009-11)

[Cameron Tilson](#), Concordia University

Vice-President (Term 2009-11)

[Peter Seto](#), Mount Royal University

Treasurer (Term 2009-11)

[Caroline Lachance](#), Association of Universities and College of Canada (AUCC)

Secretary (Term 2010-12)

[Kate McGovern](#), University of Regina

2011 Conference Co-Chairs – Fredericton, New Brunswick

[Elizabeth Lane](#), Dalhousie University

[Garry Hansen](#), St. Thomas University

Members at Large

[Anna Burke](#), Nova Scotia Community College (Term 2010-12)

[Mardere Birkill](#), Portage College (Term 2009-11)

[Sharon Shultz](#), Keyano College (Term 2009-11)

[Luc Simon](#), Université Laval (Term 2010-12)

Nominations Committee

[Jeff Donnelly, Chair](#), Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (Term 2009-11)

[Jim Doran](#), University of Alberta (Term 2010-12)

[Shauna Lehtimaki](#), Laurentian University (Term 2009-11)

[Jan O'Brien](#), Okanagan College (Term 2009-11)

[Chris Conway](#), Queen's University (Term 2010-12)

Newsletter Co-Editors

[Kristen Hamilton](#), Thompson Rivers University

[Joan Bessey](#), Memorial University (Emeritus)