

In this Issue:

- // CIRPA Conference a Huge Success
- // International Students in Canada
- // Plenty of Business During General Meeting
- // CIRPA Conference in Photos

2008 CIRPA Conference the Largest Yet

President's Message



Jeff Donnelly, CIRPA President

Here we are; another conference over with and another outstanding success to reflect upon. Our 17th annual conference in Quebec City was a new best ever combining outstanding plenaries and workshops with a highly stimulating program of contributed papers and panels. We also had our largest assembly of members ever with 198 registered delegates. On behalf of our entire organization, my sincere thanks to Luc Simon and Rob Schultz (and their teams) for doing such a great job.

But already we are looking forward to next year with planning actively underway to host the 18th annual conference in Banff, Alberta in October of 2009. Kathleen Bigsby of Kwantlen Polytechnic University will be looking after the Program and joining the CIRPA Executive Committee. Now is as good a time as any to start planning to attend the 18th annual conference in Banff next year. The conference site is the Banff Centre.

In accordance with annual cycles (and annual AGMs) we welcome new members to the Executive and say goodbye to those who have completed their terms. I welcome Kate McGovern

(University of Regina) and Anna Burke (Nova Scotia Community College) to the Executive. I look forward to working with each of them. I would also like to extend my sincere gratitude to outgoing secretary Jacques Turcotte (University du Laval), and outgoing director Mark Lucas (University of Saskatchewan). I'm grateful to each of them for their contributions and dedication to the organization.

Your Executive continues to work on your behalf. Most important is the ongoing development of our web site. I'd like to remind all members to go to the CIRPA/ACPRI website and take note of some of the changes. You will now have to log on and use your password to access some of the content. We were also able to conduct our last election over the web which was another terrific step forward. We'll continue to progress in the upcoming year.

The Newsletter has had changes to its team as well. I must mention my thanks to Laurie Smith (Norquest College) who has had to give up co-editing the Newsletter with Sharon Shultz (Keyano College). We have an urgent need for a new co-editor of the Newsletter. As I have said so often before, service to this organization is not onerous and is tremendously rewarding. Newsletter co-editor is a great way to enhance your involvement with CIRPA/ACPRI. If you have any questions about this role, please don't hesitate to contact Sharon or Elizabeth Lane (Dalhousie University) or even me!

2008 Annual General Meeting

This year's Annual General Meeting, held in Quebec City on October 28th, was attended by 39 members.

Jeff Donnelly, the President of the Association, reflected on the past year's many achievements which culminated in the highest number of conference attendees (198) and highest membership (222) to date. The Vice-President, Cam Tilson, indicated that these increases could largely be attributed to the use of an online payment facility provided through the conference registration site, follow-up with former members and a general increase in the number of new IR/IP offices and positions opening-up across the country.

The Treasurer, Ian Calvert, reported an increase in net assets from \$97,149 in June 2007 to \$106,369 in June 2008 - a gain of \$9,220 over the 2007-08 year.

The Communications Committee Chair, Liz Lane, thanked Sharon Shultz (Keyano College) and Laurie Smith (Norquest College) for their contributions as Co-editors of the newsletter. As the latter of the two is stepping down, an appeal was made to the membership for a new co-editor.

The Nominations Committee Chair, Rob Schultz, reported a record high of 65 voters this year, which is believed to be due largely to the implementation of a new electronic election process. Two new members were elected to the executive, Kate McGovern (University of Regina) who will serve as the new secretary and Anna Burke (Nova Scotia Community College) who will serve as a new member at large. Special thanks were given to Jacques Turcotte (Université Laval) and Mark Lucas (University of Saskatchewan) for their service to the Executive.

Additional reports were provided by Peter Seto on a range of activities undertaken by the Data Advisory Committee and by Mark Lucas, who commented on changes and enhancements to the CIRPA-ACPRI website.

Kathleen Bigsby from Kwantlen Polytechnic University was introduced as the Conference Chair for the 2009 conference being held October 25 to October 27, 2009 at the Banff Centre in Alberta.

International Students in Canada

Jim Doran, Research Systems Analyst, Strategic Analysis Office, University of Alberta

The Data Advisory Committee of CIRPA has identified three areas of interest to be studied over the next year or so: gender issues, aboriginal students, and international students. This article touches on international students; the other areas will be addressed in upcoming issues of the newsletter.

The numbers of students coming from other countries to study at Canadian post-secondary institutions have been rising yearly for over a decade. At this stage,

it is not possible to determine how many international students attend colleges or technical institutes, but those at our universities are spread right across the country. Visa students comprise 5 to 6 percent of all full-time students in Newfoundland, PEI, and Saskatchewan, to more than 10% in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Quebec, and BC. About 31% of international students are at the graduate level, which is almost three times the percentage of graduate-level Canadian citizen students in the whole post-secondary population.

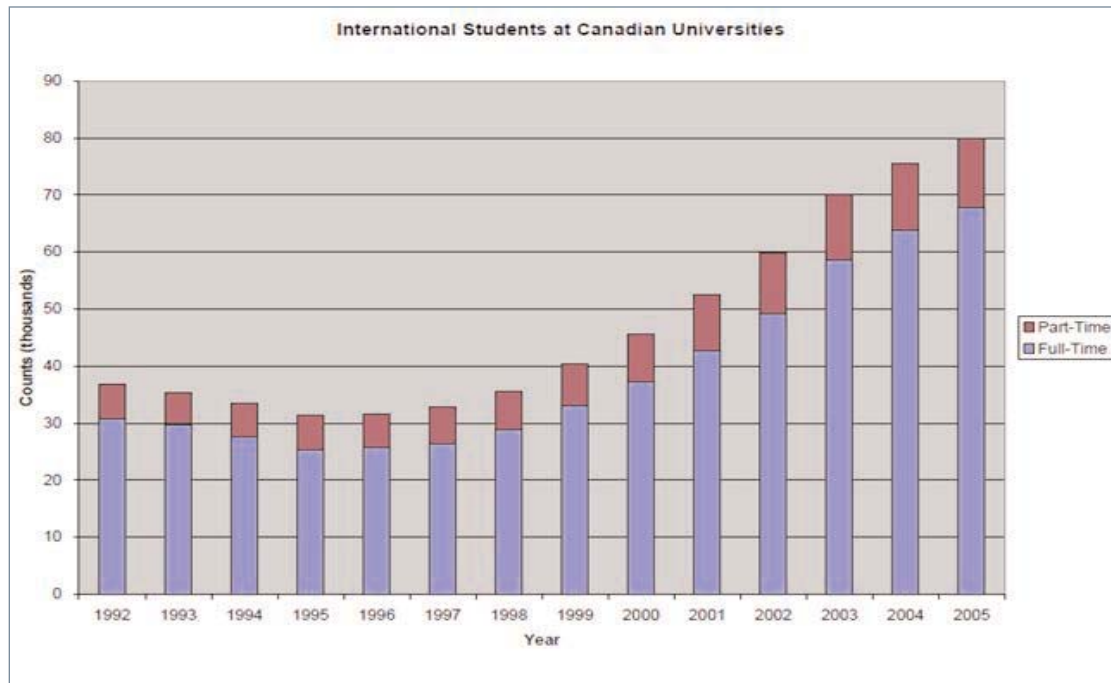
The reasons behind this growth in international students coming to Canada are likely complex, with everything from rising numbers of people seeking education generally (and higher education especially) worldwide, to urbanization in many developing countries, to changes in immigration policies in competitor countries all impacting Canada's success in attracting and

retaining international students. The number of international students arriving in Canada rose almost 170% between 1996 and 2006. With Canada experiencing a growing economy in that same time period, it is also likely that institutions were able to spend more on attracting foreign students, and that this paid off to some

would be good to have a more standardized approach to providing them. If institutions shared their experiences amongst each other, and if they could agree on a common set of standard practices to adopt, then dealing with international students could be a more uniform process, benefiting all concerned. Of course, this may be

easier said than done because not only do the services offered to international students vary across campuses, but also who provides these services varies widely, too. It is still a goal worth pursuing, though.

The place to start is on institutional



extent with increasing enrolments of these students.

Rising numbers of international students present some program and policy implications for Canada and Canadian post-secondary institutions. If we want to attract and retain these students, we need to have systems in place that make it easier for them to get to Canada and into schools, and then to stay here while they pursue their education. Canada has the student visitor immigration status class which speeds the arrival of international students. Also, most universities have increased resources to provide the special services international students need, such as foreign admission documents evaluations, fees information, housing information, ESL or FSL courses, health insurance information, culture-aligned activities, and even how to deal with winter. Services vary by province and institution, however, and it

websites, which are usually the first point of contact for a prospective foreign student. If every institution provided the same kind of information and services, or at least used the same presentation format on their websites, it would be more useful for these prospective students. Students are currently hunting down different things on different websites, and then having to make some sort of comparison and evaluation in an "apples and oranges" way. We should work toward more standardization of services for international students. The CIRPA Data Advisory Committee will be looking into issues surrounding international students over the coming year. It is hoped that some recommendations can be made that can benefit both these students and the people who deal with them while they are studying in Canada.

Then we can work on standardizing the reporting of international student statistics, but that's a story for another day.

Learning from Bologna

A Different Interpretation for Canadian Friends - Clifford Adelman

Bruce Winer, Associate Director, Office of Institutional Research and Planning, Carleton University

Before commenting on Clifford Adelman's talk at the recent CIRPA conference in Quebec City I have to issue a disclaimer ... I have a built in bias against Bologna, not the Bologna 'Process' as it pertains to higher education but the city itself.

In an earlier era (1975/76), I visited Bologna on a grand bicycle tour of Europe.

As it transpired, our Bologna visit occurred in the Italian winter and the north of Italy is not nearly as warm as the south (who knew?). We hit Bologna in the midst of a period of frozen rain and my over-riding memory of Bologna is the denizens of the coffee shops looking out at us bicycling by (on

our tandem) and making a variety of hand gestures than quite clearly indicated that they thought we had taken leave of our senses ... but in a friendly way. So I can't think of Bologna or the Bologna process without thinking of that cold day, not so long ago ...

Biases aside, Adelman is a knowledgeable and engaging speaker, and it's hard to think of two more edifying plenaries than the pair provided by Carl Wieman and Clifford Adelman (kudos to the conference organizers). His agenda, other than informing the gathered CIRPAns about the Bologna process, was to initiate some reformulation of the Canadian position on Bologna which, if fairly captured by the AUCC policy, is basically reactive and defensive. The AUCC statement of June 2008 indicates that the Bologna Process is largely about capturing a larger share of international students and secondarily about passing off less qualified students into the international post-secondary system.

So what is the Bologna process? Adelman colourfully described it as a process to bring European higher education to a point where trans-nationally it is singing in the same key though not necessarily singing the same tune. As to what key that is, it's best to take a look at the set of slides Adelman prepared for his presentation (on the CIRPA web-site, no doubt) and, for the strong, to the

references provided.

In specific terms, the intended outcome of the process, which is easier to grasp than the mechanisms of the process itself, is to ensure that European students (and any others that choose to participate) have a credential from their post-secondary institution that is known and well understood throughout the

Eurozone and, thus, results in increased mobility for students. Which is, presumably, the cause of the AUCC reaction - increased mobility WITHIN the Eurozone implies decreased mobility outside the zone and fewer international students coming our way - which seems like a plausible argu-

ment, I guess, the question is; was this an intended or un-intended consequence?

For Adelman, the Bologna process is admittedly long and tortuous (they've been at it for 10 years and are likely to continue for another decade) but the outcomes are worth the cost. For Bologna, he states emphatically, content counts and for higher education practitioners it's hard to argue that content shouldn't count - though in many ways Canadian higher education (and society and the workforce) is more credential than content oriented.

Adelman argues that positive motivations are behind Bologna (not the negative outcomes as seen by AUCC) - especially an understanding of the different pathways to participation in higher education students take throughout Europe. He feels that the outcomes of Bologna will lead to better educational opportunities for disadvantaged groups such as isolated rural populations, students with disability and students with 'short cycle' degrees (which in the Canadian context would include college diplomas).

(Another example of Adelman's accomplished speaking abilities and knowledge of his audience are shown a) by his introduction in French and b) his indication that access to higher education for students with disabilities is at least 'on the list' in Canada as opposed to the U.S - how better to appeal to

a Canadian audience than to diss the Americans.)

The inclusion of "short-cycle" and "associate" degrees/credentials in the Bologna process is something clearly important to Adelman and something that is an issue in Canada. For Bologna, the clear description of the content of these types of credentials is intended to ensure that the appropriate credit be given to the holders of these credentials, as they move through the higher education system. In Canada (with some exceptions) the lack of clarity of the content of short-cycle credentials, and the bias towards credentialism in Canadian higher education, ensures that mobility for these students as they move through the higher education hierarchy is tortuous, bureaucratic and slow. Those words "tortuous, bureaucratic and slow", I think it's fair to say, are not too far off a description of the Bologna process itself (I don't think I'm letting any bias interfere with this assessment) - so the overall question is: where should this burden lie, with the students or the institutions? As institutional researchers -some of us whom might be involved, if Bologna was to come to Canada (and in Ottawa we already have the freezing rain) - we all know where the burden should lie ...



Clifford Adelman



Snapshots from the 2008 CIRPA Conference

Just some of the conference's many key components



The Networking



The Workshops



The Organizing Team



The Speakers



The Banquet



The Entertainment

CIRPA 2008, Planning for and Measuring Success did indeed live up to its theme! Records were broken for the number of proposals submitted (53), concurrent sessions (42), volunteer presenters (66), volunteer facilitators (28), delegates (198), the highest percentage of membership attendance (95%), and judging from the evaluations some of the best presentations, local amenities and food to date. In relation to our keynote speakers, CIRPA is definitely leveraging our experiential learning and

continues to 'ratchet-up' the quality (and quantity) of our annual conference.

I also must thank the exceptional efforts of the local arrangements team lead by Luc Simon, Conference Chair. Specifically, I must commend the work of Micheline Moore, Michel Jacques, Jacques Turcotte and Richard Massé from Université Laval and Denis Marchand, Ginette Lortie and Sylviane Tremblay from Université du Québec. The outstanding effort from these individuals complemented the efforts of the presenters and made the conference a

SUCCESS!

As indicated at the Monday night banquet, the success of the CIRPA conference is really in the hands of the membership. This is your conference. The conference can only be as good as you make it. Therefore, I encourage you to start making your plans for presentation proposals for CIRPA 2009 at the Banff Centre, prepare to share your work and question and challenge your colleagues across Canada to improve the quality and value of your work.

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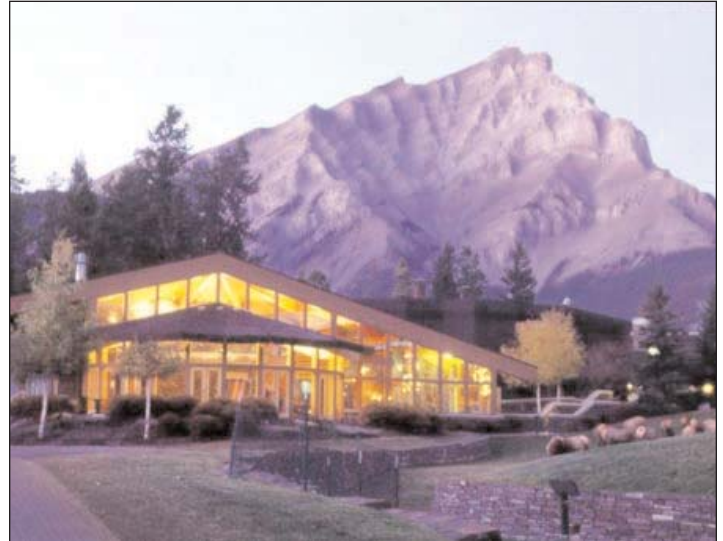
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Finding Meaning in Measurement

Plan to join us for the
2009 CIRPA Conference
at the Banff Centre, Banff, Alberta

October 25 to 27, 2009

Your 2009 Program Committee wrestled with themes such as "Hard Climbing", "The Vision from the Mountaintop," "Achieving the Vision in a Challenging Landscape," "Soaring With Eagles; Working With Turkeys," and "Climbing the Slippery Slope," -- you can tell we were getting punchy!

We decided on "Finding Meaning in Measurement" as it highlighted the importance of interpreting the data we collect and analyze and making it useful to our institutions.

When you come to the fabulous Banff Centre next October, you'll find a conference program that will help you to find meaning in measurement.

See you in Banff.