

CANADIAN
PSYCHOLOGICAL
ASSOCIATION



SOCIÉTÉ
CANADIENNE
DE PSYCHOLOGIE

Committee on Scientific Affairs Annual Report 2009

Members: Ken Craig, David Dozois (Chair), Anna-Beth Doyle, Janel Gauthier, Thomas Hadjistavropoulos, Jill Jacobson, Valerie Kuhlmeier, Wolfgang Linden, Clarisa Markel (Student Representative), Marian Morry, Morris Moscovitch, Valerie Thompson, and Keith Wilson

CPA has a strong commitment to science. For example, CPA currently sits on the Steering Committee of the Canadian Consortium of Research, is a member of the Humanities and Social Sciences Federation of Canada, liaises with granting councils, and just completed 18-month participation as a member of the Experts Committee appointed to help Canada develop quality assurance recommendations for research ethics review in Canada.

A major event that occurred this year involved what some have called the “economic hurricane” which has also seriously affected research funding. Although the government introduced an economic stimulus package to support Canadians during the global recession and increase consumer confidence and spending, support for research funding was mediocre. Moreover, the Tri-council granting agencies have undergone strategic reviews and identified areas where operations could be “streamlined” to be more efficient. The upshot of all of this is that there will be a net loss to the base funding of CIHR, NSERC and SSHRC. Whereas the United States is dramatically increasing funding for basic research, CIHR, SSHRC and NSERC are being asked to cut their spending by \$148-million over the next three years. The “Don’t Leave Canada Behind Campaign”, highlighted in the April 2009 CPA Newsletter, was an initiative of the academic community calling for adequate funding for Canadian research.

The strategic reviews of CIHR, SSHRC and NSERC will also result in restructuring of grant selection committees and funding eligibility. For example, although SSHRC has, over the past 10 years or so, also funded health-related research they will no longer do so. Instead, all health-oriented research grants will be reviewed by CIHR. One danger is that research that falls into a grey zone may fall through the cracks and excellent basic psychological science may not get funded. The SSHRC committees responsible for psychology (i.e., 10 and 27) will also be restructured. Committee 27 currently involves grants focusing on, among other things, health, counseling and psychotherapy; this will cease to be the case. Scientific Affairs continues to monitor this development and has consulted with SSHRC.

The CPA Board made a firm commitment this year to the development of a Science Directorate to best meet the organization's advocacy objectives for science. It is important to coordinate, organize and bolster the advocacy activities undertaken on behalf of the science of psychology at the national, provincial and territorial levels. Although much of the activity of CPA's senior staff persons are already taken up in advocacy activity, the development of a resourced Science Directorate means that CPA's Scientific Affairs Committee will be able to be more proactive and strategic in its advocacy objectives and have the operational support necessary for implementing and sustaining its activities. CPA recently hired Dr. Lisa Votta-Bleeker as its new Associate Executive Director. Dr. Votta-Bleeker has a Ph.D. in Experimental Psychology and will carry out the Science Directorate in collaboration with Scientific Affairs.

I would like to thank the members of this committee for their contributions over the past year.

David J. A. Dozois, Chair