

PRESIDENT'S REPORT – BROOKE JEFFREY

CAPPA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

York University, TORONTO

June 22, 2023

Introduction

This meeting marks the end of my three-year term as president of CAPPA, a term which could only be described as eventful and, due to the exceptional circumstances, one that was extended for a year beyond the traditional two-year term.

When I was elected president in June 2020, the world had already been in the throes of the COVID-19 pandemic for 100 days. As a result, one of the very first casualties of this crisis for CAPPA was the cancellation of our annual conference, scheduled for later that month in London, Ontario. At the time, I rashly indicated that I was confident the following year's conference would proceed as usual. Needless to say, that prediction proved far too optimistic. Instead, the past three years have seen CAPPA face unprecedented challenges on a range of issues, including the organization of annual conferences. As this report outlines, (and in no small measure thanks to the exceptional dedication of my colleagues on the Executive and the Board), CAPPA not only rose to the occasion but has emerged in many respects stronger and more motivated than before.

Annual Conference

This year's conference at York marks the culmination of a three-year effort to return to "normal." From the cancellation of the annual conference in 2020, to a virtual conference in 2021 and a hybrid conference last year in Victoria, I am delighted to be able to say that we have now returned to a full-fledged in-person conference this year. At the same time, it is worthwhile noting that both of these earlier conferences were highly successful. In addition, they involved innovative planning and technology that is likely to remain an essential component of many future CAPPA activities.

I believe it is also important to recognize the relevance of the subject matter examined at CAPPA's conferences of the past two years, and in particular at our conference this year. In my inaugural address in 2020, I wrote that "in these trying times, when all levels of government in Canada and around the world are faced with a plethora of competing claims and difficult decisions that must be made in an atmosphere of ongoing urgency, the study of public

administration could hardly be more relevant.” I also noted that “issues such as trust in government, public sector ethics and organizational change, as well as federal-provincial relations, accountability and fiscal management, will undoubtedly prove to be of even greater significance.” This year’s conference theme, “Standing Up to the Wave”, clearly reflects these developments with its focus on the teaching, study and practice of public sector ethics and values, accountability, diversity and inclusion. (It is also the logical successor to last year’s conference, “Turning the Tide“, which addressed many of the practical organizational and management issues confronted by governments and public servants dealing with the unprecedented ‘whole of government’ response to the pandemic crisis.) In my view the enthusiastic response to this year’s call for papers, and the impressive registration numbers for this conference, demonstrate the widespread recognition of the important contribution that CAPPa makes to the discipline of public administration in Canada.

Lastly, I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the individual contributions of so many Executive and Board members in making these conferences a reality under trying circumstances, and in particular the dedicated efforts of Naomi Couto and Kim Speers for last year’s conference in Victoria, and of Andrea Migone and Ian Stedman for this year’s conference at York.

Case Competition

For students of public administration in our member programs across the country, one of the highlights of the year is the annual CAPPa Case Competition. Here, too, CAPPa was faced with difficult decisions due to the advent of the Covid-19 crisis. I am therefore extremely pleased to report that, with the exceptional help and dedication of former CAPPa president Rob Shepherd and his support team at Carleton, CAPPa was able to continue to hold this important event virtually throughout the pandemic. One positive result of this transition to virtual sessions has been the participation of a greater number of teams from member programs, due to the elimination of travel costs and organizational challenges. And, in the same way that the extraordinary pivot to remote work for many aspects of actual government operations is likely to provide ongoing benefits and reforms post-pandemic, so the expertise acquired and the technology utilized for these virtual Case Comp sessions will likely prove to be valuable tools for other CAPPa events moving forward. Indeed, the Executive has listened to the concerns of member programs and decided to delay a return to in-person sessions of the Case Competition for one more year, thereby allowing a transition period in which numerous organizational and financial issues can be resolved. As a result, next year’s competition (in February 2024) will once again be held virtually.

Accreditation

The accreditation of member programs by CAPPAs independent Accreditation Committee is another extremely important element of CAPPAs contribution to the discipline. As with other professional accreditation programs, it is designed to provide objective recognition of the quality and contributions of academic programs. At present six of CAPPAs member programs have been accredited, and an additional three programs are in the early stages of the process. Here too it is important to note that the pandemic has had a significant impact on this aspect of CAPPAs work, as many schools have delayed their application due to the more pressing and immediate concerns imposed on faculty and administrators by the crisis.

Once again I would be remiss if I did not recognize the extraordinary contribution and dedication of Kathy Brock as chair of the Accreditation Committee for the first two years of my presidency. During this time she launched a review and introduced significant improvements to the documentation concerning the accreditation process, all of which is now accessible on the CAPPAs website. With her departure from the committee at last years conference the Chair's role has been ably assumed by Genevieve Tellier, who will be presenting her annual report at this conference.

Awards

During my presidency a number of changes and additions have occurred with respect to various awards presented by CAPPAs. These involve both faculty and students of member programs.

To begin with, as of 2022, after a cooperative review of shared activities with IPAC, one of our major partners, CAPPAs assumed full responsibility for the **Pierre DeCelles Award** for excellence in teaching, This years winner of the award is Professor Naomi Couto of York University.

In addition, I am pleased to report that at last years annual conference in Victoria a resolution was unanimously adopted to create an Awards Committee, and Emeritus Professor Sandy Borins of the University of Toronto was appointed Chair. The work of that committee resulted in the decision by the Board to create a parallel award for excellence in research, to be known as the **Ken Kernaghan Award**. The inaugural winner of this award is Professor Michael Howlett of UBC. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sandy for his hard work on this file and note that he will be presenting his own report at this conference.

Finally, in conjunction with IPAC, CAPPAs offers the **National Student Thought Leadership Award**. This award provides an opportunity to recognize outstanding students from member programs who have made important contributions to research, scholarship and community leadership. The top three student submissions are recognized with this award and are also recognized at the annual IPAC conference. This years winners will be decided at a virtual jury session on June 27th, and the winning entries will be posted on the CAPPAs website. Here, too, I

would be remiss if I did not mention the tireless dedication of past president Andrea Rounce, who has taken charge of these awards for the last three years.

Governance

One major area which the Governance Review Committee highlighted for further work was CAPPAs communication function, both in terms of enhancing the website and terms of in highlighting the work of the organization to a broader audience.

I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made in both of these areas despite the ongoing challenges of the pandemic. Rather than simply staying afloat and maintaining the status quo, members of the CAPPAs Executive and Board enthusiastically supported the work of the **communications committee** to conduct a significant overhaul of the website. This nearly two-year process has been ably spearheaded by our Communications Chair (and Treasurer) Jean-Francois Savard, and the improvements to our website have been widely and positively noted by a wide range of our partners and members. Jean-Francois will be presenting his annual report at this conference, in which he will provide additional details on the progress made and upcoming plans for further improvements.

One area in which I have been personally invested during my time as president is **bilingualism** and the transformation of CAPPAs into a truly bilingual national organization. I am therefore very pleased to report that I believe we now have an established bilingual presence in person and online, covering everything from our website and public documents to material presented to our member programs and Board members. And, although the cost of simultaneous translation for this conference or other major events is prohibitive, we have taken significant steps towards achieving both bilingual documentation and a bilingual capability on panels and juries organized by CAPPAs.

Finally, in terms of **membership**, I am also very pleased to report that we have maintained our pre-pandemic membership and in fact have added three new member programs over the last three years, namely RMC, Brock and the Max Bell School at McGill. As a result, there are currently 26 member programs.

Partnerships

IPAC: The importance of relating theory to practice has long been recognized by public administration scholars and practitioners. It was to enhance this relationship that CAPPAs has had a long and generally fruitful relationship with IPAC. Over the years this relationship has evolved, and although the two organizations are now de facto separate bodies, it could be argued that in some respects the level of close cooperation between the two has rarely been higher than in the past three years. IPAC continues to offer discounted memberships to students

from member programs, and more recently offered greatly reduced rates for those wishing to participate in one-of-a-kind seminars and webcasts. Under the Direction of David Fulford, CAPPAs and IPAC have continued to co-sponsor the National Student Thought Leadership Award. David personally attended last year's CAPPAs conference, and will be participating in a special panel on CAPPAs and Partners at this conference.

Canada School of Public Service: In addition, CAPPAs has forged closer ties with the Canada School and president Taki Sarantakis. Here, too, the aim is to enhance the connections between academics and bureaucrats. One of my first activities as the new CAPPAs president was to participate in the opening plenary of a virtual seminar sponsored by the School for federal public servants, more than 1,000 of whom attended. Along with a former Clerk of the Privy Council and a deputy minister, as well as CAPPAs Accreditation Board member Professor Alasdair Roberts, I participated in a panel discussion of the challenges and issues facing practitioners during the pandemic and the relevant research currently being conducted by academic scholars. In addition, representatives of the School attended last year's conference, and are also scheduled to participate in the special panel this year on CAPPAs Partners.

Korean Association for Public Administration (KAPA): I am pleased to report that CAPPAs is currently in discussions with KAPA in anticipation of the signing of a memorandum of understanding. Both information exchange and joint attendance at respective annual conferences are anticipated. Unfortunately KAPA's conference for this year is occurring simultaneously with our own, but future exchanges are planned.

Concluding Thoughts

As a volunteer organization, CAPPAs relies on the goodwill and contributions of its members. I have been privileged to work with an exceptionally dedicated and congenial group of Executive members and a Board that has taken its responsibilities seriously. I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of them for their wise counsel, collegial attitude and willingness to step up when necessary. As a result of their efforts, I believe that CAPPAs has not merely weathered the storm of a global pandemic but has come out the other side in better shape than before. I am confident that the new Executive will make further improvements and take CAPPAs in new and interesting directions, and I look forward to assisting in whatever ways may be useful in my capacity for the next two years as Past President.

