

## President's Report - Robert Young

When contemplating the budget of the Canadian Political Science Association, one sees a small, very light organization. But the CPSA is complex, not just internally but also through its related bodies - primarily the *Canadian Journal of Political Science (CJPS)*, the Parliamentary Internship Programme (PIP), and the Ontario Legislature Internship Programme (OLIP). Along with these are important linkages to the Société québécoise de science politique (SQSP), the International Political Science Association (IPSA), and the Canadian Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences (CFHSS). Internally, of course, there is the Board of Directors, the Executive Committee of the board, the Trust Fund, the *Bulletin*, and a variety of committees, both ad hoc and standing, the most vital being the Programme Committee which organizes the annual conference; as well, there is the Executive Director of the association. Finally, there are the members, who are active and vocal and generally well intentioned. So any president of the CPSA has the task, and the opportunity, to work with a large number of people on a wide variety of different dossiers. This has been the most gratifying part of the year that I have spent as president.

In managing the affairs of the association, the board, the executive committee and your president have tried to act with the best interests of the members in mind. We have had to take many decisions, some petty and others pretty important. Should some students get some travel support even though they did not perfectly meet the qualifications? Should PIP follow up the prospect of an exchange with Germany? When will we have to spend money from the Trust Fund and what would be a worthy object of this expenditure? How can we get the CFHSS to pay more attention to our views and interests? How can we staunch the association's deficit? Who will publish the *CJPS*, and how will the choice be made? In all of this, we have tried to find answers that the members can support. I hope that we have succeeded.

By far the weightiest matter confronting the association has been the publication of the *CJPS*. As you know, the board selected Cambridge University Press (CUP) to publish the journal. We are pleased that CUP will be our partner for the next six years, and we expect our members, authors, subscribers and readers to realize substantial benefits from this exciting new relationship. In my report printed in the *Bulletin* of December 2003, I outlined the process that we had followed to date, indicated that we would soon issue Requests for Proposals, and asked the members to communicate any concerns (none did). In a recent special report, I gave a full account of the procedures that your representatives followed in making their choice, and of the criteria that guided their decision. As well, there was justification for the increase in the rates paid by institutional subscribers, and I hope these will be approved at the Annual General Meeting. We all stand accountable for these decisions, and look forward to providing further information at the AGM and at the special session about the shift to CUP that has been added to the normal programme of the conference.

The second big issue concerned the CPSA's finances. At the December meeting of the Board, it became obvious that the association has been running a structural deficit of unsustainable proportions. It was tolerable to be \$20,000 or so in the red each year when we had an embarrassingly large accumulated surplus, but the situation would worsen when long overdue salary increases were made and when the subsidy provided through the *CJPS* would end with John McMenemy's retirement as Administrative Editor. Since the surplus would erode fast, the board took some quick initiatives (such as cutting their own free tickets to the CPSA dinner), and asked for options about other areas of activity. Then in March, when the outlines of our agreement with CUP were pretty well finalized, the board approved increases in membership fees. These fees have not

increased since 1993, and we hope that the membership will approve the modest hike proposed by the board (which unanimously agreed on the increase).

An interesting event this year was the annual meeting of department chairs, held at the end of January. Andrew Sancton and I decided to combine this with a dinner in honour of Sid Noel, who has retired from the University of Western Ontario, and with the help of Ms Faye Murphy, Administrative Assistant at Western, both events were well organized. There was a good turnout for the dinner, with over half the chairs joining dozens of colleagues from Western at an event marked by interesting and sometimes very funny speeches. The meeting itself attracted 31 chairs for the normal *tour d'horizon* of the departments and breakout sessions to discuss the state of the discipline in departments of various sizes. As well, Tony Porter of McMaster had generously agreed to compile some basic data on the departments, an effort we hope will be continued, and there was some discussion of the SSHRC 'transformation exercise.'

This exercise took up a fair amount of time in the spring of 2004. The CFHSS took the matter seriously (more so than when its executive in 2003 supported Professor Martha Piper's controversial proposals to break SSHRC into institutes and have research focus on social problems). Indeed the Federation convened an extraordinary meeting in Ottawa of the presidents of all member associations. The mood there was one of profound suspicion about a transformation that might marginalize the humanities, diminish the relative funding of Standard Research Grants, and have government more or less directly set research priorities. As your president, I tried to explain the political context of the exercise to sometimes naive colleagues, to defend the integrity of SSHRC, and to argue that funding for basic research might be much augmented were SSHRC to advance a couple of very practical initiatives, ones the public could understand. In a written submission, following input from the departmental chairs, I made the same points, arguing as well that though many political scientists could well be the principal beneficiaries of aligning research priorities with the government's policy priorities, the CPSA strongly opposed any such infringement on basic research and academic freedom.

Other than this, our relations with the SQSP continue to be excellent, largely through their presidents, Henry Milner and Serge Denis, and our effective representative, André Lecours. Our relations with the CFHSS are not so good, as their lack of accountability and absence of a service orientation continue to irritate (as do the fees they charge us). The PIP and OLIP programmes have been successfully run this year by Jean-Pierre Gaboury and Greg Inwood (along with JoAnne Cartwright and Eithne Whaley in the respective offices): we are all in their debt for their management of these flagship programmes.

The *CJPS* editorial teams have worked hard this year, and along with Lynda Erickson Laurent Dobuzinskis and Christian Rouillard, I thank Manon Tremblay and Michael Howlett especially, for their participation in interviewing representatives of the three presses shortlisted to become publisher of the *CJPS*. On behalf of the whole membership, I thank John McMenemy not only for his many years of devoted service to the *Journal* but also for the efforts he made over the past year to accommodate very sweeping changes in format. I am personally very much in his debt for his willingness to stay on to handle the March 2004 issue of the *CJPS*, even though he was eager to retire earlier from this very demanding task. We should also be grateful to Brian Henderson and his colleagues at Wilfrid Laurier University Press for their highly professional service over many years and their magnanimous agreement to bring out the June issue of the *CJPS*.

Presiding over any organization is not so hard when people are willing to help, and I am beholden to those who have done so. First and foremost is my predecessor,

Grace Skogstad, who had a very busy year as president but who nevertheless was willing this year to provide hard work and good counsel as past president. Next come the other members of the executive committee, Pierre Coulombe, André Blais and David Johnson, who had more to do in 2003-4 than they bargained for. So did members of the board, and I thank them for their efforts. Members of the association should know that their elected representatives have served them with diligence and integrity.

Others agreed to help. Sandra Burt has taken on the position of Administrative Editor of the *CJPS* (a position that will be less demanding under our arrangements with CUP, but important in new ways). Jim Driscoll has carried on as editor of the Bulletin, and is currently conducting a review of our options about this publication. The members of the Nominating Committee, Yasmeen Abu-Laban, Geneviève Bouchard, and Lynda Erickson, joined me in working to ensure that members could choose from a representative range of candidates in the board elections. Also toiling were members of prize juries. These include Peter Russell, Maureen Covell and François Pétry (the Smiley), Joe Carens, Don Desserud and Margaret Ogrodnick (the Macpherson), Michael Howlett, David Johnson and Manon Tremblay (the McMenemy), and Caroline Andrew, Louise Carbert and Judith McKenzie (the Vickers); still others, yet to be named, will soon carry out the onerous yet significant function of recognizing excellence. I further thank Chris Dunn and Yvon Grenier, representatives to the CFHSS, and Peter Meekison, chair of the Trust Fund. As we all know Jean Crête and Sébastien Lévesque have done a really good job with the POLCAN network, and the board was pleased that our agreement with them has been renewed for another three years.

To David Laycock I and the membership are much indebted. David agreed to take on a heavy burden as Programme Chair. This is the most important appointment that a CPSA president makes, and David has been brilliant at the task. He has recruited an excellent committee (including David Stewart of Manitoba, who accepted the tough job of managing local arrangements), and he and they have created an innovative and attractive programme. In all of this, David Laycock has combined a sage discernment of big structural issues with a keen attention to detail, while nicely coping with the foibles of the hundreds of people involved in the annual conference.

I also wish to thank the people who were willing to serve with me on the three committees set up last summer to explore the options about the *CJPS* that were laid out by the ad hoc committee chaired by Michael Atkinson. These include Grace Skogstad, Ken Carty, Éric Montpetit, and Sandra Burt. I appreciate their help.

My greatest debt is to Michelle Hopkins, our Executive Director. She can do just about anything. It's true that Tim Howard provides some financial advice, and we appreciate this, but Michelle has proven herself quite capable of working out some sophisticated budgetary projections through her command of Excel. And she does all the rest. When I was initially approached about taking on the job of president, my first reaction was to ask whether Michelle Hopkins would be in place throughout the year. She has been so, and has provided both staunch support and appropriate prodding. My opinion of Michelle's talents has only grown throughout the year. We members are fortunate that not only her talents but also her enthusiasm, determination, and discernment continue to be at our service.

It has been an honour and often a pleasure to have worked on your behalf as president of the CPSA. I will continue to help insofar as my successor and friend, the highly capable André Blais, needs me. I wish him a tranquil year. Thank you all for your support of the association and of my efforts to advance our collective interests.