

# Canadian Evaluation Society – Ontario Chapter

## 2000: The Year in Review

### **CHAIR'S COMMENTS**

*by Sandy Henderson, Chair of the Ontario Chapter in 2000*

The seasons are important markers for the board and the Ontario Chapter of CES. During the spring and summer, under the stewardship of Peter Venton, the board engaged in strategic planning discussions. The generous support of Goldfarb Consultants, through their web-based survey, allowed us to make sure we had your input in this important process. As autumn was upon us, Clay LaFleur organised the nominations process for the 2001 Board of Directors, and initiated an exciting AGM program. In the winter, our efforts to develop an interesting provincial conference for the spring kept the conference planning committee busy. The 2001 conference committee is chaired by Rochelle Zorzi.

Throughout the year, Kathryn Doré oversaw professional development events, conducting a needs assessment and offering a session of the ESS. Wendy Young established new linkages with our student members, and Mehboob Habib continues to assume the role of treasurer. Last but not least, Gordon Framst and Elana Gray are not only active members of the Annual Conference Planning Committee, but they continue to contribute to all board activities.

As the seasons came and went, so too did some of our board members. Scott Evans, who was an active member of the Strategic Planning Committee and liaison to the National Council, resigned in the summer to accept a promotion in the U.S. Rebecca Ullmann, who was co-chair of the Professional Development Committee, also resigned in the summer to pursue her busy consulting career. Many thanks to Scott and Rebecca. In December, our board had to say goodbye to Kathryn Doré, Clay LaFleur, and Gordon Framst. Kathryn, Clay, and Gordon have been invaluable to the board during their respective 3, 5, and 6 year tenures, and I wish them all the best.

You will notice that I have chosen to focus my comments on the people side of the Ontario Chapter. You will read in a moment about some of the things we have accomplished over the year. But for me it is only through the voluntary efforts of all board members, and active member participation, that we can sustain the chapter's activities over the year and into next year. Thank you to you all. It has been a pleasure serving as the Ontario Chapter chair during 2000.

### **STRATEGIC PLANNING REPORT**

*by Peter Venton, Strategic Planning Committee Chair*

#### **The CES Ontario Strategic Planning Process**

The CES Strategic Planning Committee, in conjunction with the Board of Directors, took the following steps in 2000:

1. Reviewed theory and practice
2. Translated theory into a mission statement and business lines
3. Conducted Internet-based survey to obtain member feedback

4. Analysed survey results
5. Modified of mission statement
6. Reported survey results to members
7. Obtained member approval of mission statement at the AGM

### **Results of strategic planning survey**

Ninety-four members responded to the web-based strategic planning survey. Of these, 81% felt that the mission statement reflected the chapter's principal mission. Two business lines were identified as high priority:

- dissemination of knowledge about quality evaluation
- advocating use of evaluation

Respondents identified four of the proposed activities as the most important:

- web site (79%)
- list of agencies funding evaluation (68%)
- publish monographs on methods/results (68%)
- disseminate RFPs (66%)

### **Next Steps**

The chapter now needs to establish committees on knowledge dissemination (professional development) and advocacy. The chapter should also concentrate its efforts on its three most important activities: the web site, the compilation of a list of agencies that fund evaluation, and the publication of monographs on methods/results.

In the meantime, the strategic planning committee will continue to review respondent comments from the strategic planning survey, to further define "quality evaluation" and to further explore business lines. The next step in the strategic planning process is for the chapter to consider measures of goal achievement.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT REPORT**

*by Rebecca Doré, Professional Development Committee Chair*

This has been a fairly busy organisational year for Professional Development. In February, Rebecca Ullman and I proposed an overall Professional Development plan for 2000 to the board, which included a needs assessment, marketing component, and delivery of the Essential Skills Series. I would like to report on the progress in each of these areas.

### **Needs Assessment**

We conducted a needs assessment in late spring/early summer. Fifty-seven members responded. The objective of the needs assessment was to gather feedback from the membership regarding their interest (high, medium, low) in a variety of introductory, intermediate, advanced, and general interest evaluation topics that could be possible Professional Development offerings in the future.

The results of the needs assessment indicated that there was interest in:

1. Beyond Performance Indicators: Tools and Applications (advanced)

2. Performance-based management (intermediate)
3. Evaluation design (advanced)
4. Integrating evaluation, audit, and performance measurement (intermediate)
5. Evaluation and accountability frameworks (EAF) for evaluators (intermediate)

These results will be shared with the incoming Professional Development chair to guide workshop planning for 2001.

### **Marketing**

We have been seeking opportunities to collaborate with others in planning and delivering Professional Development workshops. In May, I met with Nancy Porteous, Past-President of the National Capital Chapter, to discuss ways we could share resources to benefit Kingston-area evaluators, who may have trouble attending professional development events in either Ottawa or Toronto.

We were also approached by a not-for-profit organisation to deliver the Essential Skills Series at their workplace. Although the content of ESS is prescribed, there could be supplementary exercises tailored to the participants' organisation. This notion is one that the Board has wanted to explore, so we were pleased to have been asked. In this case, the organisation decided that ESS did not meet their needs at this time, and we linked them up with someone who could assist them in clarifying their current needs. However, I expect that the idea of in-house delivery of professional development courses, including ESS, will be actively pursued by the board in 2001.

### **Essential Skills Series**

We delivered our third full run of ESS in June, 2000. Approximately 30 people registered for each of the four modules, held at the Institute for Learning in Scarborough. One of our members, Laura Heinz, summarised the post-session evaluations. Respondents were very pleased with the course content, the quality, and the expertise of facilitation and the location. They were not happy with the workbook and the overheads. We have forwarded these criticisms to CES National Council.

Finally, we would like to thank Gordon Framst for his help in drafting the terms of reference for the Knowledge Dissemination Business Line Committee.

## **ANNUAL CONFERENCE AND COMMUNICATIONS REPORT**

*by Rochelle Zorzi, Communications Committee Chair and Conference 2001 Committee Chair*

### **Communications**

As many of you know, we have been trying to go paperless in our communications, to save time, money, and resources. We have been trying out some paperless communications this year. For example, the AGM information was sent out by e-mail to about 80% of our members.

The establishment of a chapter web site is key to our plans. We aim to the site up and running by June 2001. We hope that the web site will make the chapter more accessible to all members, especially those who live outside of the GTA. A web site committee has been established and is ready to move forward on the project - thanks to those who volunteered for this through our strategic planning survey. At this point, our main challenge is keeping our e-mail list up-to-date. If you change your e-mail addresses, please notify us as well as the CES secretariat.

## **Conference Report**

I would like to invite you and your colleagues to attend the Ontario chapter annual conference on April 2, 2001 at the Old Mill. The conference theme is "Two world connect: Enhancing the value of evaluation." The conference will focus on evaluators and program/policy decision makers together: both parties will learn how they can make an evaluation useful, and what they can do to ensure that evaluation results get used appropriately. The conference will be a full day event. In the morning, we will feature an actual evaluation that has made an impact and examine why it had the impact it did. In the afternoon, we will have a panel discussion about what makes evaluations useful and how we can foster evaluation use. The speakers will be evaluators, government decision makers, and funders, and will present their perspective on the topic.

A brochure with full details about the conference will be sent to members along with the February Communique. Please share it with your colleagues when you receive it. I'm looking forward to seeing you in April.

## **STUDENT ACTIVITIES**

*by Wendy Young, Student Representative*

I am pleased to present the activities that the Board undertook in the last year related to the students. However, before I do I would like to thank the Board for welcoming a student. I believe that the Board, over the last year, has increased its understanding of the needs of students. I believe that students' needs are different from the needs of other CES Members.

The Board has undertaken in the last year 5 activities related to students.

1. The Board has continued to offer financial support for the case competition.
2. The Board established the student corner in Communique to help link students across Ontario with CES activities.
3. The Board overwhelmingly supported the establishment of a business line related to students.
4. The Board has started to communicate with students electronically. Not all university listservs can be accessed by external users, and so we have had to communicate with some students individually.
5. The Board will be discussing a motion to establish a travel award to cover the expenses associated with attendance at the annual meeting by students, as well as others.

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

*by Mehboob Habib, Treasurer*

The Financial Statements for 1999 and 2000 are being reviewed, and will be published when they have been approved by the board.

## **NATIONAL COUNCIL REPORT**

*by Sandy Henderson, National Council Representative*

Nancy Porteous, the new President, has been actively consulting with Treasury Board, the Volunteer Association and the professional Marketing Association. Dr. Robert Segsworth has resigned as editor

of the Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation, and a replacement is required. Discussions related to an International Evaluation Association are ongoing.

The conference planning for May is well underway, with December 15 as the deadline for submitting abstracts. The CES conference will be held in Halifax in 2002. Financial statements are not yet available from the Montreal conference.

## **ELECTIONS**

Clay LaFleur reported on the very close election results. The new board members are:

- Jarold L. Cosby
- Martha McGuire
- Adam Spencer
- Peter Venton
- Wendy Young
- Student Representative: Candace Nykiforuk