



CAP News

Canadian Association of
Physicists

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CAP meets with the Federal Minister of Finance

You've heard it already : over the last year, your association has reinvigorated its activities in science policy. In the last CAP news, we provided you with a summary of the documents prepared in large part by the Chair of the Science Policy Committee (SPC), Paul Vincett, in the name of the CAP and of the Canadian Consortium for Research (CCR). These two briefs were submitted in mid August to the House of Commons Finance Committee (HCFC) as part of the budget preparation process. Last October, both documents were also presented orally to the HCFC — a first, as far as we know, in the history of CAP, allowing our community to emphasize, again, the importance of funding fundamental research. These presentations were followed, on October 27th, by a meeting with the Minister of Finance, the Honourable James Flaherty, organized by the Canadian Consortium for Research and at which Paul Vincett, Chair of the SPC, participated. This meeting, that lasted 40 minutes, was very instructive for both parties, leaving sufficient time to establish a real dialogue. Minister Flaherty proved to be very receptive and knowledgeable regarding the current situation. He asked several very relevant questions and reminded his interlocutors of his support for basic and fundamental research. In particular, he wanted

A new web site for CAP

After a couple of unsuccessful starts due to the sheer size of the project, your association finally has a new look. Launched officially on November 18th, the CAP's new web site is much more than a simple face-lift : its content is now managed under Drupal, a modern open-source content manager supported by a very active user and developer community. The design of the site was carried out by UPEI Integrated Communications, a programming and web-designing team from the University of Prince Edward Island. The transfer and update of the large quantity of text present on the old web site, as well as a number of software adaptations were done by Francine Ford, Executive Director, and Shane Smith, our new webmaster, with the support of many volunteers, including Robert Mann, Shelley Page, Louis Marchildon, René Roy, Bill Whelan and your Director of Communications.

to understand the strong reaction by the scientific community to his 2009-2010 budget. Paul responded in detail emphasizing the need for an increase in budgets destined to non-targeted basic research.

The only difficult question: Why should we increase funding for fundamental research when Canada is already among the top OECD countries funding university research? Answer: Because private investments in Canadian research are sorely lagging compared with the other OECD countries. It is therefore essential that the government compensates for this lack of private research funding. This is even more important in a global context where other countries are massively increasing their investments in basic research. To remain competitive, Canada has no other choice but to follow this lead.

Of course, this first meeting with the Minister of Finance is not sufficient to address all of the physics community's needs. We must make good use of the increased openness on the part of the federal government to present our point of view and defend basic research. With the economic crisis affecting our country, the activities of the Science Policy Committee are becoming even more important and will require even stronger support on the part of the whole physics community.

This first step allows the CAP to offer a welcoming and easy to use web site where, we hope, you will be able to easily find the information that you are looking for. We also hope that this site will be more effective for the promotion of physics to the general public and to students looking for an exciting career. Our work is not over yet, however, and we plan to continue the site development in order to make it even more complete. For example, we will be adding personalized pages reserved to each division. In order to help us improve the web site, we encourage you to send us your comments and your suggestions. In the meantime, do not forget to add a link to your association's site on your own web page in order to increase the CAP's visibility on the Internet!

To visit the new CAP website, simply type www.cap.ca in your browser.

Community News

212 physicists have already benefited from the professional certification program created by the CAP in 1999. This year, physics students are invited to write the Professional Practice Exam at their local physics department on January 19th, 2010. For more information, visit the CAP web site or contact your local physics department.

The CAP annual congress is also undergoing change. The next Congress, to be held in Toronto, is adopting a new schedule that runs over five days, from Monday June 7th to Friday June 11th 2010, avoiding overlap with the weekend and better utilizing the time available. Visit the Congress web site at cap.ca to keep up to date on developments.

Educational Trust Fund

The CAP Educational Trust Fund supports important education and outreach activities, including the CAP lecture tours, university and high school prize exams, the Canadian Undergraduate Physics Conference and the Canada-Wide Science Fair.

The Educational Trust Fund urgently needs your support in order to continue the sponsorship of these important activities in support of physics education and outreach in Canada! Tax deductible donations can be made to the ETF at any time via the CAP website.

CAP News is a publication of the Canadian Association of Physicists, Suite 112, McDonald Building, University of Ottawa, 150 Louis Pasteur Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1N 6N5.

Tel: 613-562-5614;

Fax: 613-562-5615;

Email: CAP@physics.uottawa.ca;

Website: www.cap.ca

Editor: Normand Mousseau