



# CAP News

Canadian Association of  
Physicists

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## Changes at NSERC

Following an international evaluation, NSERC has changed its assessment criteria and the operation of the committees evaluating its Discovery Grants program. Projects are now evaluated using a conference model whose aim is to ensure better treatment of multidisciplinary applications. In addition, the grant amount is no longer based on funding history, but rather it is determined using three criteria: the project's quality, the applicant's quality, and the training of highly qualified personnel. Finally, despite an international assessment that highlighted the positive impact of small grants to less active researchers, NSERC wants to decrease the proportion of successful applications in order to concentrate money on the most deserving researchers. These changes have been made in several stages and the results of 2010 are the first to come after the full system changes were implemented..

Since most Discovery Grants run over five years, only 20% of faculty have been assessed under the new process (evaluation grid plus conference model). It is therefore difficult to

## News of the Federal Budget

Much has been said in the latest bulletins about the CAP's major efforts to explain the needs of the scientific community to the federal government and ensure a better budget for it. If the result is not as dramatic as one might have hoped (see [www.cap.ca](http://www.cap.ca) for more details), the modest increase in funds for basic research still shows that in a context of declining budgets, our efforts have mattered. We cannot stop there, of course, and the CAP will continue lobbying for science and for adequate funding

## CAP is part of the LASERFEST

The CAP celebrates the fiftieth anniversary of the invention of the laser, a revolutionary technology that owes much to Canadian researchers. In addition to being the central theme of the CAP's 2009-2010 Lecture Tour (with the support of several private companies), the laser and the researchers who

draw clear conclusions about the impact of these changes on Canadian university research. Anecdotal evidence indicates that these changes have had significant impact in a number of institutions. However, the survey of the heads of the physics departments of large and small Canadian universities conducted last fall by the CAP, after the first round of financing with the new evaluation criteria in place, did not show particularly strong dissatisfaction towards the funding procedure.

Despite this, the CAP, and most notably John Dutcher, Director of Academic Affairs, are following closely the impact of changes in the Discovery Grant program and they continue to collect statistics and other information from the various Physics departments across the country. The idea is to proceed with our own evaluation regarding the impact of these changes to what is unquestionably the most important source of funding for basic research in Canada. A special committee, chaired by John and bringing together some department heads, is currently being put into place and should report on the subject over the coming months.

for all aspects of research. So expect to be consulted for a second consecutive year about the priorities of the CAP in budgetary matters. This will help the Science Policy Committee to prepare a new brief for the Finance Committee of the House of Commons. Since the federal government plans to start balancing its budget in 2011, we will have to be very persuasive and original to preserve the current budget and even improve the situation for some areas neglected in recent years.

developed it will also be feted at the 2010 Congress to be held in Toronto. For more information, see the CAP website at well as that of the Laserfest ([www.laserfest.org](http://www.laserfest.org)), an international initiative of which the CAP is a partner.

## Community News

You will soon be able to find all your favourite old articles of Physics in Canada online! Already, the archive section for PiC is online on the CAP website. For now, they date back to 2007, but the list will grow over the months to come so keep an eye on the site!

The first annual CAP High School Teaching Awards have just been announced. In its inaugural year, this contest has already attracted a significant number of high quality candidates, which shows both the remarkable work of teachers and the promise of a long future for this prize. Show your support for this award by contributing generously to the CAP's Educational Trust Fund.

## 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@uottawa.ca](mailto:CAP@uottawa.ca);  
Website: [www.cap.ca](http://www.cap.ca)  
Editor: Normand Mousseau