



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Bill Whelan

June 13, 2024

Welcome everybody and thank you for attending the 2024 CAP AGM.

Over the past few years, the Executive and Board of Directors has been focused on the second objective in our 2019-2024 Strategic Plan.

Achieve organizational and operational excellence to provide services in an effective, efficient and transparent manner

It has been necessary and very important to the strength and resilience of the organization.

We are now in our third year working with the association management company Megram. Almost all of the CAP operations have been integrated with Megram and this has helped to streamline and strengthen CAP operations. But there is still work to do. On January 1, 2024, our Executive Director Francine Ford moved from a 1.0 FTE position to a 0.8 FTE position as part of a staged pathway to retirement, and most of you know our full time program manager assigned by Megram, Ellen Molloy. Nicole Gibson from Megram is supporting membership and administration.

This year, we've continued looking at the structure and operations of the organization, including updating our governance documents, building on the good work Barbara Frisken advanced in her year as President. In fact, Barbara continued to lead much of this governance work as Past President.

This year, this work included updating remaining position descriptions for members of the Board of Directors, and Councillors on the Advisory Council, along with terms of reference for the main committees.

This ongoing review of structure and operation led to the creation of a new position, the CAP Departmental/Institutional Representative, or CAP Rep, which was launched in September 2023. But there is still work to do to identify Reps, bring folks together and provide good direction about the position. This position combines the roles of CAP Friends, Regional Councillors and Regional Lecture Tour Coordinators. Your CAP Rep is your departmental/institutional representative, who takes responsibility for local logistics such as prize exams, the lecture tour, etc. or to find a delegate. CAP Reps within a region will meet occasionally to discuss regional issues. More support to CAP Reps will be provided over the next couple of months.

We hope that these changes will make the role of the departmental representatives clearer, improve connection between CAP and departments/institutions, and allow representatives to take a more active role in the CAP.



Over the past year, the Board has made advances on the first objective in the 2019-2024 Strategic Plan.

Strengthen the profession of physics by connecting and engaging the breadth of physics interests in Canada

The CAP and CASCA (Sarah Gallagher, President of CASCA) partnered this past year to establish a National Science Roundtable to share information and to explore opportunities for greater collaboration and cooperation among national societies. The initial focus is on physical sciences, mathematics and statistics, but there is interest to expand. The Roundtable has met twice virtually to discuss ways to work together to advance EDI, enhance advocacy and expand science/physics outreach.

In the area of advocacy, this year the CAP adopted a coalition approach to our budget submission, engaging other physics institutions and societies to consider endorsing the brief to help strengthen and focus the ask of government. We are pleased to have so many societies and institutions partner with the CAP on this.

Letters were written to Prime Minister Trudeau, Deputy Prime Minister Freeland, Minister Champagne, Minister Wilkinson and Minister MacAulay advocating for the recommendations in the [CAP budget submission](#) and meetings were secured with the Prime Minister's Office, Federal ministers, NSERC and ISED. A CAP Advocacy team was assembled: Rowan Thomson (Professor, Carleton University and member of the CAP EDI Implementation Committee), Meaghen Shiha (PhD Student, Carleton University and member of the CAP Student Advisory Council), Kate Fenwick, (PhD Student, University of Ottawa), Barbara Frisken (Professor, Simon Fraser University and CAP Past President), Nancy Forde, Professor, Simon Fraser University) and Bill Whelan (Professor, University of Prince Edward Island and CAP President). Thank you to the advocacy team for representing the CAP and the Canadian physics community in the meetings with government departments and agencies.

The CAP also officially partnered with Support Our Science in advocating for increases to federal scholarships and fellowships. SOS helped with our preparations to meet with government officials, many of whom they had already met with. This included providing the CAP with an analysis on the return on research investment in Canada and the impact of students and postdoctoral fellows on Canada's innovation ecosystem.

The CAP Outreach Committee has been re-established under the leadership of Mark Richardson from the McDonald Institute. The current role of this committee is to identify actions that will help to educate the general public on, and promote awareness of, physics; and to recommend ways the CAP could serve as a physics outreach connector or hub, to capture the outreach efforts from across the country by members and institutional partners, and to consolidate access to outreach resources. We look forward to the work of this committee.



A new Division of Quantum Information was launched on Jan 1, 2024. Thank you to the inaugural executive for their leadership in establishing this new Division: Daria Ahrensmeier (Simon Fraser University), Olivia De Matteo (University of British Columbia), Thomas Baker (University of Victoria) and Carlo Maria Scandolo (University of Calgary).

On June 7, 2024 the United Nations declared 2025 the International Year of Quantum Science and Technology. A task force has been established co-chaired by Daria Ahrensmeier (Chair, CAP Division of Quantum Information) and Oliver Stelzer-Chilton (TRIUMF and CAP Director of International Affairs) to identify and plan activities for the IQY; the task force currently has 26 members. There was a brainstorming event at the Congress. There will be more to come on this very soon.

There isn't enough time to highlight the good work all of the CAP Divisions are doing, but I want to take this opportunity to thank the leadership and members of the CAP Divisions for their efforts to engage with, strengthen and better connect the physics community in Canada.

The CAP and the American Physical Society (APS) have engaged in discussions over the past year around ways to enhance collaboration and cooperation between our two societies, including in these areas:

- Membership (enhance agreement, joint/discounted membership)
- Career Planning/Resources (share programming, sustainability)
- EDI Policies/Practices (share approaches/strategies)
- Advocacy (share approaches, unified voice, joint statements)
- Student/Researcher Mobility (cross border and visa support)

I also participated in the [APS Summit of the Americas](#) with the presidents of other physics societies in North and South America, to discuss opportunities for greater collaboration and cooperation. In addition, the APS circulated our CAP Strategic Planning survey to APS members working in Canada as a way to help the CAP reach as many physicist and physics students in Canada. The APS position on membership has been clear in our discussions, that physicists should be members of their national association first and then consider the APS. We will continue to explore possible joint membership structures.

Other updates of events occurring over the past year:

- Lecture tour – Pierre will give a report on this later;
- Congress – Martin will give a report on this later;
- CAP medal winners were invited to give a talk at Congress in London and they were presented with their medals at the recognition banquet;
- The 2023 and 2024 CAP Fellowships were presented at Congress, where Fellows received a plaque and a new lapel pin designed and minted by Aiken Pewter in Nova Scotia;
- Student Advisory Council will be giving an update later in the agenda;



- The CAP helped to support a number of conferences over the past year including CUPC, CCUWiP, and the 2SLGBTQ+ in STEM Conferences (reports on CUPC and CCUWiP will come later in the agenda);
- The university prize exam was put on hold this year to restructure the program to have two exam categories – one for first year and cegep students, and one for upper year students. This was in response to feedback about the need to engage first year / cegep students with what is an upper level physics exam. We are also working with the CAP Foundation to be able to fund more cash prizes;
- 568 students across 108 schools wrote the high school prize exam; 25% were women;
- Thank you to faculty and students from the Department of Physics at Carleton University, and to members of the CAP Board who all helped to set-up and host a physics information and demonstration booth at the Canada-Wide Science Fair in May. Many physics students from Carleton volunteered at the booth. The CAP also sponsored two prizes at the Fair.
- Engaging with physicists outside academia was identified as a priority for the new CAP Strategic Plan;
- Led by our Director of Academic Affairs, Chitra Rangan (University of Windsor), physics department leaders met quarterly to discuss various issues of interest, including:
 - o local budgetary challenges and provincial funding.
 - o research grant funding and the elimination of Bin J (NSERC).
 - o increase in graduate scholarships without increase in grant amounts.
 - o open access requirements, data management plans, risk management plans, Sensitive Technology Research and Affiliations of Concern (STRAC).

Many of the CAP programs above, such as the lecture tour, prize exams, and student scholarships, are supported by funds raised by the CAP Foundation, the money raising arm of the CAP. We will hear more about their activities this year from Manu Paranjape later in the agenda.

CAP's current Strategic Plan ends this year and we are in the process of developing a new plan. Progress to date includes:

Survey of Canadian physicists and physics students: asking folks about how the CAP is doing and what could we do better in the future. A total of 330 individual responses were received (66% current members, 14% previous members, and 20% never been a member). Thank you for participating, and thank you to Barbara Frisken for pulling together the survey report. There are many excellent comments that were rolled up into overarching statements/themes. Thank you to all the members who completed the survey. The survey results will be released later in the summer.

Strategic Planning Session May 24/25 involved 24 highly engaged participants, including members of the Board, Advisory Council, Student Advisory Council, institutional members, and an external association. Thank you to all the participants for taking the time over 2 days to discuss the future of the CAP. A big thank you to Stephen Pistorius, former CAP President, for facilitating the planning session



with great care, focus and purpose. I learned this is the third CAP strategic plan that Stephen has helped with. I'd say we achieved what we were looking for in terms of input, advice and direction to frame up the new CAP objectives that will guide the association for the next 5 years. The timing is such that the Strategic Plan is to be released in January 2025.

Before I close, I would also like to express my thanks to people I have worked closely with during the past year as President,

- Thank you to a wonderful executive for supporting me throughout the year, Barbara Frisken, Martin Williams, Pierre Benard and Christine Kraus.
- Thank you to the members of the Board for your support and guidance.
- Thank you to Francine Ford and Ellen Molloy for your help and support.
- Thank you to Nicole Gibson and the other folks at Megram for all the work they do behind the scenes to keep the organization moving forward.
- And thank you to all the CAP members that I have interacted with over the past year, for your engagement and commitment to the CAP.

I have been a member of the CAP for my entire career. Over this time, I have experienced first-hand the personal and professional value of being part of a national physics community. The CAP has been a big part of my professional identity. It has been a real privilege to serve as CAP President this past year.

Please remember that this is a volunteer organization. One of the comments made at the strategic planning session 3 weeks ago was that our greatest strength is our community of motivated volunteers who give of their time and talents to support physics education and research across the country.

- If you would like to support the organization, please volunteer
- If you would like to see a new program, please volunteer

Thank you for your attention and support. We have allowed time for a few questions – so please let me know if you would like to ask a question by raising your Zoom hand.