

# COLLEGE ADMINISTRATOR

OCASA  
APACO

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The professional journal for Ontario college administrators

## CAAT Pension Plan: After the meltdown, where do we stand?



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- Find Your Great Work™  
June 22-24, Blue Mountain Resort
  - Ontario Privacy Commissioner on privacy

# Algonquin College cares about sustainability

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- \$6 million invested in energy efficiency projects
- Recycling program celebrates 15 years
- Greenpower program that unites faculty, staff and students
- Innovative “e-cottage” built at Heritage Insitute
- New sustainability plan underway

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**OCASA MISSION STATEMENT**

OCASA is the voluntary association that supports and promotes the interests and needs of the province's community college administrators. On behalf of its members, OCASA advocates professionalism, excellence, and learning for the betterment of the community college system.

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Steve Robinson  
OCASA President

“Our challenging times for college administrators are also a time ripe with opportunities to make a positive difference not only in our own college but in the system as well.”

## Changing times need strong leadership

There is a story about a leader who climbed the mountain to ask the wise sage to provide a response that would hold true in any situation – no matter how good or how bad. The answer given by the sage was simply, “this too shall pass”. This message serves as a good reminder at any time, but is particularly helpful during difficult times like these – they will pass, and better times will follow. The current economy at all levels (global, national, provincial, and local) also puts pressure on colleges as our core mandates become even more vital, and the strong leadership we provide as administrators is more critically needed than ever.

This issue of *College Administrator* explores this theme of leadership in response to challenges in several ways. On pages 16-19 you can read about our upcoming 2009 Annual PD Conference, featuring the dynamic **Michael Bungay Stanier** helping you Find Your Great Work™. Check out Michael’s provocative and inspiring *Great Work Movie* at <http://www.greatworkmovie.com/>, and then since you’re already on the web, surf over to newly refreshed OCASA website <http://www.ocasa.on.ca>, and register for this amazing conference.

Next you can check out our new feature column *Career Corner* with **Brian Desbiens**, past president of Fleming College. Brian will also be leading an online discussion forum on career development for college administrators in the members-only section of the website starting in April. Continuing the theme of leadership and challenges is guest columnist **Anne Sado**, president of George Brown College, who addresses some of these challenges from an administrative perspective. Other features in this issue include an update on the CAAT Pension Plan, a glimpse at some best practices of local Administrative Staff Associations (ASAs), member profiles, and of course, some news and events.

Perhaps the sage sitting on the top of the hill in the story above was actually a **Bob Dylan** fan and was only reiterating the age-old truth that “times they are a-changin’”. Our challenging times for college administrators are also a time ripe with opportunities to make a positive difference not only in our own college but in the system as well. There has never been a better or more important time than now to get involved (or more involved) with OCASA as part of your professional support network. Why is it so important now that we focus on finding our great work? Because we are the leaders we have been looking for. [c|A](#)





Steve Robinson  
Président de l'APACO

« Les heures difficiles que nous vivons recèlent des possibilités pour les administrateurs de collège d'exercer une action positive non seulement dans leur propre collège mais aussi dans l'ensemble du réseau. »

## Un solide leadership pour une époque en changement

Je me rappelle l'histoire du chef qui avait gravi la montagne pour demander à un vieux sage un conseil qui serait valable en toute situation, peu importe combien bonne ou mauvaise. La réponse a été, simplement : « Tout cela passera. » Ce message s'applique certes en tout temps, mais il est particulièrement pertinent dans les moments difficiles que nous connaissons actuellement : ils passeront comme le reste, et l'avenir sera meilleur. L'état actuel de l'économie, à tous les niveaux (mondial, national, provincial et local), pèse aussi sur les collèges du fait qu'il accentue l'importance vitale de notre mandat de base et que le solide leadership que nous apportons en tant administrateurs est plus que jamais crucial.

Le présent numéro d'*Administrateur de collège* explore plusieurs aspects du thème du leadership en réponse aux défis de l'heure. En pages 16-19, vous prendrez connaissance de la conférence annuelle 2009 de perfectionnement professionnel, dont le clou sera l'atelier *Find Your Great Work<sup>MC</sup>* donné par le dynamique **Michael Bungay Stanier**. N'hésitez pas à visionner son film *Great Work Movie*, à la fois déconcertant et inspirant, à <http://www.greatworkmovie.com/>. Et comme vous êtes déjà sur le Web, pourquoi ne pas vous rendre sur le site nouvellement rajeuni de l'APACO à <http://www.ocasa.on.ca> et vous inscrire à cette conférence extraordinaire?

Vous pourrez ensuite lire la nouvelle chronique *Le coin des carrières* de **Brian Desbiens**, ancien président du Collège Fleming, qui animera également, à partir d'avril, un forum de discussion en ligne sur la promotion professionnelle dans la section du site Web réservée aux membres. Toujours sur le thème du leadership et de ses défis, une chronique spéciale par **Anne Sado**, présidente du Collège George-Brown, examinera certains de ces défis dans une optique administrative. Le présent numéro comprend aussi un article qui fait le point sur le régime de retraite des CAAT, un aperçu de « pratiques exemplaires » d'associations locales du personnel administratif, des profils de membres et, bien sûr, des nouvelles et des événements.

Peut-être le sage de la montagne dont j'ai parlé plus haut était-il au fond un admirateur de **Bob Dylan** et ne faisait que répéter la vérité intemporelle que « le temps est au changement ». Les heures difficiles que nous vivons recèlent des possibilités pour les administrateurs de collège d'exercer une action positive non seulement dans leur propre collège mais aussi dans l'ensemble du réseau. Jamais il n'a été plus important, ni le moment plus propice, de participer (ou d'accroître votre participation) à l'APACO en tant qu'élément de votre réseau de soutien professionnel. Pourquoi est-il tellement important de chercher à confirmer la grande valeur de notre travail? Parce que nous sommes les leaders que nous recherchons. [c/a](#)





# An active ASA helps maximize your OCASA benefits

**W**hile OCASA membership can keep you plugged into provincial circuits, and can represent your interests in many forums, a local Administrative Staff Association (ASA) may be the key to maximizing the effectiveness of OCASA membership.

At the same time, the ASA may be a simple remedy for the headaches that many college presidents face.

At a few colleges, the local ASA is active and involved regularly in discussions with the college president on issues that affect administrators (and what issue does not?). Others have no local ASA. *College Administrator* wondered: with workload being a common issue everywhere, is the local ASA worth the effort, both for the college president and the OCASA representative and the ASA executive?

To find out, and to gain some information on how an active ASA does work, we invited both the college president and the local ASA college rep at five colleges to describe how they function, and to describe the benefits and challenges for all involved. We did so hoping that at least the two distinct perspectives would provide some useful insights.

For our purposes, an ASA is any group of OCASA members active at a single college to advance the OCASA goals of professionalism. Whereas OCASA does this provincially, the local ASA is active at the college level.

In this article, we share the responses from five colleges: Algonquin, Cambrian, Confederation, Fanshawe, and Georgian.

Linda Trott, OCASA College Representative for Georgian, sees the key element to be clarity of communication. “Stakeholder consultation is very important. If there are issues that impact either all employees or just administrators, there needs to be a vehicle for administrators to provide input. It is risky to not have a voice on important issues.”

Not surprisingly, Brian Tamblin, President of Georgian College, has similar views: “Our local president of OCASA sits on our College Council, which meets eight times a year. This committee focuses on the college’s budget, college procedures, supports the board of governors in strategic planning, and raises any issues of concern around the college’s operation. I have an open door policy for any of the OCASA executive.”

At the heart of the relations effectiveness of the ASA is regular meetings with the college president, where information and ideas flow both ways.

Brian Tamblin says: “The local OCASA chapter provides me with input on issues affecting job satisfaction for administrators, and administrators’ views of more general college issues. It is also a great forum where I can convey information and address any questions or concerns.”

Howard Rundle, President of Fanshawe College, says it is important to him that administrators at all levels be involved in the ASA. The staff association is “a ‘somewhat’ independent source of information and advice for junior management and a chance to have anonymous input and expression of concerns. This relies on senior management being members a well.”

Algonquin College President Robert C. Gillett agrees: “Having an active ASA gives the college a strong voice from administrative staff similar to the voices of our unionized personnel and allows the president the opportunity to share system challenges and explore local solutions.”

At Confederation, the meetings vary

## Benefits of an ASA

To senior management

1. Improves information exchange
2. Provides admin perspective on committees
3. Helps with employee retention, satisfaction.
4. Develops leadership capacity
5. Networking minimizes silos

To administrative staff

1. More PD opportunities
2. Improves information flow
3. Networking minimizes silos
4. Adds leadership opportunities
5. Provides a credible college voice

Complete guidelines can be found at the OCASA website: [www.ocasa.on.ca/asa](http://www.ocasa.on.ca/asa)

from formal meetings with the president and the board twice a year but include a policy of informal openness.

What do such meetings accomplish?

Patricia Lang, President of Confederation, says the benefits to her include "Receiving honest and direct feedback from Confederation OCASA members. The OCASA President sits on the College Planning Committee that offers advice and support to the President on college-wide policy issues, strategic planning and the budget. The College Planning Committee also includes the presidents of our faculty and

support staff unions, presidents of our student associations (SUCCI and OASA) as well as the senior team." OCASA college representative Sheryl Furlonger says, "In one word the relationship is excellent!"

Donna Gates, OCASA representative at Fanshawe, says: "A college benefits when its administrative staff works constructively together – when they (administrators) feel that they have a voice and that the president is listening to what they have to say; when they feel that they have more in common than disparate. Having a strong ASA

only benefits a college and brings no disadvantage." Howard Rundle agrees that the ASA helps "promote a climate of openness and fairness" for all administrative staff.

The most important part of the local ASA will likely be this relationship formed with the president and/or a committee of the board. Collegiality is essential in this relationship.

Some have seen the administrative representative on the board of governors as serving a similar function. This is of course not true. The administrative representative to a board serves

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## How OCASA members can start an ASA

1. Form leadership team (3-5 people)
2. Gain support from the college president
3. Communicate with all administrative staff
4. Plan an initial meeting of admin staff
5. Develop a constitution (OCASA has samples)
6. Elect officers, including OCASA board rep
7. Establish a business plan
8. Set up an account to manage fees, costs

the college as a whole, and votes accordingly.

The relationship between the ASA and the board, on the other hand, fosters dialogue as Linda Trott at Georgian says, to “work pro-actively and constructively with the President to address any issues before they can become problems.”

At Cambrian, College Representative Celina Cacciotti says, the ASA meets regularly with the president. “Prior to each meeting with the president we meet with local OCASA members and develop an agenda of topics we would like to discuss with the president. At our monthly meeting, the president will inform the group of topics so that we can pass that information on to our local OCASA group.” In other words, communication is a two-way street.

While local ASAs have existed at various forms at many colleges, “When the New Charter (2003) came into existence,” says Ms. Trott, “we actively ramped up to pull together a local ASA executive. The activity level and visibility of the ASA has varied over the years, but there has always been a local OCASA presence thanks to a small group of dedicated administrator volunteers.”

Each college ASA has its own challenge. At Fanshawe, says Ms. Gates, “The biggest ongoing struggle, I think,

is to overcome the notion that we are a ‘pseudo-union’ for administrators. Our members understand that we are something completely different. However, there are still some administrative staff who have not joined the ASA because they carry this belief. It can be difficult to communicate the differences sometimes.” Ms. Gates said she joined when she became an administrator after 15 years at the college “because I was impressed with they way the group seemed to come together on issues and projects that make our college a better place to work. The president seemed to be supportive of the ASA and he seemed genuinely interested in what we had to say.”

At Confederation, says Sheryl Furlonger, the issue is one common to the northern colleges: “Our local ASA ensures that all members, including those from our regional offices, are involved, and provides a venue for all Confederation OCASA members to mingle, meet and express their views.”

And then she adds one more challenge: “Finding the time, over and above the workload on all administrators’ desks, is always a challenge.” That challenge is likely echoed by administrators at all levels in all colleges, and that busy people with challenging

jobs make time to develop and cultivate an active ASA underscores its value. Confederation College President Patricia Lang agrees on the workload issue, along with the perennial issue of funding.

Algonquin College President Robert C. Gillett agrees the biggest challenge is “under-funding by government of the college system in terms of operational and capital grants as well as tuition fees.”

Sylvia Bernard, President of Cambrian College, adds that low funding pressure has never been felt more than at present. “Especially when we need to respond to the increased demand for more flexible access to college programs in an economic downturn.”

Identifying under-funding is one thing. But what is the role of an ASA in dealing with this?

Mr. Gillett: “ASA members need to speak out about all of the ramifications brought about by under-funding and how challenging it is to remain competitive against systems which are far better funded.” Tamblын agrees: “ASA can help by expressing their concerns to government through the provincial executive (OCASA).”

One perhaps surprising result of an active ASA – or not surprising, if you think about it – is the culture of professionalism that can be engendered whenever any group of administrators get together for any reason. From the foundation of networking, to the facilitation of professional development, individual careers can be built with such mortar. And, of course, the college as a whole benefits.

Benefits of an active local ASA to members, says Ms. Furlonger at Confederation, are “Regular communication and opportunities to meet; a very supportive President who invites OCASA representatives to self select for representation on college committees, hiring and interview panels, member of the board of governors and more. This is powerful and a great



Robert C. Gillett, Algonquin



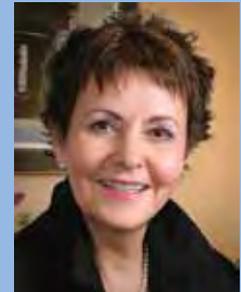
Brian Tamblын, Georgian



Sylvia Barnard, Cambrian



Howard Rundle, Fanshawe



Pat Lang, Confederation

resource for not only our local ASA, but for our president and senior team too.” Pat Lang agrees. “(The local ASA) is an opportunity for administrators to connect with provincial colleagues on a regular basis. (It) gives administrators the opportunity to provide feedback – which can be helpful in sharing responses or giving direction to their local ASA executive on matters affecting administrators across the college.”

Sylvia Barnard: “An active ASA provides networking and leadership development for administrators, thereby helping them be more effective in their roles.”

Brian Tamblin also sees additional untapped potential in professional development. “Masters and doctoral research that members do could be coordinated with Colleges Ontario’s and individual college’s priorities,” he said. Howard Rundle at Fanshawe suggests that the local ASA (and OCASA) could “co-sponsor with college HR-appropriate PD activities that members appreciate and that assists them develop.” (The PD factor fits well with OCASA’s provincial efforts in PD, through the annual PD Conference each June, and local

presentations.)

The need to communicate with new members of administration is, of course, practical, for often the new administrators replace retiring ASA and OCASA members. And while OCASA provides regular communication to members provincially, communicating to members locally takes time and effort. In particular “communicating to non-members the numerous benefits in becoming an OCASA member,” is both essential and difficult, according to Ms. Trott.

At Cambrian, Ms. Cacciotti sees the challenge as more personal: “taking the time to focus on issues that affect our careers and participate in professional development opportunities.”

But often both presidents and members appreciate the networking opportunities that ASA membership provides. At Cambrian, Sylvia Barnard, sees the chief advantage as “networking to share best practices for more efficient productivity, advocacy.” As an OCASA college representative, Donna Gates at Fanshawe agrees. “We are a large institution and the ASA has given me an opportunity to work with administrators

from areas that I would never get to work with otherwise. I really appreciate that. It brings us together in ways that allow us to see how similar our goals and objectives are even when our roles are so different.”

It is this focus on professionalism, stressed by OCASA provincially and emphasized by the local ASA, that can provide the most benefit to the college. Dr. Rundle at Fanshawe defines the main problem of colleges as “managing change” – and sees potential of the local ASA working with college human resources to develop “appropriate PD activities that members appreciate and that assist them to develop.”

Provincially, OCASA stresses professionalism and individual growth of members. Locally, the ASA seems to be the vehicle for applying that professionalism on a day-to-day basis, and for sharing the challenges. Or, as Patricia Lang says, the ASA provides an opportunity to “work together with the president and senior team to drive the vision and the values through the college.” [c|A](#)



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# CAAT PENSION *Plan*

THE MARKET DOWNTURN HURT, BUT BY HOW MUCH?  
AND WHAT MIGHT THAT MEAN FOR YOUR RETIREMENT?

By Duane McNair, OCASA Appointee, CAAT Pension Plan Board of Trustees



**T**here has been no shortage of media coverage on the state of employer pension plans over the past several years. The financial markets' downturn over the past year has caused considerable angst among those planning to retire within the next few years.

Pension plan assets have been hit hard and the market turmoil has been cause for concern that the "pension promise" – that retirees will receive the benefit payments promised to them while they worked and contributed part of their earnings to their defined benefit pension

plan – might not be honoured.

The Colleges of Applied Arts and Technology (CAAT) Pension Plan has not been immune to the market downturn. The market value of the CAAT Plan's assets incurred severe fluctuations and had dropped as much as 20% at one point in 2008. Asset values have recovered some of those losses since that low point.

But it is important to remember is that these asset value fluctuations do not have a direct effect on member contributions or benefit payments. As

members of a defined benefit pension plan, our pension benefits are based on years of service and pensionable earnings.

Investment returns on assets are important as they support the plan's objective of providing retirees with pension benefit payments while maintaining stable contributions. Achieving adequate investment returns to help meet the plan's obligations is both challenging and critical to the sustainability of the fund. In general, 80% of the plan's cash flow comes

# “BY ARTICULATING AND MEASURING THE RISKS FACED BY A PENSION PLAN’S INVESTMENT STRATEGY, THE CIO CAN MAKE MORE INFORMED DECISIONS TO ALIGN THE INVESTMENT STRATEGY WITH THE OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN.”

from its investment returns and the other 20% from employee and employer contributions. The plan strives to optimize its investment income while stabilizing its reliance on contributions.

CAAT Pension Plan members are in the second year of three years of planned contribution increases. Contributions were increased 1% on each January 1 of 2008 and 2009 and will be increased another 1% on January 1 of 2010. These increases were necessary to ensure that the CAAT Pension Plan remains fully funded to pay its pension benefits. Shortly after experiencing a financial market downturn earlier in the decade, the plan was faced with some difficult decisions on how to satisfy the provincial pension regulator, the Financial Services Commission of Ontario (FSCO), on how it would maintain its financial “health” and ensure it met its pension payment obligations. Since it is impossible to

control and predict the level of future investment returns the plan had limited options: increase contributions and/or decrease benefit payments.

The plan opted to implement a combination of the two choices. Three years of 1% contribution increases were implemented and the plan will evaluate its ability to provide indexation on benefit payments (for service years 2008 and later) on a year-by-year basis. An actuarial valuation (which is basically a pension plan’s “financial health” report card) was prepared as at January 1, 2008 and submitted to the FSCO. The valuation stated that the plan was fully funded. The valuation also determined that the plan could provide indexation on benefit payments for the 2008 service year with increases to be made January 1, 2009, 2010, and 2011.

The plan must submit an actuarial valuation every three years. Given that

the valuation for January 1, 2008 was filed, the next mandatory valuation is for January 1, 2011 (the plan may also choose to file before that date).

The CAAT Pension Plan is a multi-employer pension plan sponsored by Ontario’s 24 colleges of applied arts and technology and its employees. The plan is governed by a Sponsors’ Committee and a Board of Trustees.

The Sponsors’ Committee is responsible for pension plan amendments and advising when actuarial valuations should be prepared and submitted. The eight-member Sponsors’ Committee is comprised of four employer and four employee members. The employee members represent each of the three employee groups in the college system: Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) for support staff, OPSEU for academic staff and the Ontario College Administrative Staff Association

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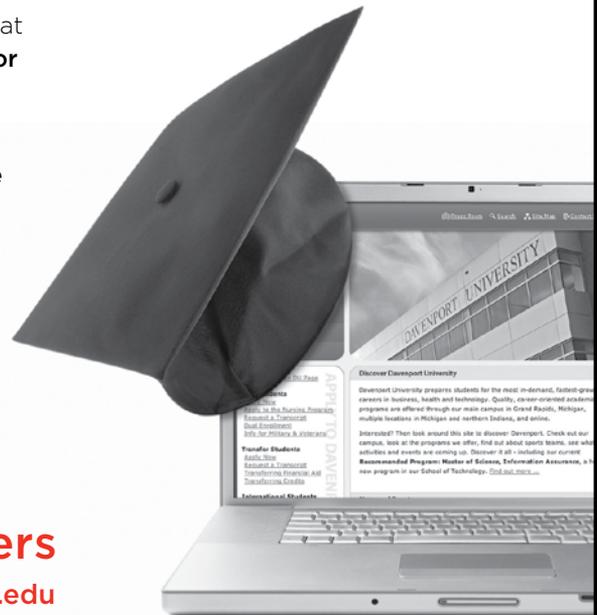
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(OCASA) for administrators.

The Board of Trustees is responsible for the administration of the plan and managing the plan's assets. The 12-member Board of Trustees is also comprised of both employer and employee representatives (OPSEU support staff, OPSEU academic staff and OCASA).

The Board of Trustees have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the plan's assets are invested appropriately while considering expected rates of returns from investment holdings and the benefit payment obligations. The management of investments and the administration of the plan are performed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and his staff. The plan's Chief Investment Officer (CIO) reports to the CEO and is responsible for monitoring and directing the day-to-day management of the plan assets.

The CAAT Pension Plan has a total complement of 37 staff and an operating budget of approximately \$27 million. About two-thirds of the operating budget is spent on investment management fees. The plan's assets are diversified and managed by external firms so that the plan may seek out the best management for each asset class. The CIO continuously monitors

manager performance while developing strategies to further optimize investment returns.

To help ensure that the plan's investment holdings are structured to meet benefit obligations, the plan has undertaken several initiatives over the past couple years. An asset liability study was conducted to evaluate the plan's asset mix policy (i.e. % of bonds, % of equities, % of cash, etc.). Basically, this study reviewed the types of investments held by the plan and their expected rates of return while considering the obligation to pay pension benefits.

Plan has engaged with leading risk management practitioners to develop a strategy to optimize investment returns and align investment assets with pensions plan liabilities. The plan now calculates and monitors the risk that the growth of its assets could fall short of the growth of its liabilities. They regularly measure the risk that its investment managers may perform worse or better than the portfolio benchmark for its asset class (for example, the S&P/TSX Composite Index). This information helps to guide the CIO and her staff to make the best decisions when

**“THE RISK MANAGEMENT DISCIPLINE HAS EVOLVED INTO THE USE OF COMPLEX STATISTICAL AND MATHEMATICAL FORMULAS AND RESEARCH INTO FINANCIAL MARKET BEHAVIOR.”**

The results of this study were used to develop a risk management framework for the plan's investment management. By articulating and measuring the risks faced by a pension plan's investment strategy, the CIO can make more informed decisions to align the investment strategy with the objectives of the plan. In order to implement these initiatives, the plan has researched alternative investment classes and made proposals to the board on those that best meet the objectives of the plan.

The premise of a pension plan's asset liability study is that in a perfect world, the cash in-flows of the plan's assets match the cash-outflows of its liabilities (i.e. pension benefit payments) and its operating costs. If this could be achieved in an affordable manner, pension plans would never be over- or under-funded. In reality, this cannot be accomplished affordably but the plan can strive to achieve as good a match as possible between its assets and liabilities. The CAAT Pension Plan undertook this study and the result was proposed adjustments to the investment asset mix that was a better match with its liabilities.

Risk management has become a ubiquitous term used in virtually every industry today. In the financial markets, the risk management discipline is very high profile and valued especially in today's volatile environment. Risk management in the pension plan industry now goes beyond ensuring proper diversification of assets such as the typical “60% equities, 40% bond portfolio mix”. The risk management discipline has evolved into the use of complex statistical and mathematical formulas and research into financial market behavior. The CAAT

investing the plan's assets.

As a result of the asset liability study and the implementation of a risk management framework, the plan has expanded its range of asset classes to enhance returns and provide a better match to its liabilities. There is now an allocation of up to 10% of plan assets in the infrastructure asset class. Infrastructure is an emerging asset class with great potential as governments around the world announce stimulus packages to revive the economy by repairing, replacing and modernizing highways, bridges, airports and utilities. Real estate is another new asset class for the plan. Up to 5% of its assets will be invested in commercial real estate properties diversified by property type, location and sector. Finally, the plan has recently initiated plans to invest up to 5% of assets in private equity. Recognizing that not all great companies list their stock to be traded on the public stock market exchanges, the plan has contracted with a leading private equity investment manager to enhance the fund's returns.

As the OCASA representative on the CAAT Pension Plan Board of Trustees, I have a fiduciary responsibility to act in the best interests of all the plan members. This includes ensuring that the plan is administered and operates effectively and ensuring assets are invested prudently. The Board of Trustees is comprised of individuals with diverse backgrounds who work together to ensure that the Plan keeps the “pension promise”. Given the initiatives undertaken over the past few years by the talented staff working at the plan, I am confident that we will keep the promise and continue to provide secure retirement income to plan members. **ClA**

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# Le régime DE RETRAITE DES CAAT

LA CRISE DES MARCHÉS BOURSIERS A FAIT MAL, MAIS COMBIEN? QUELS POURRAIENT ÊTRE SES EFFETS SUR VOTRE RETRAITE?

Par Duane McNair, représentant de l'APACO, Conseil d'administration du régime de retraite des CAAT



**D**epuis plusieurs années, la situation des régimes de retraite d'employeur n'a pas manqué de retenir l'attention des médias. La baisse des marchés financiers au cours de la dernière année a suscité une inquiétude considérable parmi ceux qui envisagent de prendre leur retraite d'ici quelques années.

La valeur de l'actif du régime de retraite a été durement touchée, et les bouleversements du marché ont même fait craindre l'impossibilité de tenir la « promesse de pension » – c'est-à-dire l'engagement de verser aux retraités la pension qui leur était promise lorsqu'ils travaillaient et qu'ils contribuaient une partie de leurs gains à leur régime de retraite à prestations déterminées.

Le régime de retraite des Collèges d'arts appliqués et de technologie (CAAT) n'a pas été à l'abri du fléchissement du marché. La valeur marchande du régime de retraite des CAAT a subi de fortes fluctuations, ayant même chuté de 20 % à un certain moment en 2008. Ces pertes ont été en partie résorbées depuis.

Il importe cependant de rappeler que ces fluctuations de la valeur de l'actif n'ont pas d'effet direct sur les cotisations

des membres ni sur le paiement des prestations de retraite. En tant que membres d'un régime de retraite à prestations déterminées, nos prestations de retraite sont basées sur les années de service et les gains ouvrant droit à pension.

Le rendement des éléments d'actif est important en ce qu'il soutient l'objectif du régime, qui est de verser aux retraités les prestations de retraite auxquelles ils ont droit tout en maintenant les cotisations à un niveau stable. Obtenir des rendements permettant de satisfaire aux obligations du régime est à la fois un défi et un élément critique de la viabilité du régime. De façon générale, le rendement du capital investi compte pour 80 % des rentrées de fonds du régime et les cotisations des employés et employeurs pour 20 %. Le régime vise à optimiser ses revenus d'investissement tout en stabilisant son recours aux cotisations.

Les cotisants au régime de retraite des CAAT en sont à la deuxième année d'un plan de trois ans d'augmentation des cotisations. Celles-ci ont augmenté de 1 % au début de 2008 et de 2009 et subiront une autre hausse identique le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2010. Ces augmentations ont

été nécessaires pour que le régime de retraite des CAAT demeure entièrement capitalisé de manière à pouvoir verser les prestations de retraite. Plus tôt dans la décennie, peu après avoir subi les contre-coups du recul du marché financier, le régime devait prendre des décisions difficiles pour donner satisfaction à la Commission des services financiers de l'Ontario (CSFO), qui est l'autorité provinciale de réglementation des fonds de retraite, quant aux moyens à prendre pour maintenir sa « santé » financière et s'assurer de pouvoir respecter ses obligations de versement de prestations de retraite. Comme il est impossible de contrôler et de prévoir le niveau des rendements futurs, les options qui s'offraient étaient des plus limitées : augmenter les cotisations, réduire les prestations ou encore les deux.

Le régime a opté pour une solution mixte, à savoir trois augmentations annuelles de 1 % des cotisations et l'évaluation, sur une base annuelle, de sa capacité de maintenir l'indexation des prestations (pour les années de service 2008 et ultérieures). Une évaluation actuarielle (qui est, au fond, le « bulletin de santé » d'un régime de retraite) au 1<sup>er</sup>

janvier 2008 a été effectuée et présentée à la CSFO. L'évaluation actuarielle a confirmé que le régime était entièrement capitalisé et a également déterminé que l'indexation des prestations pouvait être maintenue pour l'année de service 2008, avec des augmentations prévues le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier de 2009, 2010 et 2011.

Une évaluation actuarielle doit être produite tous les trois ans. Celle allant au 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2008 ayant déjà été présentée, la prochaine portera sur la période se terminant le 1<sup>er</sup> janvier 2011 (le régime peut aussi choisir d'en présenter une avant cette date).

Le régime de retraite des CAAT est un régime de retraite à employeurs multiples commandité par les 24 collèges d'arts appliqués et de technologie de l'Ontario et ses employés. Il est régi par un comité de commanditaires et un conseil d'administration.

**« EN PRÉCISANT ET EN MESURANT LES RISQUES AVEC LESQUELS DOIT COMPOSER LA STRATÉGIE D'INVESTISSEMENT DU RÉGIME DE RETRAITE, LE CHEF DES PLACEMENTS EST EN MESURE DE PRENDRE DES DÉCISIONS MIEUX INFORMÉES POUR ALIGNER LA STRATÉGIE D'INVESTISSEMENT SUR OBJECTIFS DU RÉGIME. »**

Le Comité des commanditaires, qui est responsable d'apporter les modifications au régime de retraite et de déterminer à quel moment les évaluations actuarielles devraient être préparées et présentées, est composé de huit membres, quatre qui représentent les employeurs et quatre les employés. Ces derniers représentent chacun des trois groupes d'employés du réseau des collèges : le Syndicat des employés et employées de la fonction publique de l'Ontario (SEEFPO) pour le personnel de soutien, le SEEFPO pour le personnel enseignant et l'Association du personnel administratif des collèges de l'Ontario (APACO) pour les administrateurs.

Quant au Conseil d'administration, il est responsable de l'administration du régime de retraite et de la gestion de son actif. Il est composé de 12 membres représentant soit les employeurs, soit les employés (le SEEFPO pour le personnel de soutien et le personnel enseignant et l'APACO).

Le Conseil d'administration a la responsabilité fiduciaire de s'assurer que les éléments d'actif du régime de retraite sont investis correctement tout en tenant compte des taux de rendement attendus des capitaux investis et des obligations de paiement de prestations. La gestion

des investissements et l'administration du régime sont assurées par le chef de la direction et son personnel. Le chef des placements du régime, qui relève du chef de la direction, est chargé de contrôler et de diriger la gestion courante de l'actif du régime.

Le régime de retraite des CAAT a un effectif total de 37 employés et un budget de fonctionnement d'environ 27 millions de dollars, dont à peu près les deux tiers sont consacrés aux frais de gestion des investissements. L'actif du régime de retraite est diversifié et sa gestion est confiée à des sociétés externes de telle sorte que le régime peut recourir aux meilleurs gestionnaires pour chaque catégorie d'actifs. Le chef des placements exerce un contrôle continu de la performance des gestionnaires tout en élaborant des stratégies d'optimisation du rendement des investissements.

Au cours des dernières années, plusieurs initiatives ont été prises dans le but de s'assurer que le portefeuille des placements du régime était structuré en fonction de ses obligations de paiement de prestations. Une étude actif-passif a été menée afin d'évaluer la politique de répartition de l'actif du régime (c'est-à-dire le pourcentage en obligations, en capital-actions, en liquidités, etc.). Cette étude a porté, pour l'essentiel, sur les types de placement faits par le régime et leur taux de rendement attendu, sans perdre de vue l'obligation de paiement de prestations de retraite. Les résultats de l'étude ont servi à élaborer un cadre de gestion des risques pour les investissements du régime. En précisant et en mesurant les risques avec lesquels doit composer la stratégie d'investissement du régime de retraite, le chef des placements est en mesure de prendre des décisions mieux informées pour aligner la stratégie d'investissement sur objectifs du régime. Pour mettre œuvre ces initiatives, de nouvelles catégories d'investissement ont été examinées et des propositions portant sur celles répondant le mieux aux objectifs du régime ont été présentées au Conseil d'administration.

L'étude actif-passif du régime de retraite avait pour prémisses que, dans un monde idéal, les rentrées de fonds s'ajoutant à l'actif du régime de retraite seraient égales aux sorties de fonds (c'est-à-dire les prestations de retraite) constituant son passif et aux coûts de fonctionnement. Si cela pouvait se réaliser de manière abordable, les caisses de retraite ne seraient jamais surcapitalisées ni sous-capitalisées. Dans la pratique cependant, cet idéal ne peut être atteint de façon abordable, mais on peut néanmoins chercher à obtenir la meilleure correspondance possible entre l'actif et le passif du régime. C'est pourquoi le régime de retraite des CAAT a entrepris cette étude, qui a abouti à des propositions d'ajuster la répartition des éléments d'actif afin d'obtenir un portefeuille qui correspondrait mieux au passif du régime.

De nos jours, la gestion des risques est devenue une expression des plus usitées dans à peu près tous les secteurs. Sur les marchés financiers, la gestion des risques est une discipline très en vue et des plus nécessaires, en particulier dans le contexte volatil qu'on connaît à l'heure actuelle. S'agissant de régimes de retraite, la gestion des risques, de nos jours, va bien au-delà d'une diversification appropriée des éléments d'actif, telle que la répartition typique « 60 % en capital-actions, 40 % en obligations » des portefeuilles, et s'appuie désormais sur des formules statistiques et mathématiques complexes et des recherches sur le comportement des marchés financiers. Le régime de retraite des CAAT a retenu les services d'éminents spécialistes de la gestion des risques afin de mettre au point une stratégie pour optimiser les rendements d'investissement et faire concorder l'actif et le passif du régime. Ils calculent et contrôlent le risque que la croissance de l'actif puisse être inférieure à celle du passif et mesurent périodiquement le risque que les gestionnaires d'investissements puissent obtenir des résultats pires ou meilleurs que le portefeuille repère pour leur catégorie d'actifs (par exemple, l'Indice composé S&P/TSX). Cette information aide à orienter le chef des placements et son personnel dans leurs décisions d'investissement.

À la suite de l'étude actif-passif et de la mise en œuvre d'un cadre de gestion des risques, le régime a élargi son éventail de catégories d'actifs afin d'améliorer les rendements et d'obtenir une meilleure

« LA GESTION DES  
RISQUES – S'APPUIE  
DÉSORMAIS SUR DES  
FORMULES STATISTIQUES ET  
MATHÉMATIQUES COMPLEXES  
ET DES RECHERCHES SUR  
LE COMPORTEMENT DES  
MARCHÉS FINANCIERS. »

correspondance avec son passif. Il est maintenant prévu d'affecter jusqu'à 10 % de l'actif du régime à la catégorie des biens d'infrastructure. Il s'agit d'une catégorie d'actifs émergente qui présente un grand potentiel du fait que, partout au monde, les gouvernements annoncent des programmes de réparation, de remplacement et de modernisation des routes, ponts, aéroports et services publics pour stimuler l'économie. L'immobilier est une autre catégorie d'actifs nouvelle pour le régime, qui investira jusqu'à 5 % de son actif dans des propriétés commerciales, diversifiées par type, par emplacement et par secteur. En dernier lieu, le régime a préparé récemment des plans pour investir jusqu'à 5 % de son actif dans le capital-actions privé. Sachant que ce ne sont pas toutes les entreprises les plus performantes qui sont cotées en bourse, le régime a retenu les services d'un éminent gestionnaire de fonds de capital-actions privé dans le but de rehausser les rendements du régime.

En tant que représentant de l'APACO au Conseil d'administration du régime de retraite des CAAT, j'ai la responsabilité fiduciaire d'agir dans les meilleurs intérêts de tous les membres du régime. Cela signifie, entre autres choses, de veiller à ce que le régime soit administré et fonctionne avec efficacité et que ses éléments d'actif soient investis prudemment. Le Conseil d'administration est composé de personnes ayant des antécédents variés qui travaillent ensemble pour faire en sorte que le régime puisse tenir la « promesse de pension ». Vu les initiatives prises ces dernières années par le personnel qui gère le régime avec tant de compétence, j'ai confiance que nous serons en mesure de tenir cette promesse et de continuer de garantir un revenu de retraite sûr aux cotisants au régime. [c|A](#)

## Letter to the editor

Please accept this note of thanks for the financial support OCASA has given me to pursue my degree. This commitment to your members is a testament to the professionalism and quality of your association.

With many thanks,

Laurie Neal

Administrative Assistant

Office of the Vice President

Corporate Services

Niagara College

Editor's note:

Laurie Neal was one of four to receive OCASA student bursaries last year. Applications for this year's bursaries are now being received. See the OCASA website for details: [www.ocasa.on.ca](http://www.ocasa.on.ca)

[www.sgmllaw.com](http://www.sgmllaw.com)

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June 22-24, 2009 • Blue Mountain Resort, Collingwood

## Schedule

| MONDAY, JUNE 22             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| 12:00-4:00 p.m.             | Board of Directors Meeting (lunch included)   |
| 5:00-5:30 p.m.              | OCASA Annual General Meeting<br>All OCASA members are invited   |
| 5:30-6:30 p.m.              | Welcome Reception   |
| 6:30-9:00 p.m.              | Dinner<br>Welcome: Georgian President, Brian Tamblyn<br>Presidents' Panel   |
|                             | After hours: visit the village  |
| TUESDAY, JUNE 23            |   |
| 8:30-10:00 a.m.             | Plenary: Michael Stanier, Find Your Great Work™   |
| 10:00-10:30 a.m.            | Networking break  |
| 10:30-12:00 p.m.            | Plenary: Michael Stanier, Find Your Great Work™   |
| 12:00-1:00 p.m.             | Lunch   |
| 1:00-2:30 p.m.              | Concurrent workshops  |
| 2:30-2:45 p.m.              | Networking break  |
| 2:45-4:00 p.m.              | Concurrent workshops  |
| 4:00-6:00 p.m.              | Leisure time: explore the village   |
| 6:00 p.m.<br>6:30-8:30 p.m. | Awards Banquet Reception<br>Awards Banquet  |
| 8:30 p.m.                   | After hours: visit the village  |
| WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24          |   |
| 7:45 a.m.                   | Breakfast   |
| 8:30-9:45 a.m.              | Plenary: Liability Insurance 101 – a primer for administrators<br>Lily Yu, CIP, Vice President, Marsh Canada Ltd. |
| 9:45 a.m.                   | Conference Closing  |
| 10:00 a.m.                  | Networking: golf or Scandinavian Spa  |
|                             | Travel home when fully relaxed!   |

## Plenary Sessions

### Monday, June 22 (Opening Dinner)

Presidents' Panel  
Barbara Taylor, Canadore College  
Ann Buller, Centennial College  
Don Lovisa, Durham College  
Brian Tamblyn, Georgian College  
Dan Patterson, Niagara College



## Tuesday, June 23

Michael Bungay Stanier

International speaker, author, and coach

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## Michael Bungay Stanier BA, LLB, M.Phil, CPCC



Michael Bungay Stanier is the founder and Senior Partner of Box of Crayons.

Michael was the 2006 Canadian Coach of the Year. He was a Rhodes Scholar at Oxford University, and holds a Masters of Philosophy from Oxford, and law and arts degrees with highest honors from the Australian National University.

He created *Get Unstuck & Get Going on the Stuff that Matters*, a multi-award-winning coaching program and tool that's being used in organizations around the world. Leading management thinker Peter Block says it has “a quiet political message in it that coaching is available to all of us and is not a profession but a way of being with each other.”

He also created *The Eight Irresistible Principles of Fun and The 5 3/4 Questions You've Been Avoiding*, short Internet

movies that have been seen by well over a million people in at least 175 countries around the world.

Michael's latest book, *Find Your Great Work*, is due out early 2009.

Michael is a popular speaker at business and coaching conferences and is speaking at the international conferences for: SHRM (June 2009), International Association of Facilitators (April 2009) and Etisalat Academy's 8th Middle East HR Conference and Expo. Recently he has spoken at the OD Network, and the International Coaching Federation.

Prior to founding Box of Crayons, Michael held senior positions in the corporate, consultancy and agency worlds in the UK, the United States and Canada.

*Michael's trips are carbon neutral, with the appropriate amount of his fee put towards offsetting the carbon cost.*

## Wednesday, June 24

### Lily Yu, CIP

Vice President, Government and Education Practice, Marsh Canada Ltd.

#### Liability Insurance 101 – a primer for college administrators

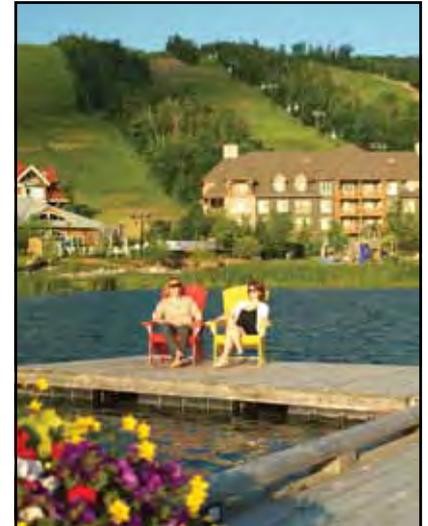


Employees are confronted with many challenges in the fulfillment of tasks in today's competitive workplace. This is made even more challenging by our litigious society. Learn how third-party liability insurance responds to potential liability exposures of the employee and the institution. In this workshop, participants

will learn the scope of coverage provided by various types of third-party liability insurance policies typically purchased by educational institutions including limitations of these policies and impact on employees' personal liability.

Lily Yu has over 15 years' insurance experience serving risk management clients in various industry sectors including manufacturing and transportation. She has handled several difficult placements and has become specialized in global placements engaging the UK market. During her career she has held the position Director, Risk and Insurance at a major construction company in Canada.

Lily has been with Marsh since 1997 and is currently Vice-President in the Government and Education unit. She acts as a Client Executive for several not-for-profit organizations including a large reciprocal for municipalities, as well as community colleges in Ontario.



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## Concurrent Workshops

Additional workshops are still being confirmed. Updates will be posted as available.

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- Take action to achieve results

During this session Rick McFadden will present the Revolutionary Performance Model and show you that coaching is a skill that can be learned and applied in the workplace.

### Facilitator: Rick McFadden MBA, CHRP, CRSP



Rick McFadden is an experienced human resources and coaching professional with over 20 years' consulting experience in the public and private sector. He has worked in a variety of industries in several provinces and is a professor at Georgian College.

In addition to his work experience he holds undergraduate degrees in Labour

Relations and Organizational Sociology from McMaster University and an International MBA from the University of New Zealand.

Over the past several years Rick McFadden has embarked on a new journey and he has changed his consulting practice to focus on professional business coaching. This shift of perspective has allowed him to assist organizations and individuals to reach beyond their performance expectations.

### Playing to Your Strengths – Managing Your Weaknesses

We all possess basic human capabilities in order for us to focus, prioritize, organize and manage our time, control our emotions. Why do some people excel in some of these areas and struggle in others? We each have a unique combination of strengths and weaknesses. Would you like to learn more about your strengths how to put them to use so you can be more successful?

In this session you will complete a powerful self-assessment tool: the Executive Skills Profile (from the bestselling book, *Smarts: Are We Hardwired for Success?*). After answering 60 brief questions, you will get an accurate picture of your personal mix of assets and shortfalls. In this interactive session you will work with Marcus Buckingham's research and learn how to play to your strengths, manage around your weaknesses, and effectively manage these skills in others.

### Facilitator: Anne-Marie McAllister, Manager, Organizational Learning, Healthy Workplace Leader, Georgian College



Anne-Marie McAllister is a registered nurse and workshop facilitator. She has taught in the nursing program at Georgian College for 13 years. While teaching in the nursing program she was often asked to facilitate workshops on teaching and learning, cooperative learning and team building. She

has an undergraduate degree in adult education and is an expert in cooperative learning. She recently won the Board of Governors Award for Professional Development at Georgian College. On a leave from Georgian College for one year, Anne-Marie worked in Staff Development at the Royal Victoria Hospital as the Program Educator for Hospital Staff. In October of 2003 Anne-Marie was the successful candidate for a position in Staff Training and Development at Georgian College. Anne-Marie's workshops are fun, energetic and interactive.

### Career Development

Expert panelists pass on their tips for managing your career in the college environment.

Panelists: TBA

### CMU/OCASA Research Award

**Recipient will offer a concurrent workshop on their research.**  
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Canadian Mental Health Association Workplace Influence is a three-hour presentation intended for all employees. It engages the audience in considering how our responses to workplace challenges and stressors can affect our well-being and the well-being of those around us. The information presented is based on research into the factors that influence our mental health at work. We ask the participants to consider ways in which they can positively influence both their own mental health and that of their co-workers. ***The objective is for employees to be more aware of how to take control of their own responses at work, how to reduce stress from things outside their control, and how to help co-workers who seem to be losing control.***

## Accommodation

All registrants must book their own accommodation through Blue Mountain Resort.

### Reservations, call: 1-877-445-0231

Conference Code for special rates: **32051F**

For full information about guest rooms, visit [www.bluemountain.ca](http://www.bluemountain.ca)

Rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis with availability guaranteed **until May 21.**

### Blue Mountain Inn:

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### Village at Blue Suites:

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Bachelor \$165.00 (\$185.13/unit/night taxes included)

Blue Mountain cancellation policy: all changes to reservations require 7 days' notice (including early departure, change in dates or cancellation). Additional fees may apply. For Conference Cancellation Policy, see Cancellation Policy below.

## Leisure Activities

The Blue Mountain Resort offers a variety of leisure activities on and off-site. Come early, stay late – bring your family to take advantage of these activities.

Summer activities at **Blue Mountain**: check out the Le ScandinaVe Spa, hiking, caving, rock climbing and more!  
<http://www.blueactivities.com/summer/index.html>

Call for further information about activities: 1-800-955-6561

Georgian hosts highly recommend taking in **Le ScandinaVe Spa** – no reservations required, great value. Come early Monday and relax before the conference begins.  
<http://www.scandinaveblue.com/>

**Monterra Golf Course Rates** (includes green fees, motorized cart and all taxes)

Saturday to Noon Sunday: \$90.00

Noon Sunday to Friday: \$85.00

If you are interested in booking a tee-off time with other registrants for either Monday or Wednesday, please check off the appropriate box on the registration form. Otherwise, feel free to book your own tee-off time (be sure to tell them you're attending the conference for these rates).

TEE TIMES AND INFO: 705-445-0231 or 877-445-0231

<http://bluemountain.ca/golf.htm#3>

## Cancellation Policy

Registration fees less a \$50.00 administration fee will be issued for cancellations received by June 1, 2009. **No refunds will be issued after this date.** If you are unable to attend, you may substitute someone in your place. All cancellations and substitutions must be received in writing (email is fine). Refunds will be processed after the conference. [c/a](#)

An advertisement for Georgian College. The top half features a green and blue curved banner with the word "GEORGIAN" in large white letters and a leaf icon, with the tagline "YOUR COLLEGE · YOUR FUTURE" below it. The bottom half shows a man and a woman sitting in a car. The man is wearing a light-colored button-down shirt and the woman is wearing a dark top. The background is a dark interior of a car. The website address "www.georgianc.on.ca" is written in white at the bottom.

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# Educational institutions can disclose personal information in emergencies and other urgent circumstances

By Ann Cavoukian, Ph.D.

Information and Privacy Commissioner for the Province of Ontario



It is important to know that, in emergency situations, Ontario privacy laws do **not** prohibit colleges, universities or other educational institutions from responsibly disclosing a student's personal information – including information about their mental, emotional and or other health conditions – to parents or others who may be able to help in a crisis.

Ontario's *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA)* and the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of*

*Privacy Act (MFIPPA)* permit the disclosure of personal information "in compelling circumstances affecting the health or safety of an individual." They also allow for disclosure "in compassionate circumstances, to facilitate contact with the spouse, a close relative or a friend of an individual who is injured, ill or deceased."

Ontario's third privacy Act, the *Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)*, also allows for the disclosure of personal health information if the health information custodian "believes

on reasonable grounds that the disclosure is necessary for the purpose of eliminating or reducing a significant risk of serious bodily harm to a person or group of persons." *PHIPA* also permits disclosure "for the purpose of contacting a relative, friend or potential substitute decision-maker of the individuals, if the individual is injured, incapacitation or ill and unable to give consent personally."

It was clear after the Virginia Tech campus shootings – when story after story blamed privacy laws for the tragedy, even though a review panel's report made it clear that privacy laws were not to blame – that some officials did not understand what they could do in an emergency situation. Here in Canada, after the separate suicides of two Canadian students (one in B.C. and one in Ontario), privacy laws were again incorrectly blamed in some quarters.

This led to my collaborative work with David Loukidelis, British Columbia's Information and Privacy Commissioner, which resulted in the production of the *Practice Tool for Exercising Discretion: Emergency Disclosure of Personal Information by Universities, Colleges and other Educational Institutions*.

In the *Practice Tool*, Commissioner Loukidelis and I send a clear message that when education or health professionals believe there is a significant risk of serious bodily harm, privacy laws **do**

**not** prevent schools from contacting parents or others.

While drafting the *Practice Tool*, Commissioner Loukidelis and I both recognized that the decision to notify someone's family without the individual's consent can be extremely difficult, requiring very sound judgment. We understood that sometimes decisions have to be made quickly and that the facts may not be as clear as one would like. But if someone uses common sense and in good faith discloses personal information in such circumstances, they will find that my office (and that of the B.C. Commissioner) readily understands the difficult decision that they faced. Clearly, privacy is important, but preserving life is more important. I would like to emphasize that point: *Life trumps privacy and our laws reflect that reality.*

In terms of practical application, the *Practice Tool* offers guidance in handling personal information in critical situations, such as: being prepared with a clear policy and procedure including providing notice to students; having accurate emergency alert information, including an emergency disclosure contact; establishing clear decision-making roles and responsibilities; and having in place a program to educate, train and evaluate staff. Further, the *Practice Tool* also offers advice for developing policies to deal with emergencies, including: knowing who to call; how to proceed in emergencies; deciding the manner and scope of disclosing information; and how to properly notify and document disclosure of information. And, the *Practice Tool* provides three example scenarios in which this kind of emergency disclosure may occur.

I urge those responsible for the health and safety of others to read our *Practice Tool for Exercising Discretion: Emergency Disclosure of Personal Information by Universities, Colleges and other Educational Institutions*. Someone's life may depend on it.

The *Practice Tool* can be downloaded from the IPC's website at [www.ipc.on.ca](http://www.ipc.on.ca), or go to the OCASA website and follow the links: [www.ocasa.on.ca](http://www.ocasa.on.ca). [c|A](#)



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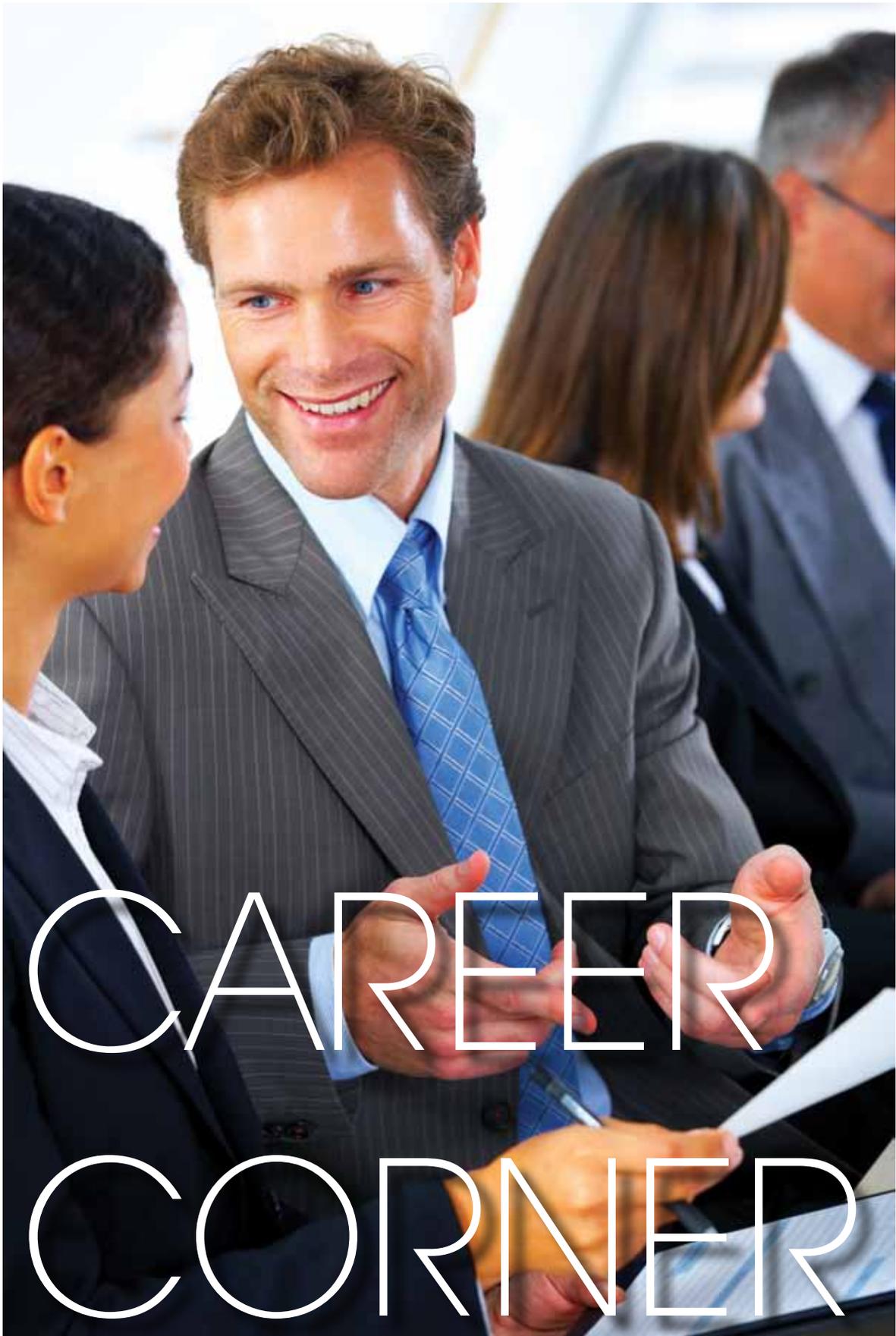
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# CAREER CORNER

# Career development for College Administrators: Ask for feedback

By Brian Desbiens

One piece of simple yet powerful advice can often determine who gets a promotion and who does not. It is key to success at all levels but becomes even more crucial the higher you go in administration and the broader your responsibilities.

It is simply this: asking for feedback from others to help you recognize your Blind Spots.

Some may remember that old management training exercise called the Jo Harry Window, which illustrates the need to disclose yourself to others by asking for feedback. Jo Harry contended that others know things about us that we do not know about ourselves: our Blind Spots. These Blind Spots could signal areas of potential difficulty. Usually, they are easily corrected if we are open to feedback.

In my executive search work I have found most applicants do not seek feedback after interviewing for senior positions. Only one applicant is successful in each search, yet many quality candidates come forward. For everyone, this should be a learning experience.

Recently, our firm completed a CFO and CEO search for a college. Only one-third of the long-listed candidates asked for feedback. This tells me a lot about who is truly interested in learning and who simply wants another position.

We always ask references whether a person is a lifelong learner who can accept feedback. The best test, though, is whether a candidate will ask for feedback – even when successful. Interviewing for senior positions is an intense experience full of opportunity to learn. Take advantage of those special learning moments.

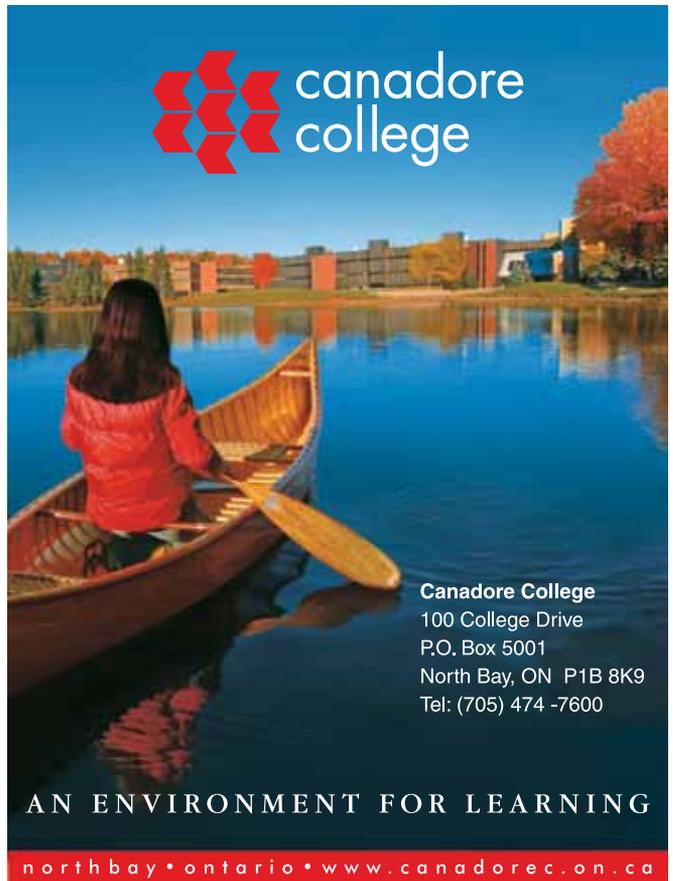
Once, at a training session at the Kempenfelt Centre in Barrie, I had the opportunity to hear Dr. Charles Pascal speak. He made an excellent presentation and as he was leaving, I got up my courage and introduced myself to him. I commented on how outstanding I found his insights. He thanked me but asked a favour: could I help him by suggesting one thing upon which he could improve? I was shocked. He was a leader in our system – a college president – and I was just another administrator, but he wanted my feedback. But what he really wanted was an honest assessment of how he could improve and learn.

I have since become very good friends with Charles and see him very much as a role model. I recently served on the EQAO board which he chaired. At the beginning of each meeting he had a check-in round table agenda item. This gave members a

chance to speak about themselves or about some learning or insight regarding our work at EQAO. At the end of each meeting he had a standing item, a meeting evaluation, which usually consisted of a one-word or phrase answer on our effectiveness that day or how we could improve. Simple, but powerful.

To me, the core to any career planning is the first question: are you open to continuous learning? Most of us would reflexively say yes, but do we practice it overtly? Are you open for feedback? Do you actively seek help from all levels and from every opportunity? When was the last time you asked (and received) honest feedback?

Do you create a culture in your work teams where it is safe to give feedback? Do you model this behavior to others both by



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“If you are seeking a promotion, first try asking those who work for you for feedback. It is a great risk with a lot of potential reward. It can also lead to greater job effectiveness.”

giving and receiving feedback constructively?

If the answer to these questions is yes, then well done! If it is sometimes, then welcome to where most of us fall. But if you are hesitant or just plain don't think you need such advice, then career planning for your job promotion or taking on more responsibility needs to be reconsidered until you are ready. Because we know that things change and we need to be open to learning and adapting, it is critical that we remain open. We also know that the higher you go, the broader your responsibilities become, so most likely you will have to rely on others for expertise, problem solving and decision making.

If you are seeking a promotion, first try asking those who work for you for feedback. It is a great risk with a lot of potential reward. It can also lead to greater job effectiveness.

Performing better at your current job is the best preparation for future opportunities. When you do apply, you will be able to answer anyone's questions about your learning style, or your commitment to continuous improvement.

But most important, isn't that what colleges and life are all about: learning and reaching our potential? [CIA](#)

*Brian Desbiens is an Associate Partner, Promeus Executive Search, and Past President of Sir Sandford Fleming College. He began his career in 1968 as a counsellor at St. Clair College in Windsor.*

*To comment on this column, or offer suggestions for future columns, contact Brian at [ca@ocasa.on.ca](mailto:ca@ocasa.on.ca) or call Brian directly at 1-705-799-6777.*



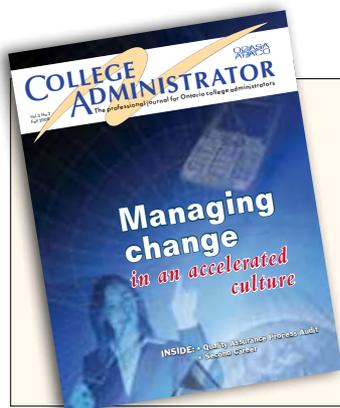
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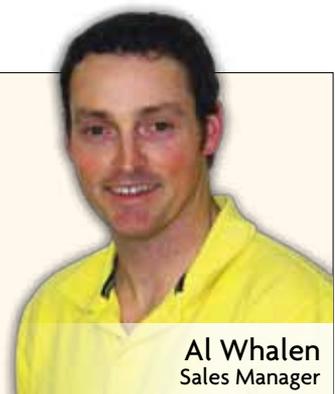
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## Repositioning colleges

By Anne Sado, President and CEO, George Brown College

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### Having just returned from another successful Colleges Ontario conference,

I find myself revisiting the variety of reactions – from inspiration to introspection – that the conference so aptly inspires.

While the inspiration was clearly on display for all to see, I suppose my nature is drawn back to focus on many of the same challenges our system has faced for as long as I've been here – and I would suspect as long as Ontario's community colleges have existed.

There continues to be much hand-wringing over these questions:

Why are we not viewed as a critical and important pillar of post-secondary education? Why don't we have a more streamlined system of credential recognition and credit transfer with our university counterparts? And most importantly, why are we having such difficulty reducing our funding gap?

The value of the college system is so apparent to so many of us – especially those attending the conference – that we simply can't understand why we aren't breaking through with some of our most important constituencies. I can't help but conclude that despite continuous efforts, we just haven't made a compelling enough case.

But this year's conference revealed some themes and specific actions that I believe could help us finally start to make some headway – especially with parents and the province. I see five key initiatives that we should pursue as a system if we are to see the kind of progress we need to make.

The first was offered by Minister Milloy himself (Hon. John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities). He was quite forthright in challenging us to be much more specific about how we define the funding disparity and how we benchmark our success. We clearly need better, simpler and more resonant metrics that regularly demonstrate our impact upon the provincial economy. If our secondary counterparts use class sizes and test scores to benchmark their progress and the health care system uses wait times and hospital beds, what are the key outputs we should be using to justify our funding?

Second, we clearly need to do a much better job engaging with the political system, especially at the grassroots level. Ontario's colleges are deeply rooted in the many communities of this province and all of us need to become more visibly involved in local political party activities, engaging with local members of the provincial parliament and opposition

candidates and building stronger political relationships that remind our local members of our importance in their ridings.

Again, our counterparts in the secondary system have made this a best practice, largely in reaction to challenges to their system that were presented by the Progressive Conservative government in the late '90s. They got active and have clearly had an impact.

A third effort, which is already well under way, is the need to make changes to our system that streamline pathways between the college and university system to appropriately recognize the value of credentials earned in both systems. Not only will this help us demonstrate our value much more clearly to potential students, but it will reduce the economic strain on the system, the student, and our overall economy.

I was encouraged to hear presenter after presenter at the conference praising the system for its relevance and accomplishment. And that brings me to my fourth recommendation: we need to keep doing what we're doing well. I firmly believe that colleges are more flexible and better equipped than any other system to deal with both the current economic challenges and the rapid demographic changes in our society.

Over the next 20 years our province will undergo a metamorphosis of dramatic proportions. The baby boomer generation will be settled into retirement. The average age will be 43. Natural population growth will move into negative digits, propelled upward only by the mass influx of immigrants from all corners of the globe. These new Canadians are bringing with them a breadth of education, and colleges are perfectly positioned to support the re-certification and recognition of their qualifications.

“The value of the college system is so apparent to so many of us – especially those attending the conference – that we simply can't understand why we aren't breaking through with some of our most important constituencies.”

“I firmly believe that colleges are more flexible and better equipped than any other system to deal with both the current economic challenges and the rapid demographic changes in our society.”

The province will rely on colleges to ready the flood of new immigrants, 40 per cent of whom arrive in Canada with an unrecognized Bachelor or Master’s degree, and 11 per cent with a non-university diploma, for the Canadian workforce.

And what of the plight of the Southern Ontarians whose employment fate has been sealed both by the current economic climate and the decline of the traditionally sturdy manufacturing sector? They too will likely have to reinvent their careers through focused retraining that will allow them to integrate themselves into the new economy. We have been in this business for a long time and will

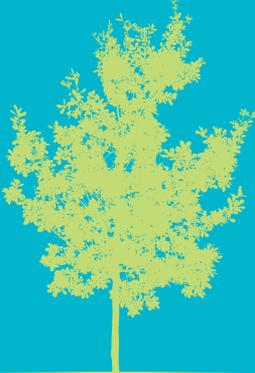
be looked to by both those potential students and the province to ensure these affected workers experience a quick turnaround and return to productive new roles.

Finally, perhaps an obvious sixth recommendation: we must do a much better job of telling our story. Colleges have changed, and not only in terms of the diversity of the students we are serving. We are so much more than trade schools today, but I find that even many of our supporters still see us through that one-dimensional lens. We are now providing our students with the preparation they need to access a new economy – in technology, digital media,

design, and business to name just a few examples.

A recent survey we commissioned among employers in the Greater Toronto Area showed that more than three-quarters agree that college graduates are just as prepared for the workforce as their university counterparts. So clearly this important constituency is seeing the fruit of our labour in the caliber of the graduates we provide them. But we clearly have much to do to similarly position colleges in the minds of parents and government.

The good news is that we are starting from a remarkably strong base. But there is still much work to do. [CIA](#)



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# Membership News

## Georgian College faculty member receives first CMU-OCASA outstanding research award

A faculty member from Georgian College has been named recipient of the first annual CMU-OCASA Outstanding Research Award.

**Martha J. MacEachern** of Georgian is the award recipient for her Master's Degree paper *Impact of Structured Orientation Programs on the Teaching Practice of Part-Time Faculty in the Ontario Community College System*.

The award is sponsored jointly by Central Michigan University (CMU) and Ontario College Administrative Staff Association (OCASA) to recognize the high quality of research being conducted in Ontario by CMU graduate students that impact the development of the colleges. This Outstanding Research Award will be presented annually to Ontario students in CMU's Master of Arts degree in Education, with a Community College concentration, for conducting outstanding research related to Community Colleges in Ontario. Nominees are first selected by CMU faculty with the OCASA review panel selecting the final recipients.

Honorable Mention this year was **Ruth Hickey**, Manager Open Learning Centre, Humber Institute, for a paper entitled *Online Student's Perception of Interaction in an Online Course*.

Other nominees included **Tracy L. Goode**, ESL, Georgian College, with a paper entitled *Conducting A Good Practices Audit with Community College ESL Faculty*; **Robert Richardson**, Photo Technical Centre, Humber Institute, with *The Learning Spaces are the Message*; and **Louise Baird** of D. Gary Gibson & Associates with *The Development of a Student Identity as a Means of Reducing Student Attrition*.

The Capstone abstracts of all nominees are available at [www.ocasa.on.ca](http://www.ocasa.on.ca). c|A

## OCASA launches redesigned website

OCASA has launched a revised website with improved functionality, expanded networking opportunities, discussion boards – and improved security.

The new website, announced recently to OCASA members, provides individual secure sign-in for members. This will allow access to an improved Members Only section for discussion boards, access to archived material, and research material and news items.

The revamped site is the third major revision since it was launched in 1999.

A second re-design, which also introduced the current logo and image revision, was completed in 2004.

OCASA invites reaction to the website – what you like, what you don't – and has plans to add increased functionality in response to needs expressed by members.



A significant change in the new site is the ability to allow each member to set his or her own user ID and password. This feature is key to the site's ability to allow members to take part in online discussions in a secure environment.

Comments on the website should be directed to [info@ocasa.on.ca](mailto:info@ocasa.on.ca) c|A

## OCASA AGM to be held in Collingwood



The Annual General Meeting of OCASA will be held June 22 in Collingwood, immediately prior to the 2009 OCASA Professional Development

Conference. The newly formed board of directors will meet for the afternoon on that day, followed by the meeting of the members.

The OCASA Pension Corporation will also hold its annual general meeting at the conclusion of the board of directors' meeting. Reports from OCASA's appointees to the CAAT Pension Plan will be received at that time.

Full details about all of these meetings will be posted on the OCASA website. c|A

## Award nominations invited

OCASA invites nominations for two nominations for presentation at the OCASA AGM in June: the OCASA Distinguished Administrator Award and the OCASA Volunteer Recognition Award. Deadline for both nominations is April 30, 2009.

OCASA Volunteer Recognition Award pays tribute to administrators within an Ontario College, who have made a significant contribution to the work of OCASA at the local, regional and/or provincial level. The contribution outcome may be complete or in progress. Nominees have volunteered time and energy without expectation for compensation, nominees have represented OCASA's mandate, and nominees have the support of OCASA peers.

OCASA Distinguished Administrator Award pays tribute to an administrator within an Ontario College who has demonstrated distinguished administrative performance at the local or regional level. The nominee is a member of good standing who has supported OCASA's mandate.

For more information on both awards visit the OCASA website: [www.ocasa.on.ca/ocasa/awards](http://www.ocasa.on.ca/ocasa/awards)

Both awards will be presented the Annual Awards Banquet on June 23. The banquet is held during the Annual PD Conference taking place at the Blue Mountain Resort, June 22-24. c|A





## Retirees may join OCASA for life

OCASA membership for life is available for retiring members. For a single one-time payment of \$100, members may continue their membership in OCASA. For more information, contact the OCASA office: [info@ocasa.on.ca](mailto:info@ocasa.on.ca) or call 1-866-742-5429.

Retiree members retain access to all OCASA information to members, including access to the members-only section of the website; all infobulletins; subscription by mail to *College Administrator*; and opportunities to continue networking and to be involved in mentoring with active members.

OCASA has a direct voice on the CAAT Pension Plan through representatives to both the CAAT Pension Plan Sponsors' Committee and the CAAT Pension Plan Board of Trustees. As well, OCASA appoints an additional representative to the Board of Trustees through rotation with two OPSEU reps. This position is named by OCASA for three years out of every nine, and may be held by a retiree.

Through the Sponsors' Committee membership, OCASA has a veto on some issues concerning the plan. OCASA membership is the only direct voice in the CAAT Pension Plan available to administrators. [c|A](#)

## OCASA membership hits new high

OCASA membership at the end of February set a new record at 719 members. Despite a number of retirements, total membership has continued to increase since the launch of *College Administrator* in the fall of 2007.

OCASA membership is open to any full-time, part-time or contract administrator in the 24 Ontario community colleges. For more information on membership, or for a membership application, visit the OCASA website:

[www.ocasa.on.ca](http://www.ocasa.on.ca) [c|A](#)

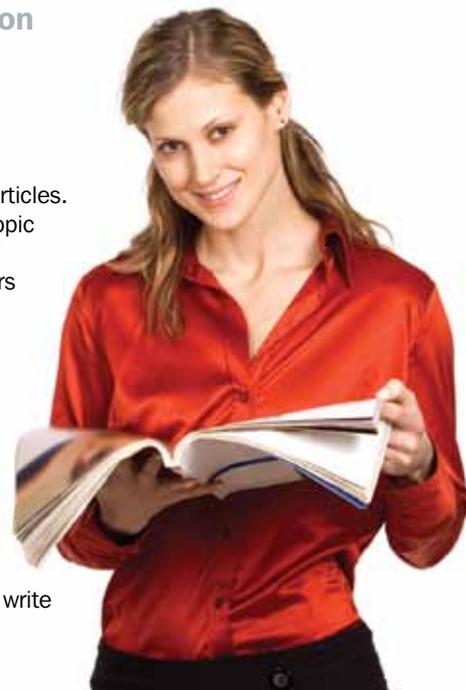


## Have a suggestion for a CA article? Let us know

*College Administrator* welcomes queries and suggestions for future articles. If there is a particular topic you believe would be of interest to administrators on Ontario Colleges, write us a brief note about the topic. If you have developed some background information on the topic you could share that with us and suggest one or more people who you believe might be best suited to write such an article.

If you are really well versed on an issue and would like to share your knowledge, *College Administrator* welcomes submissions. If you would like to contribute an article send a brief query on the topic (200 words or so) outlining the topic. The query helps editors review the suitability for publication before you've committed the work involved in producing the article, and helps avoid duplication of effort.

Send all queries and suggestions to: [CA@ocasa.on.ca](mailto:CA@ocasa.on.ca) [c|A](#)



## CA invites letters to the editor

*College Administrator* welcomes feedback and comments on all content in this magazine. If you disagree with any of our writers, or would like to expand on the topic, write a letter to the editor.

*College Administrator* also welcomes suggestions for content, and welcomes queries.

Send your comments to [CA@ocasa.on.ca](mailto:CA@ocasa.on.ca). [c|A](#)

# Marathon woman

When Susan Atkinson is not working as the manager of media relations at Sheridan College, you can probably find her running.

The Oakville native has always enjoyed running, but in 2001 she entered her first marathon “on a whim.”

“It was painful because I wasn’t properly trained, but a couple of years later I got back into it and have been running two marathons a year for the past several years,” she says.

She has completed nine marathons to date, including the Toronto, Miami, Mississauga, Ottawa, Erie, Boston, and Paris marathons. Running in the Boston marathon was especially thrilling for Atkinson. “Getting into Boston is a dream goal for runners, as it’s the most historic and prestigious North American marathon. I had to train very hard to meet the qualifying time, but the Boston experience was well worth the extra effort.”

The Paris marathon was not her best performance-wise, but was memorable for the beauty of the locale. “I was one of more than 30,000 runners, and the route took us by countless historic landmarks. It was a great way to see the city.”

Atkinson has discovered that small town marathons also have their charms. The Erie Marathon in Erie, Pennsylvania, stands out. The race is run entirely on Presque Isle State Park, a 3,200 acre peninsula that extends into Lake Erie. “Despite the fact that it poured rain throughout the race, the route’s natural beauty and the friendliness of the organizers and volunteers made this a fun event,” she says.

Erie was also memorable for Atkinson because it was her husband John’s first-ever race – he completed the half marathon.



Susan Atkinson, Manager, Media Relations, Sheridan College

He’s run two more half marathons since then. “While he’s not exactly turned into an avid runner, he does appreciate the health benefits and enjoys the sense of accomplishment – I’m hoping that he will run his first full marathon with me this fall.”

Juggling the demands of work and home life (the couple has two school-aged children), means that Atkinson often hits the road before dawn. “I love starting off the day with a run – it’s invigorating, and I can use the time to mull over work assignments and organize myself mentally for the day ahead.”

As someone who has always trained alone, Atkinson decided to try something different this past winter, and joined a running clinic. “Training in the winter can be tough when you’re dealing with sub-zero temperatures and snow and ice,” she says. “I run twice a week with this group, and the camaraderie is great – we really push and support each other.” Her next marathon is in Pittsburgh in May. [CIA](#)

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