

2002 - 2003

**College of Alberta Psychologists**

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## COUNCIL

The Council, which is the governing board of the College, consisted of 12 voting members: 10 chartered psychologists elected by the membership and two public members appointed by the provincial government. Five *ex officio* committee members also sat on Council, along with two officials and one recording secretary (all non-voting).

The Council held six meetings in the 2002-03 fiscal year. Meetings were open to the public, and dates and locations were advertised on the CAP website and in *The CAP Monitor*, the College's newsletter.

### Key accomplishments in the 2002-03 fiscal year

Activities focused on three major areas: improving communications with members, providing guidance to the profession and committee activity.

#### 1. Improving communications with members

Meetings were held with psychologists at:

- The Family Centre
- Edmonton Public Schools
- Corrections Canada
- Alberta Mental Health Board
- Medicine Hat

Two public meetings were held for those interested in becoming provisional psychologists, one in Edmonton and one in Calgary.

The College website continues to be a source of information to CAP members and the public, as it includes updates to the guidelines and bylaws, meeting dates, access to the governing legislation, a member's registry and links to other useful websites.

The College published three issues of its newsletter, *The CAP Monitor*.

#### 2. Providing guidance to the profession

Guidance to the profession was assisted by the work of the Practice Review Committee. Details of the work done are outlined in the report of the Practice Review Committee.

### 3. Committee activity

Details of the extensive work done by numerous College committees are provided in the individual committee reports.

#### Key objectives for the 2003-04 fiscal year

- *To implement the new Health Professions Act.* The College has established a process to make preparations for the transition to the new act upon its proclamation.
- *To guide the profession.* The Council plans to place continued emphasis on providing guidance to the profession primarily through the work of the Practice Review Committee.

## REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

The Registration Committee is responsible for:

- reviewing applications for registration from provisional chartered psychologists and other categories of registrants
- reviewing supervision practice plans and the previous practice experience of applicants for registration

The Registration Committee approves or denies registration, or defers approval until the applicant has met the established criteria.

The Registration Committee held 13 meetings in 2002-03 and it reviewed 705 files. As of March 31, 2003, the College had registered 1,977 chartered psychologists, 154 psychological assistants and 330 new applicants and provisional chartered psychologists.

#### Applicants/new registrants, 2002-03

New chartered psychologists .....	85
New psychological assistants.....	39
New provisionally chartered psychologists .....	167
Courtesy registrants .....	2
New applications for provisional and psychological assistants .....	193

#### Results of the Examination for Professional Practice in Psychology (EPPP), 2002-03 Fiscal Year

The EPPP was computerized in April 2001, and the Alberta candidates began taking the exam in May of 2001. The pass mark on the

computerized exam is a scale score of 500 (equivalent to 70%).

Pass ..... 90 (76.3%)  
Fail..... 28 (23.7%)  
Total No. of Candidates..... 118  
Average Scale Score, Alberta.....536.62  
Average Scale Score, ALL Candidates .....553.22

## PRACTICE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The Practice Review Committee is a legislative committee established under the *Psychology Profession Act*. Its mandate is to advise the Council on codes of ethics, codes of conduct, practice guidelines and standards of competence for psychologists.

The Practice Review Committee held seven meetings during the 2002-03 fiscal year. The committee's main focus continued to be the model of continuing competence, as required under the Health Professions Act. In addition, the committee completed a number of other tasks, including:

- developing new guidelines on Dual Roles
- revising existing guidelines on:
  - Advertising and Other Public Communication
  - Release of Confidential Information: Special Issues in Third Party Requests
- revisions to the Code of Conduct on:
  - informed consent
  - representation of title
  - disclosure of confidential information without informed consent
- publishing a practice bulletin on the Court of Queen's Bench of Alberta Family Law Practice Note #7 related to psychologists' involvement with child custody decisions

### Key objectives for the 2003-04 fiscal year

1. Implement the continuing competence model through a pilot project
2. Develop a position on requirements for staying current with respect to continuing competence
3. Obtain final approval for revisions to the Code of Conduct with respect to supportable and insupportable services

4. Revise guidelines on control of psychological tests

## DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

The Discipline Committee consists of 14 chartered psychologists and one public member. The committee works to ensure that hearings and appeals are handled appropriately and promptly. One panel chair has received training in *Administrative Justice* and two others are scheduled to complete this training in the fall.

Three member panels of the Discipline Committee dealt with eight appeals of the Registrar's decision to dismiss a complaint. The Registrar's decision was upheld in all eight cases. There were no disciplinary hearings held this past year.

## CREDENTIALS EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Credentials Evaluation Committee is responsible for reviewing applications for evaluation of academic credentials from candidates for registration as chartered psychologists and psychological assistants. The Committee is also responsible for reviewing doctoral and Ph.D credentials of applicants. Several new members were appointed in the fiscal year.

The Committee met seven times and reviewed 229 applicants for credentials evaluations:  
Chartered psychologists applicants..... 162  
Psychological assistant applicants ..... 27  
Ph.D. credentials applicants ..... 40

## ORAL EXAMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Oral Examinations were held four times in the fiscal year.

### Results: Oral Examinations, 2002-03 Fiscal Year

Pass..... 100(91.74%)  
Fail .....9 (8.26%)  
Total No. of Candidates ..... 109 (100%)

## CHARTERING COMMITTEE

The Chartering Committee is a standing committee that acts in an advisory capacity to the Council. It continually reviews all aspects of the chartering process and makes recommendations on the criteria and procedures required to become chartered to practice psychology in Alberta. Such review has become urgent in view of the new Health Professions Act and the increasing emphasis on legally defensible practices.

Activities during the past year have included:

- recommending bylaw changes required to implement the Mutual Recognition Agreement (June 24, 2001) under the Agreement on Internal Trade
- revising Standards for Supervision
- developing ethical guidelines for supervisors
- revising the criteria for credentials evaluation

In the future, the committee expects to address:

- mandatory registration requirements
- clarification on the grandparenting clause of academics under the Health Professions Act
- clarification of interpretation to ambiguous clauses of the Mutual Recognition Agreement

## COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINE PROCESSES

“Complaints” are defined as concerns about the practice or conduct of a psychologist, provisional psychologist or psychological assistant about possible violations of the code of conduct, standards or ethics with respect to professional services provided. Complaints processes are handled by the Registrar. Throughout the investigation of a complaint, the College endeavours to provide factual information to all parties concerned. The goal of the College is to ensure that complaints and discipline processes meet the requirements of natural justice, i.e., processes are transparent and open to the public, and due process is afforded to the psychologist.

Two processes are available to handle complaints—formal and informal. Formal complaints are written complaints advanced under section 30(1) of the Psychology Profession Act. The process for handling these complaints is delineated by the Act.

The College also has an informal resolution process. Some concerns can be resolved informally between the complainant and the member. The College contacts the member and informs them of the client's concerns. The member is given the opportunity to try to work out a resolution with the complainant with the assistance of the Registrar. Resolution may include the psychologist refunding fees, completing overdue reports, issuing apologies, and correcting factual inaccuracies, and/or undertaking practice remediation.

### Nature of Complaints

It has been a very busy time in Discipline. An increase in the number of complaints and a significant change in the complexity and merit of complaints have been seen over the last 4 years. (Table A)

Table A

	1999/00	2000/01	2001/02	2002/03
Formal complaints	48	55	68	76
*Informal complaints	35	52	30	26
# of Investigations	27	37	46	51
Hearings	1	2	----	<b>(3 pending)**</b>
Settlements	----	2	<b>11</b>	<b>10</b>

\*The number of informal complaints has actually decreased – complainants are advancing formal written complaints more often due to the serious and complex nature of their concerns.

\*\*charges have been laid – negotiations underway to attempt to resolve by undertakings.

Most complainants identify where the psychologist has breached the Code of Conduct, Code of Ethics and Guidelines of the College. The areas in which the College has identified breaches are outlined in Table B, following.

Table B

*Section 6 (sufficient professional information)	41.5%
**Competence / Unskilled Practice	33.5%
Prohibited Dual Relationships (non-sexual)	11%
Prohibited Dual Relationships (sexual)	7%
Consent Issues	7%

\*charges laid relate to/concerns identified included:

- Prescribing medication
- Recommending changes in client's medications
- Utilizing unsupportable treatment intervention
- Improper test administration, scoring, and interpretation
- Unskilled FAS assessment

The two main areas of concern where complaints were resolved via settlements, are Section 6 of the Code of Conduct and Competence or Unskilled Practice.

A breach of section 6 of the Code can impact significantly on clients' civil and legal rights. Complaints are often advanced immediately after such a breach.

Section 6 of the Code of Conduct has been identified as one of the major pitfalls in psychological practice. A Practice Bulletin was issued to address this specific clause of the Code in November, 2001. We are available to members for consultations when they find themselves in potential or actual difficulties.

### Disposition of Complaints 2002-03

#### Formal Complaints

A total of fifty-five (55) new complaints were received this fiscal year. Seventy-six (76) complaints were dealt with in total.

Thirty-eight (38) complaints were closed over the course of the year:

- 13 Dismissed, no appeal filed
- 8 Dismissed, appealed and upheld by Discipline Committee
- 7 Psychologist completed voluntary undertaking
- 4 Withdrawn
- 3 Investigations suspended due to non-participation of complainant
- 2 Resolved informally
- 1 Rejected according to Council custody policy

Thirty-eight (38) complaints remained open at year end:

- 24 Under investigation
- 2 in 30-day appeal period following dismissal
- 3 Psychologist completing voluntary undertaking
- 6 Negotiating informal resolution
- 3 Forwarded to discipline hearing

#### Informal Complaints

Twenty-six (26) informal complaints were received this past year.

- 13 were resolved
- 3 proceeded to formal complaints process
- 2 awaiting further information from complainants
- 3 not under the jurisdiction of the College of Alberta Psychologists
- 5 Closed – no follow-up by the complainants

#### Complaints and Discipline – Workload

The processing of these complaints has required more resources—investigators, experts, acting registrars, legal services. It has significantly impacted the workload of the Registrar and the Assistant to the Registrar.

To manage this workload, we have taken a number of actions:

- Recruited and trained 5 new investigators (1 to replace an investigator who moved out of province) for a total pool of 8 (an increase from the 4 previously utilized).
- Developed guidelines for investigators, acting registrars, discipline hearings and appeal panels.
- Trained Discipline Committee panel chairs.

In cases where the Registrar is in a conflict of interest, acting registrars are appointed. In the past year we have used 7 acting registrars on 19 cases. *Each acting registrar has to be trained and supervised throughout the process and administrative support remains with the Assistant to the Registrar at the College office.*

In the last two years, we have been faced with cases in which the preliminary investigation produced factual evidence sufficient to forward the matter for a discipline hearing. In prior

years, only a handful of cases were identified—e.g. four in 2000/01. As an alternative to discipline hearings, a process of resolving the identified breaches by way of voluntary undertakings by the psychologist was developed.

***The undertakings are negotiated to fulfill our mandate to protect the public*** by whatever means is necessary in each case—e.g. successful completion of ethics review, supervision of practice, restriction on areas of practice, etc.

Undertakings are entered into with the understanding that if unsuccessful, the matter would proceed to discipline hearing. To date, all undertakings have been successfully completed. To conduct the remediation processes, a network of senior psychologist had to be developed in the areas of ethics and areas of practice. Administrative support to track progress and compliance remains with the Registrar's office. Fiscally, this process is particularly cost effective in that it avoids the costs of discipline hearings (approximately \$10,000 per hearing) and that we have recovered some of the costs incurred in investigating the complaints (including legal costs).

This type of negotiated settlement is, however, extremely time consuming. Most psychologists now retain legal counsel throughout the process. The Registrar must not only negotiate with the psychologists and their counsel, but must also attend to the complainant's need to reach closure in each case.

## **REPORT FROM THE PUBLIC MEMBERS**

*By Wayne Wright and Barry Ashton*

We are pleased to have been recently appointed as the two public members on Council. While we still face a steep learning curve, we have been greatly impressed by the open and frank discussion and debate in Council over a wide variety of topics, much of which has been reported elsewhere in this report or in other communications. Clearly, the College is in sound financial shape and has plans to address a large work plan in the coming year, the most important items being related to the implementation of the Health Professions Act. It is likely work related to this issue will require additional staff time and funding.

We intend to be active members of Council, serving not only the public interest, but,

hopefully, where it is appropriate the profession of psychology as well. It appears to us that the profession is well served by its Council, the Registrar, Deputy Registrar and the Staff of the College.

As Eric Haffenden steps down as President, we wish him well. He has served the College well and we expect he will continue to do so in his role as liaison on implementation of the HPA.

We look forward to the coming year and the tasks ahead.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

The College's un-audited financial statements for the 2002-03 fiscal year are now available on request. Audited financial statements will be available upon request at the end of June 2003. The approved budget for 2002-03 is available upon request.

## **Committee Lists, 2002-03**

### **Council**

Mr. Eric Haffenden, President  
Dr. Sandra Collins, President Elect  
Dr. Richard Spelliscy, Past President  
Ms. Arlene Chapman, Treasurer – Public Member  
Ms. Bonnie Rude-Weisman, Treasurer  
Mr. Barry Ashton, Public Member  
Mr. Wayne Wright, Public Member  
Dr. Dennis Brown  
Dr. Wendy Hawkins  
Dr. Teresita Jose  
Dr. Louise Million  
Dr. Jean Pettifor  
Ms. Eileen Baril, ex-officio  
Mr. Pierre Berube, ex-officio  
Mr. Walter Goos, ex-officio  
Dr. Alexandra Kinkaide, ex-officio  
Dr. Patrick Lynch, ex-officio  
Dr. Terry Pezzot-Pearce, ex-officio  
Dr. Derek Truscott, ex-officio  
Ms. Wendy El-Issa, ex-officio  
Ms. Leanne Vanderhelm, ex-officio

### **ADVISORY COMMITTEES:**

#### **Chartering Committee**

Dr. Jean Pettifor, Chair  
Ms. Eileen Baril  
Mr. Pierre Berube  
Dr. Wendy Hawkins  
Dr. Alexandra Kinkaide  
Ms. Diane Priebe  
Ms. Rowena Robinson  
Dr. Derek Truscott

#### **Publications Committee**

Mr. Harvey Brink  
Dr. James Canniff  
Mr. Eric Haffenden

#### **Practice Review Committee**

Dr. Derek Truscott, Chair  
Dr. Lorraine Breault  
Ms. Jana Hyer Davies  
Mr. Stephen Dooley  
Dr. Paul Jerry  
Dr. Horst Mueller  
Dr. Monty Nelson  
Mr. Terrance Wilton  
Mr. Pierre Berube, ex-officio  
Dr. Alexandra Kinkaide, ex-officio

### **REGULATORY COMMITTEES:**

#### **Credentials Evaluation Committee**

Mr. Walter Goos, Chair  
Dr. Lee Handy, Panel Chair  
Mr. Ali Al-Asadi  
Dr. Jeffrey Blanchard  
Dr. Indira Gajraj  
Mr. Ken Gardner  
Dr. Lisa Harpur  
Dr. Kirstie Kneppers  
Ms. Stasia Lucki  
Dr. Arlin Pachet  
Mr. Kelly Schwartz  
Dr. Tom Strong  
Dr. Peter Wass  
Dr. Alexandra Kinkaide, ex-officio

#### **Registration Committee**

Ms. Eileen Baril, Chair  
Dr. Roy Frenzel, Panel Chair  
Ms. Melody Hopchin, Panel Chair  
Mr. James Bateman  
Ms. Ann Marie Dewhurst  
Dr. Sonya Flessati  
Dr. Lori Harper  
Dr. Christine Orosz  
Dr. Linda Rose  
Dr. Greg Schoepp  
Ms. Patricia Schuster  
Dr. Garth Stewart  
Dr. Lorraine Stewart  
Dr. Jill Turner  
Ms. Merrilyn Sweeney, ex-officio

**Oral Examinations Committee**

Dr. Terry Pezzot-Pearce, Chair

*Panel Chairs:*

Dr. Les Block  
Dr. Stephen Carter  
Dr. Judy Chew  
Dr. Dorothy Constable  
Dr. Gerald Cossitt  
Dr. Philip Eaton  
Mr. Paul Gronnerud  
Dr. Lee Handy  
Dr. Gregor Jason  
Dr. Teresita Jose  
Dr. Marianne Miles  
Dr. Gloria Rodberg  
Dr. Marilyn Samuels  
Dr. Rami Sela

*Examiners:*

Dr. Susan Baerg  
Ms. Sherrie Banks  
Dr. Patrick Baillie  
Dr. Kerry Bernes  
Mr. Theodore Cadman  
Dr. Sharon Cairns  
Dr. Peter Calder  
Dr. Adriana Celser  
Ms. Carol Chandler  
Dr. Thomas Dalby  
Dr. Debbie Dobson  
Dr. Michael Enman  
Dr. Caroll Ganam  
Ms. Debra Goethe  
Dr. Susan Graham  
Dr. Victor Grossi  
Dr. Robert Hall  
Dr. Michael Handman  
Dr. David Hodgins  
Dr. Andrew Howell  
Dr. Richard Huddleston  
Dr. Gloria Jacobucci  
Dr. Ronna Jevne  
Dr. Candace Konnert  
Dr. Stewart Longman  
Dr. Brenda Mann  
Dr. Sheila Mansell  
Dr. Don Massey  
Dr. Valerie Massey  
Dr. Rosalyn Mendelson  
Dr. Kerry Mothersill

Dr. Beatrice Norrie  
Dr. Sharon Robertson  
Dr. Barbara Schmalz  
Dr. Simon Sheh  
Dr. Emily Wang  
Ms. Daphne Wing

**Discipline Committee**

Dr. Patrick Lynch, Chair  
Dr. Robert Acton, Panel Chair  
Mr. Theodore Cadman, Panel Chair  
Dr. Joanna Dabrowski, Panel Chair  
Dr. Roger Gervais, Panel Chair  
Mr. John Law, Public Member  
Mr. Ali Al-Asadi  
Dr. Patrick Baillie  
Dr. Kerry Bernes  
Dr. Lorraine Breault  
Dr. Michael Enman  
Dr. Irene Estay  
Dr. Beatrice Norrie  
Dr. Marilyn Phelan  
Mr. John Roshak  
Dr. Howard Saslove

**Investigators**

Dr. Jon Amundson  
Dr. Sally Barros  
Dr. Roshni Daya  
Ms. Colleen Eggertson  
Mr. Walter Goos  
Dr. Terry Karpman  
Dr. William McElheran  
Dr. Barbara Schmalz  
Ms. Olive Yonge