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Report from the Interim Executive Director and CIC Chair

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The past year has been filled with challenges and changes at the Chemical Institute of Canada (CIC). The COVID-19 pandemic has obviously impacted the CIC and its community, including forcing cancellations or changes to our conferences in order to ensure safety. In response to this challenge, the team has pivoted to creating more virtual opportunities to connect the Canadian chemical sciences community. Some of the changes at the CIC include personnel, most notably with the resignation of Ian Jobe as executive director in August 2020. Since that time, I have stepped into the role of interim executive director alongside my position as chair of the CIC Board. The CIC has also added additional staff to its national team since September 2020, which has allowed us to focus on important areas for member engagement and new revenue growth opportunities. The focus of the organization remains to grow membership, ensure financial sustainability, and continue capacity building so that we can better serve the Canadian chemical sciences community.

Governance Task Force

Since summer 2020, the tri-society governance task force (GTF) has been mandated to evaluate the current governance structure of the CIC and the Canadian Societies for Chemistry (CSC), Chemical Engineering (CSChE), and Chemical Technology (CSCT). The GTF has been working to provide recommendations for the organizational structure to reduce complexity, improve efficiency, accelerate decision making, bring cost efficiencies, clarify accountability for the Directors and Staff, and improve communication between the societies. Because of the work undertaken by this taskforce and how it may impact the operation of the organization and societies, the CIC has delayed hiring a new executive director. This search is a top priority once the task force's work is complete, and we will be aiming to have a new ED in place in Q3 of 2021.

Finance

Financially, the CIC has weathered a challenging year and is currently in a solid position thanks in part to government support during the pandemic. The CIC received \$270,248 as part of the Canadian Employment Wage Subsidy (CEWS), which allowed the management fees to be significantly lowered for the societies this year. The other major financial change was the milestone of hitting a clean audit opinion. This excellent news came about through the cooperation of the local sections and subject divisions who moved their accounts to centralized management. The auditors were then able to audit all of these entities as part of the full CIC audit.

Membership

Membership numbers overall for 2020 were heavily impacted by the cancellation of the Canadian Chemistry Conference and Exhibition (CCCE) 2020, through a significant drop in CSC memberships. The numbers held steady for CSCT with a slight increase for CSChE. However, as the CSC drop shows, membership is still often generated around conference registration discounts. Moving forward, the team has been working to create new programming that provides value to members throughout the year, not just through the conferences. It is crucial for the sustainability of the organization that membership provides real value for our community all year round. Initiatives like CIC VIRTUAL and careers focused services and programming like the new job board will help demonstrate value to members and potential new members. In addition, the team is examining alternative membership models that could provide value to organizations as a whole rather than just relying on individual memberships.

Conferences

Conferences remain a key source of revenue for the societies, although one that has become less predictable due to the challenges of the past year. After the disappointing but necessary cancellation of CCCE 2020, the team worked with the organizing committee of the Canadian Chemical Engineering Conference (CCEC) 2020 to transform it from the planned in-person event in Ottawa to a virtual event. There were certainly some challenges including how to improve



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some of the networking and social aspects, but CCEC 2020 VIRTUAL was overall a success both financially and based on feedback from attendees. The team is now working closely with the IUPAC | CCCE 2021 organizing committee and the CSC to create an exciting and engaging virtual event for that conference in August 2021. Plans are also in process for CCEC 2021, with key decisions still to be made around what kind of format the event can safely take in October 2021. The team is committed to creating top-notch conferences, whether virtually or in-person, to allow the Canadian chemical sciences community to connect and share their research and innovations.

CIC VIRTUAL

To provide value to members year-round, the national office team launched a new way for the Canadian chemical sciences, engineering, and technology communities to connect from home. [CIC VIRTUAL](#) continues to draw in people not only in the Canadian community, but also internationally. The [CIC Talks](#) stream of events features virtual discussions and webinars that offer the opportunity to learn how the Canadian chemical sciences community is meeting today's biggest challenges. The team has recently launched a series of CIC Talks Careers events, focused on providing early career students and professionals with valuable career advice from mentors who are passionate about inspiring the next generation of leaders – particularly those who may not see themselves adequately represented within STEM fields. The [seminar series](#) stream is presented by members of our subject divisions and features technical talks from subject area experts exploring their research. If you are interested in organizing a seminar series in your area of speciality, reach out to us at the national office and we can work with you to get it running. CIC VIRTUAL is now firmly established as an essential part of the CIC's programming and even once COVID-19 subsides and the world returns to more in-person meetings, we plan to continue this programming as way to connect our geographically vast Canadian community throughout the year. These talks are free for anyone to attend, but only members receive exclusive access to the archive of recordings.

Communities

Although the past year essentially removed the possibility of in-person events for the CIC's communities, the local sections, subject divisions, and MRG have come up with innovative new ways to come together virtually. We've seen virtual networking sessions, career talks, AGMs, mentorship programs, and seminar series and we're looking forward to the 2nd virtual Leaders Overcoming Great Inequalities in Chemistry retreat happening right before IUPAC | CCCE 2021. Our student communities have been hard-hit by the pandemic. In 2021, the team has been focusing on supporting students as they launch their careers through the new job board and CIC Talks Careers webinar series. Over the past year, the CIC has also been working with these communities to streamline finances for the goal of being able to audit all CIC finances, including the community groups, through one central audit. This will not only simplify the process for the treasurers and director of finance, but also saves the organization significant money. All community groups remain in control of their own finances and can access them as needed.

Awards

The awards program allows us to celebrate the outstanding achievements of the Canadian chemical sciences, engineering, and technology community. In 2021 so far, we have been delighted to announce 7 CIC award winners, including Molly Shoichet, MCIC, as the winner of the CIC Medal and Alison Thompson, MCIC, as the winner of the Montréal Medal. There have been 20 new CSC award winners in 2021, and they, along with the 2020 winners, will be celebrated at IUPAC | CCCE 2021. We are excited for the 8 CSChE award winners from 2021 and look forward to celebrating their achievements at CCEC 2021. The CSCT has been able to celebrate outstanding contributions to chemical technology in 2021, by awarding the Norman and Marion Bright Memorial award for the first time since 2010. We have also welcomed 5 new fellows of the CIC, J. Hugh Horton, Charles Jia, Jennifer Love, Gilles Peslherbe, and Allan W. Rey. Congratulations to all the award winners and many thanks to everyone who took the time to nominate all of the outstanding candidates.



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Journal

The Canadian Journal of Chemical Engineering has had another successful year led by Editor-in-Chief João Soares and the national staff team. The journal's impact factor increased to an all-time high of 1.687 for the 2-year and 1.544 for the 5-year impact factor. Article downloads also continued their upward trend, with a 7.5% increase in downloads in 2020. The journal continues to have quick review times of around one month. *Can. J. Chem. Eng.* makes significant financial contributions to CChE and will continue to engage with the Canadian chemical engineering community and build towards increased Canadian publication content.

Communications

Connecting with the Canadian chemical sciences, engineering, and technology community remains a top priority for the CIC. The team manages the website and other communications channels like emails, the *CIC NEWS*, and social media to reach our community, drive participation from members, and encourage non-members to join our interconnected chemical sciences community. The *CIC NEWS* welcomed new editor Sharon Oosthoek in December 2020. Since September 2020, the team has re-focused on ensuring that our francophone members receive important communications in their language of choice. The 2021 membership email campaign was fully bilingual and many vital communications to members have also been available in both languages, including the calls for nominations to various society board positions and the GTF survey. The website for CCEC 2021, due to take place in Montréal, is also fully bilingual. The *CIC NEWS* team is also working to renew a partnership with *Québec Science* in order provide our audience with *CIC NEWS* stories in French.

Revenue Growth Opportunities

As an organization, the COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us how our financial success has been tied to in-person conferences and the related membership boosts that they bring. In order to ensure the CIC's financial sustainability, the team has been working on developing new opportunities for revenue in ways that strengthen our support of the Canadian chemical sciences community. To date, this new initiative has involved assessing our overall partnership offerings and ensuring that partners receive tangible value from working with the CIC. We have re-developed our conference sponsorship offerings and will continue to assess how the larger portfolio of CIC assets, including awards and membership, might fit into possible partnership packages. In December 2020, we launched the new CIC job board to support our job-seeking members and provide organizations with a dedicated place to reach the Canadian chemical sciences community. We now have a marketing and partnerships coordinator on staff to drive this portfolio and work towards building long-lasting partnerships that benefit the CIC financially and bring strong value to our partners.

National Team

Although it has been a challenging year for the CIC staff team, we are working more collaboratively and effectively than ever. Staff have now been working virtually for a full year and the team connects regularly through platforms like Teams and Slack. The virtual office has been working extremely well and we continue to deliver programming to build and support the Canadian chemical sciences community. In order to grow programs and generate new revenue opportunities, the team has added new positions over the past year, including the awards coordinator and governance associate, marketing and partnerships coordinator, and manager of membership, communications, and marketing. The organization has also been structured to efficiently deliver our programs, events, communications, and publications with clear teams based around role and function. The team looks forward to continuing to drive membership growth, work towards financial sustainability for the organization, and capacity build to better support the Canadian chemical sciences community.