



Canadian Society for Chemistry | **For Our Future**
Société canadienne de chimie | **Pour notre avenir**

CSC President's Report – AGM June 2025

Dear colleagues,

This past year serving as President of the Canadian Society for Chemistry (CSC) has been an enriching experience, and I am genuinely grateful for the opportunity to reflect on our work together in this report. It has been a privilege to serve during this dynamic period as we prepare for major international conferences, strengthen our community, and navigate financial and operational challenges. I extend my gratitude to the Board of Directors of both CSC and the Chemical Institute of Canada (CIC) and the CIC National Team (NT) for their dedication and commitment. A special thank you to Drs. Jennifer Love, Paul Hayes, Christina Bottaro, and Jay Wickenden for their valuable contributions and leadership during their time on the board. Their dedication has made a lasting impact. We also thank Dr. Love for leading the 2025 nomination committee and guiding the process for four CSC Board of Directors positions.

The CSC Board of Directors, along with the NT, continue our efforts towards increased transparency and commitment to equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (EDIA). We are also delighted to report that there are six recipients of FCIC designation this year, three of whom are chemists. Congratulations to Drs. Diane Beauchemin, Jennifer Van Wijngaarden, and Chérif F. Matta.

The following is a summary of activities of the CSC Board in the past year.

International and External Engagement

CSC continues to strengthen its global presence through major international conferences and strategic collaborations:

- **Pacificchem 2025** – As the host society, CSC, led by Dr. Laurel Schafer, is bringing together global leaders in chemical sciences and showcase Canada's contributions.
- **IUPAC & CSC 2027** – CSC will host the 51st IUPAC World Chemistry Congress and 54th General Assembly, led by Dr. Francesca Kerton. This event will highlight Canadian chemistry on an international stage.
- **CSC 2024 & 2025 conferences** – The success of CSC 2024 in Winnipeg, under the leadership of Drs. David Palmer, Michel Gravel, Tara Kahan, Andrew Grosvenor, and Gregg Tomy set the stage for CSC 2025. CSC 2025 in Ottawa, organized by Dr. Maria DeRosa, conference chair, and the organizing committees from both the University of Ottawa and Carleton University. The theme for CSC 2025, "Chemistry. Unfiltered." reflects our commitment to

exploring the future of chemistry without barriers. CSC 2025 will also feature representatives from the **American Chemical Society and the Royal Society of Chemistry**, fostering engagement and knowledge exchange.

- **Commonwealth Chemistry** – CSC remains engaged in global advocacy, with representation at the 2025 Commonwealth Chemistry AGM to reinforce international collaborations.
- **Publishing & partnerships** – CSC maintains strong ties with the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC) and Canadian Science Publishing (CSP) to support high-impact chemistry publications.

Supporting Members

CSC remains dedicated to supporting its members by increasing accessibility to professional development and networking opportunities:

- **Financial support for early-career researchers (ECRs) and professors** – In line with our commitment to accessibility, CSC is offering funding to support early-career researchers and professors holding permanent positions at Canadian post-secondary institutions. This initiative, led by CSC Vice President Dr. Alex Brown in collaboration with CSC Board members, provides awards that cover half of the CSC early-bird registration fee for CSC 2025. By reducing financial barriers, this funding aims to encourage the participation of emerging scientists and professionals in our upcoming conference, fostering a more inclusive and engaged community.
- **Bilingual communications** – Together with the CIC National Team, we have continued to promote bilingualism, ensuring that francophone members receive more communications in French. Notably, efforts have been made to have CSC newsletters and announcements available in English and French on the CIC website and via email.

CSC continues to enhance its governance structures to serve its members better:

Symposia & Conference Planning – The CSC Board, SDs, and NT have worked together to improve support for symposia organizers at CSC 2025. More straightforward guidelines on Registration Discount Codes were developed to reduce logistical challenges and streamline the registration process. Additionally, a virtual meeting held in February 2025 provided a platform for symposia organizers to address questions and ensure seamless planning.

Financial & Membership Updates

- **Financial strategy** – Given the ongoing financial constraints, the Board has focused on exploring sustainable funding models, including seeking new partnerships, exploring external sponsorship opportunities, and increasing visibility for CSC's programs. Despite these challenges, we have worked hard to ensure our core services and initiatives remain effective and accessible.
- **Symposia & conference support** – In response to financial pressures, we have refined our approach to supporting symposia organizers, offering clearer guidance on registration discount codes and other available resources to reduce logistical challenges and support engagement in events like CSC 2025.

- **Membership** – The total CSC membership fee revenue was lower than the 2024 budget. This loss stemmed from a decrease in the annual renewals and a lower turnout of new signups at the CSC 2024 conference. The latter may make a strong comeback with the high number of abstract submissions to CSC 2025 in Ottawa.

Moving forward, we will continue to prioritize financial stewardship while encouraging our members to access the better resources, more networking opportunities, and further professional development provided by the Society.

Equity, Diversity, Inclusion & Accessibility (EDIA)

CSC remains committed to advancing EDIA initiatives to foster an inclusive and representative chemical sciences community. Key efforts this year included:

- **Policy and data-driven initiatives** – Working for Inclusion, Diversity and Equity (WIDE) analyzed Self-Identification Questionnaire (SIQ) data collected from CSC 2024 with Senomi Solutions to guide future priorities and will integrate the SIQ into CSC 2025 registration. Findings from the CSC 2024 data will be shared in a Canadian Journal of Chemistry article.
- **Collaborations and strategic support** – WIDE collaborated on refining award Terms of Reference, updating accreditation requirements with an EDI focus, and supporting the NSERC EDIT-STEM grant to drive systemic change in STEM.
- **Community engagement** – The Education, Community & Outreach (ECO) subcommittee leads outreach through social media, Spotlight Videos, and the Virtual Seminar Series.

Additional Portfolio Specific Activities and Director Reports:

Accreditation

Dr. Jay Wickenden stepped in as the interim Director of Accreditation following Dr. Chérif Matta's retirement from the CSC Board in May 2024. Under Jay's leadership, the Accreditation Committee has worked to address challenges stemming from the pandemic-related backlog of institutions requiring assessment. To improve efficiency and clarity in operations, the committee updated its Terms of Reference, refining the governance framework to better support accreditation processes.

The CSC's accreditation program plays a critical role in ensuring high-quality, recognized programs by providing comparator analyses required for quality assurance and helping institutions attract students. However, the pandemic significantly impacted the program, as on-site assessments were no longer possible. In response, the Accreditation Committee adapted by facilitating virtual site visits and offering departments the option to defer accreditation by a year, extending their existing accreditation accordingly. This backlog was further exacerbated by the transition in 2018–2019 from a 5+5-year accreditation cycle to an 8-year cycle, which aimed to align site visits with institutions' cyclical reviews and reduce administrative burdens. To address these challenges, the Accreditation Committee successfully recruited new members, doubling in size and enabling an increase in site visits over the past year. As a result, four site visits were completed, and for the

first time since the pandemic, the committee is now on track to execute re-accreditations on schedule.

Awards and Recognition

Dr. Christina Bottaro has continued leading the awards program as Director of Awards, overseeing adjudication, policy development, and strategic initiatives. This year, 83 nominations were received for 24 awards, evaluated by the Joint CIC/CSC/CSChE Awards Committee under integrated policies.

Key governance efforts included advancing the endowment strategy, refining the awards sunset policy, and strengthening conflict-of-interest policies. As part of the x2026 Strategic Guidance Working Group, Dr. Bottaro has contributed to shaping long-term awards strategy. At CSC 2024 in Winnipeg, award activities included refining presentation wording, preparing symposium acknowledgment slides, supporting sponsor outreach, and participating in award presentations. Award revitalization efforts continued, particularly in implementing WIDE recommendations, updating Terms of Reference for EDIA best practices, ensuring bilingual documentation, and collaborating with Subject Divisions to establish an Awards/EDIA role. Ongoing priorities for the Joint Awards Committee include securing financial sustainability and increasing nominations, ensuring the awards program remains impactful, inclusive, and aligned with the chemical sciences community's values.

Conferences

Dr. Johanna Blacquiere has continued to promote the mission and values of the CSC by supporting conference-related initiatives and advocating for member interests. As Director of Conferences, she has provided guidance on CSC conference planning, evaluated applications for Early-Career Researchers to attend the 3rd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress, and actively participated in CSC Board Meetings, where she voiced member concerns regarding conference registration costs and membership fees.

Planning for CSC 2025 in Ottawa is ongoing, with Dr. Blacquiere regularly engaging with the Conference Organizing Committee, Sponsorship team, and Transitions Program to help ensure a well-structured and successful event. In preparation for the 3rd Commonwealth Chemistry Congress in South Africa, she played a key role in evaluating applications for travel funding, considering research alignment with the congress themes. Based on this evaluation, funding was awarded to Drs. Marissa Clapson (University of Prince Edward Island) and Ran Zhao (University of Alberta).

Looking ahead, Dr. Blacquiere continues to contribute to the planning of the x2026 concurrent CSC and CSChE Conference in Toronto. She participates in regular meetings with the Strategic Guidance Working Group and the Conference Organizing Committee to refine this new format, set for May 24-28, 2026. With Conference Chairs Drs. Roland Roesler (CSC, University of Calgary) and Todd Hoare (CSChE, McMaster), efforts are focused on assembling key leadership positions,

including Technical Program Chairs, an EDI Chair, and Sponsorship Chairs. With the theme of this conference being “Erasing boundaries”, the goal of this concurrent conference is to foster greater collaboration between Societies, enhance efficiency in conference coordination, and achieve financial savings by streamlining logistics and contracts. Through these initiatives, Dr. Blacquiére remains dedicated to ensuring that CSC conferences continue to provide a valuable and engaging experience for the community.

Working for Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity (WIDE)

Dr. Tricia Carmichael, leading the WIDE committee, continues to advance the strategic initiatives outlined in the five-year plan shared at CSC 2023. Policy development efforts include analyzing Self-Identification Questionnaire (SIQ) data from CSC 2024 in collaboration with Senomi Solutions, with key findings informing future priorities. The SIQ will be integrated into CSC 2025 registration. The National Team compiled a speaker database to support symposium organizers in implementing diversity guidelines.

Collaborations remain central to WIDE's work, including refining award Terms of Reference with the Directors of Awards and Divisions and updating accreditation requirements through an EDI lens. Additionally, WIDE has supported the NSERC Alliance Society grant application “EDI Transformation for STEM (EDIT-STEM),” aiming to drive systemic change through interactive multimedia.

The newly formed Education, Community & Outreach (ECO) subcommittee leads engagement initiatives, managing social media, launching the 2025 Spotlight Videos, and coordinating the Virtual Seminar Series. WIDE is also working with the Canadian Journal of Chemistry to publish an article on SIQ findings and broader EDI topics.

For CSC 2025, WIDE has planned four EDI-focused symposia and will present on strategic initiatives in the “It Gets Better – Pride in the CSC” session. Efforts are ongoing with EDI Ambassador Dr. Emilio Alarcon to implement the Conference Code of Conduct and EDI Accessibility Policy, ensuring an inclusive and accessible conference experience.

Industrial Liaison

Dr. Curtis Rieder continues to explore opportunities for increasing industrial engagement with the Society. While progress has been modest in strengthening day-to-day interactions, the most significant engagement remains through the annual Canadian Chemistry Conference and Exhibition.

For CSC 2025, the Transitions Program builds on its success from CSC 2024, integrating industry and professional development initiatives to support early career scientists. This program introduces participants to diverse career paths in chemistry and fosters connections with local industry, enhancing both engagement and sponsorship opportunities.

The CSC 2025 Transitions Program will feature four days of programming, including workshops, an industry tour, networking events with industry representatives, and the second National Career Fair. Additionally, it facilitates partnerships with external organizations such as the Canadian Science Publishing (CSP) and the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC), reinforcing the value of industry involvement in the conference.

Beyond the Transitions Program, a technical symposium on Academic and Industrial Collaborations is planned, further strengthening industry-academia ties within the Society.

Local Sections

Dr. Kevin Stamplecoskie has been working collaboratively with the National Team and the CSChE Director of Local Sections and Subject Divisions to strengthen engagement with Local Sections across the country. These efforts aim to better serve members by promoting knowledge exchange, fostering community connections, and increasing the visibility of local activities within the broader Society framework.

Ongoing discussions have focused on identifying shared priorities and exploring opportunities for collaboration between Local Sections and other member-led common interest groups. Looking ahead, renewed attention will be given to enhancing communication channels, supporting section-led events, and facilitating partnerships with industry and academic institutions at the local level.

Student Affairs

With a focus on engagement with Student Chapters, Director of Student Affairs Ms. Isabella Liu led discussions with various Student Chapters, focusing on fostering connections, supporting inclusive initiatives, and addressing specific chapter needs. These interactions provided valuable insights into the priorities of student communities and opportunities for further collaboration. Ongoing efforts are dedicated to strengthening student networks and ensuring that chapters have the necessary resources and guidance to thrive.

In Fall 2024 Student Chapter Grant applications were approved. Given the current transition regarding the CSChE Director of Student Affairs role, these approvals were handled collaboratively, ensuring continued support for student-led initiatives.

In Winter 2025, Student Chapters met virtually to reintegrate the role of the Director of Student Affairs, how CSC can support Student Chapters and the current work being done at different Student Chapters. During one in-person visit at McGill University, the president of undergraduate student society (Chemistry Undergraduate Student Society CUSS) indicated the lack of funding available to support undergraduate students in attending conferences. Currently, Isabella is drafting CSC Student Chapter Bylaws in collaboration with the National Team.

Subject Divisions

Building on past efforts, Dr. Paul Hayes remains dedicated to drive initiatives that assist Subject Division (SD) activities that support members. In addition to cross-portfolio efforts, SDs remain an essential component of the CSC, facilitating engagement between members, the CSC Board of Directors, and the National Team. Over the past year, efforts have focused on improving communications between the National Team and SDs, strengthening governance, and supporting SD leadership transitions. Administrative updates remain an important task, particularly with respect to maintaining accurate records of SD executive contact information, as leadership transitions occur at different times throughout the year for different SDs. Substantial effort has been allocated to assisting implementation of changes to Award Terms of Reference (RE: WIDE EDI recommendations), encouraging SDs to have an executive representative for Awards and EDI, and increasing understanding of SD grant allocations (based upon membership numbers). In addition, Hayes has been a member of the x2026 Strategic Guidance Working Group and has met with SDs to ensure symposia organizers understand the structure and processes surrounding invited speaker registration discount codes for the 2025 CSC conference. Finally, the Green Chemistry Division is now fully operational, having been created in response to substantial interest and foundational work by members. They have an active and engaged executive. Support continues to be provided to the Technologists and Technicians SD as they work to expand their executive and increase membership.

NSERC Liaison

The NSERC-Chemistry Liaison Committee (NCLC), under the leadership of Dr. Bruce Arndtsen, has become a crucial bridge between the Chemistry community and the NSERC. This committee, comprising representatives from 12 universities nationwide, along with the Discovery Evaluation Group Chair and NSERC Discovery and Partnership representatives, acts as a dynamic platform for dialogue and feedback.

Throughout the past year, NCLC convened three times to deliberate on the current state of NSERC programs, provide constructive feedback on recent changes, and assess the Discovery funding landscape for Chemistry. A significant focus has been placed on advocating for increased Discovery funding within the NSERC framework. In addition, they have evaluated how Chemistry fares within Partnership programs and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

To enhance their outreach and accessibility, NCLC has developed and integrated a [new website into the CSC webpage](#). This digital presence aims to streamline information sharing and engagement with the broader community.

Beyond the committee's regular activities, some NCLC members have proactively collaborated with fellow scientists to address a broader national concern: the alarming decline in Canada's R&D funding and its detrimental impact on industrial activities. This coalition has taken the initiative to meet with representatives from various national governmental parties and cabinet officials to

discuss these pressing issues. Their efforts have not gone unnoticed, as the government announced a long-term strategic plan last year to tackle the R&D funding shortfall.

Directors-at-Large

Directors-at-large Drs. Sanela Martić and Alex Veinot supported the Board's activities in various capacities. They updated and finalized the Director Information Sheet (Directors-at-large worked with other Board members to create the most up-to-date information sheet on Director roles and responsibilities). Alex joined the Canadian Journal of Chemistry's Editorial Advisory Board as a non-voting CSC representative, where he is working to strengthen the CSC's connection with the journal and contributing insights to its strategic direction. Directors-at-large also contributed to the Transitions Program related to 2025 CSC conference programming (Directors-at-large attended and participated in Transitions Program meetings to plan specific programming including workshops, panels, etc.; They were also an important link between the community and the Transitions Program). These Transitions Program-related efforts increase opportunities for professional development and networking which are valuable to our members. In addition, Directors-at-large attended and participated in the CSC Board meetings and supported other Directors in their activities. Both Directors also served as WIDE board members and have supported WIDE initiatives and WIDE working groups.

Vice President

Dr. Alex Brown settled into his role as Vice-President gaining significant experience and knowledge of the workings of the CSC and CIC as well as the many people both on the National Team and Boards that make the organizations run. The experience was gained via attendance and participation in regular CSC Executive meetings, CSC Board meetings, and CIC Board meetings. Importantly, these experiences have laid a solid foundation as he transitions into the role of President.

In his role as Vice-President, Alex contributed to a number of initiatives of the CSC. He actively contributed to the CIC strategic plan to enhance membership growth and engagement as well as address demographic imbalances. He worked with CSC Board members to develop Terms of Reference and implement the CSC 2025 Early Career-Focused Conference Registration Award. With the assistance of the National Team, the first awards competition was successfully run provided 58 reduced registration fees for ECR and education-focused CSC members. This trial program was incredibly well-received and, funding permitting, will be run again in the future. On behalf of the CSC, Alex attended the 3rd Commonwealth Chemistry Conference and AGM in Stellenbosch, South Africa in May. He is actively involved in discussions to re-engage/engage via Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with ACS (as well as other national chemistry organizations). These discussions will continue into 2026.

Closing Remarks

As I conclude this report, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all CSC members for your ongoing support and dedication. Your participation, engagement, and enthusiasm are the driving

force behind the success of our community and events. A special thank you goes to the outgoing members of the CSC Board for their valuable contributions and leadership.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve as CSC President this past year. I look forward to continuing to support the CSC as **Past President** in the upcoming year.

Shan Zou, MCIC
CSC President, 2024–2025