

Minutes of CANSSI Annual General Meeting

May 24, 2014 at the Fields Institute

4:30 – 5:30 pm ET

Present: Richard Smith (Chair of CANSSI Board); Hugh Chipman (CANSSI Associate Director, Atlantic Region); Nancy Reid (CANSSI Associate Director, Ontario); Charmaine Dean, Western University; Hanna Jankowski, York University; Karen Kopciuk, University of Calgary; Jixun Liu, University of Saskatchewan; Wendy Lou; University of Toronto (DLSPH); Sudhir Paul, University of Windsor; Jamie Stafford, University of Toronto (Statistical Science); Stefan Steiner, University of Waterloo; Ed Susko, Dalhousie University.

Chair: Mary Thompson, Scientific Director, CANSSI

Recording Secretary: Elena Corrado

1. Approval of agenda

Jamie Stafford suggested the addition of an agenda item on the role of CANSSI in representing the statistical science community with NSERC. This was added and the agenda was approved.

2. CANSSI Board for 2014-2015 (Attachment A)

Mary Thompson reviewed the rationale for presenting the slate of Board of Directors for 2014-2015 to this first Annual General Meeting of CANSSI. She noted that in 2015 a new Board will be brought forward, and there will be an election, including the election of two representatives of the institutional members.

Motion: To ratify the composition of the CANSSI Board of Directors for 2014-2015.

Carried.

2b. Update on governance activities and Scientific Director Search

Mary noted that the development of governance for CANSSI has been moving fairly slowly over the last year and a half. The Board has agreed that it is too early for CANSSI to apply for incorporation. CANSSI is currently viable as a virtual institute, to be funded through the mathematical sciences institutes. The new Not-for-Profit Corporations Act specifies that a Board cannot have ex officio members, but it is important that the Directors of the mathematical sciences institutes sit on the Board for now. The plan is to adopt a set of Operating Policies as soon as possible, and make them consistent with what will eventually be the bylaw in respects other than Board composition. The

next step toward incorporation will require some expenditure for legal assistance.

Richard Smith, Chair of the Board of CANSSI, was serving as Chair the search committee for the next Scientific Director, with the hope of having someone in place as of January 1, 2015. The committee had been working since December 2014 and was hopeful of having several candidates to consider.

3. Discussion of Draft Operating Policies (Attachment B).

- Mary reported on the discussion at the Board meeting. Two particularly important topics had been the composition of the Board going forward and the term of office of Board members.
- Regarding the second, it had been agreed that the Board should be set up so that a third of its members are leaving, or standing for election to a second term if they wish to continue.
- Regarding the first, changes to the draft Operating Policies recommended by the Board included the following:
 - Deputy Director and Associate Directors should not be able to vote, but would attend Board meetings as non-voting members
 - At least two elected Board members should represent the institutional members of CANSSI
 - There could be an elected member representing government statistics.
- In discussion at the AGM concern was suggested that this scheme might have too many Board members with no right to vote; in that case the 3 institute Directors might have too much influence. It was suggested that there be a majority or at least a minimum number of voting members who are statistical scientists.
- It was suggested that there also needed to be a balance between elected members and appointed members, and that perhaps two out of five Associate Directors could be voting members.
- The question was raised of whether the SSC should have a representative on the Board. Nancy Reid commented that she thought that it was useful to have SSC and CANSSI as completely separate organizations in the eyes of funding agencies.
- Richard Smith talked about the structure for SAMSI. The Director of SAMSI is not on the SAMSI Board. The Director meets with the Board, and this meeting is followed by a Board *in camera* session.
- Mary said she would try to take the input received at the Board meeting and the AGM and develop a set of principles for Board composition which would be the basis for the next proposal.
- The composition of the Scientific Advisory Committee was also discussed. In the draft Operating Policies it was to have 9 voting members, normally from outside of Canada. It was explained that members from inside Canada were not precluded, but that there were fewer conflict of interest issues when the members were from outside.

- In response to a question, it was noted that collaborators outside Canada could participate in a Collaborative Research Team Project
- Nancy Reid noted that the Board was also recommending changing the wording of the benefits of institutional membership listed on the first page of Attachment B. The recommendation is to remove the word “priority” from the 3rd and 4th points.

4. Review of finances and budget (Attachment C).

- a. Financial statement for 2013-2014
- b. Budget for 2014-2015

Mary reviewed the financial statement and budget. She said that CANSSI would soon finish spending the seed funding of \$50,000 from the SSC. She was expecting that over the next five years there would be about \$90,000 per year income from institutional membership funds. She said that this income is very important because it can be spent on expenses which are not NSERC-eligible, such as training events and payments to a financial administrator. It is also very important as a demonstration to funders of support for CANSSI from the community.

Stefan Steiner pointed out that this year the amount of “overhead” is expected to be about \$97,500 on a total expenditure of \$409,198 -- slightly less than 25% overhead. He asked if that was expected to continue. Mary responded that it might: the expenditures on research activities are lower in the 2014-2015 year than they will be in subsequent years, because CANSSI is just starting up, but in subsequent years there will be full year salaries (in kind contributions) for the Scientific Director.

Motion (Reid, Paul): To approve the financial statement for 2013-2014.
Motion carried.

5. Other business

There was a discussion of what CANSSI can do to engage with NSERC, with respect to trying to fix the problems with the Discovery Grant System. Being supportive to early career researchers might be a useful contribution, as well as trying to enlarge the opportunities for funding of statistical science research. It was acknowledged that NSERC is unhappy about the current situation. Richard Smith said there might be value in looking at other countries such as the UK (with EPSRC) and the US (the NSF DMS has a statistics program).

6. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:30 pm.