

CANADIAN ACOUSTICAL ASSOCIATION

Minutes of the Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, 3 October 2023 3:00 PM – 6:30 PM (EDT)
Plaza Centre-Ville, 777 Blvd Robert-Bourassa, Montréal
and by Zoom videoconference

1. Call to Order

Present in person: Jérémie Voix (chair), Victoria Duda, Bill Gastmeier, Bryan Gick, Michael Kieft, Andy Metelka (arrived at 17:00), Hugues Nélisse, Roberto Racca, and Joana Rocha (arrived at 17:10, previously online). Present online: Umberto Berardi, Dalila Giusti, Joana Rocha (initially), and Frank Russo.

Mehrzed Salkordeh (outgoing Director) joined briefly online to wish everyone well and was warmly greeted.

Meeting called to order by Jérémie at 15:08 (EDT).

Adoption of proposed agenda moved by Jérémie, seconded by Michael.

2. President's Report (Prof. Jérémie Voix)

Jérémie began by remarking that this would be his last report to the Board as President as he intended to transition to the role of Editor-in-Chief of Canadian Acoustics as he had announced at the Spring BoD meeting. He went on to report on the status of infrastructure projects, highlighting first off the now completed migration of the CAA-ACA website to a PHP 8.1 compliant platform that was secure and compatible with current standards. He indicated that work was actively progressing on the repository of Acoustics training programmes across Canada, with 20 entries currently in a wiki page, and the updated Operations Manual and Procedures that Michael Kieft had been developing as a wiki as well. Projects that had not made much progress but remained as goals included the curation of a Practitioners' Corner section in Canadian Acoustics (papers would have to be invited, and the well-attended current conference might be a valuable forum to drum up interest), the improvement of terminology and content clarity in the Open Journal System portal in both English and French via the language pack (a task that Roberto had agreed to lead), the creation of a “starter kit” for new local chapters of the Association following the example of the Toronto/GTA and the Montréal groups, and the production of a bilingual video patterned after a French short named “What’s an Acoustician?” but adapted to the Canadian reality of the profession (Andy had provided initial help).

Jérémie reported on the robust operational status of the scripts developed for the Open Journal System (e.g., to generate listings of BoD, sustaining subscribers, advertisers, members, etc.) that had just been finalized before the 2023 Spring meeting of the Board, and of the adverts management system structured on a subscription-like model in the OJS with ensuing benefits to advertisers such as on-line renewals and access to the digital content of the Journal. He gave further details about the Toronto/GTA and the Montréal local chapters, which were coordinated via Google Groups moderated respectively by Mikk Tomme and by Romain Dumoulin / Raphael Duée, and about the development of a complete wiki knowledge base for the Association which would include the Operations Manual and constitute a readily accessible resource for members.

Moving on to new business, Jérémie commented on the fact that over the 2022-2023 period numerous members reportedly had not received renewal notifications by e-mail, leading to the expiration of their active status. This had been traced to two technical issues: an improperly configured relaying of outgoing emails which made them liable to be considered spam, and flaws in the operation of the automated scripts that generated reminders. Both issues had been solved and reminders were now being delivered reliably to members, institutional subscribers, and advertisers at 1 month, 15 days, 1 day before and 15 days, 1 month, 6 months after the lapsing of a term. Jérémie also mentioned new features of the online journal that enhanced its value to members and subscribers, such as the introduction of easily embeddable citation links for social media and other communication platforms, and the indexing of Canadian Acoustics on the QuietLinks specialised library of noise and quiet related articles.

The final part of Jérémie’s presentation addressed the all-important matter of membership engagement in the governance of the Association. He noted that 11 participants in the 2023 AWC had, through the registration form

for the conference, expressed interest in at least learning about directorship. Rather than setting up a formal meeting with just these respondents, Jérémie proposed to have two tables in the conference lunch area set aside for the first two days of AWC and identified with signage and announcements so that interested parties would have the opportunity to meet and chat informally over luncheon with current members of the Board who would volunteer to attend. He then went on to the matter of Directors' and Officers' terms of office, the discussion of which had already begun at the 2023 Spring meeting of the Board, and presented a proposal for amending them. Under the proposed new rules, Directors would serve up to six consecutive one-year terms, after which they would have a cooling-off period of two years during which they could not seek election or appointment to the Board or hold any other leadership positions within the CAA. This cooling-off period would encourage diverse leadership and fresh perspectives within the organization while allowing former Directors the opportunity to potentially return to leadership roles after a reasonable break. The proposal also envisaged for the executive position of President a term of two years in the effective role preceded by two years as "elect" and followed by two years as "immediate past". Jérémie also suggested that the position of Editor in Chief should be appointed by the BoD for a term that could be predefined or left open, and that a formal position of System Administrator should be established to capture the increasing responsibilities to maintain and advance the digital framework for the Association.

Extensive discussion ensued about the proposed scheme, especially regarding other executive positions (Treasurer and Executive Secretary) and whether they too should be made fixed term and with an overlap period like the President's role. Concern was expressed that such a rate of rotation would be challenging to sustain given the limited pool of candidates and potential low willingness to commit to the demands of an Executive position; it was also noted that too short a period in the active role would hardly yield adequate benefit from the experience acquired, and in the case of the treasurer it would create logistical difficulties with having to frequently update bank signatures, PayPal administrative contacts, etc. Final consensus was to have an active term of five years plus one year "outgoing" for the positions of Treasurer and Secretary; it was also agreed that an outgoing President should transition into the "immediate past" position to provide redundancy and continuity, but there was no requirement for an "elect" phase. The point was raised that if the terms of office of a member of the Executive required their position on the Board to extend beyond the six-year limit, this should be formally allowed.

Jérémie committed to summarising the agreed terms in a briefing to be presented at the AGM for information, although it was recognised that additional time and thought would be needed to formally ensconce the proposal into amended bylaws that would have to be voted on at next year's AGM. There was some additional discussion about renewal of the current Board and how to encourage a diverse and inclusive representation among new members. Bill Gastmeier suggested that a nomination and selection committee should be set up to both identify interested parties and, assuming there is a surplus of candidates, make recommendations in an EDI and merit informed manner; he volunteered to provide a guideline document to the convening of such a body and defining its mandate.

3. Treasurer's Report (Dalila Giusti)

Dalila presented a list of the Association's current investments in principal guaranteed GICs and noted that no significant interest revenue could be expected in the current calendar year since the majority would not be maturing until 2024 or later. She indicated that there had been a substantial uptick in membership revenue (whose origin would be discussed in the Secretary's report) but that was just a return to a more normal situation after a drop, and it had to be acknowledged that increased costs would start eroding the Association's savings unless new revenue streams were created, or existing ones increased.

An aspect of the budget that Dalila described as unclear was the student travel allocation for attendees to the annual conferences, which was not handled in a consistent manner. For the conference in Newfoundland the previous year, Dalila was not aware of any funds having been spent on student travel support even though the Association had allocated in the budget for that purpose \$10,000 that went unclaimed. She indicated that for the current AWC she had been in discussions with Victoria (awards coordinator) and Jérémie to define funding criteria, and student travel grants would be disbursed although the modality had not yet been finalised.

Spotlighting some additional financial facts, Dalila reported that journal costs had been considerably higher in 2023 and had already exceeded the estimate included in the proposed budget, still with one quarterly issue to go. She noted that the September issue had cost over \$12,000, more than half the budget allocation, and indicated that if that trend was expected to continue there was urgent need for a discussion of the matter to bring costs under

control. A larger number of student prizes had been awarded in 2023 (the previous year more had gone unclaimed) and the Directors' Awards for best student and member's papers in Canadian Acoustics had been judged and assigned once again in 2023 after a hiatus. Lastly, the 2022 conference had resulted in a shortfall albeit modest, about \$1,250.

Turning to the Association's assets, Dalila remarked that for the first time the cash position was slightly lower than the previous year, about \$541k against \$554k, but that was influenced by the timing of disbursements with respect to investments maturing and interest being deposited. Although paying out the awards will draw down on the capital fund, she advised against transferring any funds from the operating to the capital account until the final balance of payments and revenues became clearer. Dalila then showed a prospect of all the awards being paid out that year, totalling just over \$10,000 or about twice the amount paid the previous year; this, she noted, was a good thing as it meant that the Association had applicants for most prizes and was thus able to recognize and reward excellence.

Moving on to the operating fund, Dalila showed the comparison of estimated vs actual figures for the year in both revenues and expenses; she noted that actual membership dues at \$20,700 had far exceeded the estimate of \$15,000 that had been based on the previous year; other revenues like sustaining subscriptions were lower than forecast while advertising revenue was exactly as expected; altogether, revenues were about \$5,000 above forecast. On the expenses side, the most substantial overrun was from journal costs that rose to \$30,000 against \$21,000 forecast, especially due to an uncommonly large conference proceedings issue; still, total expenses were marginally (about \$2,500) lower than budgeted because no travel grants were paid out for AWC 2022. Based on the 2023 information Dalila projected a budget for 2024 conservatively estimating a deficit of about \$16,000.

Dalila reminded the Board that the Association had not raised its dues since 2019 despite increasing costs; she noted that she had not made a recommendation for fee increases but the matter should be reviewed. Lengthy discussion ensued on what the journal costs would be in the future and whether members would prefer a paperless option; this led to the suggestion of creating a split category for regular membership where the fee would be the current one (\$120) with no printed copy of the journal and an increased one (\$140) with paper copy delivery. Student and retired memberships would remain at their present fees but without printed journal.

Jérémie moved, seconded by Bill, for the adoption of Dalila's report amended with the proposed rates adjustment; the Board voted unanimously in favour.

4. Secretary's Report (Dr Roberto Racca)

Roberto began by presenting a table of membership and subscription numbers over the previous 12-month period comparing current values to the previous Fall BoD meeting in late September 2022 and the Spring meeting in May 2023. He noted how the precipitous drop in regular memberships that had occurred between the earlier two reporting dates had thankfully corrected itself, doubling to 142 from the 73 in May and indeed exceeding the 129 of a year earlier. Student memberships had also more than doubled to 59 from the 24 of six months before, continuing in that case a rising trend, while sustaining subscriptions had bounced back to 14 from the 9 in May and nearly recovered to the 18 of a year before. While reflecting in some part the interest in the Association created by the conference, Roberto noted, these encouraging gains were largely attributable to the campaign of e-mail reminders sent out by Jérémie in the run-up to AWC 2023 to all members whose terms had lapsed in the past year or so. This had resulted in a surge of renewals – and several apologies and expressions of goodwill for the CAA-ACA sent to the Executive Secretary in whose name the automated reminders had gone out. All said, the grand total of individual members and institutional subscribers had risen to 224.

Regarding the sustaining subscribers, Roberto indicated that he would continue following up with organisations not only to canvass their support but also to ensure that they were aware of and benefited from features such as network-based free access to the full online content of Canadian Acoustics. He pointed out that the same follow-up was being done for advertisers, who appreciated the ability to see online the most recent issues of the journal with their ad insertions thanks to the "subscriber" status lent to them by the OJS based management. On that note he remarked that ad runs had also recovered from the drop of a few months earlier, suggesting that despite the publishing schedule challenges in 2022 there had not been a loss of interest in advertising in the pages of Canadian Acoustics.

Roberto remarked that the surge in communications with members and subscribers that resulted from the reminder campaign also brought again in sharp focus the difficulties presented by the current portal to individuals trying to purchase or renew their terms. Numerous requests for instructions and clarifications had to be fielded on an individual basis by the Executive Secretary despite “how-to” video clips produced by Jérémie that are linked in renewal notification e-mails. Several people stated that navigating the subscription / membership management site was awkward and unintuitive and that the process of renewal needed to be made easier. Especially in view of the objective to transition long-held executive roles to new and freshly enthusiastic hands, Roberto committed to focusing his activities over the upcoming months, in collaboration with Jérémie and other specialised resources, to making the OJS portal and related administrative processes clearer and more intuitive.

5. Awards Report (Prof. Victoria Duda)

Victoria presented a summary table of all prizes and their awarded status for 2023 and gave the good news that most prizes had been applied for, sometime with as many as five applicants for an award, and winners had been selected. Because of this considerable turnout, and the higher cash value of the prizes after an increase decided the previous year, the total distributed amount in prizes for 2023 would be much larger than in 2022 as already mentioned in the Treasurer’s report. She highlighted some of the major awards distributed, including the Shaw post-doctoral prize in Acoustics (\$3900) which had gone unassigned the previous year for lack of a qualifying candidate. There were no applicants for two prizes, the Albert S. Bregman student prize in Psychological Acoustics and the Thomas D. Northwood student prize in Architectural and Room Acoustics, while the Hétu prize in Acoustics went unawarded because of the vacant coordinator position, formerly held by Alberto Behar, for which a replacement would be sought. Victoria expressed her gratitude to directors Bill, Brian, Dalila, Michael, and Roberto who had been judges for the Directors’ Awards for best student and best member papers in Canadian Acoustics; she noted that the Student Presentation Awards would similarly be assigned based on scoring by audience members selected by session Chairs throughout the conference. Jérémie indicated that for AWC 2023 the full complement of three prizes would be awarded to the top judged student papers across all days and sessions; this was the subject of discussion because at some previous conferences (AWC2020, AWC2022) only one such prize had been offered, but Jérémie noted that the reason had been the small number of student presenters at these events. Having verified that the CAA-ACA online documentation mentioned three prizes of \$650 each, it was confirmed that this would indeed be the case.

Lastly, Victoria reported on the AWC Student Travel grants of \$500 a person toward costs to attend the conference, which had a maximum budget of \$10,000 but no set qualifying rules for applicants. She related that the decision had been made with AWC convenors and following the 2023 Spring BoD to support students travelling to Montréal from more than 350 km away, which restricted the qualifying field to a group of 9 (from Ontario and British Columbia) based on registration records. The final list of course would depend on actual attendance by those students. Dalila confirmed that these grants, like all awarded cash prizes, would be paid out by e-transfer for which she only required the electronic mail addresses of recipients.

6. Editor’s Report (Prof. Umberto Berardi)

Umberto summarised the production status to date: issues 1 and 2 of 2023 had been printed and mailed; issue 3, the AWC 2023 proceedings, had been printed and would be mailed to members and subscribers who would not receive a copy directly at the conference. For future issues there were already 12 papers in the editorial pipeline, some of which were close to being accepted and two already accepted, so there would be no problem in publishing the fourth issue of 2023. Beyond that, he noted, he would not say too much as his editorial responsibility would end with the swap of roles with Jérémie; there were however some insights for the future that he wished to share. For the May 2024 conference jointly organised with the American Society of Acoustics, the two parties had agreed after some discussion that authors of presentations would be able to submit their papers indifferently to the ASA’s POMA (Proceedings of Meetings on Acoustics) or to Canadian Acoustics. Both doors would therefore be open, with the expectation that Canadian authors would more likely publish their paper in Canadian Acoustics while US authors would choose POMA.

Umberto also put forward, for the next Editor in Chief’s consideration, the idea of producing again a geographic special issue, as had been done in the past for the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Montréal, and Vancouver to boost interest in the journal for potential contributors in those regions. This had not happened in the last four years, and Umberto thought the time was right to rekindle the idea. In the same vein he suggested that a topical special issue

would raise the interest in the journal for a specialty sector, as it was done for audiology a couple years back. Lastly, Umberto remarked that not much renewal had taken place over the past decade on the Advisory Board or much of the Editorial Board of Canadian Acoustics, and some vacancies remained to be filled. For the near future nonetheless, he noted in closing, the journal was in good shape editorially, with enough contributed papers to see it into the first (March) issue of 2024 whilst the June issue would feature the conference proceedings.

Jérémie thanked Umberto for his insights and said that as the upcoming Editor in Chief he would heed the suggestions regarding the publishing timeline, special issues, and the advisory bodies of the journal. He then raised a point of fact regarding the options for conference papers from the May ASA/CAA conference, stating that his understanding in exchanges with the ASA stakeholders was that the same paper could be published in both Canadian Acoustics and POMA with the proviso that the title had to be different in the two submissions to avoid indexing conflicts. Umberto confirmed that this was also his interpretation in principle, but hopefully the 800-900 ASA participants expected at the joint event would not opt to submit their papers to the Canadian Acoustics conference issue which would be overwhelmed. By comparison, following the previous joint conference held in Victoria (BC) in October 2018, a proceedings collection containing mostly 2-page articles from CAA members was published in the December issue, and as a result from the delegates' interest, a special issue of full papers from a special conference session on room acoustics dedicated to Murray Hodgson was published as a tribute in March 2019.

7. Present and Upcoming Meetings

a. AWC 2023: Montréal (Prof. Olivier Doutres, Dr. Thomas Padois – joined in person this segment only)

Olivier Doutres, conference Chair, reported that the event had attracted more than 260 registrants and that an impressive balance had been achieved between academic and industry participants, an almost exactly even split which was excellent in terms of the congress' wide appeal. He remarked on the broad geographic reach, with most participants from Québec and Ontario but many spanning Canada coast to coast, from British Columbia and Alberta to New Brunswick and Nova Scotia as well as from the USA, France, and Germany. The conference had received generous support from sponsors at the diamond level (Pliteq) and silver level (IRSST, LogiSon and SVS), who were also exhibiting at the conference along with 12 other exhibitors; to encourage attendees to visit all exhibitors' booths, a "collector" card to be stamped at each stand would entitle the bearer to be entered in a draw for prizes. Thomas Padois, the technical Chair, presented a summary of the programme structured as 11 sessions in 4 parallel streams, with a total of 156 presentations on topics ranging from Architectural & Building Acoustics, Hearing Protection, and Speech & Hearing (the three primary subjects at AWC 2023) to Environmental Noise, Artificial Intelligence, and Underwater Acoustics among others. Olivier remarked that 156 presentations were the maximum that could be accommodated, and luckily it exactly matched the number of accepted papers so that no speaker had to be turned down due to space constraints.

Thomas gave a brief overview of the three keynote speakers (Christian Giguère, Noureddine Atalla, and Fabrice Marandola), then Olivier described the social and technical events associated with the conference. These included an all-time "NoiseCapture Party" whereby participants would use their Android phone and NoiseCapture app (duly calibrated) to assemble a map of sound levels wherever they went around Montréal during the three days of the conference. On the Wednesday afternoon there would be two parallel social events, a "Beer and Pizza" gathering for students at a local microbrewery, and a combination of cocktails, technical visits to EERS and CRITIAS laboratories, and a ghost tour of Griffintown for all conference participants registered to that event. On the Thursday afternoon after the end of sessions there would be the CAA-ACA Annual General Meeting, followed by a cocktail reception & PowerPoint Karaoke, the conference gala banquet, and a musical jam session. Finally on the Friday afternoon after the end of the conference programme three parallel technical visits were planned, to CIRMMT, or ICAR (ÉTS), or the Maison symphonique.

Regarding food and beverage offerings for the delegates (in addition to the gala dinner), Olivier mentioned that there would be that evening a Welcome cocktail reception (open bar and appetizers), then on every day of the conference a continental breakfast, 2 coffee breaks, and a buffet seated lunch, all complimentary. A point of great importance to the conference organisers, Olivier noted, was the environmentally sensible running of the event; he listed the sustainable actions adopted which included low-impact waste management, responsible consumption, and sustainable choices in food and beverage, following the guidelines proposed by Tourisme Montréal and the Sustainable Events Council of Québec. All sustainability measures adopted were openly communicated to

participants via e-mails and the web site – including the 40% quota of vegetarian dishes offered at the gala banquet, which Olivier felt might turn out to be the least popular.

Lastly Olivier showed a preliminary breakdown and estimate of the conference budget. On the revenue side, the event was forecast to bring in \$160,121 of which the largest component (72%) came from registration fees. On the expenses side, the total estimate was \$152,817 of which the vast majority (84%) were the venue costs. The event was therefore expected to realise a modest revenue, or at any extent not to run into a deficit. Olivier mentioned the challenge and cost of securing a suitable venue, which caused the organisers considerable anguish until the registration numbers began to rise and they could be confident that the event would be well subscribed. Board members expressed their appreciation for the efforts of Olivier and his colleagues, and Jérémie complimented them on having by his records surpassed the attendance of any previous AWC.

b. ASA/AWC 2024: Ottawa (Joana Rocha, Sébastien Ghinet)

Joana reported that all arrangements for the collaboration between ASA and CAA in running the event had been finalised, and the conference would be held from 13 to 17 May 2024 in the Shaw Centre in Ottawa. By ASA's estimates, upward of 1000 participants would be expected. Joana noted that the ASA team was very organised in the running of conference events, and they had provided considerable support. The modality for submission of papers had not yet been decided in terms of whether it would be mixed or kept distinct for the two organisations, but the ASA would be managing the process. The choice of season would be uncommon for AWC, but Joana indicated that there would not have been any option for rescheduling a joint event since the ASA had long before committed to the venue. The positive side of the Spring scheduling is that it will be tulip season in Ottawa and the city will be very pleasant to visit. Thanks to Sébastien Ghinet of NRC being co-chair, one or more technical visits to NRC laboratories were being planned; Joana and her local team were also advising ASA on possible social and leisure activities to include in the programme. At the moment, she noted, her committee was in standby mode waiting for ASA to accept input regarding CAA specific activities to fit in the schedule; because of the far greater complexity of the ASA conference structure, much of the logistical organising had to be left in ASA's hands.

Roberto asked whether Joana or any other members of her committee were directly involved with the technical structuring of the conference from ASA's standpoint (he noted that for the 2018 joint conference in Victoria he had been the ASA technical chair and coordinated the entire programme); Joana indicated that the arrangement in this case was altogether different and the ASA technical chair was someone with considerable involvement in that organisation and experience in structuring their events. Jérémie noted that in some instances it had been possible for the CAA to carve out in the main programme one or two sessions to be chaired and arranged independently of the larger structure; in the present case, however, the ASA had run matters from the outset, and we had joined their conference largely on ASA's terms – but could still make the most of the opportunity.

c. AWC 2025: Vancouver/Banff (Umberto Berardi / Fitsum Tariku)

Umberto having already left the remote connection, Jérémie only informed the Board that the option of AWC moving West for 2025 remained a possibility that Umberto and his colleague Fitsum Tariku at BCIT in Vancouver would consider. The decision to commit to the event might be affected, however, if developments were to occur on a potential bid to have Vancouver host InterNOISE 2028 which could divert the available time and attention of would-be local AWC organisers toward that prestigious but highly demanding target. Jérémie noted that there is still ample time to identify a potential alternative for 2025.

8. Social Media Editor Report (Romain Dumoulin – joined in person this segment only)

Romain presented some statistics of members / followers for the CAA-ACA accounts on LinkedIn (1069 members, +70 since June 2022) and X / Twitter (562 followers, +40 since June 2022) and gave a summary of subjects covered in recent posts which included AWC 2023, job opportunities, student awards, and local chapter events among others. He indicated that he planned to report on awards and other events associated with the conference, and urged anyone with photos and videos of the event to post them on social media with event hashtags he would make known among attendees, and he would repost and/or share them. He also reiterated a previously expressed intent to work with the journal editor to identify and post references to archival articles of particular interest or curiosity, as "Gems from the past." In response to a Board member's question about presence on Facebook, he stated that there were no plans

to add that platform to the CAA-ACA portfolio as in general LinkedIn provided a more professional appearance for complex posts and gave better capabilities to manage content.

Jérémie reminded the directors that Romain had been appointed to the role in 2019 by the Board for a period of four years, and his mandate would need renewing if it was felt that his work merited it. He moved to keep Romain in the role of social media editor, seconded by Joana; the motion was carried unanimously. Jérémie also remarked that two members of the international media had requested to cover the conference and they had been given free passes to the event (though no other benefits such as meals as that could be seen as an inducement), and Romain proposed to act as liaison with them and also try contacting local media to see if any interest could be generated in covering the event. He remarked that for future conferences there should be an established process to reach out to the media with press releases and announcements to raise the profile of the events with the public.

9. Varia

Jérémie coordinated with Board members on site the logistics of attending, over the next two days' lunches, at the information tables for people potentially interested in serving on the Board. He also alerted members of the executive, present and online, that he would assemble a slide pack for the AGM to which they would have to contribute brief summaries of their presentations.

10. Motion to Adjourn

Moved by Jérémie, seconded by Roberto, at 18:20 (EDT).