



# *Saskatchewan College of Psychologists*

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Dear Colleagues:

We hope that this letter finds you well and enjoying the wonderful colors of Fall. The last few months have been very busy and productive for the College and we wish to share with you some of our successes and challenges. It is also once again time for license renewal. You will find the necessary license renewal form and the annual invoice enclosed with this letter. **Please remember to submit the renewal form with your fees to the College office by December 1, 2007. Please note that fees received after this date will be assessed overdue fees of \$10.00/day to a maximum of \$200.00.**

The SCP believes in the importance of continuing education as one vehicle to ensure and promote competency among its members. Thus Executive Council implemented a continuing education policy in August of 2005 that requires all members (all categories of licensure) to obtain a minimum of twenty (20) hours of continuing education in each calendar year. Ten (10) hours must be in direct participatory activities such as workshops and conferences, and a maximum of ten (10) hours can be in self-directed study such as reading journal articles, online courses etc. Credit is also given for work carried on behalf of the profession through work for the SCP, or one of the Psychology advocacy bodies. Historically, members have not been required to submit their yearly continuing education activities to the SCP, rather as you are aware a yearly declaration that these have been obtained is all that has been required. In an effort to increase professional accountability as well as the transparency of the self-regulatory process, **the SCP will begin random audits of continuing education credits in the 2009 licensure year.** We trust that the membership will agree that this is a professional responsibility and will serve to strengthen the profession.

The Saskatchewan College of Psychologists (SCP) has been very fortunate to continue to have committed volunteers willing to serve on both Executive Council and the various Committees of the SCP. It cannot be said enough that without the volunteers who provide countless hours of time and talent, the organization would not be viable.

The SCP would like to welcome Mr. Gordon Glaicar and Mr. Curt Schroeder to Executive Council as our two new Public Representatives. We look forward to the contribution that these two individuals will undoubtedly make to the organization and the regulation of the profession. We continue to feel very fortunate to have our third Public Representative Ms. Joan Dudgeon, who serves on both Executive Council and the Registration Committee of the SCP. Her input has been invaluable and has assisted in improving our organizational goals and procedures.

The Chair of the Registration Committee, Dr. Tom Hengen, unfortunately is not currently available to serve in the position. The SCP has benefited greatly from his passion for the profession and his wisdom. We wish him well and look forward to when he may again be able to actively participate in this important work. Mr. Dave Gorrie has agreed to fulfill the role of Chair, and we are confident he will do so ably. The Registration Committee continues to work at refining its policies and procedures with the goal of ensuring a high standard of competence among the SCP's new and established members. Currently the SCP has within its membership 490 members; 385 Full Practice Members, 56 Provisional Members, and 49 Non-Practice members. The rapidly changing academic world has required the Committee to strike a balance between flexibility in their evaluation of applicants but at the same time being not so malleable as to compromise high standards for competency and licensure.

The Oral Examination Committee continues to work at refining the examination process of the SCP, and to providing two sittings of the SCP oral examination each year. Under Dr. Tania Safnuk's leadership, the Committee has continued its work on improving the standardization of the examination process, and the development of a handbook for the APE – only examination.

The Professional Conduct Committee (PCC) fulfills a very necessary but difficult role in the work of the SCP. Dr. Greg Stevens recently stepped down as the Chair of the PCC. We very much appreciate the years of dedicated and competent service that he has given to the PCC and the SCP. The Committee under the leadership of Ms. Shelley Hengen has continued to further refine the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and Mediation processes of the Committee, providing the SCP and its members where appropriate a less formal means to deal with practice concerns. The PCC has endeavoured to address complaints in a timely and efficient manner, although for those awaiting an outcome it may appear that things do not progress as quickly as they would like.

The Discipline Committee continues under the leadership of Dr. Mary Hampton. The Committee fortunately does not often have to adjudicate discipline cases, but when called to do so clearly have done so with integrity and professionalism. It is anticipated that the SCP will on average will conduct 2 formal Discipline Hearings a year, and the average cost for each so far has been approximately \$20,000.00. If this bears true, it has interesting and perhaps frightening implications for our continued viability as a self-regulated profession given our aging membership and reduced registration.

The Professional Practice and Ethics (PP&E), chaired by Dr. Lynn Loutzenheiser, has continued to provide competent consultation to Executive Council and the membership regarding issues related to the practice of Psychology. The PP&E has been asked to respond to numerous inquiries relating to issues such as: privacy legislation, requests from the judiciary, dealing with the media and ethics in the supervisory relationship.

The primary role of the Legislation and Bylaws Committee (Leg and Bylaws) is to advise Executive Council regarding necessary legislative changes and draft the wording of such changes. Leg and Bylaws Chaired by Dr. Della Hunter has continued their work on draft bylaws relating to the establishment of a Temporary Register and incorporating the Continuing Education policy into the bylaws. As we are confident you will appreciate these issues it is important that these issues are given serious and careful consideration, and thus they do not move forward quickly.

The Nominations Committee (Nominations) is currently being established for the 2008 election. You will be hearing from Nominations over the next few months as they organize and recruit for the upcoming Executive Council elections. We strongly encourage you to give consideration to becoming involved in this exciting and challenging work. In serving as a member Executive Council one has an opportunity to help shape the profession in this province.

Dr. Greg Stevens has assumed the role of the University of Saskatchewan Senate Representative. We sincerely thank Ms. Shelly Adams for her able representation in this position in the past. Her role within this body has been to provide a voice for the College and the profession within the University structure.

The SCP continues to have representation on the Mental Health Sector Committee from Dr. Deborah Parker-Loewen. Her role within this provincial advisory group has been to advise on the regulated practice of psychology within mental health, and to provide a voice for the College and the profession within this group.

The Third Party Payer Committee was recently established in response to a request from the Worker's Compensation Board to assist them in developing criteria for service provider qualifications and practice standards for Psychologists providing services to their clients. The SCP has been clear that it will only comment on regulatory issues, and will not stray into advocacy issues such as fee schedules. While the Committee was established out of a need expressed by a specific Third Party Payer, it is expected that the Committee will have a broader mandate and applicability, and will advise Executive Council on issues pertaining to third party payer services in general.

Ongoing change appears to be reality of the profession of Psychology. On a North American level the acceptability of distance education for the purpose of licensure continues to be of significant discussion. Executive Council recently established the Ad Hoc Committee on Distance Education to research the issue and to advise them as to how the SCP should proceed with applicants presenting with distance credentials. The committee led by Dr. Carl Von Bayer hopes to have a preliminary report ready for Executive Council by the end of the calendar year. On March 3, 2007 Executive Council passed a motion revising the Academic Credentialing Policy of the SCP to require among other criteria, that distance programs acceptable for licensure must either be CPA or APA accredited.

Competence and its assessment is also an issue of significant discussion among the North American regulators of Psychology as well as within our own organization. At the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards' (ASPPB) mid-year meeting in Louisville, Kentucky in May 2007 discussion occurred around substantive issues such as the need to tie competencies to behavioural anchors as opposed to rather broad aspirations, supervision of Psychologists, and the need for formative evaluation as opposed to only summative. The SCP continues to review its policies and procedures with regard to competency declaration and evaluation, and is interested in establishing and maintaining high standards with regard to the competence of its members. Both the Registration and Oral Examination Committees have been examining this issue in earnest and are working together to advise Council regarding how to proceed.

Another issue of significance for the SCP is that of our aging demographic. Approximately 50% of our members are age 50 or older. It is unlikely that the training programs in the province will be able to train a sufficient number of Psychologists to account for those who will be leaving the profession within the next 10 to 15 years. This is a reality that is shared by other health professions and other professions in general. Statistics Canada reports that by 2011 100% of Canada's net labour force growth will be as the result of immigration. Practically speaking in order to maintain its viability the SCP will need to develop mechanisms to recruit and license qualified foreign trained Psychologists, in addition to enhancing its existing recruitment and licensure strategies for Canadian and USA trained applicants. Since January 2007, the Registrar has served on an advisory committee for a Saskatchewan Health / SAHO initiative regarding internationally trained health professionals and facilitating their licensure. This has been an incredible opportunity for gaining knowledge and perspective with regard to what SCP will need to address in light of its aging membership.

On an equally positive note, the SCP recently applied for and was awarded \$60,800.00 in grant monies from the Workforce Planning Branch of Saskatchewan Health to fund 6 projects related to the recruitment and retention of Psychologists. A portion of the monies has been identified for the development of resource materials for recruitment and retention of foreign trained Psychologists. In addition some of the monies have been committed to supporting and enhancing the supervision skills of the membership.

The College has been involved in discussions with the Saskatchewan Association of Social Workers (SASW) and government representatives with regard to SASW's wish to have the diagnostic privilege expanded to a segment of their population that they will identify as qualified to diagnose. As you may be aware discussions regarding diagnostic privilege have been occurring between our two organizations since the inception of the SCP in 2002. Our government representatives and the SASW report that the intent of Section 23 of the legislation was not to exclude all others from conveying psychiatric/psychological diagnoses but rather to limit the more complex diagnoses to physicians and qualified Psychologists. The SCP has established standards of competence that requires its members to demonstrate and maintain in order for them to achieve the right to diagnose or the Authorized Practice Endorsement (APE). The SCP believes strongly that it is important that there be a process of training, supervision and evaluation of competence in diagnostics for its members who are entitled to diagnose, and encourages the SASW to adopt similar if not identical standards. Having said that the SCP acknowledges that the SASW has a right to regulate its members in a manner it sees as reasonable. The Executive Council of the SCP has endorsed the SASW's right to request expansion of diagnostic privilege, but has not been asked to comment on or endorse a specific plan. At this time the SASW proposal suggests that the minimum requirement in terms of an academic credential would be an MSW. SASW has indicated that they will be establishing other criterion. The Executive Council of the SCP believes that in this particular instance the government must adopt a leadership role in correcting the problem within the legislation.

Other initiatives that the SCP has been involved in have included a Saskatchewan Educational Psychologist's Association (SEPA) / Saskatchewan Learning initiative to develop a best-practice document pertaining to Psychologists working in schools (release pending final Saskatchewan

Learning approval), representation on a Saskatchewan Learning reference committee regarding Certification of Psychologists as Teachers, discussions with the Worker's Compensation Board regarding the establishment of a relationship agreement, continued involvement with the national regulators (ACPRO – Association of Canadian Psychology Regulatory Organizations – incorporation in January 2008), continued involvement with the Association of State and Provincial Psychology Boards, providing information to future registrants regarding licensure and the SCP, and involvement with the provincial regulators of health professions (Network of Intra-provincial Regulatory Organizations).

Shortly after the last AGM, Executive Council identified the need to develop a strategic plan to take the SCP forward into the future. It was evident to the Executive Council that although the SCP is still relatively young, it is at a point where there needs to be a clear plan outlined if it is going to continue meet its mandate and continue to be viable as an organization. In entering into this process Executive Council's goal was to move the SCP from a position of reactivity to one of proactivity with clear values, priorities, and goals. The recent membership survey was the starting point for the formal strategic planning process, and was followed by stakeholder consultations and the first of two planning sessions with Executive Council and SCP staff. It is anticipated that a strategic plan will be formalized by the end of the calendar year and that we will be able to share the details of the plan with you shortly after.

The next **Annual General Meeting** of the SCP will be held on **Saturday, March 15, 2008 in Regina**. We are hoping to again incorporate a continuing education component to the meeting. We encourage you to mark the date on your calendars and hope to see you there.

As we hope you will agree it has been an exciting time in the life of this young organization. While there is still much to do, we believe that with the continued commitment of the membership, the College will continue to be an organization that we can all be proud to be affiliated with. We invite you to contact the Council or SCP staff with any comments or questions that you may have.

Mary Vandergoot, Ph.D., R.D. Psych.  
President

Karen Messer-Engel, M.A., R. Psych.  
Registrar