



Saskatchewan College of Psychologists

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Dear Colleagues:

We hope that this letter finds you in good health and enjoying the incredible Fall that we are having. The College has been very busy since the last annual meeting, and we will try in this letter to highlight for you some of the important issues that we have been working on.

However, before we turn to the work of the College we must first deal with the practical business of registration renewal. Enclosed you will find an invoice for registration renewal for the 2009 practice year. You will note that the renewal fees have been increased to \$650.00 for both Full Practice and Provisional licensure. The fee for Non-Practice membership has been increased to \$200.00. It is anticipated that there will be periodic increases in the annual renewal fee to address increases in the cost of meeting the College's regulatory responsibilities. It is important to note that Saskatchewan's annual renewal fees relative to the other Canadian jurisdictions falls in the middle of the range (\$350 - \$1200). The Executive Council supports cost recovery where feasible for those activities related to the mandate of the College which require a significant proportion of financial/staff resources, e.g. investigation/discipline and registration of Provisional members. Please note that renewal fees are due by December 1, 2008. As is the policy of the College, late fees of \$10.00/day will be assessed for fees received after December 1, 2008 up to a maximum of \$200.00. Members whose fees are in arrears will be removed from the Register until such time as the renewal and late fees are received in full. Please be advised that this "break" in licensure may impact one's eligibility for mobility under the national Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA).

Another important item of note relates to the yearly Continuing Education requirement. As was raised in the annual report and at the Annual General Meeting in March 2008, beginning in 2009, the College will conduct random audits of member's continuing education activities. It is anticipated that a random sample of the membership will be asked to submit their documentation relating to continuing education. We would therefore encourage you to maintain records relating to your continuing education activities. Specific details with regard to the process will be forthcoming.

It is important to remember that in submitting your renewal materials you need to submit in writing any changes to your contact information and/or to your declared practice competencies. In addition it is important that you also complete the attestations relating to the continuing education requirement and whether or not you have been the subject of a criminal investigation and/or charge in the past year, and that this is signed. Incomplete forms will be returned, and renewals will not be processed until all documentation is received complete. We very much appreciate your cooperation with the renewal process.

In line with the Strategic Plan that was developed in 2007-2008, work has been occurring on changes to the governance structure of the College. Executive Council has been examining its governance structure with consideration of a move towards a policy-governance model. Movement from a direct oversight model will allow for the streamlining of College work and processes. The strategic plan will allow the College to be more focussed in its work. The Executive Council is currently working on revising the Council Policies to bring them in line with the strategic changes.

Exciting changes are occurring within the College Office. A realignment of the key responsibilities of the office to better match the skill set of the existing staff has resulted in the realignment of the Office Manager's duties, and a change in title to "Assistant to the Registrar." The primary responsibilities assigned to this new position are to support the work of the Registrar and serve as the College liaison and support for the Professional Conduct Committee, while maintaining the higher level responsibilities relating to office administration. We believe that these changes will enhance service provision in the key service areas and are pleased that Wendy Petrisor has agreed to accept the position. As a result of the realignment we will be hiring a Receptionist/Admin Assistant on a temporary part-time basis (50%). This addition does not represent an increase in overall staffing for the College but rather it brings the staff component back to the 2.1 FTEs that were initially planned for in the past with the creation of a Deputy Registrar position. The Registrar is currently at 60% time, and consideration is being given to a realignment of the duties of that position. We very much appreciate your patience as we undergo this transition.

As you may recall, following the last College election (March 2008), Executive Council found itself with a vacant Member-at-Large position. Many highly qualified members responded to the request for volunteers for the position and for that we are grateful. Council was pleased to have Dr. Jenny Keller agree to fill the position. Elections for the 2009 Council are fast approaching and the College is in need of volunteers to serve on the Nominations Committee as well as volunteers who will allow their name to stand for election. The positions on Council that will need to be filled are the President-Elect, a Member-at-Large, and the Treasurer. These are exciting and challenging times for the College and we would like to encourage you to consider becoming part the change.

An issue that continues to occupy the work of the College is that of Distance Education. Council has before it a report submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee on Distance Education that provides a considered and well researched discussion of the issues. Distance Education is a mode of education that is increasing in popularity and availability. Having said that it is an issue that is very much in the consciousness of professional regulators, and we believe that the College must be strategic in its approach to addressing this relatively new mode of education as the implications are significant.

The Third Party Payer Committee has recently submitted to Executive Council for their consideration a draft document - Standards of Professional Conduct. This initiative was a timely response to growing concerns from within the membership and a stakeholder group with regard to how to manage the complex service area related to third party payers. The document was intended to have broad applicability and to be relevant to practice in general. It is important to emphasize that the College is a regulatory body and not an advocacy or fraternal organization and as such does not see as its role the negotiation of fees or standards relating to working conditions for its members.

The aging of the members of the profession has been a concern for the College, as has how to “grow” the profession. The College has been participating in initiatives related to the recruitment of internationally trained health professionals and it is anticipated that this will continue to be the focus of attention into the future (SAHO/Ministry of Health IEHP Initiative). Proposed changes to federal mobility agreements will likely impact the growth of the profession however careful consideration needs to occur as to how to strike a balance between “growing” the profession, and protecting the Public and maintaining a high standard of competence for the profession. Participation continues in the national and North American regulatory forums where issues relating to mobility, standards, professionalism etc. are addressed.

The membership of the College is currently 491 (total) which is a slight increase in membership compared to the same time last year. We are pleased to have been able to welcome these new members to the profession and practice in Saskatchewan. The Committees of the College continue to be essential to the viability of the organization and we have been truly fortunate to have had so many of you willing to step forward to contribute to your profession. We will always require your assistance, and with it we will continue to successfully meet our legislated obligations.

The Registration Committee continues to be incredibly busy with the registration of new members to the profession. They continue to consider collateral issues related to registration such as continuing competency, supervision, academic credentialing, etc and to advise Council on these. The Oral Examination Committee works in conjunction with the Registration Committee and has the responsibility to organize and administer the oral examinations for the College. Currently the College has the capacity to run examinations twice a year with 10 candidates being examined at each sitting. There is always a wait list for examination, and the Committee has continued to look at alternatives as to how to expedite and improve upon the process. The reality however is that the process is very costly and very much dependent upon member volunteerism. We would be in error to say this is not a time consuming activity for the examiners but would be accurate in saying that it is a worthwhile and essential activity that is a significant contribution to the profession. We appreciate that for those waiting for examination the wait can be frustrating. We wish to thank you for your patience, and wish to assure you that this is an issue that the College takes seriously and is attempting to improve upon.

The Professional Conduct Committee has continued to work hard to address consumer complaints, as well as work on further refining its investigation processes. Their work is very difficult and demanding because of the time commitment and the nature of the task itself. The other committee of the College that shares in the stress of reviewing the work of colleagues/members is the Discipline Committee. The College has received on average one new complaint a month (averaged out over 12 months). The complaints most often relate to allegations of “professional misconduct” around issues such as boundary violations, health record issues, custody/access etc.

The Legislation and Bylaws Committee has been working on bylaw revisions relating to Continuing Education Requirements and the Time Limited Register. Their responsibilities have also included consideration of trends in the profession and regulation, and to make recommendations to Executive Council with regard to any necessary legislative and bylaw changes.

The Professional Practice and Ethics Committee have continued to work to assist the membership at large with practice issues. Over the past months the Committee has considered questions raised by members relating to issues such as the use of psychological tests by non-psychologists, privacy legislation and practice, competency questions, new areas of practice, and its own mandate.

The U of S Senate, the Mental Health Sector Committees, and the SGI Interdisciplinary Rehabilitation Committee are special committees of the College which although not regularly active are ably represented by senior members of the College; namely Dr. Greg Stevens (President-Elect), Dr. Deborah Parker-Lowen, and Ms. Shelley Adams respectively.

With regard to the issue of an amendment to Section 23 of the legislation which would allow for diagnostic privilege to be extended to the profession of Social Work, the College has received notification from the Government that the SASW is not interested in pursuing the issue of diagnostic privilege for its members any further at this time, and thus there is no planned amendment to this section of the legislation. Scope of practice appears to be an issue that is of current interest among the health professions in Saskatchewan with two regulatory bodies pursuing this for their professions. This has historically been resisted by the Government in the template legislation. The College will be monitoring this with consideration of whether this is something that this profession should explore.

This Fall the College will be continuing its discussions with the Saskatchewan Teacher's Federation (STF) with regard to the interface between the two governing legislations and how this will be handled in the case of members who are duly registered. We are pleased to report that the Saskatchewan Educational Psychologists Association (SEPA) / Ministry of Education initiative regarding the development of a best practices document for Psychologists working in schools has been completed. The Registrar represented the College on this project. The Ministry has committed to reconvening the working group to make any necessary revisions/changes to the document. The document ***Guidelines for the Practice of Professional Psychology in Schools within Saskatchewan*** and companion PowerPoint/QuickTime presentations are available for download at the following web address: <http://www.education.gov.sk.ca/ChildrensServicesPublications>

It has been a very busy 6 months that has been both challenging and rewarding. We are working hard as an organization to ensure that the profession is ethical, promotes high standards of competence, and is accountable to those we serve – the Public. We invite you to take an active role in the College and the profession.

Steve Jacobson, M.A., R. Psych.
President

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