

**Editors' Association of Canada/Association canadienne des réviseurs
Vice-President's and Treasurer's Report on National Executive Council Meeting
November 22–23, 2003
Montreal**

Budget

As always, our November meeting was our budget-setting meeting. And as has sometimes been the case before, this was not an easy budget to set. In our budget-setting deliberations for 2004, we were ever mindful not only of our obligation as a board to be fiscally responsible but also of our responsibility to deliver the programs our members want and expect and to work to fulfill the goals of the organization. Every budget is also an exercise in priority setting, and this part of the process was made easier by the goal-setting EAC/ACR undertook as an organization in the spring. In this case, it was clear to us that certification was a very high priority; although our members don't want to give up current services for it, they do want us to move forward toward making certification a reality—and a successful one.

In setting the national EAC/ACR budget for 2004, we were also constrained by other commitments, in particular by a matching grant arranged with the federal Department of Canadian Heritage to conduct a survey of our membership and to upgrade our national database to accommodate this (and other) information. Canadian Heritage requires more information about what our members do in order to be able to consider our applications for other funds. The survey is in rapid development; you can expect to hear much more about it in the winter.

Upgrading the database is also essential to EAC/ACR as an organization. Without a larger, more flexible database, we will not be able to effectively coordinate our own member information, including things such as the various skills and interests and talents our members bring to EAC/ACR and how we have already drawn on them; a more flexible online directory; the possibility of Web-based membership applications and other forms; an online membership list in a fully protected members-only space; an effective database for our PR and marketing efforts; and so much more. Above all, we cannot implement certification without it.

We began our budget deliberations with about \$62,500 in bank savings, \$8,000 in the Tom Fairley Award endowment fund, and \$26,800 in our operational account—but facing a possible deficit of over \$85,000. We ended by approving a budget with a deficit of \$25,333 and with a formal commitment by the branch representatives—some of whose branches have savings comparable to the national level—to work together in an attempt to put together a loan to the national association that would be no greater than this deficit figure, that would be allocated to certification expenses, and that would be payable when certification's finances are in order.

Some of our projections have been conservative. We have assumed only a moderate increase in membership and we have not planned an increase in membership fees. On the other hand, we have made decisions that not only assist our budgetary process but that also support our image as a serious, modern professional organization and that will enable us to improve the quality of the programs and services we deliver.

Conference

Some of these decisions concern the annual conference. This year's fees will be closer than in recent years to those of comparable organizations: \$250 for early registrants, \$300 for late registrants, and \$500 for non-members. We have also set a target of \$8,000 for conference sponsorships. With the increased financing, we intend to push for improvements in conference programming—and to ensure that the conference is a break-even or profitable operation.

Directory

Another major decision was to make the January 2004 directory the last print directory. In its place, we are planning a more flexible online directory and a serious marketing campaign to increase the value that members receive for their directory fee. This increased emphasis on marketing means that there will be a cost for all online directory entries. But at the equivalent of this year's early-bird rate (\$50) for members who pay for their online directory entry and their membership at the same time, and with a prorated \$60 rate for those who take an entry at other times, we feel that it will be a good bargain, particularly with greater flexibility and greater visibility. And on top of all that, it will require less time from our members and our staff, freeing up human—and financial—resources for other goals.

The new cost structure for the online directory will be introduced in the summer of 2004.

Accommodation expenses

The executive also addressed a long-standing practice that has increasingly come to be seen as a disincentive to becoming an executive member. Although transportation costs have long been reimbursed and some meals expenses have been provided, accommodations have not been covered, and many executive members find they need time alone to recharge during the intensive two-day meetings. As it is, many executive members already have to donate holiday time or unpaid leave time to get to meetings.

To ensure that we can continue to attract able members to serve the association, the executive therefore decided to reimburse executive members up to \$200 per person per meeting for accommodation expenses. And in the interest of equity, money for accommodations was also earmarked for the use of the certification committee, which needs to meet occasionally for specified tasks.

Other matters

Though the budget naturally took most of our time, we also stayed on top of how the transition process into the new structure is working, focusing particularly on committees. Among the many issues we discussed were the role of the members-at-large, succession planning for committees, mentorship and training for committee chairs, and what we offer committee members. We also discussed how the various hotline programs operate and what might be done with them once the new database is in place, and how the customized seminar program (whereby the association provides on-site editorial training to businesses and government departments) might be further developed.