

Annual Report 2005-2006

The advent of the Annual General Meeting always provides a moment to stop and reflect on where the Association has come over the last twelve months, and where we would like it to go in the future.

At the last AGM, the Members were presented with a renewed Strategic Plan for the Association. That plan had four cornerstone objectives: To provide quality support to the members; to increase membership growth through recruitment and retention; to enhance the image and awareness of the Association; and, to ensure the appropriate infrastructure was in place to support the plan.

Ensuring an appropriate infrastructure to support the Strategic Plan

Dealing with the last objective first, the governance task force led by Larry Corrigan, FCGA, reported to the Board in October with their recommendations on the most effective structure for the operations of CGA Nova Scotia. The report was accepted in principal and the job of ensuring that the report's recommendations were implemented began.

First, the Executive Director position was re-established and successfully filled. Secondly, largely due to the efforts of John McCulloch, FCGA and Don Connor, CGA the Policies of the Association were re-drafted to fit the new governance model. This new model establishes responsibility and accountability with the appropriate individuals and bodies. With the changes, the Board is freer to focus on the future direction of the Association while ensuring that the administrative needs of the Association are looked after.

Change is difficult in any organization. Some members of the board decided that they were unable to complete their terms. The Board invited two members to complete the terms of departing directors, and we were fortunate that Ray Carroll, FCGA a former President, and Norm Lockyer, CGA, a former Treasurer agreed to return to the Board. Their participation, and the committed participation of the remaining Board, provided the Association with a cohesive governance body that has overseen unprecedented advances over the past year.

The office, under the guidance of Stana Colovic, has continued to provide high quality service to the members and students who request information and assistance. Stana's commitment to the Members is highly regarded. Over the year additional support for Stana has been provided, first with Shauna B and lately, with Jonathan Rook to ensure that her primary responsibility is to build solid relationships with our Members through effective service. In addition, at the end of the year, the Association offices moved into space adjacent to our former location. This space offers a more professional image for the association and enhances the versatility of what the Association can offer.

The Board has also created a Strategic Planning Committee, chaired by the 2nd Vice President, to focus exclusively on long term issues. It is expected that this committee will continue to report regularly with issues for the Board to consider as part of its strategic mandate. In addition, this committee offers an opportunity for members who wish to become more involved with the Executive in future planning.

Quality Support to Members

As you can see at the end of the Annual Report, the participation of Members in our Committees has been very impressive. They have served the Association well with their commitment to attending, and participating, in the work required to move us closer to our Objectives.

Reports of the Standing Committees of the Board are included at the end of this report however it is useful to highlight some of the work that has been accomplished.

The [Audit Committee](#) has ensured a clean audit, once again, with no management letter. As always there are on-going discussion regarding the way to appropriately treat income and expenses, and each year the presentation is improved. Congratulations to Jennifer Keating –Hubley, CGA, the Chair, and John McCulloch, FCGA, the Treasurer for their effective work.

The [Education Committee](#), under the able leadership of Mike Pottie, CGA, faced a large number of practical experience forms, and dealt with them in an effective manner. Part of the responsibility is to follow up with employers who might not understand the complexity of what is required of their employees in joining the Association as a professional. Some communication was required this year and employers were appreciative of the pro-active nature.

The [Public Practice Committee](#), led by Kayhan Lotfi, CGA, has had an active year. They co-ordinated three practitioner roundtables; inviting non-practitioners to attend and offer their input and perspective. In addition, 10 peer reviews were completed without any serious concerns identified. This certainly indicates that the quality of our public practitioners continues to improve. In addition, the Board felt that to improve the overall governance of the peer review system, that the Peer Review sub-committee of Public Practice be comprised of only those who are subject to peer review by the Association themselves. This was enacted at the March meeting.

The [Discipline and Ethics Committee](#) was faced with a number of serious concerns over the year. Structural problems that became evident in a hearing process have led to the recommendations for changes to the specific by-law. These changes have been recommended and reviewed by our legal counsel and we appreciated the time and effort that Peter Green, QC has given to us over the year. Terry Isles, FCGA, assumed the mantle of this committee during the year.

The [Professional Development Committee](#) provided some significant benefit and growth opportunities for the Membership. First, an annual professional development seminar booklet was produced to give Members a full year's schedule of offerings. Attendance has been very strong at the majority of these offerings.

For the first time in 30 years we were successful in holding a Regional Conference, with New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island, at Mount Allison University. Over 40 attendees were offered either the Orientation to Public Practice or the CGA Corporate Controllorship seminars. This was a profitable venture for all affiliates and will bode well for future growth of this annual event.

[Communications](#) with the Members has been enhanced this past year by the weekly email update prepared and distributed by Stana. This email incorporates news from the Association, important dates, upcoming seminars and events, and a bit of light humour

attached. Based on the response from Members this is a service that is highly valued and much appreciated.

Increase membership growth through recruitment and retention

Recruitment Success

This past year has seen substantial growth in the number of new students joining the CGA Program of Professional Studies – in excess of 30% - driven by new marketing initiatives and encouraging new approaches to the offering of courses.

In particular, for the first time, a full summer term program was offered. Of the 65 students that participated in courses, 25 were new students. This represents 16 % of all new students for the year. As a result, the summer term will continue to be offered as it provides an immediate opportunity to pursue the CGA designation for new university graduates.

A second initiative being introduced this year is the Undergraduate Student Program which allows full time university students to pursue their designation prior to graduation. This will also give these students a competitive advantage in the graduate job market.

A largely untapped source of new candidates continues to be the corporate market. A renewed emphasis this year on a corporate marketing strategy that approaches major employers has shown considerable success and will be expanded upon over the next year.

Retention

An emphasis this year has been to encourage CGA Student Services to be more responsive to affiliate needs in terms of information and analysis to identify areas of concern in student participation and pass rates. This is an on-going initiative that will be addressed structurally over the coming year.

A continuing concern is to understand why a large percentage of our students fail to renew each year. We have developed an exit survey to identify those issues that we can address. A side benefit of delivering this survey was an immediate increase in renewals of more than 15%.

A clear message from the survey was the need of the student to feel more connected to the Association, and to other students. This year we plan to introduce New Student Orientation sessions, and to follow up with group tutoring in key subject areas.

Enhance Image and Awareness

The Atlantic Image Enhancement Project was completed this past year. A final survey showed that awareness of the Association had improved significantly. John McCulloch did an excellent job in presenting the results of the project, on behalf of the Atlantic Region, to the CGA Canada Board who had provided the funds for the initiative.

An added benefit of the project has been the continued co-operation within the Atlantic Region to do additional marketing efforts. This culminated in the sponsorship of the Progress 101 Regional Receptions this past September.

In addition, we have been asked to contribute articles to the Nova Scotia Business Journal. The research done over the past few years by CGA Canada has been an excellent resource for the basic ideas behind these articles.

As reflected in the audited statements, sponsorship funds have been difficult to develop. With the increased awareness of the CGA designation we have been successful in raising over \$7,000 in sponsorship revenue for events such as the current year's Annual Golf Tournament and Conference.

Another reflection of our increased image is the number of high quality jobs being posted on the CGA web site. Since January over 20 jobs have been placed, and the frequency seems to be increasing. An objective for the coming year will be to establish a broader job referral service and make it either regional or national in scope.

This past June a provincial Salary Survey was conducted. The initial results suggest we have much to be proud of in how our Members are compensated as compared to others in the Province, and indeed, other CGAs in Canada. A full Salary Survey Report will be available in December of this year for you to reference.

The Year Ahead

We have had considerable success this past year but success is fleeting. A work plan for the new year has already been developed and we expect that we will continue to make advances in areas such as developing a strong presence in the corporate marketplace; ensuring that the advances made in public practice rights are entrenched in legislation; building a stronger sense of belonging amongst our Members and students; and, ensuring a rational and effective educational delivery system.

These are all significant challenges. With the guidance of a strong Board, and the support of the Membership, these goals are achievable.

We are looking forward to the opportunity.

Donald Larlee, FCGA
President

Donald Connor, CGA
Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer