

Council of Presidents Meeting, June 18th 2005

The following is a brief report on the substance and outcome of the meeting of the Council of Presidents of Canadian Geoscience Societies/Organizations/Institutions (hereafter abbreviated to CoP) held June 18th in Calgary in the boardroom of the Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists. The CSPG served as host for the meeting and Jeff Packard (CSPG) and Simon Hanmer (NRCan) acted as co-chairs and moderators.

Copies of the presentation materials were sent to the relevant societies/organizations in mid-July. If for any reason these were not received, please contact Jeff Packard at jpackard@br-inc.ca (403-260-8041).

Attendance

<u>Individual</u>	<u>Representing</u>	<u>In the Capacity of</u>
Sandra Barr	Geological Association of Canada	GAC Past-President
Jeff Packard	Canadian Society of Petroleum Geologists	CSPG President
Richard Moore	Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada	PDAC Geoscience Chair
Simon Hanmer	Partnership Group in Science and Engineering	PAGSE Chairman
Jeff Ollerhead	Canadian Association of Geographers	GAC delegate
Sandy Colvine	Geological Survey of Canada, NRCan	GSC Director
Derek Brown	Canadian Association of Provincial Geologists	CPG delegate
Jonathon Downton	Canadian Society of Exploration Geophysicists	CSEG delegate
Harvey Thorleifsson	Canadian Geoscience Council	CGC President
Bob Mummery	Canadian Geoscience Council	CGC Executive Officer
Norman Marcotte	National Science & Engineering Research Committee	Director Res. Grants
Steve Holysh	International Association of Hydrogeologists	IAH-CAN President
Bryan Schreiner	Canadian Geoscience Council	CGC International
Don James	Canadian Geoscience Council	CGC Finance
Kurt Keyser	National Science & Engineering Research Committee	Committee Chair
Joe White	Council of Chairs of Earth Science Departments	CCESD Chair
Dan Kontak	Mineralogical Association of Canada	MAC President
Edward Little	Canadian Association of Quaternary Geologists	CANQUA Councilor
Gary Jarvis	Canadian Geophysical Union	CGU President

Planned Agenda

1. Expectation of outcomes, rules of engagement
2. Overview of other national organizations for technical/scientific bodies
3. Review of history, accomplishments and mandate of CGC
4. President's/Societies' thoughts on current situation and the concept of a coordinating national body.
5. Vote: Does your society support the concept of a national geoscience organization
6. Lunch
7. Review of select feedback from Ottawa summit to present
8. Review of envisioned roles/outcomes from an effective national geoscience organization
9. General discussion of roles, vision, mission of postulated national body

10. Presentation of a possible model for an effective national organization plus an outline of how the transition period could be managed
11. General discussion and incorporation of consensus revisions to proposed model
12. VOTE: Does your Society agree in principal with reservations on the proposed model for a national organization
13. Adjournment

Modifications to agenda:

Agenda item 7 was dropped for the sake of time and to maintain a constructive focus for the meeting. Item 9 was curtailed and rolled into item 11, as it was felt that the presentation of a strawman model(10) and discussion thereof would more effectively cover the same ground as item 9. Little discussion of a transition occurred under item 10, although this subject was more fully discussed at the CGC meeting on the 19th.

Discussion and Deliberation¹

Expectation of outcomes, rules of engagement

- The chairs explained that the outcome of the day's discussions would be transmitted to the CGC and would serve as a vehicle for change (that change could range from complete dissolution and wholesale replacement to mild reorganization). The change, however it manifested itself, would hopefully result in a national organization that was truly relevant, effective, representative, accountable, transparent, proactive, coordinated, professional and owned – and that the day's meeting would be the first step in that direction. The chairs asked the delegates to fully participate, and be passionate and professional in their deliberations. The chairs explained that an expected outcome of the meeting was the voting by the delegates on two motions: the first asking the constituent societies to affirm their support, in general, for the existence of a national umbrella organization for the geosciences. The second motion would ask the constituent societies if they “agreed in principal” with a specific structural model (to be presented at the meeting) for such a national body.
- For the sake and ease of discussion, the postulated national body was referred to by a “placeholder” name, the Geosciences Institute of Canada (GIC).

Overview of other national organizations for technical/scientific bodies

- Hanmer reviewed the history, role and mandate, and structure of the Chemical Institute of Canada (CIC), Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC), and the Canadian Federation of Biological Sciences (CFBS). Hanmer also discussed the funding structure of the CFBS and CIC, which represented two fundamentally different financing philosophies. The CFBS funded their national body by means of a fixed levy . By contrast the CIC was funded entirely out of sponsorship and meeting profits. Hanmer concluded that many of these analogous institutions had suffered growing pains and fragmentation, but like the current CGC saw their

¹ A formal recording of minutes was not undertaken. The following represents a synopsis of the discussion based on cursory notes taken by JJP.

fundamental role (and hence value to their constituent members) in the following areas:

- communication (newsletters, website)
- national representation and advocacy
- international representation
- cross-discipline liaison
- organization of annual meetings
- continuing education
- accreditation of courses, national standards
- outreach and public awareness
- education fund and scholarships
- other services (e.g. managing memberships for smaller societies)

Review of history, accomplishments and mandate of CGC

- Packard briefly reviewed the history of the CGC, noting in particular its original objectives (circa 1971), how these objectives have been met as of 1993 and 2005, and he included a listing of some of the more important accomplishments of the CGC over this time period. The purpose of this brief review was to provide the delegates with a somewhat balanced perspective of CGC efficacy over a longer time frame.

President's/Societies' thoughts on current situation and the concept of a coordinating national body

- A general discussion ensued amongst the delegates. Issues and comments made included:
 - is an umbrella organization actually necessary?
 - what relationship might the GIC have to professional and university accreditation?
 - how can such a body be an effective advocate?
 - a primary role for GIC must be to create a blueprint for future needs for geoscience in Canada
 - coordination and collaboration are essential functions
 - we must look to the future, respect the past, and respect reality!
 - recruitment and renewal is a vital issue over the next decade
 - professional registration has led to a jurisdictional balkanization
 - who would GIC include (CAMIRA, CMOS?)
 - anomalous situation where in most departments graduate students outnumber undergrads
 - ups and downs in industry create an unstable career environment
 - many aspects of the geosciences can be seen in the very broad context of the "biotic/abiotic interface".
 - the identity of geographers as geoscientists (and the issue of prof. registration)
 - relative influence of geosciences on government policy.

- what could GIC realistically achieve in the short-medium term – vision for future of geosciences, services to members, dialog between societies and advocacy.
- historical trap of paralysis by analysis
- we need leadership to bring constituent societies to a sense of ownership
- GIC must be, and be perceived as being, proactive.
- Communication, communication, communication.
- can a business case be made for the establishment and maintenance of GIC?

Vote: Does your society support the concept of a national geoscience organization

- The vote of the delegates was unanimous 15-0 in favour of such an organization (the devil being in the details of course!).

Review of envisioned roles/outcomes from an effective national geoscience organization

- Hanmer presented a draft vision of the GIC. The likely list of key responsibilities that GIC might undertake found broad agreement amongst the delegates (although viewed as overly ambitious by some); more controversial was the provisional relative ranking of these roles suggested by Hanmer & Packard (see below) - a ranking of areas requiring success in an initial 5 year timeframe in order to immediately revitalize and make relevant this proposed national body. It was deemed appropriate at that point to poll the individual society representatives as to where they felt the emphasis of a national body should be. The responses follow by society in alphabetical order.

Areas of responsibility ranked according to need for success in first 5 years
(as suggested by Hanmer & Packard)

- **National Liaison, Coordination, collaboration (1)**
- **Advocacy/representation (2)**
- **Manpower/staffing/intellectual renewal (2)**
- Communications (3)
- Continuing Education/professional development (4)
- Advisory Role (5)
- Professional accreditation/mobility/curriculum (6)
- Research Funding (7)
- International Projects and Liaison (8)
- Outreach (9)
- Ancillary Services (10)

Views of Constituent Societies of critical areas of responsibility and/or concern

CAG

- Lobbying in Ottawa
- Professional registration
- Outreach and Communications

CAN-QUA

- Communication & Liaison
- Fragmentation
- Professional registration

CCESD

- Commitment
- Volunteering and Ownership
- Renewal of student numbers
- National Advocacy
- NSERC reallocation

CGU

- NSERC reallocation
- Bridges to other societies (e.g. CMOS)
- Student enrollment
- Departmental closures
- Role of smaller societies

CPG

- Effectiveness
- Influence with Decision-makers
- Contribution of geoscience to public policy

CSEG

- Coordination
- Continuing Education (particularly interdisciplinary)

CSPG

- Renewal and recruitment
- Influence – advocacy with decision-makers
- Joint Conferences

GAC

- Fragmentation
- Decline in membership (in part related to prof. registration)
- Communication (within GAC and between societies)

GSC

- Renewal (lack of student enrollment)
- Representation of geosciences needs improvement (to influence public policy)

MAC

- NSERC reallocation
- Liaison & bridging to other societies

NSERC (Kurt)

- Communication – inter-societal
- Communication of science to public and decision-makers

PDAC

- Professional mobility
- Support for govt. mapping (i.e. Cooperative Geological Mapping Strategies program)
- Recruitment of students
- Support geoscience research

Presentation of a possible model for an effective national organization

- Packard reiterated that a structural change, although arguably warranted, could not replace the key ingredients for success for GIC, these being participation and ownership of the GIC by its constituent members, along with staffing the new structure by key motivated individuals. Packard presented a strawman organizational structure, outlined its key differences from the current CGC, and discussed those design elements meant to increase GIC's effectiveness, representation, and relevance. A funding model was not presented.

General discussion and incorporation of consensus revisions to proposed model

- A lengthy general discussion ensued, largely over points of clarification on the proposed model. No substantive changes were brought forward for the model, and as there appeared to be a growing consensus on the broad acceptability of the proposed structure, a vote was initiated.

VOTE: Does your Society agree in principal with reservations on the proposed model for a national organization.

- The vote of the delegates was unanimous 15-0 in favour of this motion

Adjournment

- The meeting was brought to a close at 4:45 p.m.

Action Items Ensuing from the Subsequent CGC Meeting, June 19th, Calgary.

- Request plan from GAC, with the support of fellow societies, for the community wide distribution of Geoscience Canada as the voice of the CGC for the fall 2005 CGC meeting. Implementation target in 2006.

Moved by Dan Kontak seconded by Doug Stead
Unanimously passed

- Request CSPG play the lead role to develop a plan by the fall 2005 CGC meeting for a Canada-wide geoscience conference to be held on a regular basis and with a share of the conference proceeds becoming a revenue stream for CGC. Implementation target by Geo Canada 2010.

Moved by Steve seconded by Jeff P
Unanimously passed

- Request Jeff Packard & Simon Hanmer seek qualified candidates for the position of President and Finance Director for CGC. Implementation target by Oct 1 2005

Moved by Sandra seconded by Jeff O
Passed with one abstention

- Request Derek Brown & Bob Mummery to play the lead role in developing a draft business plan for CGC. Target for circulation of first draft to member societies by Oct 1 2005

Moved by Steve seconded by Joe
Unanimously passed

- Request CAG to play the lead role in developing a plan for improving & maintaining the CGC website. Target for presentation of draft plan to members by the fall 2005 CGC meeting.

Moved by Doug seconded by Sandra
Passed with one abstention

- Request CCCESD report by the fall 2005 CGC meeting, on the progress of canvassing academic researchers and the organizing of meetings aimed at developing a strategic vision for their relationship with NSERC.

Moved by Sandra seconded by Dan
Passed with one abstention

- Request Harvey T contact member organizations to encourage their highest level participation in the fall 2005 CoP and CGC meetings suggested to be held in Ottawa Nov 26 & 27 2005. Harvey/Bob also request NRCAN host the meeting. Target meeting dates & format to be established by Sept 1