



# CAN-ACN

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CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE  
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES NEUROSCIENCES

2016 Advocacy Activities

# Canadian Association for Neuroscience 2016 Advocacy Activities

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## 2016 CAN Advocacy Committee

Chair: **Katalin Toth**, Université Laval

**Michael Hendricks**, McGill University

**Beverley Orser**, U of Toronto

**Jaideep Bains**, U of Calgary

**David Kaplan**, U of Toronto

**Jean-Claude Béique**, U of Ottawa

**Doug Zochodne**, U of Alberta

**Jay Ingram**, science writer and communicator

**Anastassia Voronova**, U of Toronto Liaison to [CSMB](#)

### A. Events

#### **CAN launches a grass-roots advocacy contest**

Launch of the first CAN-ACN Best neuroscience promotion & advocacy groups in Canada contest, offering two \$1000 prizes for the

- best Canadian local SFN chapter and
- best Canadian undergraduate/graduate student initiative promoting neuroscience to the public.

The winners were given an opportunity to present their program at the CAN meeting in Toronto were featured on the CAN website.

The Advocacy Committee of the Canadian Association for Neuroscience were proud to announce the winners of the first CAN Advocacy and Outreach Prizes:

**First prize – Best student initiative: McGill BrainReach Program**



Prize: \$1000 and a plaque

*BrainReach McGill* is an impressive group of neuroscience advocates and ambassadors. The Advocacy Committee was especially impressed by the level of organization, the number of students reached every year, and the availability of the *BrainReach* program outside of big urban centres.

<http://can-acn.org/can-advocacy->

[outreach-awards-brainreach-mcgill-first-prize](http://can-acn.org/can-advocacy-outreach-awards-brainreach-mcgill-first-prize)  
<http://www.mcgill.ca/ipn/brainreach>

**First prize – Best local SfN Chapter: Queen's University – Neuroscience Outreach Program**

Prize: \$1000 and a plaque

The Advocacy Committee was especially impressed by the wide range of activities the Chapter organises, and that these activities target people of all ages and with a wide range of interests.



<http://can-acn.org/can-advocacy-outreach-awards-queens-university-neuroscience-outreach-program-first-prize>  
<http://neuroscience.queensu.ca/outreach>

**Honorable mention – Student initiative: Allen Champagne Queen's University**

Prize: 250\$ and a plaque

Allen co-launched CESAP (Concussion Education, Safety and Awareness Program) in the Neuroscience Outreach Program. The mission of CESAP is to empower athletes, parents, coaches on concussion injuries through evidence-based education and on field helmetless clinics.



<http://can-acn.org/can-advocacy-outreach-awards-allen-champagne-honorable-mention>

<http://neuroscience.queensu.ca/node/210>

**Honorable mention – Student initiative: Katherina Lebedeva U of Saskatchewan**

Prize: 250\$ and a plaque



Katherina Lebedeva is involved in many neuroscience promotion initiatives in Saskatchewan for many years, and has been active as a co-organizer and coordinator of Brain Awareness week initiatives, Brain Blast, The Brain wave, and the Saskatchewan Brain Bee.

View her full profile on our website:

<http://can-acn.org/can-advocacy-outreach-awards-katherina-lebedeva-honorable-mention>

The committee was impressed by the quality and breadth of initiatives presented, and thanked all those who sent a submission.

Learn more about these initiatives, these impressive neuroscience advocates, and about the first CAN Advocacy and Outreach session which took place May 30th, in Toronto here: <http://can-acn.org/can-advocacy-and-public-outreach>

## **CAN sponsors a welcome reception for the federal Health Research Caucus (March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016)**

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience sponsored the welcome reception of the new Health Research Caucus, which took place March 7<sup>th</sup> 2016, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. It was an occasion for members of the CAN advocacy committee to meet members of parliament and talk with them about the importance of government support of scientific research. The reception was hosted by the honourable **Jane Philpott**, Minister of Health. Dr. Philpott was one of the speakers at the event.



CAN President **Doug Munoz** and members of the CAN Advocacy committee **Katalin Toth**, **Bev Orser**, **Jean-Claude Béïque** and **Michael Hendricks** were present in Ottawa to represent CAN and to present the point of view of researchers to elected representatives interested in health research. CAN's presence highlighted the importance of the support of the Canadian government for the vitality of neuroscience research and to scientists in

particular.

The members of the Health Research Caucus were also present, and CAN representatives had a chance to speak directly to many of them: **John Oliver**, Chair of the Health Research Caucus, **Carol Hughes**, Senator **Kelvin Ogilvie**, and other MPs interested in health research including **Brenda Shanahan** and **Brigitte Sansoucy**.

<http://can-acn.org/the-canadian-association-for-neuroscience-sponsors-the-welcome-reception-of-the-new-health-research-caucus-in-ottawa>

<http://can-acn.org/documents/Parliament03-06.pdf>

## **CAN sponsors advocacy events at the 10th Annual Canadian Neuroscience meeting (May-June 2016 in Toronto, Ontario)**

10<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Neuroscience meeting events

### **CAN16 Public lectures**

May 28<sup>th</sup> 2016:



CAN Public lectures by Charles Tator, a Canadian concussion expert and by Margot Taylor, an imaging expert who studies the pediatric brain in autistic and injured children. Every year, the day before the opening of the annual meeting, CAN presents public lectures targeted for the general public, which are free and open to all.

### **Student organized, CAN-sponsored satellite on science communication**

May 29<sup>th</sup> 2016:

CAN sponsored satellite by CAN Student members Liam Crapper and Kathryn Vaillancourt entitled *Speak Up: The role of communication in modern neuroscience*.

<http://can-acn.org/speak-up-the-role-of-communication-in-modern-neuroscience>

### **First CAN Advocacy session at CAN16 meeting**

May 30<sup>th</sup> 2016:

CAN sponsored Advocacy session at CAN16

<http://can-acn.org/can-advocacy-and-public-outreach>

This session featured a presentation by **Wendy Suzuki**, Professor at New York University and author of the popular science book *Healthy Brain, Happy life*, and an internationally recognized neuroscience advocate.



In addition, the Chair of the CAN Advocacy committee, **Katalin Tòth**, presented the First CAN Neuroscience Advocacy & Outreach awards.

## **CAN hires Sarah Ferguson, a journalism student, to write profiles of ground-breaking Canadian neuroscientists (May 2016)**

Sarah Ferguson's mandate was to write profiles of five ground-breaking Canadian neuroscientists to be featured on our website. The five neuroscientists selected were: Wilder Penfield, Brenda Milner, Donald Hebb, Alberto Aguayo and Brian MacVicar. A new section was added to the CAN website for these profiles, which were added to profiles of CAN honorary members and presidents:

<http://can-acn.org/canadian-neuroscientist-profiles>

## **CAN hires Jason Tetro, a well-known Canadian Scientific Communicator, as a part-time advocacy officer (May 2016)**

In response to an agreement with the Society for Neuroscience, and with partnered funding, CAN hired Jason Tetro, a well-known Canadian scientific communicator and author, as a part-time advocacy officer. Jason has written books popularizing science, and is a frequent contributor to Canadian newspapers, radio shows, and media, explaining and popularizing biomedical science. Since his hiring, Jason has contributed original content on the CAN website, highlighting recent and innovative discoveries made by Canadian neuroscientists. In addition, Jason is serving as the CAN liaison with SfN as we move forward on other initiatives such as our advocacy workshop.

<http://can-acn.org/category/can-news>

## **CAN sponsors the Annual General Meeting of Research Canada (June 2016)**

CAN sponsored the [Annual General Meeting of Research Canada](#). Dr. David Park attended as CAN representative and participated in this event in the presence of The Honourable Senator Kelvin K. Ogilvie; The Honourable Dr. Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science; Mr. John Oliver MP and Ms. Carol Hughes MP.



## **CAN performs a survey of CAN members on the state of neuroscience funding in Canada (July/August 2016)**

CAN launched a member survey to provide input for the recently-announced fundamental science review launched by the Canadian government and Canadian Science Minister of Science, the honourable Kirsty Duncan.

<http://www.sciencereview.ca/>

## **CAN organizes a meeting of Canadian SfN Chapters as a satellite event for the SfN2016 meeting (Summer 2016)**

The CAN advocacy event at the CAN 2016 meeting made it apparent that there were many worthy local neuroscience initiatives that were ready to be disseminated and shared amongst Canadian neuroscientists. As a first step in this dissemination, CAN has organized a luncheon for the heads of the Canadian SfN Chapters that will allow members to share and network, and to join forces to increase the visibility and awareness of neuroscience research in Canada. CAN has asked the Chapter heads to make a short 5 minute presentation of their ongoing activities, with a particular focus on public outreach and advocacy.

## **CAN plans for advocacy events at the SfN2016 meeting (Summer 2016)**

After discussion with the SfN advocacy staff, CAN has made plans to participate in several SfN events, in addition to the aforementioned Chapters satellite event.

CAN will participate in the SfN Advocacy reception, November 14th, 2PM. Advocacy committee members that will attend are: David Kaplan, Jean-Claude Béïque, Katalin Toth, Bev Orser, Freda Miller and Jason Tetro (advocacy officer). A poster presentation of our advocacy activities will be presented.

CAN will present a booth at the SfN16 meeting. CAN uses its booth at SfN to reach new members, to invite Canadian neuroscientists to participate in our advocacy efforts, and to learn about initiatives from our colleagues.

## **CAN, working with SfN, plans an Advocacy Workshop in 2017**

In response to our agreement with the Society for Neuroscience, and with partnered funding, CAN is currently working with SfN advocacy staff to plan an advocacy workshop at

the CAN meeting in May 2017. This workshop will help to train CAN leadership and members with regard to effective advocacy, and will hopefully provide the starting point for a number of new initiatives for the upcoming several years.

In addition to this workshop, CAN is currently organizing a special public outreach event for the CAN-2017 meeting focusing on Art in Neuroscience. This event will be held before the Public Lecture and will include an exhibition and presentations by students. CAN is sponsoring the participating students throughout the year while they are working on their projects. <http://www.convergenceinitiative.org>

## B. Partnerships

- Society for Neuroscience (<http://sfn.org>)
- Research Canada membership (<http://rc-rc.ca/>)
- Canadian Society for Molecular Biosciences (<https://www.csmb-scbm.ca/index.aspx>)
- Partnership Group for Science and Engineering (<http://pagse.org/>)
- International Brain Research Organization (<http://ibro.info>)

## C. Communications

Recent reforms in the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) funding structure have had an important impact on Canadian researchers, and CAN has participated in initiatives to raise awareness about the situation.

CAN invited its members to sign a **petition for the return of peer-to-peer review of CIHR grant applications**. This effort, together with similar efforts by other Canadian biomedical scientists, resulted in a meeting between CIHR representatives and researchers that was called by Canada Health Minister Jane Philpott. This meeting resulted in an ongoing reconsideration of the peer review system. CAN wrote a **letter to the Health Minister science thanking her** for calling this meeting. This letter was signed by many of its members on the CAN website.

Following the last round of CIHR grants, **CAN invited its members to thank the government** for CIHR funding received.

**CAN has participated in Canada's fundamental Science review**, launched by the Canadian Minister of Science, the honourable Kirsty Duncan. CAN also wrote to the Minister of Science to show our support of this initiative, and invited our members to



participate. (<http://can-acn.org/documents/2016/letter-minister-duncan-science-review-june13-2016.pdf> )

CAN wrote a letter to the Canadian Minister of Finance, the honourable Bill Morneau, prior to **budget in March 2016** – advocating for increased funding for biomedical research. (<http://can-acn.org/documents/2016/CAN-Pre-budget20160121.pdf>)

CAN wrote to the Minister of Finance after tabling of the budget to **thank his government for investments** (<http://can-acn.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Post-budget2016-final.pdf> )

CAN wrote again to the **Minister of Finance in August 2016** to advocate for more funding for biomedical research. (<http://can-acn.org/documents/2016/CAN-Pre-budget-08-02-final.pdf>)

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience strongly supports the **development of a Canadian Action Plan for Brain Health**, an initiative proposed by the Neurological Health Charities of Canada. (<http://can-acn.org/documents/2016/Canadian-action-plan-for-brain-research-CAN-support.pdf>)

**More information about the Canadian Association for Neuroscience's recent advocacy initiatives can be viewed on our website at <http://can-acn.org/advocacy>**