



CAN-ACN

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION FOR NEUROSCIENCE
ASSOCIATION CANADIENNE DES NEUROSCIENCES

2016-2017 Advocacy Activities
FINAL REPORT

Canadian Association for Neuroscience 2016-2017 Advocacy Activities

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Message from Drs. Freda Miller and Katalin Toth

Dear Mr. Heintz,

We are pleased to present you with our Final Advocacy report for 2016-2017.

As you know, CAN has taken a co-ordinated approach to advocacy in Canada. Our focus has been on four major sectors, Government, Neuroscientists, Media, and the Public. The efforts outlined in the attached report highlight the work of numerous devoted researchers, trainees, and staff.

As in the interim report submitted earlier this year, we separated the activities into the four target sectors. Since that report was provided, CAN has focused on increasing the reach of our organization, largely using our upcoming annual meeting in order to do so as outlined below.

First, we have established a formal session to enhance interactions between CAN and the Canadian Chapters of SfN. We are hoping that this Chapters Forum will not only allow networking between the Canadian Chapters, but will also allow us help them integrate and share their already very active Canadian advocacy activities.

Second, for our CAN 2017 public lecture, we have joined forces with the artistic group, Convergence, to include an art exhibit at the event. We are hoping that this will not only make the public lecture more interesting for our members, but will also provide a bigger draw for the public.

Third, we have included a workshop on science communication and advocacy for members that will be run by our Advocacy Officer Jason Tetro. As a reflection of the general interest in this topic, the workshop was quickly filled with participants not only from Canada but also by some of our international attendees.

Finally, we are delighted to let you know that one of our keynote speakers this year is Margaret Trudeau, a well-known mental health advote and the mother of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. We believe that her lecture will highlight the importance of neuroscience research in Canada, and are hopeful that it will attract significant media attention.

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We believe that our activities, as outlined in the report, satisfy the requirements outlined in the Memorandum of Understanding between SfN and CAN. We acknowledge and greatly appreciate your support, since it has acted as a true catalyst for CAN with regard to our advocacy activities.

If you have any questions or would like to talk with us directly, please feel free to contact us at your convenience.

With regards,



Freda Miller, President



Katalin Toth, Advocacy Committee Chair



2017 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 Béïque, U of Ottawa

Doug Zochodne, U of Alberta

Jay Ingram, science writer and communicator

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

Jason Tetro, Advocacy Officer

A. Government

CAN Responds to the Naylor Report

On April 10, 2017, the Federal Government released the findings of the Fundamental Science Review. The Canadian Association for Neuroscience contributed to the review (see below) and was pleased with the results as they paralleled the requests made by CAN members. On May 31, 2017, a forum on next steps will be held in Toronto and will be attended by Advocacy Committee member, Dr. David Kaplan. He will bring the concerns and requests of the CAN leadership for tabling. The website for the event is: <http://sciencereview.lunenfeld.ca/>

CAN Supports the March For Science

On April 22, 2017, groups around the world gathered in cities to celebrate and advocate for science. The goal of this event parallels those of CAN, with its focus on promoting the importance of science and safeguarding appropriate funding of research. The full statement of CAN's support can be found here: <http://can-acn.org/march-for-science-april-22-2017>

CAN Returns to Parliament Hill

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience had the opportunity to highlight neuroscience research in Canada in front of Members of Parliament during a luncheon held in Ottawa on February 13th 2017. Entitled, *Neuroscience Research in Canada*, the event was hosted in collaboration with Research Canada and was presented by the Parliamentary Health Research Caucus. Three prominent CAN members were featured including President Dr. Freda Miller, Advocacy Committee member, Dr. Beverley Orser, and esteemed researcher, Dr. Charles Bourque. The CAN delegation included:

- Chair of CAN Advocacy Committee and event organizer, Katalin Toth, (Université Laval),
- CAN President, Freda Miller (University of Toronto),
- CAN Vice-President-Elect, Jaideep Bains (University of Calgary),
- Featured speaker, Beverley Orser (University of Toronto),
- Featured speaker, Charles Bourque (McGill University),
- CAN Chief Operating Officer, Julie Poupart,
- CAN Advocacy Officer, Jason Tetro.

Attendees were welcomed by John Oliver, Chair of the Health Research Council, and Carol Hughes, member of the Caucus. Both Mr. Oliver and Mrs. Hughes spoke of the importance of brain and neuroscience research for all Canadians.

Dr. Freda Miller, CAN President, discussed the importance of the work done by neuroscientists across the country to understand how the brain and nervous system works. It is through understanding the basic science of this complex organ that we will be able to find cures and

treatments for the one in three Canadians who suffer from a brain disorder, condition or injury in their lifetime.

Dr. Beverley Orser, from Sunnybrook Hospital, and University of Toronto, presented her research on anesthetics, which aims to reduce the side-effects associated with these essential drugs. She presented research that has led to the identification of a class of compounds that can help reduce post-surgery memory loss.

Dr. Charles Bourque, from McGill University, presented research on the importance of salt regulation for health. His basic research helps explain how defects in salt and water content in cells (osmoregulation) can lead to defects in brain function, and even death. His research in the mechanisms of osmoregulation has helped identify multiple molecules and processes in the body that could be valid drug target to treat hypertension.

The event was a great opportunity to increase awareness about neuroscience research in Parliament. The many members of Parliament present were enthusiastic about the role of neuroscience in Canada. Overall, the luncheon was a true success.

A flyer promoting the event can be found in **Appendix A**. In addition, a detailed summary of the event can be found in **Appendix B**.

Highlighting Canadian Neuroscience Research

To improve awareness of neuroscience research in Canada, CAN published a 48 page booklet for Parliamentarians. Entitled, "Canadian Connections" the booklet offered a collection of twenty impactful stories about Canadian neuroscience research. The booklet featured researchers spanning the country and focused on subjects meaningful to all Canadians such as:

- Anaesthesiology
- Alzheimer's disease
- Coping with stress
- Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Language Learning
- Memory
- Thirst
- Multiple Sclerosis
- Nervous system repair

Several Members of Parliament took a copy of the book and several read through the contents during the event. The comments received at the time were positive as the stories were seen as a means of connection between researchers and the community. The contents of the booklet can be found in **Appendix C**.

A Call for Action on the Canadian Budget

In preparation for the 2017 Federal Budget, CAN encouraged all members to send emails to Prime Minister Trudeau and Finance Minister Bill Morneau urging them to increase allocations for scientific research in the form of the CIHR budget. A sample letter was provided (**Appendix D**) to facilitate all CAN members in taking action.

CAN Provides Recommendations for the Canadian Budget

On August 1, 2016, CAN submitted a letter to the Finance Minister, Bill Morneau, explaining the current situation with respect to research funding in Canada. The letter recommended increases in funding for biomedical research in Canada in two specific manners:

- The mid-term objective should be a doubling of the operating budgets of the National Science and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) and CIHR.
- An increase of \$150 million to the 2017 Budget for CIHR.

The full text of the letter can be found in **Appendix E**.

CAN Takes Part in the Fundamental Science Review

“On June 13, 2016, the Honourable Kirsty Duncan, Minister of Science launched an independent review of federal funding for fundamental science. The review will assess the program machinery that is currently in place to support science and scientists in Canada. Findings from the review will help maintain and strengthen Canada's international standing in fundamental science and ensure that our scientists have the tools, training and support needed to excel globally.”

–*Canada's Fundamental Science Review Website*
(<http://www.sciencereview.ca/eic/site/059.nsf/eng/home>)

CAN welcomed this review and participated in four ways.

- CAN sent a letter to Minister Duncan on September 19, 2016 to show its support for this initiative.
- All CAN members were asked to participate in this review to ensure neuroscience research was represented.
- CAN President Freda Miller participated in a round-table forum with the review committee and presented the CAN perspective on research funding in the Canadian

environment.

- CAN submitted recommendations in response to the review, the full text of which can be found in **Appendix F**.

CAN recognizes Efforts Made by the Minister of Health to Reform Scientific Funding

“On July 13, 2016, CIHR hosted a Working Meeting with members of the health research community to review and jointly address concerns raised regarding CIHR's peer review processes.”

-Canadian Institutes For Health Research Website
(<http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/49849.html>)

To show appreciation to the Minister of Health, CAN composed a letter of support, which was signed by over one hundred CAN members and sent on July 19, 2016. The full text of this letter including all signatories can be found in **Appendix G**.

B. Neuroscientists

CAN Celebrates Connections at the Eleventh Annual Meeting

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience is pleased to announce it will hold its eleventh annual meeting in Montreal, from May 28th to 31st. The meeting will gather neuroscientists from Canada and around the world and offer the chance to share their research on the brain and nervous system. The scope of topics to be presented is wider than ever and highlights the connection between the mechanistic and the clinical. With over 1,000 registered individuals, the meeting will ensure productive interactions between neuroscientists from Canada and around the world.

CAN Supports Satellite Symposia at CAN 2017

As part of the CAN 2017 agenda, several satellite symposia and social events are sponsored by CAN. The topics of these include:

1. Perception, action, and their interaction, presented by The Canadian Action and Perception Network
2. The annual Canadian Neurometabolic Meeting
3. A course on Neurophotonics presented by the Canadian Neurophotonics Platform
4. Neural Signal and Image Processing

These events are well attended and increase the capacity of neuroscience researchers. Moreover, they offer an opportunity for researchers and trainees to network in the hopes of developing collaborations.

CAN Welcomes Margaret Trudeau to CAN 2017

CAN is honoured to have Margaret Trudeau, a prominent mental health advocate and mother of the Prime Minister of Canada, as a special guest lecturer. Her work to increase awareness of mental health has been lauded worldwide and her commitment to neuroscience is unyielding. Her lecture will highlight the importance of brain research.

CAN Initiates the Chapters Forum

CAN recognizes the great potential of the Canadian Chapters of the Society for Neuroscience as a forum for promoting brain research to the Canadian community and as a grassroots advocacy community. This year for the first time, CAN has reached out to these Canadian SfN Chapters in order to provide them with a voice within the CAN community, and to work with them on outreach and advocacy. The first steps in this regard included a hosted luncheon at SfN 2016, and a breakfast meeting at the 2017 CAN annual meeting. It was clear from these interactions that the Chapters are very interested in engaging with CAN on both outreach and advocacy.

CAN Announces the 2017 CAN Young Investigator Awards

The Canadian Association for Neuroscience is proud to announce it will be awarding two Young Investigator Awards in 2017. The laureates are Przemyslaw (Mike) Sapieha, from Université de Montréal, and Tuan Trang, from University of Calgary. The CAN nominations committee was equally impressed with both candidates, who have made important contributions to our understanding of the brain and the nervous system in the early stages of their careers. Both winners have developed a strong program of basic, curiosity-driven research that have led to discoveries that can be used to improve the lives of Canadians.

CAN Announces the 2017 CAN Trainee Travel Awards

To recognize Canadian and international trainees, CAN has awarded travel grants in the amount of either \$200.00 or \$500.00 to assist with costs associated with attending the CAN annual meeting in Montreal in 2017. Grants for Canadian trainees will be funded by CAN while international trainees will be funded by the International Brain Research Organization, who will be donating \$10,000 for these awards.

CAN Announces the 2017 Advocacy Awards

The Advocacy Committee of the Canadian Association for Neuroscience is proud to announce the winners of the 2017 CAN Advocacy and Outreach Prizes. The winners will receive a \$1000 prize and a plaque.

First prize – Best local SfN Chapter

Manitoba Neuroscience Network

The committee was impressed by the groups dynamism, the breadth of the activities they have organised, and their outreach to the general public, including youth and the francophone community. Highlights of their activities can be seen here: <http://can-acn.org/manitoba->

neuroscience-network-wins-2017-can-advocacy-award-for-best-sfn-chapter-group

First prize – Best individual initiative

Midori Nediger for the POND 3D brain project

Midori Nediger developed an online interactive brain model to improve public understanding of neurodevelopmental disorders, with support from the Province of Ontario Neurodevelopmental Disorders (POND) Network, called POND 3D brain. Learn more about Midori Nediger and her project here: <http://can-acn.org/midori-nediger-wins-can-2017-advocacy-award-individual-category>

CAN Offers an Advocacy Workshop for Trainees

On Wednesday May 31, CAN will hold a workshop on communication and advocacy for neuroscientists. This Workshop is being organized and run by CAN Advocacy Officer Jason Tetro, while will provide participants with the fundamental skills necessary to translate their research for non-scientists. The thirty participants also will learn the most important factors required for effective science communication and advocacy as well as have an opportunity to practice these skills. At this event, participants will:

1. Recognize the need for translation to non-scientists;
2. Learn how to perform basic translation into headlines;
3. Learn how to effectively communicate research to various target audiences;
4. Appreciate the role of advocacy in communication efforts.

The workshop, entitled, “All You Need Is Love...And A Little Help From Your Friends”. A full description of the workshop can be found in **Appendix H**.

CAN To Explore Training Using Social Media

There is little doubt social media plays a significant role in the promotion and advocacy of science. CAN aims to enter this realm through the development of advocacy webinars. The Advocacy Committee will meet at CAN 2017 to discuss themes and content. CAN hopes to work with SfN to increase the reach from solely Canadian neuroscientists to those worldwide.

Mentorship Luncheon for Trainees At CAN 2017

At the CAN meeting in Montreal, the CAN Women in Neuroscience (WIN) in association with the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) will be holding a mentorship lunch for trainees. The event will feature Hollis Cline from the Scripps Research Institute, who will present a career development seminar titled, "*Your future in science: following your head and your heart.*" The presentation will be followed by a Q & A and discussion, moderated by CAN members Katalin Toth, Alanna Watt, Shernaz Bamji, Melanie Woodin, and Stephanie Borgland.

CAN Assesses Members' Views of Government Funding

In response to the activities of the Canadian Institutes for Health Research (CIHR) to reform research funding in Canada, CAN conducted a survey (**Appendix I**) to assess members' views on the changes. Questions focused on the introduction of new funding schemes as well as changes to the peer-review system, including the criteria, process, and implementation. The survey results were compiled and then used as a guide for recommendations to the aforementioned Fundamental Science Review. On June 13, 2016, CAN officially sent the recommendations to Minister Kirsty Duncan. A copy of the letter can be found in **Appendix J**.

CAN Presents Advocacy Activities at SfN 2016

At the Advocacy Reception held at the 2016 Society for Neuroscience Meeting in San Diego, CAN presented a poster on its advocacy activities. The poster provided information on the membership of the Advocacy Committee and highlighted activities for each of the four targets, government, neuroscientists, media, and the public. A copy of the poster can be found in **Appendix K**.

CAN Invites Members from Chapters to Showcase Advocacy and Outreach Activities

At the Society for Neuroscience Meeting in San Diego, CAN President, Freda Miller, invited members from the various Chapters to present their outreach and advocacy activities. They were also invited to make recommendations to the executive. Based on these discussions, future actions by CAN have been planned including:

- Provision of travel grants and prizes for Chapter-based trainees
- Development of a Chapters Hub on the CAN website
- Development of a secure site for Chapter members to connect

The recommendations from this meeting are under review for further action in 2017/2018.



CAN Hosts a Social at SfN

To show its support for members, CAN held a social at the Society for Neuroscience Meeting in San Diego. The event was well attended and featured several of the Executive including President, Dr. Freda Miller.

C. Media

CAN Reaches Out to the Press for CAN 2017

Much of the research shared at the CAN annual meeting is understandably complex and may not be appreciated by the general public. Yet, several research findings have direct implications for human health. CAN is proud to highlight researchers presenting work with the public in mind. This year, press releases highlighting important aspects of human health have been sent in the hopes of gaining media attention. They include such topics as memory development and retention, neurological control of hydration, how dreaming disorders may predict neurological diseases in the future. In addition, discussions with producers and reporters have gained interest in covering events and articles to be featured at the conference.

CAN Shares Press Releases on Canadian Neuroscience Research Achievements

On occasion, universities send out press releases on neuroscience research achievements, including awards, appointments, and the release of high impact scientific articles. CAN aggregates these documents and highlights them on the CAN website.

CAN Actively Promotes Members in the Media

Neuroscience research is considered at times to be newsworthy in various media formats. CAN is proud to promote members to media organizations in the hopes they may be able to share their knowledge and findings.

D. Public

CAN Celebrates the Connection Between Neuroscience and Art

On May 27, 2017, CAN will host a unique event for the public combining neuroscience, society, and art. The event first will feature a lecture by Sonia Lupin, the Founder and Director of the Centre for Studies on Human Stress. Afterwards, an art exhibit by the Convergence Initiative will showcase the bridge between art and neuroscience. Artists and neuroscientists will be on hand to discuss the unique art pieces that bring research to the general public. The exhibit will be presented by Cristian Zaelzer, founder of the Convergence initiative.

CAN Celebrates the Opening of the Neurocraft Art Exhibition

On Tuesday May 30th, CAN will be on hand to show its support for the opening of Neurocraft at the Visual Voice Gallery in Montreal. Neurocraft is an exhibition of neuroscience-themed art pieces that have been produced through collaboration between the Manitoba Neuroscience Network and the Manitoba Craft Council. Several pieces from the exhibition will also be on display at the CAN annual meeting. More information on Neurocraft can be found here: <http://www.visualvoicegallery.com/>.

CAN Profiles Legendary Members of the Neuroscience Community

The success of Canadian neuroscience today is founded on an appreciation of those who have made great strides and brought this country to the top of the field. CAN now honours these individuals with profiles on their website. Written by journalist, Sarah Ferguson, these passages document not only the great work of these individuals but also the people beneath the lab coats. The names of the individuals are as historic as their work. They include:

- Brian MacVicar
- Brenda Milner
- Donald Hebb
- Wilder Penfield
- Albert Aguayo
- Harold Leslie Atwood



CAN Features Neuroscience Achievements with the Public in Mind

Many scientific articles published by CAN members have value for general audiences. Yet, gaining media attention is a struggle and most simply remain unknown in the public environment. To address this gap, CAN has developed a column profiling recently published articles with the public in mind. Written by Advocacy Officer, Jason Tetro, these reports provide perspective on the implications of the research on the lives of Canadians. The articles have been enjoyed both by the neuroscience community as well as the public.

E. Appendices

Appendix A – Flyer For The Health Research Caucus Luncheon

Appendix B – Summary of Health Research Caucus Luncheon

Appendix C – Canadian Connections: Highlighting Recent Neuroscience Research

Appendix D – Letter Template to Prime Minister, Justin Trudeau and Finance Minister, Bill Morneau

Appendix E – Letter from Freda Miller and Katalin Toth to Finance Minister, Bill Morneau

Appendix F – Letter from Freda Miller to Science Minister, Kirsty Duncan

Appendix G – Letter from CAN members to Health Minister, Jane Philpott

Appendix H – Detailed Outline of CAN Advocacy Workshop for CAN 2017

Appendix I – Survey to CAN members on CIHR Funding

Appendix J – Letter from Freda Miller and Katalin Toth to Science Minister, Kirsty Duncan

Appendix K – CAN Advocacy Committee Poster presented at SfN 2016