

NEW FELLOW WELCOME GUIDE

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WHAT IS THE RSC?

RSC: The Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada is the senior national body of distinguished Canadian scholars, artists and scientists. It is Canada's national academy. The primary objective of the RSC is to promote learning and research in the arts and sciences. The RSC consists of nearly 2000 Fellows, men and women who are selected by their peers for outstanding contributions to the natural and social sciences, in the arts and in the humanities.

As Canada's national academy, the RSC exists to *recognize* academic excellence, to *advise* governments and organizations, and to *promote* Canadian culture.

Raison d'être

National academies are cultural institutions with three principle responsibilities. The first responsibility of a national academy is to recognize excellence. Most national academies do this through the election of Fellows and the presentation of awards. The second responsibility of a national academy is to provide expert advice on matters of national interest or urgency. The third responsibility of a national academy is to promote its national culture abroad. This occurs in a variety of ways, and includes service on multilateral agencies (G8, UNESCO, IAP), as well as exchange lectureships with other national academies and universities.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE RSC

Foundation

In the late 1870s, the Governor General of Canada, the Marquess of Lorne, determined that Canada required a cultural institution to assist with Canada's development. In 1883, the Royal Society of Canada (RSC) was granted its Royal Charter and, since that time, succeeding governors general have remained closely involved with the affairs of the society. One of the functions of the President of the RSC is to serve on the Governor General's advisory council for appointments to the Order of Canada.

The founding document of the RSC outlines its mission:

The object of the Society shall be to promote learning and intellectual accomplishments of exceptional quality. The Society recognizes remarkable contributions in the arts, humanities and sciences, as well as in Canadian public life.

RSC By-Laws 3.1

The structure of the RSC followed the model of the Royal Society of London but with the important addition of literature and other elements found in the Institut de France. Like these counterparts, membership in the RSC was limited and by election. Initially, the RSC was divided into four sections, each of 20 Fellows. These sections were: (1) Littérature française, Histoire, Archéologie; (2) English Literature, History, Archaeology; (3) Mathematical, Physical and Chemical Sciences; and (4) Geological and Biological Sciences. The founding Fellows of the RSC included Sir Sanford Fleming, the originator of the world system of Standard Time, and Sir William

Osler, one of the greatest physicians of his day. The “Fellows” of the RSC were nominated by a committee headed by the Principal of McGill University, Sir John William Dawson, and by the former Premier of Quebec, Pierre J.O. Chauveau. These two men served as the first and second presidents of the society.

Development

As Canadian scholarship and research blossomed, the RSC also grew. Within three decades the Fellowship of the RSC doubled in number, with the sections of science growing most rapidly. In order to accommodate this growth, a fifth section, for biological sciences, was added in 1918.

The rise of the social sciences was also being recognized, as early as 1908. The accommodation of the social sciences into the RSC was structurally resolved in 1941 with the expansion of section II (and, later, section I) to include the growing number of social scientists.

After World War II the growth of the RSC accelerated again, and by the mid 1950s the RSC had over 500 Fellows. Almost 70% of the Fellows of the RSC were involved in scholarship relating to the natural sciences. In 1961 the three sections of the natural sciences were amalgamated into a single Section III with eight *disciplinary* divisions. In 1970 a division of Applied Sciences was added, and in 1974 Medical Science became the tenth division of Section III.

In fact, throughout 1974 the society as a whole was reorganized toward its modern form. Section I became *Académie I – l’Académie des lettres et des sciences humaines* – a Francophone academy. Section II became *Academy II – the Academy of the Humanities and Social Sciences* – an Anglophone academy. Section III became *Academy III – the Academy of Science / l’Académie de science*. The disciplinary divisions within Academy III were later regrouped into their contemporary four divisions: *Applied Science and Engineering (ASE)*; *Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences (EOAS)*; *Mathematical and Physical Sciences (MPS)*; and *Life Sciences (LS)*.

Modernization

The final phase of institutional restructuring occurred in 2005, when Academies I and II were reorganized as *bilingual* academies delineated according to discipline rather than segregated according to language.

There are three Academies of the RSC. Academy I is the Academy of the Arts and Humanities. There are three divisions of Academy I: an Anglophone division (I), a Francophone division (II), and a bilingual division for the Arts (architecture, creative writing, and the arts).

Academy II is the Academy of Social Sciences. There are two divisions of Academy II: an Anglophone division (I) and a Francophone division (II).

Academy III is the Academy of Science. There are four divisions of Academy III: ASE, EOAS, MPS and LS. Each of Academy III’s four divisions is bilingual.

The RSC elects a total of approximately 75 Fellows per year. The RSC also elects up to 6 Specially Elected Fellows per year, for contributions to the objectives of the society other than by scholarship and research. Finally, a number of Foreign Fellows are elected annually.

The RSC is governed by a 19-member Council, and by a 9-member Executive Committee of Council. Financial support is mainly from three sources: Fellows' subscriptions, membership contributions from 42 universities throughout Canada, and private sector support.

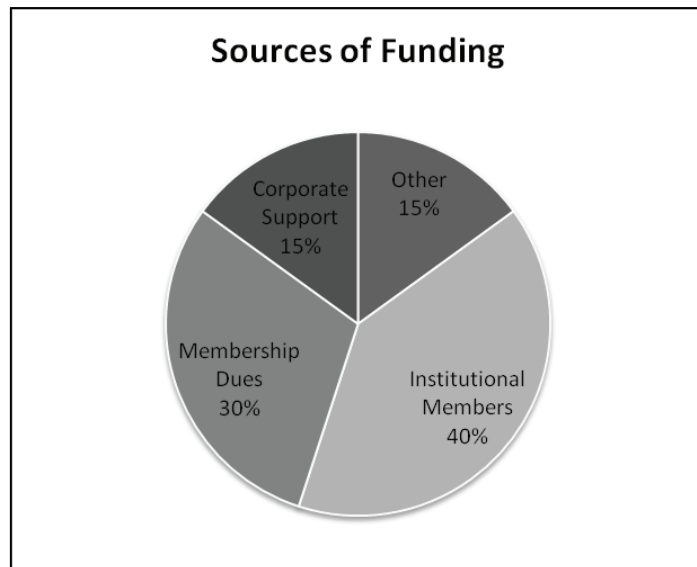
To accomplish its three objectives – to recognize, to advise and to promote – the RSC organizes “core” activities as well as new programming. While *recognizing excellence* is primarily achieved through the “core” processes of electing Fellows and presenting awards, the RSC *advises governments and organizations* through the provision of expert reports that address matters of national urgency from an interdisciplinary perspective. The RSC *promotes Canadian culture* through its presence in multilateral organizations, as well as through a variety of exchange lectureships with academies and universities abroad.

SOURCES OF FUNDING

The RSC is a registered charitable organization. The Academy's varied sources of funding ensures its independence.

Membership Dues

Traditionally, Subscriptions from the Fellows of the RSC have underpinned the operations of the national secretariat in Ottawa. As regional chapters continue to open – in Atlantic Canada in 2008, Quebec in 2009, and then Ontario, the Prairies, and Western and Northern Canada in 2010, 2011 and 2012 respectively – the dues of our Fellows have been combined with those from institutional members in order to support the “core” activities of the RSC.



Institutional Members

Since 2004, the institutional membership of the RSC has continued to grow in number and expand in scope. The 42 Institutional Members (“IMs”) of the RSC coordinate closely with the RSC national secretariat and with our regional chapters to ensure that their investment in the academy is met with benefits and opportunities. The partnership is three-fold. Firstly, Institutional Members of RSC nominate outstanding individuals (up to three per year) for Fellowship in the Academies. Secondly, Institutional Members play a leadership role in the governance of the RSC. Two IM university presidents sit on the RSC Council, and one IM representative serves on the Executive Committee of the RSC. Thirdly, Institutional Members partner with the RSC’s national and regional secretariats in the creation of programs and events. This year, the majority of the 40+ events organized by the RSC are a result of partnerships with our institutional membership.

Private Sector

In 2007 the RSC launched *Extending Excellence: The Campaign for Canada’s National Academy*. Over 80% of the \$5 million goal has been achieved as of the summer of 2009. The campaign has succeeded due to the leadership of the RSC President’s Advisory Council (PAC), and thanks to national support driven by campaign co-chairs Sandra Irving and Laurent Beaudoin. Funds raised and committed have led to the creation of new national and regional scholarship and outreach programming.

Other

The RSC continually submits grant applications in support of multilateral initiatives, and seeks sponsorship contributions for its “core” programming.

REGIONS OF SERVICE

The continued success of The RSC relies on the active involvement of its Fellows. There are many ways you can become an active participant in shaping the future of our national academy. Here is a brief overview of service options.

University Liaison

It is important for the RSC to have a representative from each university in Canada to serve as a liaison with the national secretariat and with our regional chapters. This is important because the RSC administers almost all events and programming in partnership with our institutional members. The RSC aims to have one major event on the campus of each IM every other year. As a university liaison, it would be your responsibility to assist in framing this event, and then in making it a success from the perspective of your institution.

Time commitment: In “real time”, this commitment requires approximately 15 to 20 hours per year.

Serve on Society Committees

The RSC’s core activities of electing Fellows and presenting awards function due to rigorous peer review. Selection committees at the divisional level undergo frequent renewal and your recent arrival as a new Fellow presents us with the possibility of injecting new perspectives into the selection process.

Time commitment: Serving on a divisional selection committee varies greatly in time according to the number of nominations received in your division. Our Fellowship competition is extremely competitive, and the review and ranking of files is the core component of this process.

Reaching Out

The *Extending Excellence* capital campaign has been successful due to our objective of mobilizing Canada’s tremendous intellectual leadership in service to the next generation of Fellows. High school outreach programs in the context of our national academy have been launched throughout Canada with great success, and in close cooperation with our regional chapters. These events are “paired” with the secretariat, so as to inform young people about what a national academy *is* and *what it does*, and then to introduce a scholar of outstanding merit who speaks in layman’s terms (yet full of enthusiasm, to be sure!) about her/his subject of expertise.

Time commitment: The preparation of material is a “time commitment” for your determination, but the visit itself is generally a half-day, and can re-occur at differing high schools according to your degree of enthusiasm to have a positive impact in the lives of our young people.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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