



## CUCCOA Newsletter November 2020

### President's Message



A full year has passed since I joined the board, and a busy one it was! I really enjoyed working with the committed team that we had. I would like to thank every member of the board for the dedicated and professional work they do for this association.

In particular, I would like to acknowledge Rosetta Vannelli for her leadership with the board over the past five years. She was fully committed to represent and act in the best interest of her Central Region members. You will be missed Rosetta! I also want to thank Brianna Donovan for joining the board as the new Secretary-Treasurer and Susanne Keppler for changing seat and taking on the role of Central Region Director. We also welcome back Jessica Petrella as the Marketing Director for a second term.

Here is CUCCOA's board members for 2020-21:

- President: Marie-Claude Renaud, Grenfell Campus, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Secretary/Treasurer: Brianna Donovan, University of New-Brunswick, Fredericton
- Marketing Director: Jessica Petrella, Brock University
- Atlantic Region Director: Yuri Gidge, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador
- Central Region Director: Susanne Keppler, University of Waterloo
- Western Region Director: Sarah Johnston, University of British Columbia

I want to express my sincere thank you to the organizing committee of our first virtual conference. It was achieved in a short period of time and they did a great job. Congratulations on a successful conference. I really enjoyed the sessions and the opportunity to connect with colleagues and suppliers. I also took advantage of the self-care section, did yoga and discovered an Ontario artist, Tessah Dunn, whom I have been listening to since the conference. I would also like to note that the conference program has been sent to the Events Industry Council to get accredited for CMP credits. So stay tuned to find out which sessions can earn you some credits.

As noted at the Annual General Meeting, the board will take a close look at the results from the survey sent to members last August. We will listen to your opinions and ideas and make the changes that are possible. The board is working for you and we all want to ensure that you get the best out of your membership.

The new [cuccoa.org](http://cuccoa.org) website will go live in November and I know that you will all love it. What an improvement that will be for our association! The membership management will be streamlined in one location, your member profile will be linked

to your ConnectOnCampus listing, the resources you need will be easily found in a user-friendly website. This is definitely an exciting time for our association.

I invite you to reach out to any of us on the board in the next little while to discuss how you can get involved with CUCCOA. This is your association so why not contribute with your new ideas. It is also a changing industry because of the circumstances we find ourselves in because of the current pandemic. It is in times like this what we need to share knowledge and expertise and support one another. There are many opportunities to volunteer whether it be with the marketing committees in your own region or with the awards committee or as a presenter at one of our speaker series session in the winter. The regional meetings are also under development so reach out to your regional director and see how you can help. You will definitely benefit from being involved with colleagues that have a wealth of knowledge and experience to share with you on every level. So do it!

I look forward to working for you and with you for another year.

*Marie-Claude Renaud*

## Secretary-Treasurer Update



I am so thrilled and honored to be joining the CUCCOA Board of Directors this fall!

I am extremely grateful for all of the ways that CUCCOA has helped me grow in my career and I am looking forward to contributing to the association in this new capacity.

I would like to start by thanking Susanne for all of the amazing work she has done in this position. I have big shoes to fill, but lucky enough for me Susanne remains on the board in her new role as Central Region Director!

I hope that everyone had a chance to log into our first ever virtual national conference. A huge thank you to the organizing committee who took on the daunting task of pulling off the conference on a short timeline. It has been a difficult few months with all of us and our departments being affected by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic but the conference was a great opportunity to focus back on our operations and share ideas and strategies with our colleagues across the country.

### **Budget Update**

During the Annual General Meeting, Susanne presented our financial report as reviewed and prepared by Hennick Herman. The statements show the association in a healthy financial position. The board has worked hard this year to keep expenses in check while continuing to offer professional development and maintaining our industry presence across Canada.

The 2021-2022 budget was also presented for the membership's review during the AGM. As we continue to implement the association management system we have another lean budget. As a result, the marketing budget has been reduced and there will be no tradeshow subsidy offered to the regions. We will be focusing on cost effective ways to continue our marketing efforts and will continue to offer the conference subsidy. In addition, for the year 2022 primary membership fees will increase by \$25.00. This is the first increase since 2016 and is a result of increasing costs and inflation.

### Awards Update

At the final event of the conference, we celebrated our award nominees and winners. I'd like to thank Susanne Keppler from the University of Waterloo, Erin Walton from MacEwan University, and Braeden Urbanek from York University for their work on the 2019-2020 Awards Committee. Congratulations to all award winners and nominees! This year's award winners are:

Rising Star

Jenny DeGelder, University of British Columbia - Okanagan Campus

Member's Choice

Aldo Sdao, University of Toronto - New College Residence

Award of Excellence

Vicki Thériault, Université de Moncton

Don't forget to think about fellow members that you would like to nominate for an award in the 2020-2021 year! The dates for this year's award process are as follows:

- Call for Nomination: Spring 2021
- Deadline for Nomination: September 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021
- Presentation: During the 2021 National Conference

In closing, I would like to thank everyone for their support as I begin in this new role.

I am looking forward to serving our membership on the board in the coming years.

*Brianna Donovan*

## Marketing Director Update



Fall has arrived which means another National Conference has come and gone.

Although this year's challenges caused this year's event to be a virtual one, I am so pleased with how this year's event turned out. It was so well planned and the conference itself was well received by everyone. A huge thank you and applause goes out to the Conference committee. You should all be so very proud of a job well done!!!

I am very excited to be part of the Board of Directors for another term. Given the circumstances surrounding 2020, we haven't been able to implement all the great ideas we had in mind for our members. I am optimistic that over the next two years, myself as well as the Marketing Committee, will be able to continue promoting and working for our members the way we were meant to. Over the coming months, our Marketing Plan & Strategy will be updated to reflect the next term as well as our policies and procedure pertaining to sales and tradeshow.

We will be offering some great pay to play opportunities when the time is right as well as continuing to work with Unique Venues on some great new membership perks that they have offered us for the upcoming season.

When all this chaos started 6 months ago, I don't think any of us were sure where things were headed. To say this has been stressful for everyone both personally and professionally I think is an understatement, but I am so happy to be part of an Association that generates positivity amongst its members. It has been great to connect with everyone through the listserv and see that even though we are all facing tough times, it does not stop us from moving forward. I encourage you all to keep moving forward with that positivity. We are all here together. Keep using the

listserv and working together to get through these challenging times. As we continue to promote the association, I encourage you all to share any ideas that would help us all during this time. As always, if you have any questions, comments or suggestions, please feel free to reach out to me any time at [jpetrella@brocku.ca](mailto:jpetrella@brocku.ca). My wish for you all is that you are safe and well with all your families and I look forward to hopefully seeing you all in person at the National Conference next year!

Jessica Petrella

## Atlantic Region Report



Hello CUCCOA!

I'm so glad that we had the opportunity to connect with each other at this year's annual conference and can't believe that it has almost been a month since the event! I'm sure that we would have all preferred to have been able to get together in Fredericton this fall, but it was so nice to still be able to connect with you virtually.

This year has been a challenging one and different than anything we could have predicted. We undoubtedly still have some challenges ahead of us, but I am confident that we can overcome them and come out stronger - after all, we are used to weathering storms in Atlantic Canada!

*Our 'official' conference photos may look different this year, but we still look great!*

*Delegates were asked to submit a selfie during the event and collages were made for each region.*





First off, I'd like to send out a huge 'thank you' to the planning committee for stepping up to the challenge of successfully organizing a virtual conference! It was a great success and provided strong educational sessions to our members. I'm happy to report that we had 24 of our members from the Atlantic region in attendance!

I'd also like to congratulate the Atlantic region's own - Brianna Donovan (University of New Brunswick - Fredericton campus) as she steps into the Secretary-Treasurer's role on our Board of Directors! I'm looking forward to working with her at the board level and am sure that she will contribute greatly to our association.

We kicked off our virtual conference with an opening keynote about the importance of reinvention and tools to help us reinvent ourselves by Sonia Di Maulo and Danielle Silverman. Some of our favourite sessions included the Basics of Business Continuity Planning (Erin Walton, MacEwan University), COVID and Mental Health (Dr. Michael Teed), and Finding the Courage to Lead During Uncertain Times (Rashida Geddes). We also enjoyed the great dialogue from the roundtables and at the panel discussions (which ended up being extended!). We certainly missed the ease of networking and talking with people informally during breaks, lunches, and dinners... but the happy hour lounges at the end of each day allowed us to see each other and chat in small groups!

In our Atlantic region business meeting, we discussed our region's finances as well as reviewed our trade show plan. As a result of the pandemic, our regional budget is primarily impacted by rescheduling the national conference in Fredericton from this fiscal to next fiscal year. We will also receive less revenue from not being able to host our Winter Regional Meeting in-person either. We have reduced spending in the national budget, as well as adjusted expenses in our regional budget by holding board meetings virtually, reducing regional contributions to the Unique Venues marketing package, deciding to host our Winter Regional Meetings virtually, and attending fewer trade shows. Rest assured that the board of directors will continue

to control expenses, continue to offer professional development opportunities, and ready ourselves to promote your institutions when you are ready and able to accept new business.

From a trade show perspective, we had previously committed to participating in CSAE Conference on November 4-6, 2020. This event was initially set to take place in Halifax but is now taking place virtually. We are sharing a virtual booth with the Central region and Janet Gates-Robart (Saint Mary's University) will be attending on our behalf! We're eager to gain experience from exhibiting and promoting Connect On Campus in a virtual trade show environment.

All three regions are also planning on sharing the cost of attending CSTA's Sports Events Congress in April 2021. We are waiting to hear more details about this event as it is finalized. Our trade show plan for the following fiscal years will be reviewed and updated regularly and we will keep you informed at our regional meetings.

In terms of Atlantic region leadership positions, our committee members for the next year are:

Deputy Director/Membership:

Vicki Thériault (Université de Moncton)

Awards and Bursary:

Caitlyn Hutchison (Dalhousie University - Agricultural Campus)

Marketing:

Sam Gagnon (St. Francis Xavier University)



*Here is a screenshot of the Atlantic region enjoying conversation during the Happy Hour Lounge following the 2020 Awards Gala! Each evening's lounge featured a different theme. The Atlantic Happy Hour Lounge was held on the last day and showcased recipes for two drinks to highlight our region: the Dave Matthews and the Canadian Apple mocktail.*

Our virtual conference ended with our annual Awards Gala, which was sponsored by Foliot Furniture. It was great to see everyone on video and watch all the recorded nominations and acceptance speeches! I'd like to send out a big congratulations to Vicki Thériault (Université de Moncton) on receiving CUCCOA's Award of Excellence and Leadership. Even though we wish we could have celebrated the award in person, it was still a great way to end the conference! Vicki has been actively involved in our association for many years and has helped with many areas, including the planning and hosting of regional meetings and national conferences - especially in terms of sponsorship! She is very deserving of this award - Félicitations Vicki!

I'm happy to announce that a planning committee has been struck for our Winter Regional Meeting! Ryan Gallant (Mount Allison University), Laurel Kasper (University of New Brunswick - Fredericton campus), and Jordan Wright (Dalhousie

University - Agricultural campus) will be organizing the virtual event - thank you for stepping up! **Please save the dates of February 17 and 18, 2021** and watch your emails and CUCCOA.org for more information. Registration will be opening soon!

Brianna Donovan and Julia McDevitt are continuing as our Conference Co-Chairs for next year's National Conference set to take place October 5-7, 2021 at UNB Fredericton's Wu Conference Centre. There are a lot of fun things in store and we can't wait to welcome you to this province's capital and to the University of New Brunswick! We welcome other Atlantic members to join in the planning by contacting Brianna or Julia.

Thank you again to all the Atlantic members for trusting and supporting me as your director. Finally, I would like to thank all those in the Atlantic region who have volunteered their time in the past year - having the support of engaged members like you helps make CUCCOA stronger. Whether it was serving on a committee, facilitating a professional development session, helping organize our regional meeting, representing CUCCOA at a trade show, or contributing to our listserv discussions - thank you for your valuable time and input! I look forward to 'seeing' you all again in February!

*Yuri Gidge*

## Central Region Report



We did it! We created a virtual conference with 148 individuals in attendance. The famous quote "If you build it, they will come" comes to mind. This quote is from the 1989 movie *Field of Dreams* and was experienced by the main character Ray Kinsella who was played by Kevin Costner. *While Ray was walking through a corn field, he heard a strange whisper "If you build it, they will come. Build what? in exasperation.*

It's a perfect quote for these challenging times we are going through. Normally we just closed our summer operations and are now coming up for air and excited to reconnect with our colleagues at our Annual Conference in Fredericton, NB. This year was different. Many of us didn't even open our summer operations and we started to work from home. Now we are looking at new opportunities to support our campus community stay connected virtually. We are building new experiences through virtual platforms to give individuals an opportunity to network with their industry. We are looking at ways to keep our students and guests safe on campus and looking at a future where hybrid conferences will be the norm. We are building a new future where we will be able to network with one another safely.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Rosetta Vannello from McGill University for her leadership over the past five years as our Central Region Director. She is a strong supporter of CUCCOA who worked hard to keep the membership engaged and always had "will this benefit my members" in the back of her mind when making decisions. I am certainly excited to be your new Central Region Director and look forward to this new opportunity and challenge. I'd also like to congratulate Jessica Petrella from Brock University as she starts her second 2-year term as Director of Marketing.

And let's not forget this year's planning committee who took on the task to plan and execute our first virtual conference in a very short period of time – thank you! It was so great to have the opportunity to connect and reconnect with so many of you



virtually this year.



*Here are some of our Central Region members who submitted a selfie during the conference. Collages were made for each region.*

I am happy to report that we had 72 Central Region members participate in the national virtual conference with 16 first timers. I strongly encourage you to get involved with CUCCOA be it participating in our ListServ conversations, attending our speaker series or volunteering on a Committee. I have sent out a Call for Volunteers for Central Region Deputy Director, a Central Region representative on the Awards & Bursary Committee and Marketing Committee and also volunteers to sit on the Central Region Marketing & Tradeshow Committee. Please take the time to consider volunteering. Member involvement is critical to the success and growth of our region.

During our regional meeting we reviewed our financial position which continues to be healthy. The 2019-20 financial statements are in line with the budgeted amounts. The 2020-21 expenses to date include the exhibitor fees to participate in the CSAE virtual conference in November in partnership with Atlantic Region and CSTA in April in partnership with Atlantic and Western. Due to the pandemic our 2020-21 are looking much different than past years. Conference bursaries and director expenses to attend the board meeting have not incurred. After an in-depth conversation about the Unique Venues partnership Central Region has agreed to continue this partnership with a reduced amount of funding support. For more details on our regional meeting please refer to the minutes I have forwarded to the Central Region membership.

This year's conference ended with Awards Gala where we had the opportunity to honour our fellow CUCCOA members who were nominated for our three awards. Congratulations to our Central Region member Heleena Stephens from Lakehead University who was nominated for the Rising Star Award, and Aldo Sdao from University of Toronto – New College and Rosetta Vannelli from McGill University who were each nominated for the Award of Excellence and Leadership. A big shout out to Aldo Sdao for receiving the Member's Choice Award. Well deserved Aldo!

Thanks to the 43 members who took the time to provide feedback on the Regional Winter Meeting which we are planning for early February 2021. We have received several good ideas and also volunteers who have agreed to either do a presentation or sit on the planning committee. I will be reaching out to each of you within the next week or so to start the planning process. For anyone interested in participating in our Winter Meetings please



let me know as there are still opportunities for both presenters and planners.  
I look forward to working with all of you over the next two years as your director and know that I am only an email or phone call away!

*Susanne Keppler*

## Western Region Report



What a fantastic Virtual Conference we offered our members at the beginning of October!

Thanks to all of the planning committee members and the many Western members who assisted with the organization and the running of the 'behind the scenes' that was happening while we were all enjoying the sessions.

A big thank you to the following Western Region members: Jenny DeGelder, UBC-Okanagan, Lisa Kanavaros, UBC-Vancouver, Jen Cowan, SFU, Justin Ankenmann, SFU-MECS, Maaïke Ammerlaan, UBC-Okanagan for all your tireless efforts in making this conference such a success!

It was great to see so many people in attendance online! We had 47 Western members signed up for the conference!



We had wonderful programming and great opportunities to connect with colleagues! I hope that each of you were able to take back some great learning and best practices to your organizations.

I would like to say a big thank you to Jill Glasgow, SAIT, Marketing Representative for the western region who created the WesternLink newsletter. Jill is taking a step back and Anthony Falls, MacEwan University will be our new Marketing Rep for the west.

It was wonderful to see Erin Walton presenting – Business Continuity Planning - at the conference. She had a full house and could have used more time! Luckily she has agreed to do a virtual speaker series discussion or a roundtable this coming fall/spring.

Anthony Falls was the moderator at the virtual breakfast/lunch. We had some great discussion from all three regions. I want to thank Deb van Adrichem from University of Northern British Columbia for being the Western Regional rep! It was so well attended and engaging, that it was continued for another 45- minute session to answer further questions.

We will be deciding on dates for the Winter Regional Meeting, which will be going virtual and as soon as the dates and the committee are in place more information will be coming. Please reach out to myself or Jenny DeGelder, if you are interested in getting involved in planning for this meeting!

CUCCOA will be attending the Virtual SEC 2021(Sports Events Congress) which will take place in Ottawa, this coming spring. More information to come soon about the format and who will be attending from each region at the booth.

The Virtual Speaker Series will be back starting in November and we will continue

to host as many speakers and topics as we can. Some of this might be done in roundtable format and we might be securing speakers from within the industry to speak on topics that you indicated was of interest to you. Stay tuned for more information in an upcoming email to the membership.

**Western Region Representatives:**

Sarah Johnston, Western Regional Director  
Jenny DeGelder, Deputy Director  
Jen Cowan, Awards & Bursaries  
Anthony Falls, Marketing

*Sarah Johnston*

## Conference Testimonials

*The Virtual 2020 CUCCOA Conference was better than we expected. Our office enjoyed the caliber of the keynote presentations and hearing about experiences from other Universities. We also took the opportunity to explore the many facets of hosting a virtual event (with Pheedloop). Overall, we enjoyed it. Thank you CUCCOA volunteers!*

*Jennifer Studney & Deb van Adrichem  
University of Northern British Columbia*

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*As a new CUCCOA member I was so excited to attend my first National Conference in October. Given the unique challenges we have all faced this year I feel that this conference came at the perfect time. While the idea of meeting so many new people virtually was a bit daunting to start, I quickly realized that this was a first for all of us. Our shared experience helped me to feel connected to you all despite the distance between us. Thank you to the conference committee for putting together such a terrific virtual event that fostered a sense of community for a newcomer like me.*

*Prior to joining CUCCOA I did not have the opportunity to meet anyone working in conferences and events at other academic institutions. My colleagues in Fredericton had spoken to me about the value of connecting with like-minded individuals who know and comprehend the challenges that we face. After meeting and speaking with many of you, I can see how right they are. There is something truly special about stepping into a group who understands where I am coming from and why I care about the work that I do.*

*The program was filled with timely and informative sessions, and I wish that I could have attended each one. Yuri's session on Enhancing the Guest Experience was phenomenal. It sparked some new ideas that I am eager to explore once we begin to welcome guests back to our campus, so thank you Yuri! I also found the closing keynote by Rashida Geddes particularly insightful. Her call to action resonated with me deeply and has motivated me to push myself out of my comfort zone and build more confidence into my approach. This was such a valuable lesson for me, especially during these uncertain times.*

*I am so looking forward to next year's National Conference. We will hopefully have the pleasure of meeting face to face, and I cannot wait to welcome you to Fredericton!*

*Laurel Kasper  
University of New Brunswick, Fredericton*

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*The Virtual Conference was well received on my end. It was nice to connect with everyone and share our perspectives surrounding this Pandemic. I thought the speakers were very well spoken and the roundtables were useful to put names to faces. I would love to attend another Virtual Conference. Thanks to everyone who put this together! Makes*

*you feel supported and not alone during this time. Happy to be apart of such a wonderful team!*

Amanda Finlayson  
King's University College

## CUCCOA Mentorship Program

The CUCCOA Mentorship Program offers friendly and personalized connections to help new members connect with another member, become more familiar with the association, learn about member benefits, and have a resource person to contact if they are new to the industry.

The Mentorship Program is a one-year commitment, where mentors will connect with mentees throughout the year to develop a rapport and discuss opportunities, resources, and activities available to them through CUCCOA. Mentors can also provide support and direction in helping Mentees achieve specific professional and personal career goals.

Danielle Fairweather, conference coordinator at the University of New Brunswick's Saint John campus began a completely new career in April 2019, just as their Summer Hotel operation was beginning.

*I can tell you first hand how valuable CUCCOA's Mentorship Program is. I signed up as a mentee and was paired with a well-experienced Conference Coordinator in Ontario. It was incredibly comforting to have someone not only available but willing to offer advice, direction and support in all areas of the role. There is great value in understanding how other institutions operate, whether that value comes from the reassurance that it is in line with your own institution's practices or that it differs, offering new insight and ideas. And it's far better when the person you're communicating with is a friendly voice who has more than likely experienced similar triumphs and challenges. (Danielle Fairweather, University of New Brunswick)*

Mentors and mentees are provided with a checklist to help guide their conversations at check-points throughout the year. Mentors have been CUCCOA members for a few years and are familiar with the association. They also have experience and knowledge from their institution that they are willing to share with their mentee if they are new to the field.

Raeanne Skihar, manager, hospitality services at University of Regina, had this to say about her mentor and the program:

*[He] was a very supportive resource and it was great having a colleague to touch base with regularly in order to exchange ideas, seek direction when faced with a challenge, and generally to share information regarding how to offer the best services to our clients now and in the future. His willingness to share his experience and knowledge of the industry was very beneficial to me as a newcomer to Hospitality, within the past couple of years. I had enjoyed meeting him at the National Conference in 2018 and was excited to learn that he would be my mentor for the year - and the mentorship program and mentor relationship met all of my expectations. I would highly recommend the program to others seeking to connect with peers in the industry. (Raeanne Skihar, University of Regina)*

If you aren't new to CUCCOA and would like to put your name forward as a mentor, we encourage you to do as well! It is a rewarding experience to connect with a mentee and help them become more familiar with the association and industry. Ryan Sargent at York University is a mentor and was inspired to become a mentor after remembering how helpful his mentor was to him when he first joined.

*The CUCCOA mentorship program benefits all those who are involved, as it is an excellent way to share ideas, discuss challenges, and brainstorm with someone who understands the industry we work in. (Ryan Sargent, York University)*



If you haven't signed up yet for the Mentorship Program, it's not too late!  
Email Atlantic Regional Director, Yuri Gidge, at [yuri.gidge@mun.ca](mailto:yuri.gidge@mun.ca) today!

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