

RhetCanada President's Report 2023

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The past year has been an active one for our association. From June 1-3, 2022, we had our [first independent online conference](#), which was very successful, with twenty-nine presenters from a wide variety of institutions and countries sharing their research over three days. Aside from a moment of panic on my part when the University of Waterloo network unaccountably went down a half-hour prior to the conference opening but then re-started right before we began, the technology worked flawlessly, and via our discussions in sessions and in the break room we not only shared our scholarship but maintained the collegiality that is a hallmark of our association.

At our annual general meeting on June 16, we decided to hold our 2023 conference at Congress at York University and to make the conference mainly in-person with some remote elements. Both coordinating with the Federation and straddling in-person and online modes made organization of this year's conference a bit more challenging, but with the support of the executive and the conference coordinating committee, we've navigated the planning process quite smoothly and I anticipate that this year's conference will again be a stimulating and enjoyable experience.

I'd like to thank the executive members, the members of the conference planning committees, and the advisory committee members for all their work on both the 2022 and 2023 conferences. Negotiating the multiple pivots in conference format that we've had to undertake over the last four years has been challenging, but the support of RhetCanada's committee members made it possible to pivot smoothly and hold successful events. I'd also like to express my appreciation to the members of the Student Prize Committees who have given such constructive and transformative feedback to our student presenters and have adjudicated the prizes so wisely. And, of course, I'd like to thank all the presenters, chairs, and Burkean Parlour speakers who were the foundation of our conferences' success.

This year also saw the publication of our first [Member News post and email](#), which gave a comprehensive picture of the exceptional work and achievements of our association members, whether they're faculty, independent scholars, or students. This is an initiative I'm hoping to continue on a biannual basis, and I encourage members to share their news with us so that members can keep in touch and find opportunities to share or support one another's research work.

The Member News post is one facet of an issue that perennially needs more attention, which is the promotion of our association to Canadian and international scholars and to the broader public. This is an issue that I would have liked to pursue more vigorously during my tenure as president, but other work associated with the president's position and challenges associated with the pandemic prevented me from devoting as much attention to it as I would have liked. I hope that, under the guidance of the new executive, I'll be able to participate in promotion more consistently in a new capacity.

I've now been president for two terms, and it's time for me to step aside and allow someone with new ideas and skills to take on this role. I'd like express my appreciation in particular to Benoît Sans, who has been a wonderful partner-in-planning over the last four years and who has so often taken on the demanding task of translating the association's documents, to both Andy McGillivray and Kyle Gerber, who have been such solid anchors for the association in their roles as secretary-treasurer, and to member-at-large Sigrid Streit and student exec members Kyle Gerber and Monique Kampher for their participation and support over the past four years. Finally, I'd like to thank past Rhetor editor Tracy Whalen and present editors Julie Dainville and John Moffat for their capable stewarding of our association journal and past president Tania Smith for giving RhetCanada a strong foundation to build on.

It's been an honour and pleasure to serve an association that I've now been involved with, in one capacity or another, for nineteen years—I actually gave my first presentation at a CSSR conference as a PhD student in 2006. I look forward to the continued development of RhetCanada under the guidance of its new executive and the association's general membership, and to being involved with the association for many years to come.