



Memo

Date: February 5, 2020
To: Members of Council
From: Godwin Ifedi
Chair, Editorial Board
Subject: Report of the Editorial Board

Committee Meeting Dates

The Editorial Board met on December 12, 2019, to review and approve the content of the March 2020 issue of *Professionally Speaking* and *Pour parler profession*.

Summary of Discussions

Background for and Summary of the Editorial Board's First Discussion

A June 2019 article in *Professionally Speaking*—"Teaching LGBTQ Students"—offered members support in creating a more inclusive classroom environment. The magazine received and published a letter in response to this article from a member who questioned what to do when one's personal beliefs are in conflict with the professional and legal requirements of the profession.

In response, the College received dozens of letters (as well as more than a thousand social media messages) from members expressing their hurt and disappointment at the Editorial Board's decision to publish this letter.

At its December 2019 meeting, the board engaged in a lengthy discussion regarding the letter to the editor and the reaction to its publication. The Chair of Council and the Registrar also attended and participated in the discussion.

The board considered how best to respond to the high volume of letters received in response to the original letter. They assessed the current editorial review process and reflected on effective practices for handling sensitive content, going forward. As well, they considered how the publication could address the central question at the heart of the original letter to the editor: What does one do when their personal views conflict with the professional and legal requirements of the profession?

Review process

Board members assessed the current editorial review process and concluded that the steps were reasonable, measured and effective. The board also determined that in addition to seeking consensus when considering whether or not to publish potentially sensitive material, it will seek opinion beyond the Editorial Board, as necessary, when a decision is not unanimous or clear.

Furthermore, the Editorial Board determined it will seek a legal opinion to ensure it acted in compliance with the *Ontario College of Teachers Act* and that appropriate due process was followed when it made the decision to publish the original letter in the December 2019 issue. This review will also serve to confirm the process for the future and to recommend any necessary modifications.

Ongoing education

The Editorial Board felt the central question raised in the original letter to the editor requires an answer. Therefore, members agreed to publish a feature article in an upcoming issue addressing what members should do if their personal views conflict with aspects of the curriculum, instructional styles or the philosophy of their employer.

Next steps

The Editorial Board will publish a statement in the March 2020 issue, alongside the Letters to the Editor. That statement will:

- reiterate the College position on inclusion
- explain the decision to run the letter and the need for further education and understanding
- acknowledge that the letter was hurtful to many members, and reiterate that the College regrets the pain it caused
- indicate that, while the Editorial Board's review process is robust, as professional practitioners there is always room for reflection and growth. Going forward, the board will implement an additional step in its review process before deciding to publish potentially sensitive material
- state that the College will publish a feature article in an upcoming issue addressing what members should do if their personal views conflict with aspects of the curriculum, instructional styles or the philosophy of their employer.

Summary of Other Discussions

The Editorial Board reviewed and approved all of the feature articles. The committee agreed that the cover story for *Professionally Speaking* and *Pour parler profession* will be "Teaching Through the Decades." It profiles six Ontario Certified Teachers with a range of experience

(from four years to 50 years) who each share reflections and lessons learned during their time in the profession.

The committee approved two other features for publication in both *Professionally Speaking* and *Pour parler profession*: “Transition to Teaching 2019” and the annual AQ Supplement. The former is a statistical report that sheds light on new teachers entering into the profession: Who they are, what type employment they’re finding, what they’re teaching, where they come from, and more. The latter is our yearly special section highlighting ongoing professional development and learning opportunities for Ontario Certified Teachers.

The committee also approved the latest English and French Great Teaching profiles. *Professionally Speaking* will profile Lynne Charette, OCT, named to the list of Canada’s Outstanding Principals by The Learning Partnership. As a principal, and now a university professor, Charette’s goal is to help students focus on just a few goals at a time and build on the successes they already have. *Pour parler profession* will profile Judette Dumel, EAO, who teaches all subjects to Grade 6 students in Ottawa, Dumel was a Finalist for the 2019 Governor General’s History Award for Excellence in Teaching. An exploration of individual cultures is at the heart of her approach to teaching and learning and she makes sure the classroom is a safe and open-minded environment for discovery.

Content for Connections, Reviews, Tech Class and Cyberspace — as well as two items for Governing Ourselves— were also approved, as was Final Exam, which profiles Brampton-raised hip hop artist and Polaris Prize winner Haviah Mighty.

Editor-in-Chief Bill Powell updated the committee on the College’s ongoing distribution pilot project with readers of *Pour parler profession*. Through this pilot, readers of the French-language edition have the option of receiving the College’s official publication by mail, email or both, based on self-determined preferences. As part of the pilot and to inform next steps, staff will continue to analyze data on digital magazine open rates as well as survey digital readers on information recollection.

Motions Referred to Council

There were no motions referred to Council.

Committee and Magazine Mandate

The Editorial Board provides high-level guidance on editorial development and advertising policies for the magazine. In accordance with the Content Guidelines, the board reviews all content prior to publication and provides input into future editions, looking for a balance of

subject areas that will interest the College's diverse membership and align with the College's mandate.

Professionally Speaking and *Pour parler profession* are published quarterly to inform our members about the activities and decisions of the College. The magazine provides a forum for discussion of issues relevant to the future of teaching and learning, teachers' professional learning and standards of practice.

Future Meeting Date

The next Editorial Board meeting will be held on March 26, 2020.

Committee Members

Chantal Côté, OCT (Vice-Chair)
Melissa Gaffen, OCT
Godwin Ifedi (Chair)
Timothy Kwiatkowski, OCT (from December 6, 2019)
Marlène Marwah



Godwin Ifedi, Chair