

CURAC 2017 Annual Conference at Carleton University

Carleton played host in May 2017 to a very successful annual conference of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC). Seventy delegates from across Canada came for the three-day meeting at the Richcraft Building by the Rideau River. The conference provided a great opportunity to showcase Carleton and its new facilities to a national audience.

CURAC is an umbrella organization of 40 retiree associations. The annual conference allows delegates to exchange their experiences and come up to speed on some key issues affecting retirees. This year the main themes were: Health, Higher Education, The Economy.

A host committee, mostly from the Carleton University Retirees Association (CURA) Executive, took on the organization of the conference, assisted by a team of retiree volunteers and supported by the Office of the Provost and a range of sponsors: Carleton University, MFS, Scotiabank, Beechwood Cemetery, Economical Select, ListenUP!Canada, Collette Travel, Great-West Life, CURA, and Cleland Jardine Engineering.

An evaluation survey of the delegates showed a high level of satisfaction with the conference. They especially enjoyed the invited speakers, the food, the setting overlooking the river, and the round table sessions where delegates could discuss the activities that worked best in their own associations (best practices), and prepare for the main theme sessions. At previous conferences the round tables were held at the end. At Carleton, the discussions were switched to the beginning, giving people an opportunity to get to know each other in small groups right at the start. This was a popular innovation.

The conference began with an afternoon tea in Richcraft Hall hosted by the Provost for all Carleton retirees as well as delegates to the CURAC Conference. This was followed by an evening reception for delegates.

A total of seven speakers presented on topics from the Health, Higher Education and The Economy main themes. All presentations are available elsewhere on this CURA website, and on the CURAC website, where you will also find additional

detailed notes on the conference <http://www.curac.ca/newsletter-post-conference-edition/>.

At the session on health, Jeff Turnbull, Chief of Staff at the Ottawa Hospital, gave a moving talk about his work on health equity and on improving the health of street people in Ottawa, and received a standing ovation. William Dalziel, a professor of psychiatry at the University of Ottawa, spoke about successful aging and dealing with frailty and dementia, a topic with its own dark humour. Yoni Freedhof, an outspoken obesity expert, spoke with great relevance about diet, sleep and exercise, and their impact on our health.

Several of the speakers were from Carleton. Ian Lee gave a provocative talk about President Trump and the Economy, suggesting that even without Trump, Canada would face significant trade pressures. Tim Pychyl chaired the session on higher education and spoke about Carleton's popular Learning in Retirement program, along with Ross Finnie of the University of Ottawa, who presented new evidence on the earnings of post-secondary graduates. Yes, higher education is worthwhile!

Rebecca Trueman of Algonquin College, spoke at lunch about A Little BIT of Success: a joint program in information technology between Carleton and Algonquin.

The banquet speaker was Dr. Matthew Bellamy of Carleton's history department, who kept the audience hopping with the story of Canada's love of beer. A big thank you goes to the Carleton Department of Music who provided entertainment at the opening reception and the banquet.

The CURAC 2018 Conference will be held at Dalhousie University in Halifax May 23 – 25. Watch this space:

<http://retireesandpensioners.dal.ca/curac2018/index.html>