



Jared Cardiff
Chapter Chair

I hope that everyone is having a great start to spring. It's been a productive year at the CSC Toronto Chapter with many of the events under way, or completed, as we look forward to enjoying summer and getting ready for next year.

Speaking of next year, the Executive Committee for the 2018/2019 year were announced at the May annual chapter meeting. I have spoken with many members who were asking "how do I get involved?", or "where do you think I should start?" The question itself is amazing because it shows the dedication and passion we all have for this very special organization. Even when the positions are filled, members who want to get involved and contribute to this organization are welcome to contact me. It's always great to hear from anyone who is willing to give their valuable time to helping the CSC Toronto Chapter move forward.

As my time as Chair is winding down, I often think about what is next, and what I want to do after this. I have often thought that one year is just not enough time, as chair, to really have a meaningful impact. I see myself, as chair, as steward of that position, and part of a greater legacy in the CSC Toronto Chapter that goes back generations. So as my term as Chair winds down, my focus is on preparing for a smooth leadership transition. I look forward to supporting next year's Chair as Past Chair. So as the CSC Toronto chapter moves forward, I am pleased to be able to continue to contribute to such an important organization, and grateful for the opportunity to participate in and lead such an awesome team of volunteers, sub-committee, and Executive Committee members who I had the privilege to work with during my time as Chair.

Also, I just want to thank the CSC Toronto Chapter membership as we continue to provide resources, education, and networking for ensuring there is lasting value for all who participate. Please don't hesitate to contact me or your executive committee/ sub-committee members if you have any question, or suggestions. Feedback from our membership is essential to ensure the executive and sub-committees are doing our best is in service to the members.

Thank you for reading.



**Vice-Chair
Iain Stuart**

“Be the change that you wish to see in the world,” – Mahatma Gandhi, is a saying by which I try to live my life and the exact reason why I decided to volunteer as Vice Chair of the CSC Toronto Chapter. By the time my article is published in the E-Specifier the Call for Nominations will have closed, however, I hope you have considered putting your name in the hat to volunteer to see great change you want to see at our Chapter. Even if you had considered it I implore you to be active as there are numerous Sub-Committees who need active and hardworking minds such as yours. Furthermore, attend dinner meetings, meet with Executive Committee members, or send us an email so that you can share your ideas and have your voice heard.

CSC Toronto Chapter recently hosted a Fun Night where the notion that our mothers told us of ‘Don’t play with sharp objects’ was ignored fully as we hurled sharp axes in succession at targets in a fierce competition. I always knew that Steve Gusterson is a sharp individual and he proved that as our axe throwing champion in a competitive finale against runner-up Mark Clemmensen, who I thought was going to break the targets with his 90 mile an hour throw. Congratulations to you both. The evening showed smiles all-round and there wasn’t a frown to be seen for miles. The event was made a huge success with the help of Elsa Boyden, Meghan McBride, myself, and the support of the entire Executive Committee.



Results from the member survey for our CSC dinner meetings can be found at the end of this document. Thanks to all those who took a few minutes out of their time to complete the survey!

Whether you believe it or not Spring is here and though the temperatures don’t feel it, warm weather is nearing and golf season approaches. Golf registration will be available soon on our website. Golf is taking place at the Richmond Hill Golf Course and will follow the same tee times and format as the previous two years. Due to the success of this event last year sold out in a hurry so keep a keen eye on the website and notifications from our E-Blasts and don’t miss out on the fun.



Past Chair

Nellie Vila-Legare

The 40th anniversary of the Toronto Chapter Building Expo continued with the theme of *transformation* and underwent additional changes to keep the event relevant as well as informative for all attendees.

Our Luncheon was once again a Sold-Out event! We had great interest in our Keynote Speaker, Chris Adamkowski from Google Canada, Head of Industry.

Chris provided great insights on communication around multi-generational workforce styles which is proving to be challenging but filled with opportunities for efficiencies and innovation.

Chris' headlines included:

1. Hiring is the most important thing we do
2. Coaching is critical
3. Data is required
4. Building the right culture

Of those messages what really stood out for me was 'Building the right culture' and most importantly as Chris mentioned, psychological safety – Assume Positive Intent. On a team, understanding that we "...know each other as human beings...understanding where they're coming from" helps us to deal with difficult situations and overcome stumbling blocks in the workplace environment.

For those that attended the trade show, they would have immediately noticed the changes to the floor plan layout which was designed to improve the flow of traffic and encourage attendees to visit all booths. In an effort to improve the experience for all attendees and exhibitors, we decided to hold the accredited sessions on the trade show floor. This allowed architects, specifiers and designers in attendance an opportunity to mingle with manufacturers in between sessions.

OAA accredited presentations this year included discussions by;

Catherine Wilson
Changes to Construction Law in Ontario

Jeff Ker
The Effect of Climate Change on Structures

Scott Armstrong
Building Science

Once again, we would like to thank our student volunteers from George Brown College. It was an excellent opportunity for them to meet with members from all facets of our design + construction industry while providing the support required at such an event.



These are challenging times and the committee works hard to enhance the experience for attendees and manufacturers alike. Manufacturers expect a return on investment and we believe that our value proposition is hard to beat! We will continue to push the envelope on what we can offer to ensure continued success.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge and thank the following committee members who worked tirelessly to ensure that the 40th Annual CSC Building Expo was an outstanding event for all!

Committee Members include:

Eric Corej
Bob Hartogsveld
Russell Ibbotson
Kazim Kanani
Shamanna Kelamangalam
Matt Roberts
Iain Stuart
Micah M. Rodrigues – Chapter Administrator

Next year's show is slated for Wednesday, February 27, 2019 and planning has already commenced.

We look forward to providing excellent value for all those that attend or exhibit.

This is the longest running technical trade show in the construction industry organized by volunteers for the betterment of the design + construction community.

Exhibitor registration is slated to open soon, and we look forward to another successful event!



Specifications Officer
Ashley McKay

In late January our second PDG event of the year was held. As always, a great discussion took place on the topic of the night, which was 'Suggesting and Evaluating Equivalents - How, What, When'. For those interested, a summary can be found at the end of this document. While our planned April PDG had to be skipped due to unforeseen circumstance, our June event is confirmed. Keep an eye out for the invitation to sign-up - Monday June 4th "Technical Info, Where to Go? A discussion on resources and knowledge building".

**Professional Development Officer
Michelle Wood**

We have had some great things happen the last few months on the educations programs we offer and would like to share it with you:

PCD Course: This course runs in September and we had 35 students this year! On behalf of the Executive Committee I would like to congratulate all the students who successfully graduated the PCD Course back in December. At our April meeting, we acknowledge these individuals and their success!



CCA: Ted Katsoris, instructor: classes in 2 different locations, on Mondays and Wednesdays. Ted has just passed the half way mark in the course. In that regard, it is behind schedule when compared to the other classes, but Ted had to work through some class nights delayed at the beginning of the year due to weather, and also the relocating of half the class in a new rented space. Ted had a total of 30 students this session.

TR: Steve Gusterson, instructor: the course is going very well and being taught on Alumicor premises. All 8 original students are doing well and are very engaged.



Specifier: Timothy Lee, instructor: The course is heading to the last quarter and doing well. It is taught on Wednesdays on Stantec premises. It is a small group of 4 students. It allows for great conversation and Tim finds the group to be thoroughly interested in the art of specifications writing.

Year over year, all courses have maintained their numbers and continue to show a trend towards CCCA designation as most popular option for a large variety of industry actors.

On a final note, in January, we received a request for in-house PCD course from IBI (Page + Steele) in Toronto; we have offered a program with costs for 10 students format and a set of dates, along with an instructor name, but we have not heard back as of yet. We also received a request for help with specification writing from Ryerson in Toronto, specifically for the Student Design Competition. Ted Katsoris presented a short 1-hour class to the 2nd year Interior Design students on March 14.



Marketing Officer
Russell Ibbotson

#CSATOTalks Challenge coming up in September!

How we communicate in the construction industry today has been greatly affected by the rise of the internet, social media and yes, even the arrival of BIM. The construction industry spans generations, more brands and people are finding it hard to keep up with the evolving platforms, trends and rules. I know I haven't always and I see other brands and individuals falling behind. Part of my challenge is to try to determine if I should call, email, text or send a LinkedIn message to a customer and this is someone I have a relationship with. Knowing how to connect with someone you don't know is even harder especially with the added layer of CASL (Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation).

Most of us are very busy, often too busy to attend CSC meetings and other industry events, or to return phone calls or emails deemed less of a priority. I have been lucky enough to make association volunteering and conference attendance part of my job but appreciate most people don't have that luxury. With increasing demands on an individual's time, I think it is hard for many to come out to CSC or other industry events. My colleagues and I often discuss this topic, the shortfalls mentioned earlier but also the benefits of these events, particularly networking and relationship building. There is so much more to meeting someone in-person and building a rapport in a less formal setting.

In addition, we are further challenged by the increasing quality and quantity of information available online. Most manufacturers and suppliers have been improving their online customer experience and support. This has made it easier for us to find the information, but do we always appreciate what we lose when we're not in contact with someone? There is a certain charm to a 2-way dialogue that allows us to dive deeper, ask questions and understand the full potential on what a product or service can do in the right application. I think this is why CSC invested in developing the CTR program – to ensure we have quality Technical Representatives that know how to contribute to our projects.

Many of us recently participated in the CSC Building Expo, and in my biased opinion, it was the best CSC trade show I've participated in. As a member of the organizing committee, I heard lots of positive feedback on the 3 technical sessions and new show layout. Of course, more feedback is always welcome as we strive to make the next Expo even better! If you didn't make it there, you've likely attended tradeshow, sat through a Lunch-and Learn or 50, been pitched on a new product or attended some kind of event where you've been involved in the communication of a product, application or service. I can't help but think there must be a better way to do this by improving the experience.

Communication is changing and some of us are missing out on building our network. I think we can find a better way together and I want to set a CSC Toronto Chapter challenge! Leading up to the September meeting using the hashtag #CSCTOTalks, I challenge you to Tweet out your ideas on how we should be connecting with brands and individuals in the industry or how we can do better at sharing information on products and services. To encourage you, I'll donate an LCBO gift card and we can do a random draw from those that participate during the Welcome Back Dinner Meeting in September. I think many can agree it makes it easier to communicate and build relationships with a drink in hand. So, share your ideas and together maybe we can improve our communication, #CSCTOTalks in September!

CSC Toronto Chapter Dinner Meeting Survey May 2018

The CSC Toronto Chapter Executive is committed to providing the types of meetings and educational opportunities that our membership demands; data collection and analysis is a means to provide a metric to ensure we are on track. Thank you to all who provided feedback which will help inform our actions over the next couple of years

The survey conducted late April consisted of 22 questions and focused mainly on the dinner topics.

There were 55 persons who responded to the survey. Of those respondents they identified as

23% Specifications Writers
9% Contract Administrator
48% Technical Representatives
4% Architect Building Science Professional
14% Other
2% No Response

This article will cover only the highlights and lowlights observed within the survey. A more detailed result will be presented in the September dinner meeting. If you wish for full results prior to September, please contact Micah Rodrigues at admin@csctoronto.ca.

90% of respondents agree the main goal of the presentation topics should be of interest to as many members as possible.

87% of respondents enjoy the current range of dinner topics.

82% find the dinner topics relevant.

78% responded they would attend a dinner meeting with a construction topic not immediately relevant to their work.

Given the chance to evaluate each presentation on a case by case provided an even split with respondents 50% were yes and 50% were no.

70% of respondents disagreed that general presentation themes from year to year should be predictable.

Asked if a panel discussion was of interest 56% responded yes and 44% responded no. Each question allowed respondents to add comment and this question generated the most number of comments. These comments are valuable and will not be taken lightly.

82% would like to see at least 1 dinner topic per year similar to the naturopathic doctor we had in January with topics such as networking, business development, personal development, etc.

This survey generated a total of 210 comments throughout. Below are selected comments:

"I feel that CSC is an association that [is] built on education but I would like to see topics that are current hot topics."

“It is difficult to please everyone, the program committee does a good job of trying to appeal to majority of the membership.”

“I don't need to come to a meeting to hear a naturopathic doctor. I would need a topic relevant to what I do and this never happens.”

“The food is ok.... Drinks are expensive.... I hope it gets better.... Soft drinks should be free....”

Thank you to all our members who participated in the survey. The Executive Committee appreciates your help in making our dinner meetings even better.

CSC Peer Discussion Group

SUMMARY OF EVENT:

JANUARY 29, 2018 – SUGGESTING AND EVALUATING EQUIVALENTS: HOW, WHAT, WHEN.

NOTE: This summary of the Peer Discussion Group (PDG) conversation reflects the ideas and opinions expressed by the individuals present at the event and are not those of Construction Specifications Canada.

The format of the PDG event is of an informal exchange of ideas on the selected topic – for simplicity, this summary of the conversation that took place is written in point form following the specific questions that were asked during the event to guide the discussion.

Question: What are the most common reasons for which GC's propose equivalents?

Response:

- GC doesn't understand the specifications
- It's profit driven, GC trying to increase their profit by having a product approved that is less expensive for GC to purchase
- GC attempting to disguise a re-design as a request for substitution (also usually profit driven – re-design would be cheaper for them to build, and therefore increase their profit)

Question: When is the best time to allow for proposing equivalents? During tender? During construction / shop drawings? What are the limitations of considering equivalents during the different periods?

Response:

- Allowing substitutions only during construction:
 - o put the work of proving equivalency of a product/assembly on the GC rather than on the Consultant
 - o relieves stress on Consultant during bid period – during which there may not be enough time to properly evaluate proposed products/assemblies or understand the full implications of how the substitution may affect other elements of the design
 - o works on the assumption that the design team have done their job properly
- Allowing substitutions only during the tender:
 - o allows the equivalent product to be approved by addendum so all bidders can be party to the information – this ensures a more even playing field
 - o ensures GC's have no excuse for substitutions during construction; these become an automatic 'no'
 - o ensures spec writer will be involved in the evaluation of the equivalency request
 - o due to the reality of time restrictions during bid period, it is best to limit the products/assemblies substitution for which substitution requests will be accepted – i.e. items that don't have a lot of approved manufacturer's listed
 - items with large significant design value should not be allowed to be substituted

- it can be noted in the individual technical sections whether or not substitutions will be accepted (and when if applicable)
- Manufacturer's Point of View:
 - When substitutions are allowed is generally not as important, however often manufacturer's aren't aware of the tender until late in the bid period which limits their ability to potentially propose options

Question: What is required to properly evaluate an equivalent?

Response:

- As close to an apples-to-apples comparison as possible – ways to do this:
 - Include a substitution request form in the specifications
 - Request a spreadsheet from GC comparing requested product to specified product
 - Ensure differences between substitution and specified product also known

Question: What do you find is most problematic with requests for substitutions?

Response:

- There can be difficulty figuring out equivalency if the same standards aren't used for testing the products/assemblies.
- If a substitution is approved, there can be a flood of requests for more.
- It takes time to fully evaluate the substitution and to figure out the ripple effect of the substitution (if any) on the design, adjacent assemblies, etc.

Question: Should we accept substitutions at all if work has gone into vetting products and manufacturers during the design stage?

Response:

- Yes, as equivalents/substitutions can make the specifiers and design team aware of products they hadn't previously considered.

Question: What can be done when a GC is not truthful about reasons for requesting a substitution – i.e. saying the product is not available when it is.

Response:

- Ask for proof that the product is not available, or has a long lead time, or does not meet requirements, etc.
- Call the manufacturer yourself to check validity of reason for substitution.

General Brainstorming & Discussion:

- The idea of charging the GC for evaluating requests was discussed:
 - o Not popular with Owners
 - o Opens up the question from Owners as to why requests are coming in – are the specifications no good?

- It was noted by the manufacturer's that they like the basis-of-design method of specifying products as it gives a benchmark for them against which they can easily assess their product's suitability (and likelihood to be accepted as an equivalent)

- There was a debate on nomenclature on the word 'equivalent'; it was agreed that it would be useful to have this term officially defined by the industry

- It is suggested by the Specifiers that Manufacturer Reps contact them when their product is not specified and asking for a meeting to introduce if your product for future projects.

END OF SUMMARY