



A Message from the Chair

Spring this year brings fresh optimism and new hope as the winter snow melts away. This spring marks the one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic in Canada. Our families' routines were upended while everyone tried to adjust to the "new normal" of juggling remote learning and work-from-home schedules over the course of this past year. It's very challenging for our families as they cope with their children's education that has been greatly affected by curriculum gaps, LD needs and COVID impact. Yet, there is optimism about our future as it appears that the pandemic's end is nearing. Most Canadians will be vaccinated by this fall. There is widespread hope that we will return to person-to-person contact in school and at work within this year. Meanwhile our heroic professionals and volunteers in our LD community soldier on – pandemic or not! We are all grateful for their dedication.

Thealzel Lee
Chair, Learning Disabilities Association of Canada

A Message from the Executive Director

2020 is behind us and look out 2021!

While not without our challenges, LDAC is starting out 2021 on the right path. Among the news is the addition of two new members of the LDAC team. First, after deciding to pursue new challenges, Lorenzo Li Yun has stepped down as administrative support. In his place, Louise Boucher started in early January. With more than 25 years' experience in serving nonprofits and associations, I am confident Louise will bring a depth of service and experience the association needs in fulfilling its mission.

In addition, I am pleased to welcome Rita Srour to the team as the project lead on our coming national virtual conference. Rita, too, comes with years of experience in nonprofits and in event planning. As the weeks unfold, you will undoubtedly be hearing more from her as well.

Finishing up 2020 Q4, the Learning Disabilities Association is going into the year now with:

- A new strategic plan
- A successful Christmas fundraising drive
- Significant progress from our research committee in the development of a research hub



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All of these developments are setting the association up for further success in the new year. As we move forward, some of our plans include:

- A national one day virtual conference
- Continued development of our online research hub with focus on gathering information of value to parents, advocates, educators and above all, our provincial and territorial partners in LD
- Investigation on options for the creation and/or support to an online legal information hub
- Further recruitment to our national board of directors

We are absolutely committed towards building the value a national LD association can have to its provincial and territorial partners and we welcome their involvement. If any of the above initiatives hold interest, please reach out to us. Together, we can make an impact on those living with learning disabilities.

Finally, we are pleased to announce that LDAC will be coordinating a national virtual conference later this Spring on May 28, 2021! The theme will be:

Closing the COVID Gap: Supporting Literacy, Numeracy, and Social Emotional Learning for Students with Specific Learning Disorders

Please follow us on Facebook for details when we launch the conference site!

Sincerely,

Mark Buzan
LDAC National Executive Director

Committee Reports

Research Committee

The Research Committee has been providing summaries of recent research going on in Canada. Here is an example of some research conducted by Dr. Lauren Goegan.

Dr. Goegan and her colleagues at the University of Alberta have been exploring the challenges experienced by students with Learning Disabilities at post-secondary institutions during the Fall 2020 semester as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Below are some findings from their research.

Students identified an increase in work related to their courses when compared to previous semesters. For example, one student said, “Like I have stuff due



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every day, I have stuff due on Saturdays, Sundays, I have stuff due on Mondays when I don't even have classes. So, it makes it really hard as a student because you actually don't have a day off." This workload is related to several negative emotions, including anxiety, worry, stress and frustration.

Students also commented on receiving accommodations. Generally speaking, students note that accommodations are different in a remote setting. At times, students do not need certain accommodations. One student identified that "none of my classes were synchronous, so I didn't need to record them." Other students mentioned difficulty with getting some accommodations, including extended time, and often attributed this difficulty to their professor's concern with cheating.

Lastly, students highlighted their resilience and perseverance. They identified important strategies like time management and organization skills. Moreover, these students maintained a positive mindset that helped them with their studies. For example, "we somehow figure out how to do it" and "you kind of feel like the world's going crazy around you but you're just like ok, what's next."

For more information as it becomes available, visit:

<https://laurengoegan.wordpress.com/>

Communications Committee

Our committee last met on February 18. We continue to have some of our members participate in a special committee set up to recommend some changes to improve the website. We also continue with our other work related to social media and the newsletter.

We have been much more active on Facebook, and we encourage everyone to like and follow the LDAC Facebook page.

We have also started to plan for LD Awareness Month in October 2021 and will be getting in touch very soon with the provincial and territorial associations for this purpose.

Bob Cram – Chair

Members: Marilyn Irwin, Brendan O'Neill, Brent MacPherson, Simon Williams, Mark Buzan, Louise Boucher, Amanda Louie



Provincial/Territorial Updates

Quebec

The *Institut des troubles d'apprentissage* is having their 46th Annual Online Conference on March 24-26, 2021. The theme is “*It takes a village... more than ever!*” and is chaired by Dr. Égide Royer.

Featuring:

- More than 120 presentations (including 40 in English) on current topics related to the new reality of education and health professionals.
- World-class speakers joining in a single event: Gordon Neufeld, Sonia Lupien, Linda Siegel, Thierry Karsenti, Douglas Fuchs, Joël Monzée, Michael Fullan, etc.
- Rebroadcasts will be available until April 5, 2021.

This conference will focus on resilience, inclusion and collaboration. Do not miss this year's milestone educational event.

Check out our program [here](#).

Our [YouTube channel](#) now features 92 new videos providing tips and advice for parents and expert advice for adults and educators. Available in English and French, these video clips all come with handy factsheets. To discover them, just tune to: <<https://www.youtube.com/c/Institutta/playlists>>

New Brunswick

The application period for LDANB's new scholarship will be opening on Monday, March 8th. The scholarship will be awarded to a New Brunswick resident living with a learning disability who is a high school student entering post secondary in 2021-22 or a current post-secondary student continuing into 2021-22. The application will be posted to our website and social media accounts on March 8th.

Events and Other News

Quebec's Institut des troubles d'apprentissage will hold its 46th annual conference online, March 24-26, 2021: <https://institutta.com/formations/congres-annuel-2021>. This conference includes both English and French language components.

The 2021 International Conference on Learning Disabilities will be held in Las Vegas, October 14-15, 2021, <https://council-for-learning-disabilities.org/2021-international-conference-on-learning-disabilities/>.



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The annual conference of the International Dyslexia Association will be held in Charlotte, North Carolina, October 21-23, 2021. It is also possible to participate in the conference online, <https://www.dyslexiacon.org/>.