



ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL EXECUTIVES
OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA



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Messages from the APEX Chair and the CEO

Dear members,

I was fortunate to be elected Chair of the APEX Board in October 2017: our previous Chair, Donna Achimov, had done a terrific job of leading our Board and providing direction. Her leadership and compassion were the reasons why I joined the APEX Board. Under her direction, we clarified our role and increased our visibility.

The health and well being of executives continue to be a major focus for APEX. In the past year, our CEO, Michel Vermette, brought the results of our 2017 APEX Work and Health Survey to our members. By meeting with Deputy Heads and their executives in more than 50 presentations to departments and agencies, not only was APEX able to personalize the results of the survey for each department, Michel's interaction with executive communities increased everyone's understanding of APEX. These presentations included more outreach to executives who do not work in the National Capital Region (NCR). We wanted to bring the results of the survey to you directly and to hear your concerns, and we're listening to this input to guide us.

The increased visibility of APEX translated into well-attended events throughout the year including a well-attended 2017 Symposium. Building on this engagement with our members and executives more generally, our 2018 Symposium had the highest attendance ever (812 registrants) and our membership is now at the highest ever.

We have also been focussing on executives' financial health. While our members are ensuring that Phoenix issues are resolved as quickly as possible for staff, they also have their own pay problems. APEX is working with OCHRO / TBS to ensure that executives' pay issues are addressed, and we devoted much energy to the issue of our long-outstanding economic increases this year.

In 2018, we have been challenged by comments in the media, by the Auditor General and others about expectations for our community. Going forward, we'll be reflecting on these comments to ensure that APEX is your voice. APEX will continue to more visible to ensure all our executives – whether you are in the NCR or not – know what we're doing and why.

I am very proud to be a public service executive and very proud of the work APEX has been doing. APEX is your advocate. Please join us at our events and our symposium or just give us a call.



Michael J. Whittaker
Chair, Board of Directors



Dear Members,

It has been nearly 3 years since the Board of Directors asked me to take on the role of CEO at your association. Since coming to the position, I have continued work on my own priorities of increasing awareness of APEX and improving its service offerings to better support you. This last year it was my privilege to engage in person with thousands of you in our events, engagement sessions, town halls, small groups and individually, both in the National Capital Region, and in various regional locations.

We continued to grow the membership this year when we achieved the highest proportional representation of the community ever. Our over 50 events this past year attracted 4500 participants – another high for us. You rated our events highly, told us they were helpful to you, and gave us advice on what more we could do for the Executive community.

In addition to launching our new website, we have been working on our communications with you through multiple channels. While we continued our newsletters, and our e-mails, like many of you, we are feeling our way in terms of social media, using Twitter and working to launch our LinkedIn presence. These vehicles have been useful, and we are now turning our minds increasingly to developing content to meet your needs.

A large part of our time this year was spent conducting the 2017 Executive Health and Work Survey. This fifth survey since 1997 had the highest response rate ever at 48% of the EX community responding. We then spent months digesting the results and reporting back to you starting in January 2018. Dozens of presentations of the results in various fora afforded us the opportunity to talk to you about those results and get your views on what our community should do about them in coming years.

Finally, we completed our new three-year Strategic Plan (2018-2021). With three clear strategic objectives, APEX is well-positioned to help you personally, professionally and speak on your behalf in coming years.

I thank each of you for your ongoing participation and contributions to your association. It is my privilege to work on your behalf: 2018-2019 bodes very well for APEX and I look forward to building on our successes.



Michel G. Vermette
Chief Executive Officer



Strategic Plan 2018-2021

Following consultations with its members, APEX released its Strategic Plan for 2018-2021 in the spring of 2018. In addition to setting out the new vision and mission of APEX, the plan outlines three broad objectives to support leadership excellence. They are described in more detail below.

Supporting executives at the individual level: In this respect, APEX develops and promotes sharing and learning events, develops information tools and resources to support executives, including the *APEX Guide for Executives* and APEX Fact Sheets. It also provides confidential advice to executives.

Strengthening the executive community: This includes fostering networking among executives, encouraging information sharing within the community, celebrating excellence through the APEX Awards of Excellence, organizing a ceremony recognizing new executives, and working to increase membership and create a sense of belonging.

Being the voice of the executive community: APEX engages members and gathers their views and perspectives and conducts research to promote the interests of the community. In particular, topics of interest include: managing talent and leadership development, healthy workplaces, healthy executives, culture, and terms and conditions of employment. APEX uses the results of these engagements and research to base its advocacy of the interests of the community.

Membership

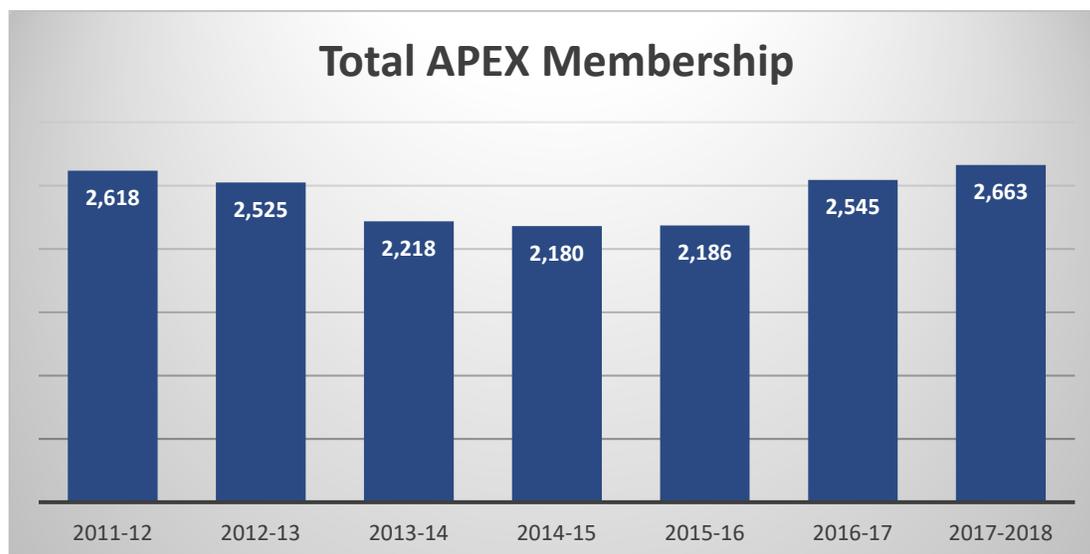
Profile

APEX membership consists of regular members (1,754), associate members (325) and new executives (584) who joined our community over the past year.

As of March 31, 2017, APEX had 412 executives located in the regions, 7 at the international level and 1,341 in the National Capital Region. APEX’s total membership represents about 35% of the entire executive community.

Growth

This year, APEX broke a growth record for its regular members (those who pay dues), with 1,754 regular members as of March 31, 2018, a growth of 18% in one year. When combining the three membership categories (regular, associate, and new executives), the number reaches 2,663 members, a 4.6% growth over the past year (see table below). This number testifies to the confidence that executives have in the Association’s leadership and the quality of events, including the Leadership Symposium. This significant growth is the result of our sustained efforts to regularly inform our members through our newsletter and social media, and the APEX team’s numerous visits to departments, both in the National Capital Region and across the country. Members also appreciate APEX’s efforts to promote the interests of executives among central agencies and the political community, particularly with respect to working conditions.



Services and Activities

Advisory Service for Executives

The Advisory Service for Executives provides confidential support to public service executives, including those outside the National Capital Region and the country. The service was created in 2003 with financial support from the deputy head community. The Report of the Advisory Service for Executives is available on the APEX website.

Leadership Symposium

The 2017 APEX Symposium, “Celebrating Leadership, Innovation and Diversity,” was very successful. The event’s Co-chairs, Deputy Minister Catherine Blewett and Deputy Minister Jean-François Tremblay, welcomed some 677 executives, a greater number than the average for the past three years. Participants included executives from 69 federal and Alberta Government organizations. The Symposium unfolded successfully, enjoying a very high level of satisfaction, with 92.2% of participants calling the event “good” or “excellent.” Accordingly, the participant satisfaction level was the highest of the past five years.

The Symposium’s resounding success largely rests on the high quality of speakers, who were given a very positive rating from participants.

APEX developed an agenda aligned with key governmental priorities. Topics of high interest to the EX community included presentations on ‘How to exploit technology to address global challenges’, by Salim Ismail, “Canada’s place in the world” by the Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, “The contribution of Indigenous People to Canada’s Future”, by a panel of experts, and “What is going on in the World: the New Canada” by Darrell Bricker, just to name a few.

With a view to provide additional value to our APEX Members and Symposium participants, we organized additional events to present Salim Ismail’s video and powerpoint presentation at departmental staff meetings. We also hosted a conference call with Salim Ismail where more than 90 could interact directly with him a few days after the event.

Hundreds of executives took the opportunity to join APEX’s CEO, the Clerk of the Privy Council and several deputy ministers at an official reception to recognize the seven recipients of the APEX Awards of Excellence.

APEX Events

In 2017-18, an additional 50 events were held for executives on a wide range of topics, including events supporting two government-wide corporate priorities: promoting a healthy workplace and building a diverse public service. Events were mainly held in Ottawa, with regional executives being given the opportunity to participate by teleconference. During the year, APEX hosted some 463 participants in person at APEX's offices, as well as 400 participants by teleconference or webinar.

Moreover, the APEX CEO visited several regions during the year, holding meetings with executives in Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal and Charlottetown. Hundreds of executives were able to benefit from a tailor-made presentation disclosing the results of the APEX Executive Work and Health Survey. This national tour also allowed APEX to get a sense of key issues of concern to executives in the regions, and to socialize through informal meetings. This regional visit initiative will continue next year to reach as many regional executives as possible. With all events combined, including the Leadership Symposium and other key activities, a total of approximately 4,447 executives participated in APEX activities.

Tools and Information for the Executive Community

To meet the growing need for information among executives, we drafted and published the *APEX Guide for Executives*, which gathers several references on the terms and conditions of employment for executives, requirements regarding employee management and operational management. As a result, managers have access to all the necessary information in one document, helping them avoid searching the Internet. The guide is available in the members' section of the APEX website.

In addition, several other guides were drafted over the past year, including a retirement information guide, a practical guide explaining the impact of resigning, and a guide regarding leave without pay. These documents will be published in the next fiscal year.

Strategic Partnership

APEX has developed a strategic partnership with Deloitte to deliver a series of workshops on executive knowledge development. In all, nearly 60 executives from 42 departments and agencies participated in three sessions held in the fall of 2017 and winter of 2018.

Through this pilot project, APEX has opened a dialogue on leadership in times of disruption and on the skills of public service executives.



A survey conducted following the pilot project found that 96% of participants were motivated and inspired by the workshops; 87.5% felt they were better equipped to deal with the challenges of being an executive; and 100% indicated that the series should be continued.

Recognition of Executives

2017 APEX Awards of Excellence

The APEX Awards of Excellence provide a unique opportunity to nominate executive colleagues who have made significant contributions to the federal public service. A record 49 nominations were received for the 7 award categories. A selection committee of four executives met to choose the winners. The recipients were announced on the APEX website, social media, and at the official Awards of Excellence Ceremony. [A photo album of the ceremony and the recipients is posted on APEX's Flickr site.](#)

2017 Recipients:

- Mr. George Green, Leadership Award
- Mr. Guy Baron, Career Contribution Award
- Ms. Nancy Chahwan, Healthy Workplace Award
- Ms. Megan Kennedy, Partnership Award
- Ms. Debora Turner, Innovation Award
- Ms. Sharon Squire, Community Contribution Award
- The Right Honourable Adrienne Clarkson, Public Service Citation

Recognition of Entry to the Executive Ranks Ceremony

On November 8, 2017, APEX welcomed approximately 300 new executives (out of a total of 527 new EXs in 2017-18) at the Canadian Museum of History in Gatineau as part of the Recognition of Entry to the Executive Ranks Ceremony. The program for the ceremony offered new executives a conference titled “Control Your Own Destiny,” a panel discussion with two deputy ministers, Marie Lemay, Deputy Minister and Deputy Receiver General for Canada at Public Services and Procurement Canada, and Ian Shugart, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs at Global Affairs Canada, along with a presentation on the role of senior executives in the federal public service. In the evening, in the presence of the Clerk of the Privy Council and dozens of Deputy Ministers and Deputy Heads, each new executive was introduced as part of the formal presentation of certificates recognizing their appointment to the executive group. [Photos of the event are posted on our Flickr account.](#) In the months leading up to the event, the APEX team contacted all new executives to welcome them to the community and offer support in their new role, as required.

Promoting the Executive Community's Interests

APEX's actions with respect to the working conditions for executives

APEX has been very active on the executive compensation file, engaging key senior government stakeholders over the last two years to highlight the lack of attention to a subject that is important to the community.

We will continue to conduct research on areas of interest of the Executive Community, seek the views of EXs both on salary and other terms and conditions of work for Executives so that we can pursue our advocacy role based on evidence.

APEX Executive Work and Health Survey (2017)

In May, the 2017 APEX Executive Work and Health Survey was launched. APEX hired a new survey firm to conduct the survey which resulted in a high-quality product delivered within the set timelines and in a more cost-effective way than in the past. In the field from May 2nd to June 19, 2017, 3,075 Executives took, on average, 29 minutes to respond to the survey – a 48% response rate, the highest ever (up from 35% in 2012). All responses to the survey were provided online. The results of the Survey were made public in January 2018. The overall report was published on the APEX website and organizational reports (where numbers permitted) were shared with deputy heads of those organizations. Organizations across the federal government have used their detailed reports with their own data to develop action plans and implement specific measures.

The survey paints a picture of an executive population that feels pride in their work, respected by their superiors and who are increasingly committed despite a high-stress, demanding work environment with constant time pressure and an increasing workload. Key outcome measures like job satisfaction and self-rated health status remain stable and relatively strong compared to 2012.

There are, however, some worrisome trends that could negatively impact individual and organizational health over time: 35% report working 55 or more hours per week (25% in 2012); 70% have thought about leaving their current position at least monthly in the past 6 months; the prevalence of chronic conditions (musculoskeletal, mental health, gastrointestinal, and cardiovascular) has increased significantly; and executives feel obligated to respond to work-related emails outside working hours. [More details can be found on our website.](#)

These and other Survey findings have been discussed and explored with more than 1,600 members of the Executive community through 50 events during the winter and spring of 2018. The results are the beginning of a conversation with deputy heads, central agencies, executives and APEX about how to create the conditions for success for the public service leadership cadre. APEX will build on the results to inform its priorities and actions in 2018-19.

Engagement and consultation with executives

APEX began a consultation exercise in May 2017 that took place at the same time as the APEX Executive Work and Health Survey. The goal was to engage executives in discussions on their day-to-day responsibilities so that they could voice their views and concerns.

This exercise included 19 visits to departments and agencies and meetings with over 270 executives across Canada who provided first-hand information to APEX. The Association also gathered useful information through parallel consultations on its website.

The issues identified during the consultation confirmed the results of the APEX Executive Work and Health Survey, mainly focusing on the volume of work, work-life balance, health, performance and talent management, trust and respect, delegation of authority, and support required by senior executives (professional development, mentoring and recognition). This useful information will provide food for thought and the development of a work plan to better support the community.

Communications

Executives regularly tell us they are extremely satisfied with our communication tools and how quickly we inform them about developments that affect them directly, in particular with regard to their working conditions and upcoming events.

In 2017-18, APEX implemented a variety of communications tools, including a complete overhaul of our website, our monthly newsletter, and social media such as Twitter and Flickr. The number of people following us on social media is growing. For example, our Twitter audience more than doubled (a growth of 870 followers) to 1,416 in March 2018. We also launched a newsletter in September 2017 (distributed by MailChimp), to inform our members and the executive community on major issues of interest. For example, in January 2018, over 2,792 executives opened one of our newsletters to view the results of the APEX Executive Work and Health Survey. As well, over 1,000 people visited our Flickr site to view photos of our new Recognition of Entry to the Executive Ranks Ceremony at the Canadian Museum of History in November 2017.



Over the past year, the CEO conducted media interviews. Executives were able to read the news through our Twitter account. One of APEX's roles is ensuring that the voice of all executives is heard, and we will play this role with increasing proactivity in the coming years. In 2018-19, APEX will launch a new LinkedIn account.

Board of Directors

The 15 members of the APEX Board are elected by APEX members at the Annual General Meeting. The Board has nine regular members from the National Capital Region, one regular member from each of the five regions and one associate member. The Board plays a key role in setting the organization's strategic direction.

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

The APEX AGM was held on October 3, 2017. A list of candidates to fill vacancies on the Board was proposed and adopted at the AGM. The nominees elected to the Board at the AGM are **Emilio Franco, Piero Narducci, Laurie Sargent, Bojana Zizic** (all from the National Capital Region) and **Doug Zolinsky** from the Prairie Region.

The resolution to approve the audited financial statements for the period ending March 31, 2017, was moved, seconded, and unanimously carried. A resolution to continue using Marciel Lavallée's audit services for the 2017-18 fiscal year was also adopted unanimously.

The 2016-17 audited financial statements were among the documents made available to all APEX members at the Annual General Meeting.

Funding of APEX Activities

APEX is grateful for the support it receives from the Deputy Minister and Deputy Head community. In addition to engagement by DMs and DHs in our work, support by them for attendance at events such as the Symposium and the recognition ceremony for new EXs, DMs and DHs support our work in two other important ways. The first is their support for Interchange Agreements which allow Visiting Executives to join us for defined periods to undertake important work on behalf of our members. The second is through a five-year agreement by 34 DMs to fund three key positions: Chief Executive Officer, Senior Director

of Operations and the Senior Adviser for Executives. This agreement was renewed in 2017-2018 for the next five years.

In addition to this support, APEX generates revenue through activities, memberships and sponsorships. These revenues provide important funds required to support our operations. APEX is particularly grateful to our corporate sponsors for their generous support. In 2017-2018, we received financial support from Rogers, SunLife Financial, Accenture, Ipsos, PriceWaterhouseCoopers, Nelligan O'Brien Payne, Johnson Insurance, Ravenlaw, Industrial Alliance, Ernst &Young, and Telfer.



[HTTPS://APEX.GC.CA](https://apex.gc.ca)

THE ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL EXECUTIVES OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE OF CANADA (APEX)
IS AN INDEPENDENT, NOT-FOR-PROFIT NATIONAL ORGANIZATION.

THE APEX MISSION IS:

TO PROMOTE A HIGH-QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICE BY STRENGTHENING LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE, PROMOTING THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF EXECUTIVES AND THEIR WORKING ENVIRONMENTS, AND DEVELOPING AN ACTIVE, ENGAGED AND GROWING NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE THAT SUPPORTS EXECUTIVES IN THEIR QUEST FOR HIGH PERFORMANCE, PRODUCTIVITY AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH.

THE APEX VISION IS:

TO INSPIRE LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE, HONESTY AND TRUST IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE FOR THE BENEFIT OF CANADA AND ALL CANADIANS. AS THE VOICE OF THE FEDERAL EXECUTIVE COMMUNITY, APEX IS A DYNAMIC NATIONAL ORGANIZATION WHOSE ADVICE ON CRITICAL PUBLIC SERVICE ISSUES IS VALUED AND ACTED UPON BY KEY DECISION-MAKERS.