

Annual Report

July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021

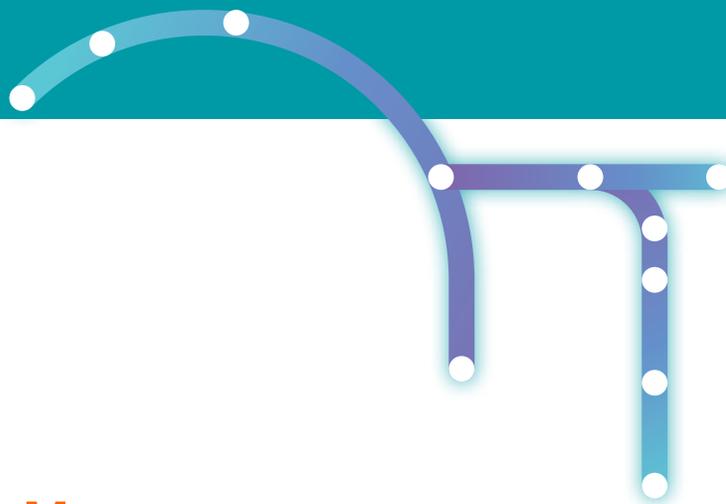


International Association
of Business Communicators
Toronto



Land Acknowledgement

IABC/Toronto acknowledges the land we service is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit.



President's Message

When one door closes, another opens

The 2020/2021 IABC/Toronto Board year was full of challenges, including the global pandemic and opportunities like addressing systemic and institutionalized racism. These realities led us to look at our practices to seek ways to grow as an association, and ensure we created a strategic framework that addresses topics that are important to all of us.

Despite the challenges we knew lay ahead, the 2020/2021 IABC/Toronto Board of Directors went into the term with optimism, hoping – and planning – to host in-person events again in 2021. However, the pandemic showed no signs of slowing down during this time. Instead, our Board of Directors and passionate volunteers continued to pivot, delivering innovative and relevant virtual programming to better support our members – which, at times, came at no cost – and the broader communications community.

Our conversations, professional development and programs, and connection to media all changed to meet the needs of professional communicators in a rapidly changing environment. IABC/Toronto also won seven IABC Chapter Management Awards, including the Large Chapter of the Year and the International Chapter of the Year, recognizing work undertaken in the 2019/2020 Board year. The Chapter Management Awards are an annual awards program that recognizes the leadership, management, creativity and teamwork of IABC chapter leaders worldwide.

While we're proud of our accomplishments, the enduring global pandemic – like many other organizations and associations – impacted our finances significantly, including sharp declines in membership and a drop in event revenue as the restrictions around physical gatherings affected our ability to hold in-person events.



Given the economic backdrop for much of the 2020-2021 Board term, we took a fiscally responsible approach to operations and made some difficult decisions. As a result, we significantly scaled back or outright eliminated many expenses and identified cost-saving opportunities to ensure the organization remains sustainable in the years to come.

During these unprecedented times, we witnessed communication professionals across the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) rise up and continue to provide excellent communication counsel to their leaders and/or clients. Knowing this, we felt it critical to continue to focus on areas where we could deliver value to members, including the annual Communicator of the Year Award and the prestigious 36th annual OVATION Awards program.

These events recognized communication professionals who rose to the challenge and kept the public informed, safe and connected as the pandemic continued to evolve and we experienced the largest healthcare crisis in a century.

Coming together, while apart

IABC/Toronto is a volunteer-led association with an outstandingly dedicated Board of Directors and volunteer network, all of whom helped us step up and address the challenges of the past year. Together, we delivered the Global Standard of the Communications Profession and supported our members.

Without our Board and committed team of volunteers, we could not have achieved as much as we did. So, thank you - from the bottom of my heart - for your hard work, passion and commitment to the communications profession as you navigated significant challenges in most aspects of your life.



Russell Baker
President



Vanessa Holding
*Vice-President,
Membership*



Justin MacLean MBA
*Vice-President,
Strategic Partnerships*



Satish Sarangarajan
*Vice-President, Finance
and Association*



Felicia Empey
*Vice-President,
Communications and
Digital Media*



Lindsay Grillet
*Immediate Past
President*



Michael Blackburn
*Vice-President,
OVATION Awards*



Nkiru Asika
*Vice-President, Special
Interest Groups (SIGs)*



Diane Bellissimo
*Vice-President,
Data Analytics and Brand
Management*



Katie Boland
*Vice-President,
Professional Development
Events*



Mandy Gibson
Executive Vice-President



Alice Namu
*Vice-President,
Programs*



Dan LeBaron
*Vice-President,
Volunteer*

Some highlights

As the largest IABC chapter worldwide, we're proud of IABC/Toronto's recent accomplishments.



The chapter's accomplishments include, but are not limited to:

- Continuing to invest in programs and professional development opportunities that drove greater levels of engagement during the global pandemic
- Naming Dr. Wes Hall – the [newest Dragon](#) on CBC's Dragons Den – as our [2021 Communicator of the Year](#) for his visionary leadership, communications excellence and his efforts to combat anti-Black systemic racism in Canada
- Reimagining the [OVATION Awards](#) program by adding [new inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility categories, two new divisions, the Best of the Best Judges' Choice Award](#) and by fully aligning the OVATION Awards to the national and international IABC award programs
- Forming the [Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility \(IDEA\) Committee](#) to focus on driving strategic recommendations to the IABC/Toronto Board of Directors that will further inclusion, diversity, equity and accessibility in the communications profession in the GTA

- The IDEA Committee presented a comprehensive recommendations report – titled [*Ideas for Belonging*](#) – which outlined the result of community engagement, in-depth conversations, brainstorming sessions, and quantitative research to help drive change
- [Championing the inaugural inclusion, diversity and equity national survey for Canada](#)
 - Sponsored, in partnership with IABC chapters across Canada, the Canadian Public Relations Society, the Canadian Council of Public Relations Firms and Leger Marketing, a first-of-its-kind industry-wide survey on inclusion and diversity for members and non-members across Canada.
 - This ground-breaking survey represented the first time the Canadian Public Relations and communications industry will have benchmark data on PR professionals’ perceptions and experiences of inclusion and diversity across the corporate, government, and agency sectors.
 - We’re committed to weaving findings from this survey – and our IDEA Committee report – into our practices going forward
- We continued to deliver exceptional and relevant networking and professional development events year-round for our members, whether they’re students or polished professionals, to help them hone their skills

Thanks for your continued commitment to IABC/Toronto and excellence in communications.

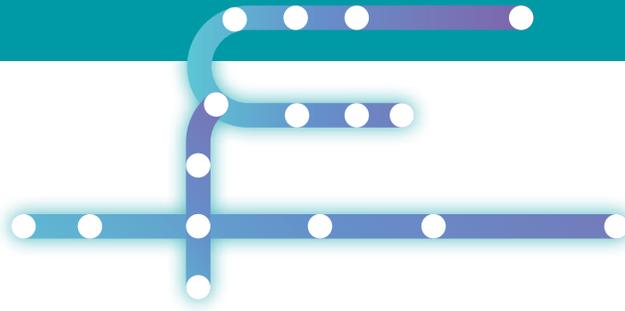


Sincerely,

[Russell Baker \(He/Him\)](#)

Immediate Past President

IABC/Toronto



Financial Report – Revenue and Expenses

Revenue

Membership Dues in 2020/2021: \$35,392

(Down from \$44,008 in the previous board year)

- Membership in Toronto continues to decline year over year, partly due to reduced corporate memberships and likely compounded by ongoing financial challenges caused by the global pandemic
- This is something IABC chapters across the world continue to experience

Awards in 2020/2021: \$49,623

(Up from \$44,943 in the previous board year)

- We delivered prestigious virtual events to our members – from students to polished professionals – who tuned in from the comfort and safety of their own homes throughout the year
- We received more than 200 OVATION Award submissions – almost half of what the international program received –, resulting in an increase in revenue for the awards portfolio

Advertising in 2020/2021: \$28,694

(Up from \$24,263 in the previous board year)

- Revenue from CareerLine started slow due to the uncertainty presented by the global pandemic but picked up slowly throughout the year resulting in an increase in revenue compared to the previous year

Programs in 2020/2021: \$7,767

(Up from \$7,406 in the previous board year)

- Revenue from programs includes virtual professional development, networking and Professional Independent Communicator (PIC) events, and the Communicator of the Year event
- As a result of the financial impact the pandemic had on many communication professionals, we decided to offer our members free professional development and networking events for much of the Board year
- We also acted quickly and decisively to provide professional development to help communication professionals with the immediate challenges they were facing
- Even in light of the ongoing pandemic, we hosted numerous virtual events, including:
 - Two open forums to engage members on both the strategy and feedback on the IDEA Committee
 - Six new member coffees
 - Six PD events, which included Global Communication Certification Council CMP® & SCMP® information sessions
 - Three networking events
 - Nine PIC events
 - Eight Senior Communicator Circle get-togethers
 - Four Student Communicator Circle events
 - One of our best-attended Communicator of the Year events
 - An industry-leading virtual, interactive and fully accessible OVATION Awards gala
- In the end, we saw nominally more revenue come in compared to the year prior

Total revenue for 2020/2021: \$121,432

(Up from \$120,621 in the previous board year)

Administrative Expenses

Management Fees in 2020/2021: \$70,857

(Down from \$83,019 in the previous board year)

- We contract Funnel Communications to provide administrative support throughout the year
- This includes website management, program support and financial administration, as well as timely member assistance, as required
- We were able to reduce costs by approximately 15% this year, representing our ongoing commitment to fiscal prudence in light of the ongoing global pandemic

Postage and Courier in 2020/2021: \$341

Up from \$203 in the previous board year)

- These costs are minimal as we continue to find more efficient ways to communicate with our members

Interest and Bank Charges in 2020/2021: \$4,182

(Down from \$5,073 in the previous board year)

- As a result of hosting fewer events, and therefore fewer transactions, this total has decreased from last year's total
- This number also decreased due to a new, streamlined process for payments
- CareerLine also moved to an online payment system

Meetings in 2020/2021: \$495

(Down from \$551 in the previous board year)

- Meeting expenses include the AGM and Board meetings.
- This number decreased as a result of the move to virtual board meetings and the online AGM

Professional Fees in 2020/2021: \$3,569

(Down from \$3,662 in the previous board year)

- Though this number is nominally lower than last year, it remains relatively consistent year-over-year
- It represents the cost of monthly bookkeeping and fees charged by a Chartered Accountant to review the financial statements

Insurance in 2020/2021: \$1,348

(Down from \$2,552 in the previous board year)

- There was a significant decrease in the cost of the chapter's Directors' and Officers' Liability and Commercial General Liability insurance
- This savings resulted from IABC International taking responsibility for this expense

Printing in 2020/2021: \$507

(Down from \$694 in the previous board year)

General office printing/copying decreased even further this year as a result of fewer in-person events

Telephone in 2020/2021: \$758

(Up from \$739 in the previous board year)

- There was a nominal increase in the costs of our telephone service this year

Total administrative expenses for 2020/2021: \$80,060

(Down from \$96,455 in the previous board year)

Program Expenses

Awards in 2020/2021: \$50,292

(Up from \$15,368 in the previous board year)

- Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, the chapter continued to invest in the prestigious 36th annual IABC/Toronto OVATION Awards, which included hosting an interactive and fully accessible virtual gala celebration

Events in 2020/2021: \$3,748

(Up from \$3,021 in the previous board year)

- Program event expenses include networking, professional development, Communicator of the Year and Professional Independent Communicators
- This expense was also significantly reduced this year, as compared to last year, due to the cancellation of in-person events and associated costs

Communications in 2020/2021: \$8,959

(Down from \$12,224 in the previous board year)

- Communication expenses include advertising & promotion, website, communications platform, Mailchimp, Hootsuite, Zoom, etc.
- Compared to the previous year, this expense declined noticeably, which included strategic investments in a more reliable and user-friendly website with more modern functionality
- In terms of interactions, we saw a slight increase in social media engagements and social media followers.

Executive Services in 2020/2021: \$0

(Down from \$3,240 in the previous board year)

- Executive Service expenses include Board orientation and committee meetings, Leadership Institute (LI) and the IABC World Conference
- Expenses usually incurred are often associated with IABC's Leadership Institute, an annual event where volunteer leaders from the chapter, regional and international levels share best practices
- While IABC held LI virtually due to the global pandemic, the chapter typically pays for a set number of Toronto Board Members to attend as part of their leadership development based on the approved budget available
- As a result of the financial challenges associated with the ongoing global pandemic, the IABC/Toronto Board of Directors also voted to remove – for one year only – the bursary provided to the President to help offset the cost of attending the IABC International World Conference

Volunteer Services in 2020/2021: \$0

(Down from \$1,200 in the previous board year)

- Though the significant challenges created by the global pandemic, our 39 volunteers, 50 judges and 13 volunteer Board members were essential to our continued operation
- Expenses in this line item usually include an in-person volunteer recognition event, which was cancelled in light of the global pandemic

Membership and Certification in 2020/2021: \$50

(Down from \$676 in the previous board year)

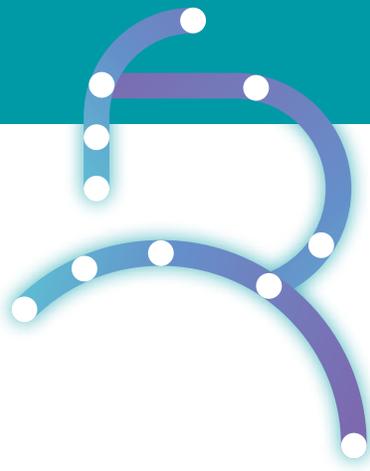
- The ongoing global pandemic prevented us from hosting an in-person certification exam
- However, we continued to offer virtual "New Member Coffees," where newly joined communicators were invited to join us for a meet and greet, and to get an idea of what the chapter has to offer (in total, we hosted six new member coffees)

Total program expenses for 2020/2021: \$59,502

(Up from \$35,728 in the previous board year)

Total expenses – representative of both the administrative and program categories – came in at \$141,562

(Up from \$132,183 in the previous board year)



Financial Report – Overview

- Excess of revenue over expenses for 2020/2021: **-\$20,129**
- Net assets, beginning of 2020/2021: **\$241,317**
- Net assets, end of 2020/2021: **\$221,187**

In 2020/2021, the Board approved an annual budget with a projected loss of \$12,615 with the intention of investing in the IDEA Committee, IDEA-related thought leadership, data collection more broadly and continued programming to help communication professionals continue to lead during the global pandemic.

The economic backdrop necessitated a fiscally responsible approach to operations. Still, despite this, the global pandemic had a significant impact on our finances, which included sharp declines in membership and a drop in event revenue as the restrictions around physical gatherings impacted our ability to hold in-person events.

At the end of the year, IABC/Toronto held \$108,225 in designated surplus, designed to serve as a cushion for financially challenging years.