Toward a Definition of Evaluation Within the Canadian Context: Who Knew This Would Be So Difficult?

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Abstract: This article describes the systematic examination and membership consultation process undertaken to define evaluation within the Canadian context. To that end, the article (a) presents the findings from a literature scan and analysis of social media postings, (b) considers the outcomes of the audience discussion during the presentation at the 2013 Canadian Evaluation Society conference, and (c) offers ideas for next steps. Together, the literature scan results, social media analysis, and membership discussion reveal that no single definition currently exists. Further, there are indications that a shared definition would be difficult to achieve within the Canadian evaluation community. Among the potential implications discussed is that a single definition might restrict or oversimplify the current scope of practice, given the wide range of contexts and purposes for evaluation in Canada.

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Defining the scope of practice of a profession is seen as beneficial; a review of such literature within the field of evaluation revealed that among the most impactful outcomes is the collaborative defining process itself. Specifically, the process of developing a shared definition generates a mutual understanding among evaluators and stakeholders about the practices involved in evaluation (Patton, 2008). Although many working definitions of evaluation have emerged within the United States context, given the differing history and practices as evaluators in Canada, we considered whether a Canadian-specific definition might be crucial to differentiate our profession.

One way that evaluators started creating a distinctly Canadian professional identity was through the formation of the Canadian Evaluation Society (CES) in 1981 as a national, not-for-profit, bilingual organization. Although its mission and initiatives continue to evolve, CES has remained the national organization for those interested in advancing the theory and practice in Canada. Its National Council currently consists of 10 chapter representatives as well as a smaller executive. Initiatives aim to actively involve CES members, yet are often supported financially and coordinated by CES National Council members. Among the four key initiatives that remain a focus of the CES are (a) generating guiding resources (e.g., Guidelines for Ethical Conduct initially approved in 1996), (b) creating training courses (e.g., Essential Skills Series initiated in 1999), (c) founding a peer-reviewed journal (the Canadian Journal of Program Evaluation [CJPE] in 1986), and (d) developing a professional designation program (credentialed evaluator implemented in 2009). It is important to note that the first three initiatives have undergone revisions over time.
Some of the impetus for the professional designation program has been attributed to a dialogue related to professionalizing the practice of evaluation within Canada. Specifically, evaluators were questioning their professional identity and expressing a desire to define the nature of their work and to examine the skills and knowledge required to do the work (Borys et al., 2005). As part of the initial work to inform the professional designation program, it was necessary for the CES to identify competencies that credentialed evaluators would be required to demonstrate (see www.evaluationcanada.ca/site.cgi?s=5&ss=11&_lang=EN for more information). Given the changes that have already occurred within the field of evaluation during the past four decades, it is not surprising that the competencies are recognized as a work-in-progress and that a future review is already anticipated. In particular, the role of evaluation within the Canadian context has continued to expand in terms of purpose and environments.

Since 1977, the Government of Canada has had an evaluation policy, and since 2001 the federal evaluation community has been led by the Centre of Excellence for Evaluation (CEE) within the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS). The creation of this policy centre coincided with the release of the 2001 Policy on Evaluation, which shifted the focus of evaluation to managing for results and expanded the scope to include programs, policies, and initiatives within the departments and organizations (http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/cee/about-apropos-eng.asp). The recent version of the policy expanded the scope of evaluation even further to include all direct program spending and “to create a comprehensive and reliable base of evaluation evidence that is used to support policy and program improvement, expenditure management, Cabinet decision making, and public reporting” (Government of Canada, 2009).

In short, the Government of Canada has played an instrumental role in shaping the evaluation function and profession in Canada, particularly since 2001 with the establishment of the CEE and the shift to results-based management. This is not surprising given that a large number of CES members reside in the National Capital Region (see Table 1 for membership information as of December 31, 2013). In addition, the CEE is responsible for activities designed to build capacity and provide guidance with respect to evaluation. These activities include (a) developing guidance documents and tools to support the implementation of the policy within departments as well as to advance evaluation practice, and (b) supporting an increased capacity and competence of evaluation within the Government of Canada by fostering community and capacity development (http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/cee/about-apropos-eng.asp).

Given this history and the important role of the Government of Canada, the CES’s task of identifying the competencies was challenging, involving both an iterative process of drafting and revising the competencies and requiring a great deal of time. This pioneering work was undertaken by CES members tasked by the CES National Council and involved an extensive membership consultation process.
Around the same time that the competencies were being developed, the results of a survey highlighted that the Canadian field of evaluation had not yet acquired an identity of its own even though the field was seen as having matured (Gauthier et al., 2010). The authors characterized maturing as having expanded the contexts in which evaluation was undertaken and having broadened the scope of practice for evaluators. The survey compared the perspectives of 12 evaluation practitioners and observers about the Canadian state of evaluation at two time points (2003 and 2009). Although the professional designation program has played an important role within the Canadian context in distinguishing the profession of evaluation from other professions, it has not provided a succinct definition that could be used by the CES to represent the work of its membership. It was this goal that provided the impetus for the CES National Council to consider undertaking this work.

As members of the CES National Council (2012–2013), two of the authors (Lamarche and Poth) took part in a November 2012 semi-annual face-to-face meeting. It was as part of a larger discussion related to organizational changes to the CES that the 2012–2014 president (Larry Bremner) proposed developing a shared definition of evaluation. To begin this process, he suggested reviewing seven existing definitions in use (see Table 2). He then asked each member of the National Council to mark (using different coloured stickers for each individual) the aspects of each definition that, from their perspective, was important to be part of such a definition. What followed was a lively discussion, and it soon became apparent that while parts of each definition were agreed upon, no one of these seven definitions fully represented the scope of practice of a professional evaluator in the opinion of National Council members.

Table 1. Canadian Evaluation Society Members by Chapter (December 31, 2013).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Number of members</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Capital Commission</td>
<td>475</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alberta and Northwest Territories</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Société québécoise d’évaluation de programmes</td>
<td>187</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>British Columbia and Yukon</td>
<td>152</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nova Scotia</td>
<td>58</td>
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<tr>
<td>Saskatchewan</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newfoundland and Labrador</td>
<td>25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prince Edward Island</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Brunswick</td>
<td>15</td>
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### Table 2. Seven Existing Definitions Examined by National Council Members

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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| Patton (1997)                           | The systematic collection and analysis of information about program activities, characteristics, and outcomes to make judgements about the program, improve program effectiveness, and/or inform decisions about future programming. *Program Evaluation:*  
(1) Involves the systematic collection and analysis of information  
(2) Focuses on a broad range of topics (accessibility, comprehensiveness, Integration, cost, efficiency, effectiveness)  
(3) Is designed for a variety of uses (management, accountability, planning). |
| Fournier (2005)                         | Evaluation is an applied inquiry process for collecting and synthesizing evidence that culminates in conclusions about the state of affairs, value, merit, worth, significance or quality of a program, product, person, or plan. Conclusions made in evaluations encompass both an empirical aspect and a normative aspect. It is the value feature that distinguishes evaluation from other types of inquiry such as basic science research, clinical epidemiology, investigative journalism, or public polling. |
| Yarbrough, Shulha, Hopson, & Caruthers  | The systematic investigation of the quality of programs, projects, subprograms, subprojects, and/or of their components or elements, together or singly for the purposes of decision making, judgements, conclusion, findings, new knowledge, organizational development, and capacity building in response to the needs of identified stakeholders leading to improvement and/or accountability in the users’ program and systems ultimately contributing to organizational or social value. |
| Scriven (1991)                          | Evaluation refers to the process of determining merit, worth, or value of something, or the product of that process. . . . The evaluation process normally involves some identification of relevant standards of merit, worth, or value; some investigation of the performance of evaluands on these standards; some on these standards; and some integration or synthesis of the results to achieve an overall evaluation or set of associated evaluations. |
Source Definition
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Preskill & Torres (1999) Evaluative inquiry is an ongoing process for investigating and understanding critical organizational issues. It is an approach to learning that is fully integrated with an organization’s work practices, and as such, it engenders (a) organization members’ interest and ability in exploring critical issues using evaluation logic, (b) organization members’ improvement in evaluative processes, and (c) the personal and professional growth of individuals within the organization.

Rossi, Lipsey, & Freeman (2004) Program evaluation is the use of social research methods to systematically investigate the effectiveness of social intervention programs. It draws on the techniques and concepts of social science disciplines and is intended to be useful for improving programs and informing social action ameliorating social problems.

The resulting lack of consensus led to two of the authors (Lamarche and Poth) volunteering to explore how the task of developing a shared definition could be commenced. The purpose of this Practice Note is to describe the systematic examination and membership consultation process undertaken to define evaluation within the Canadian context. To that end, the article (a) presents the findings from a literature scan and analysis of social media postings, (b) considers the outcomes of the audience discussion during the presentation at the 2013 CES conference, and (c) offers ideas for next steps.

**METHOD**

The two parts of the study focused on defining evaluation within the Canadian context: first a systematic examination, and then a membership consultation process to discuss the integrated findings from the former.

**Systematic Examination of Definitions**

It was initially anticipated that the systematic examination of current definitions in use within the Canadian context would include three methods: a literature scan, social media postings, and an online survey. The rationale was that each of the methods would target a specific audience: published literature (literature scan), those already involved in evaluation (social media), and users of evaluation (survey). It soon became clear that conducting a valid and reliable survey
would require more time than had been allotted. Thus, a decision was made not to proceed with the survey. The integration of the findings from the literature scan and the social media postings was undertaken following the individual analysis of each. Across each data source, similarities and differences related to the focus of the definitions were sought.

**Literature scan**

A literature scan was conducted with the aim of establishing a link between current definitions and the use of those definitions within the Canadian context. Such a scan, unlike a literature review, broadly surveys the literature but does not evaluate articles for methodological quality (Creswell, 2013). The decision to initially limit our scan to English-language works was not an easy one, given the important evaluation work being done in Quebec and published in French, but it was due to limitations in language expertise and time. A total of 15 articles met the inclusion/exclusion criteria (see Figure 1). The process involved a search using the following key words: “program evaluation” AND “Canada” OR “Canadian” AND “definition” OR “implementation” or “interpretation” across six education, psychology, and science databases (ProQuest, EBSCOhost, Web of Knowledge, ERIC, PsycINFO, Scopus, and Medline). This yielded 1,415 articles, which was further narrowed to 78 articles using the following parameters: removing duplicates; scholarly peer-reviewed; and full-text English articles published between January 2008 and June 2013. Each of these articles was subsequently searched to find evidence of use of a definition for evaluation. Finally, to ensure that no pertinent articles had been missed by the key word search, a manual search of CJPE was conducted and the findings summarized in a table.

**Social Media Posting**

Three avenues of social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, and Facebook) were used to access the perspectives of evaluators, researchers, and other practitioners of evaluation related to “How do you define evaluation?” Such a method, unlike a literature scan, has the potential to produce user-generated content through unstructured and interactive dialogue. A total of three unique responses were generated by a Twitter posting using three hashtags: #CES, #eval, and #evaluation, 50 unique responses from 37 respondents were posted on LinkedIn, and one response was received through an author’s (Lamarche) Facebook page.

An inductive analysis approach was used across all responses independently by two of the authors (Lamarache and Chisamore) to generate 20 unique codes. A graphic was created using Wordle to visually represent the frequency of each code. The authors were then guided by a constant comparison method (Charmaz, 2006) in their discussions of their coding and resolutions of differences. The code list was finalized to include 10 codes containing more than two examples, those with fewer were grouped together into an “other” category, and a second graphic was created using Wordle.
Membership Consultation Process

A panel presentation involving the integrated findings from the systematic examination of the definitions was undertaken by the authors at the 2013 Canadian Evaluation Society Conference in Toronto, Ontario. The format of the presentation was such that the audience of approximately 50 attendees was invited to interact at any time during the 90 minutes allotted. To capture the discussion, notes were taken by one of the authors during the presentation; directly follow-
ing the presentation, the four presenters debriefed and summarized what they had each heard.

**FINDINGS & DISCUSSION**

**Systematic Examination of Definitions**

Together the results from the literature scan and analysis of the social media postings yielded two important findings related to how evaluation is currently being defined within the Canadian context: (a) There is little evidence of the use of definitions within the literature; and (b) When a definition is attempted, the focus is on describing various aspects of the evaluation process itself. First, very few articles reviewed provided definitions of evaluation, the sole exception being policy documents from the Canadian government. The Treasury Board Policy on Evaluation defines evaluation as the “systematic collection and analysis of evidence on the outcomes of programs to make judgments about their relevance, performance, and alternative ways to deliver them or to achieve the same results” (Government of Canada, 2009, Section 3.1). Articles written about federally mandated evaluations refer mostly to the use of a summative approach to evaluation characterized by being systematic and judgement-oriented. It may not be surprising that the government policy documents provide a definition, but it is noteworthy that the definition is very narrow and representative of a traditional view of evaluation similar to that of Scriven (1991) in terms of purpose for making judgements. As a result, it does not reflect the more contemporary view of evaluation as being useful for formative and developmental purposes (Alkin, 2011; Patton, 1997).

The focus on a summative approach is not found when we look to the aspects of the evaluation process itself that emerged across both the literature scan and social media postings. Although a common focus on purpose exists, the literature found was more likely to refer to the evaluation approach and type (see Table 3) whereas the social media postings refer to the outcomes. For example, whereas Kenny, Van Neste-Kenny, Park, Burton, and Maiers (2009) refer to formative, Langlois, Blanchet-Cohen, and Beer, (2013) wrote from an action research study perspective about five practices for developmental evaluators, and Poth, Pinto, and Howery (2011) referenced Patton (2011) in an account of the challenges encountered during a developmental evaluation. Among the approaches found in the literature were utilization-focused, theory-driven, and participatory/collaborative. For example, specific to utilization-focused approach was Amo & Cousins’s (2008) theoretical paper, which discussed the parallels between evaluation utilization and knowledge utilization and their contributions to theory and practice in the field. Some of the literature focused on defining evaluation methods used (see Table 4). Rowan, Labrecque, Kristjansson, and Dahrouge (2009) and Lahey and Nielsen (2013) discussed differentiating evaluation methods from a theoretical standpoint, while Caulkins (2010) and Yates et al. (2011) examined case study designs. Others focused on examples of methods used, such as web-based
The most common code in the social media postings was related to evaluation as useful for judging the quality, value, merit, or significance of an intervention \((n = 13)\), followed by learning \((n = 8)\), which was followed by a three-way tie \((n = 7\) for each) of determining the extent to which an intervention has achieved its results, impact of an intervention, and informing decisions.

It is interesting to note in Figure 2 the differences between the two graphics used to represent the code frequency of the social media postings. Whereas the graphic on the left represents all the codes regardless of frequency, the graphic on the right represents all the codes that have more than two examples with all the codes with fewer than two examples categorized as “other” (e.g., measuring if an intervention is doing what it is supposed to; making observations; testing assumptions and hypotheses; unexpected outcomes; extent to which the program is on the right path). Considering distribution in the graphic on the left, the top responses were “judgement” \((n = 13)\); learning \((n = 8)\); determining extent to which outcomes are achieved or impact it has had \((n = 7)\); systematic,

<table>
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<th>Table 3. Examples of Literature Reviewed Related to Purposes</th>
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<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
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<td>Evaluation approach</td>
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<th>Table 4. Examples of Literature Reviewed Related to Methods</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Differentiating</td>
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<tr>
<td>Examples of designs</td>
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<td>Examples of methods</td>
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(Sundar, Kasprzak, Halsall, & Woltman, 2010) or big data sets (Leatherdale, 2012).
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robust process gathering, analysis, and reporting \((n = 7)\); and informing decisions \((n = 7)\). Although the graphic on the right also clearly identifies the most common response as “judgement” \((n = 13)\), by grouping the many low response items into the “other” category, this suddenly becomes the second most common response category \((n = 10)\). These findings indicate the diversity of responses and may demonstrate the challenges for identifying a common definition of evaluation.

A lesser focus emerged from the integration of the systematic examination of definitions related to distinguishing evaluation from other designs and methods, whereas a common code from the analysis of the social media postings was that evaluation was a systematic, robust process of gathering, analysis, and reporting \((n = 7)\). Although both articles differentiated evaluation methods from a theoretical standpoint using Levin-Rosalis (2003)’s idea that evaluation focuses on naturally occurring groups and event, Rowan et al. (2009) focused on randomly controlled trials whereas Lahey & Nielsen (2013) focused on monitoring and results-based management. This distinction is not helpful because designs such as randomly controlled trials are used with some evaluation processes. The same can be said for empirical articles that reported examples of evaluations using case study designs and web-based and big data sets as methods (see Table 4).

The integrated findings suggest that the literature and social media responses often reflected a variety of aspects of the evaluation process that must be considered rather than providing an evaluation definition. The lack of a definition may be attributed, in part, to two causes. The first cause is the lack of funding within evaluation contracts for disseminating activities beyond the project client to include the wider practitioner audience through more public means—for example, published literature or conference presentations. Indeed, Szanyi, Azzam, and Galen (2012) found that very little research exists on evaluations and what evaluation approaches are being used in the Canadian community. The second cause may be the difficulty associated with this task for a national evaluation organization. Indeed, a web-based search of 12 randomly selected evaluation society websites around the world revealed that not one had posted a definition.
This was especially noteworthy given that the list included not only country-specific societies but societies that spanned large geographical areas, for example, the European Evaluation Society, the Australasian Evaluation Society, and the African Evaluation Association.

Further examination of 18 of the 21 evaluation societies listed as part of the United Nations Evaluation Group (NEPAD Independent Evaluation Group were unavailable, the Brazilian website was in Portuguese, and the German was in German), some of which are included in the original 12 selected, revealed that only a single website provided a set definition of Evaluation: Global HIV M&E Information, which provided Patton’s 1997 definition. Instead of a definition, many of the societies posted evaluation standards and codes of ethics, while others did not list anything related to evaluation at all. It seems that the target audiences of these websites is not the layperson seeking an introduction to evaluation, but someone with existing knowledge about the field. Interestingly, France’s evaluation website featured a video, *A quoi sert l’évaluation de politiques publiques?* (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gE1R6MBxES4), which features French evaluators who work in the public policy sector giving their own definitions of evaluation. The idea of a video for the layperson explaining how different evaluators define evaluation is one that may serve to inform and better define the role of evaluators in the eyes of the general public. While most of the societies did not include a definition, others attempted to establish some criteria.

**Membership Consultation Process**

A lively discussion occurred among the diverse attendees of the conference panel presentation. As audience members commented on the integrated findings, they were invited to disclose their role within the field of evaluation, and the notes revealed representation of evaluators who worked as independent consultants and academics, as well as for government (federal and provincial) and not-for-profits. This process confirmed our findings that no one definition emerged from our systematic examination. As well, comments from audience members suggested an acceptance within the Canadian evaluation community that consensus on one definition would be difficult to achieve and might restrict or oversimplify our scope of practice, given the wide range of contexts and purposes for evaluation in Canada. These findings align with one of the conclusions from the Gauthier et al. (2010) study that the collective definition of the field of evaluation lacks clarity as well as reflects the more recent calls for a clear definition of evaluation (Szanyi, Azzam, & Galen, 2012).

In many ways, that the audience viewed the need to move beyond developing a definition is encouraging given that diversity is noted in the competencies for Canadian evaluation practice. This diversity is particularly seen in the competency domain of situational practice, which focuses on the application of evaluative thinking in analyzing and attending to the unique interests, issues, and contextual circumstances in which evaluation skills are being applied. These ideas align with those 12 evaluation practitioners who took stock of the state of
program evaluation in Canada based on their personal experience and called for action not to create a unique definition, but for the CES to increase its advocacy efforts. Specifically:

[A]dvocacy means talking about evaluation, its unique perspective, and its role in public (and private, and nonprofit) sector management; it means raising the profile of evaluation when our trade could contribute; it means identifying successes and showing that evaluators can make a difference. (Gauthier et al., 2010, pp. 28–32)

**IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS**

It is clear that there is a lack of consensus not only on a definition; more importantly, the Canadian evaluation community does not recognize a pressing need for developing a shared definition of evaluation. In short, it might be stated that a definition is currently neither necessary nor desirable. Rather than developing a definition, perhaps a greater contribution to evaluation practice would be to embrace the multifaceted nature of evaluation and expertise of evaluators by describing the continuum of purposes, approaches, activities, and contexts in use within the Canadian evaluation context. This would provide the tools to talk about the strength of the breadth of the evaluation function and its ability to respond to the needs of various organizations and truly make a difference. In so doing, we might consider that we have successfully created a shared proxy definition, which celebrates and encourages diversity and innovation within the field of evaluation. A proxy is used within the field of statistics to describe a variable that is used to measure an unobservable quantity of interest. Although a proxy variable is not a direct measure of the desired quantity, a good proxy variable is strongly related to the unobserved variable of interest. Proxy variables are extremely important to and frequently used in the social sciences because of the difficulty or impossibility of obtaining measures of the quantities of interest. (Lewis-Beck, Bryman, & Liao, 2004, p. 135)

Using a proxy definition is perhaps a strength because the definition can continue to evolve in response to innovation to describe what evaluators do; when, how, and why they do it; and to engage the users of evaluation in a better understanding of our profession. All this while being inclusive of the evaluation community may be much more relevant to current needs.

At a minimum, we forward the need for CES to take into consideration some potential negative consequences to the profession if a definition continues to be sought; for example, narrowing the focus and losing the diversity inherent in evaluation highlighted by our findings. Yet it should also be noted that our findings highlighting the multifaceted nature of evaluation in the literature and perspective of the membership contrast starkly with the narrow government definition. Further, it gives us the opportunity to embrace the diversity that appears to currently exist and to sustain it in the future.
It should be noted that while our study points to important implications for how we go forward, our study was limited by our methods; specifically, the scope of our literature scan, the response rates to our social media postings, and membership consultation process to those that attended our presentation. Further research is recommended to address the limitations highlighted by replicating this study for greater generalization with (a) a more complete literature search that includes French-language literature as well as literature reflective of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit groups and the grey literature; (b) a social media blitz across an increased number of avenues and more representative of multiple perspectives (e.g., evaluation users); and (c) a membership consultation process that provides greater opportunities to participate.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Cheryl Poth is an associate professor at the University of Alberta. In this role she teaches the doctoral-level program evaluation course, conducts research in the area of evaluation use and developmental evaluation, and supervises graduate students. She is an active member on committees associated with the Canadian and American Evaluation Associations (CES and AEA) and a regular contributor to their annual conferences and publications. Among several professional memberships, she holds a CES “credentialed evaluator” designation. Her research interests include evaluation use with particular emphasis on developmental and participatory.

Mary Kay Lamarche, CE, is the Vice President of the Canadian Evaluation Society (2013–2014). She has been involved with evaluation, performance measurement, and strategic/results-based planning in both the public and private sectors for over 13 years. In October 2008, Mary Kay was part of the first cohort graduating from the Graduate Certificate in Program Evaluation at the University of Ottawa. She is presently working toward a Master of Arts in Public Ethics at Saint Paul University. In recent years, she was also a member of the CES-National Capital Chapter (CES-NCC) Board where she served as this chapter’s representative on the CES National Council and also sat as Chair of the Governance and Process Committee on CES National. In 2003, 2004, 2008, and 2009, Mary Kay assisted with the organization of the annual CES Student Evaluation Case Competition.

Alvin Yapp works as a part-time research/evaluation coordinator at Alberta Health Services while pursuing an evaluation-focused Master of Education degree. An undergraduate internship opportunity with an educational evaluation unit sparked an enduring interest in evaluation. Having worked in evaluation projects in health and education (in some in-
stances, health education), Alvin gained an appreciation for the importance of the organizational context in which evaluation takes place. More recently, he has been exploring the role of Big Data in evaluation. His areas of interest include big data analytics, instructional technology, and health evaluation.

Erin Sulla is currently pursuing her doctorate in School and Clinical Child Psychology at the University of Alberta. She works part-time as a teacher’s assistant for an undergraduate classroom assessment course in the preservice teacher education program. Her interest in evaluation was activated during her Master’s studies, where she completed a formative evaluation for her thesis topic. She examined the effects of a reverse-integration program designed to promote social and emotional development in typically developing children after spending a year in a special education classroom. Her current areas of interest include school-based interventions, protective factors for children with attention deficit/hyperactivity disorder, and examining positive educational experiences.

Cairine Chisamore has held managerial positions with various federal government organizations for the past 10 years. She is a credentialed evaluator, holds a degree in Administration from Athabasca University, and was a graduating member of the inaugural cohort of the Graduate Diploma in Public Policy and Program Evaluation offered by Carleton University. Ms. Chisamore came to the field of evaluation following a federal career in financial management, with experience in performance reporting, financial and corporate planning, and capacity building and development. Upon joining the federal evaluation community, she built on her capacity building experience to become involved in coaching and staffing initiatives for evaluators.