

ANNUAL REPORT 2025- 2026



Canadian Public
Relations Society

Manitoba Society



www.cprs.mb.ca



admin@cprs.mb.ca



CPRS Manitoba

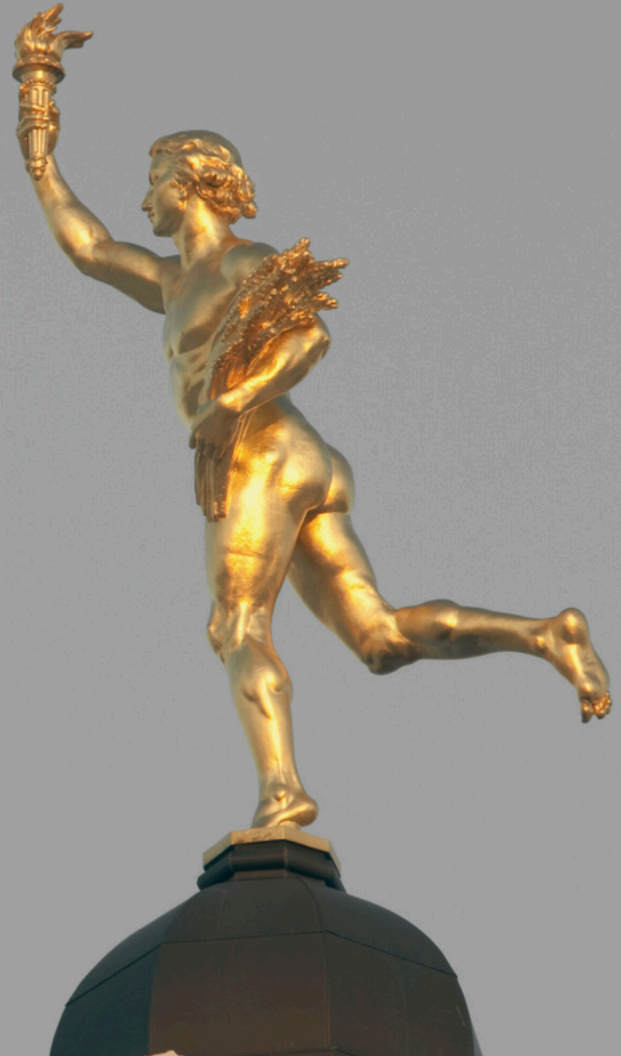


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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

WELCOME.

We are pleased to present our 2025–2026 annual report, which highlights our key achievements, financial performance, and notable events throughout the year.

This report reflects our dedication to the public relations and communications profession and its members, as well as our commitment to transparency and accountability.

We invite you to explore the insights shared within as we reflect on our accomplishments and look forward to another exciting year ahead.

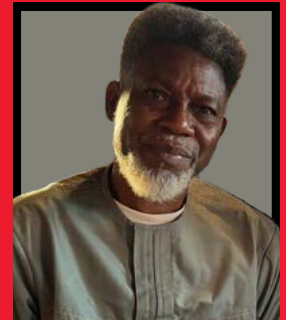
L-R: JENNIFER PAWLUK, APR,
LINDSAY MACKENZIE, APR,
MICHELLE FONTANILLA,



L-R: ERIN GIROURD, APR,
GEORGIA DALKE,
HILARY FRIESEN, APR



L-R: GINA BORKOFSKI, APR,
SHARMON LUCHUCK,
SANYA ONAYOADE



L-R: CHINYERE OJI,
MONIQUE CHENIER, APR



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

My first term as President of Canadian Public Relations Society of Manitoba was marked by momentum, growth, and renewed energy for our organization.

While reflecting on where we found ourselves at this time last year and where we wanted to go next as a local society, one theme emerged consistently from volunteer feedback: a shared goal to continue evolving in ways that strengthen the member experience.

We considered opportunities to further engage students and emerging professionals. We asked ourselves how to create stronger pathways for long-term involvement from volunteers with greater collaboration across portfolios, recognizing that our strongest outcomes are achieved when we work together. We identified communications as an important strategic enabler, whereby a broader focus extends beyond promoting events and initiatives to include storytelling, community building, and demonstrating the value and impact of our work.

Throughout my second term as President, there was clear enthusiasm for supporting recruitment, retention, and meaningful participation at every stage of a member's career. By incorporating learning into networking and engagement activities, we create richer experiences that strengthen both professional connections and our sense of community. This was a common refrain at every meeting of Presidents' Council hosted throughout 2025–2026 by CPRS President Jane Antoniak, APR.

Published last fall, the *2025 State of Public Relations in Canada Report* facilitated important peer conversations around identity, trust, ethics, artificial intelligence, and more. We were delighted to host one of five national roadshow events at ChangeMakers in Winnipeg on October 29, 2025. That same week, we participated in the inaugural CPRS Week challenge, and Manitoba was honoured to be recognized as the most highly engaged local society in terms of member outreach during that week.

As noted in the January 22, 2026 issue of *Communiqué*, CPRS National's e-newsletter: "(Manitoba's) success in recruiting new members, including those who joined the society in October, reflects their dedication to growing and strengthening the communications community."

After a unanimous decision to host a late winter networking event and panel discussion at no cost to students, registration was on par with pre-pandemic attendance records. A continued focus of CPRS Manitoba throughout 2026–2027 will be more meaningful engagement of student liaisons as observers serving alongside our board of directors, as well as higher retention of student members as emerging practitioners.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This will require meaningful consultation, strengthened partnerships within RRC Polytech's Creative Communications program and the strategic communications and marketing specialization at UWinnipeg PACE, and enrichment of emerging practitioner memberships in terms of intrinsic value.



I was delighted to emcee the 2026 Manitoba Communicators of the Year (MCOY) Awards celebration evening at Assiniboine Park's Qualico Family Centre in late April. Special thanks to Mary Agnes Welch and Probe Research for their continued support of CPRS Manitoba's signature event. A cocktail reception, fireside chat, and heartfelt recognition of community achievements is an itinerary with which we have consistently received positive feedback over the past three years. However, given CPRS Manitoba's membership and corresponding budgetary

resources, additional revenue will be essential to sustaining such a large-scale initiative year over year. Moving forward, considerations must be made to optimize MCOY Awards planning for cost recovery, which will likely involve revising ticket prices, seeking a more affordable venue, and offering a variety of sponsorship opportunities.

I am grateful to have spent a few days in picturesque St. Andrews, New Brunswick at the 2026 CPRS National Conference, where I reconnected with old friends, strengthened acquaintances through intentional connection, and expanded my coast-to-coast peer network, learning alongside such a talented and generous community of communications professionals. Our conversations reinforced the importance of strategic communication, organizational listening, and the role our profession plays in helping organizations navigate change with clarity and trust.



CREDITS: THE CANADIAN PRESS & DRÉ DEBATTISTA (TOP LEFT)

I felt a renewed sense of purpose that comes from gathering with colleagues who care deeply about our craft and the stakeholders we serve.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

I returned home to Manitoba with new ideas, revitalized energy, and a deeper appreciation for a community that continues to lead with curiosity, professionalism, and a willingness to learn, share, and grow together. In writing this report, I found myself reflecting on the value of being part of a profession (and a professional society) strengthened by connection, collaboration, and collective wisdom. Amongst a community committed to helping one another succeed is a powerful reminder that some of our best learning still happens when we come together, challenge one another's thinking, and exchange perspectives.

Thank you to Chinyere Oji, 2025–2026 Lead Student Liaison, UWinnipeg PACE, as well as Lindsay MacKenzie, APR, XMF, Vice President, who served as a member of our board of directors from 2022 to 2026, for their support of CPRS Manitoba. Finally, a warm welcome to our newest director, Allison Dalke. My sincere appreciation for our magnificent volunteers!

"Anyone who undertakes the work of leadership needs to focus on doing good, on caring for people, and on thinking creatively to mobilize people in a process of action, learning, and change."

—Kim B. Clark, Jonathan R. Clark & Erin E. Clark

JENNIFER PAWLUK, APR
President, CPRS Manitoba Board of Directors



VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MANITOBA COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR (MCOY) & TECHNOLOGY PORTFOLIO

To the Members of CPRS Manitoba,

It has been an absolute privilege to serve on the Board of Directors. As I step down this year to begin my PhD studies in the fall, I am incredibly grateful for the collaboration, dedication, and shared passion for excellence in public relations that defines our community.

Portfolio Accomplishments & Modernization

Over my tenure, my dual focus has been on revitalizing our flagship recognition program and modernizing our organizational infrastructure.

- **Three Seasons of MCOY:** Following the disruption of the pandemic, I successfully led the relaunch of the Manitoba Communicator of the Year (MCOY) Awards, guiding the program through three successful seasons of celebrating local storytelling and professional excellence.
- **Technology Migration:** To streamline internal operations, I migrated our technology architecture to Google Workspace. This transition has permanently reduced our annual information technology costs.
- **Design & Collaboration:** I secured a teams subscription to Canva. Together, these digital tools have drastically improved volunteer board collaboration, eliminated data silos, and preserved institutional memory through better documentation.

MCOY 2026: Performance & Strategic Reflections

The 2026 MCOY campaign brought clear challenges that provide a stark blueprint for the incoming board. Our recent Eventbrite data shows a total of 60 tickets sold for this season's culminating event, yielding \$2,170.00 in net sales.

Sponsorship & Ticket Sales

Ticket and sponsorship revenues were lower this year due to the loss of key partnerships with the McMaster Communication Management Program, Leger, and RRC Polytech. Two of these are academic institutions currently facing severe institutional funding challenges. To mitigate this moving forward, we must diversify our revenue base. I recommend aggressively bolstering ticket sales within local PR and creative agencies. Furthermore, the board should host targeted networking events to forge stronger, mutually beneficial relationships with Winnipeg's broader business community.

VICE PRESIDENT'S REPORT

MANITOBA COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR (MCOY) & TECHNOLOGY PORTFOLIO

Award Submissions

Despite an early campaign launch in November 2025, award submissions were significantly lower than anticipated. The program received just 3 submissions, down from 13 in 2025. While three of our six categories successfully produced award winners, there was zero competition within those categories. The incoming portfolio chair should deploy a more aggressive, sustained marketing campaign over a lengthier period to actively solicit and drive nominations.

A Professional Caution: Upholding Democratic Scrutiny

As communicators, we operate in an era where public trust in institutions is under unprecedented scrutiny. I want to close my final report with a vital caution to our membership regarding the CPRS Code of Professional Standards.

Lately, there is a growing, troubling trend of practitioners counselling executives and clients to decline comments to journalists or bypass newsrooms entirely, opting instead to publish controlled narratives via social media, blogs, and corporate websites. We must remember that our ultimate obligation is to support the core tenets of democracy. Democracy invites robust public scrutiny of leadership and decision-making, and professional journalists are a critical conduit to that system of governance.

Bypassing the press erodes long-term institutional credibility. It is rarely easy to speak truth to executive power, but as PR professionals, we must hold that difficult, delicate line to preserve trust with our publics and maintain the absolute integrity of our practice.

Thank you all for an incredible journey. I look forward to watching CPRS Manitoba thrive from academia.

Respectfully submitted,

LINDSAY MACKENZIE, MCM, APR, XMF

Vice President

CPRS Manitoba Board of Directors





AI, PUBLIC TRUST, AND THE FUTURE OF COMMUNICATION MANAGEMENT IN MANITOBA



PRINCIPAL SPONSOR: PROBE RESEARCH
PHOTOGRAPHY BY: DRÉ DEBATTISTA

2026 MCOY Award Winners



COMMUNICATOR OF THE YEAR: KATHRYN LEBLANC



OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION - ENGAGEMENT:
DOCTORS MANITOBA



EMERGING COMMUNICATIONS LEADER:
MARISSA NAYLOR

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Looking back on the past year as Secretary, I'm grateful for the opportunity to support the board and contribute to the work of the organization. While much of my role happened behind the scenes, it was a rewarding experience to ensure that the board's operations run smoothly through the preparation of the meeting minutes package and agenda.

In addition to my responsibilities as Secretary, I had the opportunity to contribute to the student event working group. Collaborating with fellow board members to support student engagement initiatives was a highlight of the year, a full-circle moment for myself as I was invited to participate on the panel to share my insight and experience as an emerging practitioner.

As my term as Secretary comes to an end, I'm excited to be stepping into the role of Treasurer. I look forward to taking on new challenges and continuing to contribute to the board's work in a different capacity.

Thank you to everyone who helped make this a positive and productive year. I'm looking forward to what the coming year will bring.

MICHELLE FONTANILLA
Secretary, CPRS Manitoba Board of Directors



COMMUNICATIONS REPORT

The 2025–2026 year for the Communications team was focused on engaging current and prospective members in the initiatives of CPRS Manitoba.

We worked closely with the Member Experience & Events team to highlight our 25/26 events, which included the Fall Networking Night, the November Networking Night, the Student Networking Event, and the 2026 Manitoba Communicators of the Year (MCOY) Awards.

We partnered with Accreditation to develop campaigns designed to grow awareness of the Accredited in Public Relations (APR) designation and Public Relations Knowledge (PRK) exam.

We also shared information about national initiatives such as the inaugural CPRS Week, the 2025 State of Public Relations Report, the 2026 CPRS National Conference, and the 2026 CPRS National Awards of Excellence.

Following a review of our social media platforms, we stepped away from X at the beginning of the year to concentrate our efforts on LinkedIn and Facebook. We continued to see growth on LinkedIn over the past year, with an increase of 87 followers over the previous year. Engagement on Facebook remained steady with minimal growth over the past year.

In the coming year, we have the opportunity for further analysis on our email marketing platform and website to better measure growth and inform our content strategy. We can gather additional testimonials to better support our campaigns. We can also explore changes to bring the website in line with Manitoba accessibility standards.

We are grateful for the ongoing support and collaboration of the board of directors as well as the leadership of the President and look forward to the coming year.

ERIN GIROUARD, APR

Communications Chair, CPRS Manitoba Board of Directors



ACCREDITATION REPORT

It has been a privilege to join the CPRS Manitoba Board this year as Accreditation Chair.

Accreditation continues to play an important role in advancing professional standards and recognizing excellence within the communications profession. As communicators continue to grapple with reduced trust in public institutions, increased misinformation, and how to use AI productively and ethically, our members' commitment to accreditation, professional standards, and ethics is more important than ever.

This year, one Manitoba candidate successfully achieved Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) — Jay Makwana. Congratulations to Jay on this significant professional accomplishment and commitment to excellence in public relations practice. Although Jay now resides in Ontario, we wish him continued success in his career.

In the coming year, Erin Girouard, APR will assume the role of Accreditation Chair. I look forward to continuing to support Erin and the board in promoting accreditation and professional development within CPRS Manitoba.



PHOTO CREDIT: DRÉ DEBATTISTA
JENNIFER PAWLUK PRESENTING HILARY FRIESEN A TOKEN OF HER
APPRECIATION FOR HER CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MCOY AWARDS

HILARY FRIESEN, APR
Accreditation Chair, CPRS Manitoba Board of Directors

ACCREDITED CPRS MANITOBA MEMBERS AS OF APRIL 30, 2026

TERRY ASELTINE, APR, FCPRS, LM
BRANDON BOONE, APR
GINA BORKOFSKI, APR
DEBORAH BOWERS, APR
MONIQUE CHENIER, APR
HILARY FRIESEN, APR
ERIN GIROUARD, APR
DAVID HULTIN, APR
MARLENE KLASSEN, APR, LM
CONOR LLOYD, APR
LINDSAY MACKENZIE, APR, MCM, XMF
JAY MAKWANA, APR
T. KENT MORGAN, APR, LM
JENNIFER PAWLUK, APR
PAM SIMMONS, APR, CFRE
JASON SMALL, APR
ESTELLE SURES, APR, LM

PHOTO CREDIT: THE CANADIAN PRESS
JAY MAKWANA, CENTRE, ACCEPTS HIS APR CERTIFICATE



MEMBER EXPERIENCE & EVENTS REPORT

Introduction

The 2025–26 year for the Events & Membership portfolio continued the strategic focus on prioritizing in-person networking and fostering a sense of community among CPRS Manitoba members, students, and the broader communications industry. Our goal this year was to provide welcoming networking spaces for peer-to-peer engagement and professional relationship building.

Achievements

Throughout the year, CPRS Manitoba hosted three networking events:

| Event | Date & Venue | Overview | Ticket Sales | Ticket Price | Financials |
|-----------------------------|--|---|--|---------------------------------|---|
| Fall Networking Gathering | Wed, Sep 24, 2025 Brazen Hall | Seasonal kick-off networking event | Members: 12 Non-Members: 6 Students: 5 Total checked in: 22 | M: \$10 N-M: \$15 S: \$5 | Gross Sales: \$282.77 Expenses: \$305.74 |
| Winter Networking Gathering | Wed, Nov 26, 2025 Low Life Barrel House | Building momentum networking event | Members: 9 Non-Members: 3 Students: 1 Total checked in: 9 | M: \$10 N-M: \$15 S: \$5 | Gross Sales: \$166.41 Expenses: \$163.97 |
| *Student Networking Event | Thu, Mar 12, 2026 U of W Buhler Centre | Student-focused professional development and networking | Members: 7 Non-Members: 1 Students: 34 Total checked in: 24 | M: \$10 N-M: \$15 S: Free | Gross Sales: \$85 Expenses: \$486.72 |

* Student Networking Event included a panel of industry professionals:

- **Kathryn McBurney:** Vice President, Marketing & Communications, Children's Hospital Foundation
- **Julie Dooley:** Interim Manager of Corporate Communications, City of Winnipeg
- **Michelle Fontanilla:** Communications Assistant, The College of Physicians and Surgeons of Manitoba

Summary

The fall and winter networking gatherings provided valuable opportunities to foster professional community, strengthen member connections, and increase awareness of CPRS Manitoba within the communications sector.

The student event represented a valuable investment in future membership growth by strengthening connections with emerging communications professionals and increasing awareness of CPRS among students.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE & EVENTS REPORT

Acknowledgments

Success in this portfolio is a collaborative effort, and I would like to thank:

- Sharmon Luchuck for her leadership and coordination for the November networking gathering.
- Chinyere Oji for her leadership and coordination of the March student event.
- Sanya Onayoade for his insights, as well as steadfast support and participation in events.
- Erin Girouard, APR, and Georgia Dalke for their communications and design expertise that promoted events and drove engagement.
- Jennifer Pawluk, APR for her leadership and outreach efforts.
- All board members for their support and attendance at events.

Conclusion and Future Outlook

The 2025–2026 program year successfully built upon the "rebuilding" phase of the previous year by maintaining a schedule of in-person opportunities.

- **Community Building:** Future events will continue to focus on bringing Manitoba's communications community together through networking and professional connection.
- **Financial Sustainability:** We will continue working toward events that break even financially while still providing a positive experience for attendees.
- **Student Engagement:** We will continue offering a student-focused event to connect with future communications professionals, introduce students to CPRS Manitoba, and encourage future membership.
- **Venue Selection:** Accessibility, central location, and easy parking will continue to guide venue selection. Based on positive feedback, venues such as Brazen Hall and Low Life Barrel House may be used again for future networking events.

Thank you to the board and our members for another year of meaningful connection.



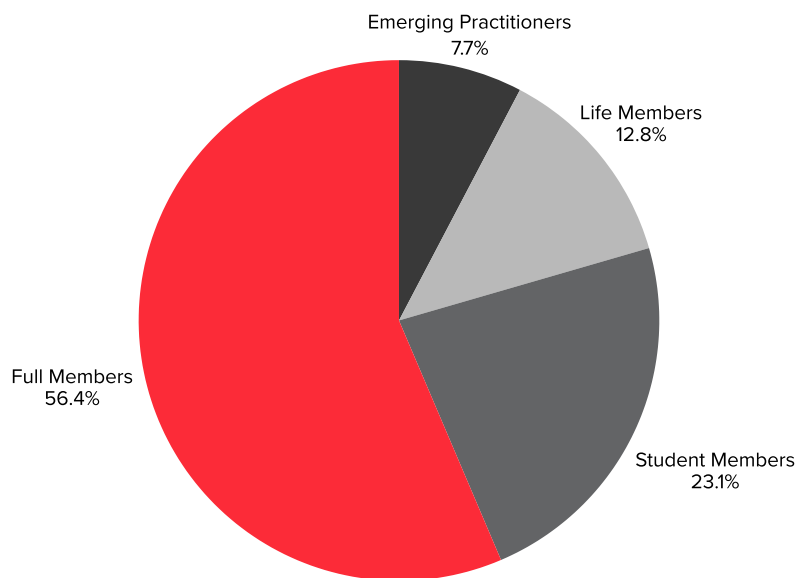
GINA BORKOFSKI, APR
Events Chair, CPRS Manitoba Board of Directors

MEMBER EXPERIENCE & EVENTS REPORT

Throughout 2025–2026, CPRS Manitoba membership decreased by 16 members compared to last year. As of May 1, 2026, membership sits at 39 members, composed of the following: three emerging practitioners, five life members, 22 full members, and nine student members.

These numbers show a significant drop in student memberships, and so more work needs to be done to engage students as emerging practitioners before their memberships and student emails lapse. Tactics such as personalized email outreach, student liaisons as ambassadors, and a student networking event will attempt to retain more student members as emerging practitioners. This year saw emerging practitioners increase by one and full memberships decrease by six, some of which may be attributed to missed renewal deadlines at the time of this report.

2025–2026 CPRS Manitoba Membership at April 30, 2026

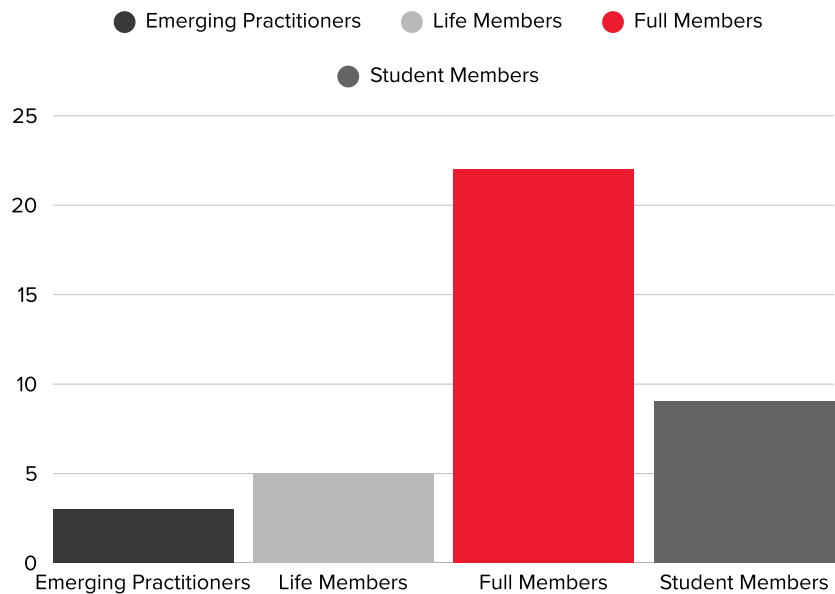


The three areas of focus for CPRS Manitoba membership growth are as follows:

1. Conversion of student members to emerging practitioners.
2. Retention of full members year over year.
3. Strategic outreach and engagement of individuals as well as organizations.

MEMBER EXPERIENCE & EVENTS REPORT

2025–2026 CPRS Manitoba Membership Demographics at April 30, 2026



Our Chapter President, Jennifer Pawluk, APR, actively engaged students from Red River College Polytechnic's Creative Communications Program and The University of Winnipeg PACE's Strategic Communications & Digital Marketing Diploma program. Students were invited to and actively involved in various chapter activities, namely the student networking event organized by UWinnipeg PACE Lead Student Liaison, Chinyere Oji. Chinyere successfully engaged UWinnipeg PACE and RRC Polytech students with fresh ideas and unique perspectives.

Email templates were created to engage soon-to-lapse and renewing student members and for lapsed and soon-to-lapse full members.

Congratulations to Lindsay Mackenzie, APR and the 2026 Manitoba Communicators of the Year (MCOY) Awards committee on a successful event. And bravo to the recipients of the 2026 Manitoba Communicators of the Year (MCOY) Awards: Doctors Manitoba, Marissa Naylor, and Katheryn LeBlanc.

Looking forward to 2026–2027, as the Member Experience & Events team will establish a communication plan aimed at attracting new members, enhancing renewals, and building engagement.

SHARMON LUCHUCK
Membership Chair, CPRS Manitoba Board of Directors



EVENTS AT-A-GLANCE



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

YEAR-END APRIL 30, 2026

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|
| <u>Membership Dues</u> | \$ 2,613.12 |
| CPRS National | \$ 2,613.12 |
| | |
| <u>Events & PD</u> | \$ 6,956.90 |
| 2025 MCOY Reception | \$ 6,496.90 |
| September Networking Event | \$ 235.00 |
| November Networking Event | \$ 140.00 |
| March Networking Event | \$ 85.00 |
| | |
| REVENUE | \$ 9,570.02 |
| | |
| <u>Operating Expenses</u> | \$ 2,644.28 |
| Outreach and Engagement | \$ 375.00 |
| Business Supplies, Fees & Licensing | \$ 990.63 |
| Insurance | \$ 1,278.65 |
| | |
| <u>Events</u> | \$ 9,235.39 |
| 2025 MCOY Reception | \$ 6,478.96 |
| September Networking Event | \$ 305.74 |
| November Networking Event | \$ 163.97 |
| March Networking Event | \$ 486.72 |
| 2026 MCOY Reception | \$ 1,800.00 |
| | |
| <u>Awards and Scholarships</u> | \$ 1,000.00 |
| CPRS Student of the Year | \$ 500.00 |
| RRC Scholarship | \$ 500.00 |
| | |
| EXPENSES | \$ 12,879.67 |
| | |
| NET INCOME | \$ (3,309.65) |

2026-2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Past President — Monique Chenier, APR (Honourary)

President — Jennifer Pawluk, APR

Vice President — VACANT

Secretary — Hilary Friesen, APR

Treasurer — Michelle Fontanilla

Accreditation — Erin Girouard, APR

Communications — Georgia Dalke and Allison Dalke

Member Experience & Events — Gina Borkofski, APR, Sharmon Luchuck & Sanya Onayoade

Lead Student Liaison, UWinnipeg PACE — TBA Fall 2026 (Observer)

Lead Student Liaison, RRC Polytech — TBA Fall 2026 (Observer)



PHOTO CREDIT: DRÉ DEBATTISTA

FRONT: ERIN GIROUARD, MICHELLE FONTANILLA, JENNIFER PAWLUK, STEPHANIE FUNG (CPRS NATIONAL)

BACK: HILARY FRIESEN, GINA BOROFSKI, GEORGIA DALKE



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admin@cprs.mb.ca



CPRS Manitoba