

Contemporary Accounting Research **Editor's Report for January 1 to December 31, 2019**

Overview of 2019

Contemporary Accounting Research (CAR) enjoyed continued strong submission volume in 2019, with regular submissions exceeding 500 manuscripts and total submissions including conference submissions exceeding 600 manuscripts. We maintained our global reach and selectivity. A later section of this report provides detailed statistics.

Our 2019 *CAR* conference at the Westin in Ottawa attracted a sell-out crowd. The Craft of Accounting Research workshop in Ottawa, Ontario and the PhD and junior faculty consortium in Ottawa furthered *CAR*'s outreach to young Canadian scholars.

In the remainder of this report, I discuss the following topics:

- Personnel & process changes
- External recognition of the journal
- Conferences and meetings
- Manuscript statistics
- Update - 2020 events

Personnel & process changes

Carina Hackett along with Judith Russell of Queen's University continue to manage the back-office functions that keep the peer-review process flowing smoothly. In 2019, *CAR*'s Managing Editor, Colin Braithwaite announced his retirement, and we welcomed Sylvia Siemens. As Managing Editor, Sylvia oversees accepted manuscripts through the copyedit process up to compilation of each issue.

During 2019, we continued to work on improving our systems and procedures to maintain high standards of academic integrity, and to acknowledge reviewers and editors for their support of the journal. Please see the section "Update – 2020 events" for details.

"Bundling" of discussions with the discussed article

Historically, written discussions of *CAR* conference papers have been published as standalone articles. In 2018 we began to "bundle" an article and discussion. A single DOI is assigned to the bundled article and discussion. The primary ramification of this change is the elimination of the discussion as a separately counted paper in per unit publication counts. The downside is that paper authors and discussion authors will not have readily available separate citation counts. The first bundled discussion appeared in the journal in the second issue of 2019.

Manuscript follow-up process

We continued to engage in follow-up every two weeks rather than every month, reducing the time lags before we identify and address manuscript processing delays.

External recognition of the journal

Over the years, *CAR* has earned international recognition as one of the world's top accounting journals. In 2016, *CAR* was one of six accounting journals in the *Financial Times* Research Rank of 50 business journals. *CAR* merited an A* in the 2019 ranking by the Australian Business Deans' Council, and a score of 4 from the UK Chartered Association of Business Schools' *Academic Journal Guide 2018*. Currently, Google Scholar ranks *CAR* fourth among accounting and taxation journals on its h5-index, and h5-median. According to the most recent Impact Factor information (2018), *CAR*'s two-year ISI impact factor is 2.261, and its five-year impact factor is 3.711.

Conferences and meetings

Craft of Accounting Research workshop

The goal of this annual one-day event, held in conjunction with the CAAA annual meeting, is to enhance the quality of research carried out in Canada. The workshop allows doctoral students and junior faculty members to learn about important aspects of research design and the publication process, in a supportive environment. Participants discuss issues and problems involved in planning and performing research, preparing manuscripts for submission to a journal, and responding to peer-review comments. We offer subsidies to Canadian PhD students, to help defray their costs of attendance.

The 2019 workshop was held on May 30 in Ottawa, ON, organized by *CAR* Editor Hai Lu. *CAR* Editor Khim Kelly and Jee-Eun Shin (University of Toronto) rounded out the complement of organizing faculty. The workshop offered nine students the opportunity to present and get feedback on their research, and also featured faculty presentations. The 29 participants included twenty-six students and junior faculty members from Canadian colleges and universities, along with three students and junior faculty members from elsewhere in the world.

CAR conference

The journal holds the annual *Contemporary Accounting Research* conference to provide a forum where the global accounting research community can engage and interact, in Canada. The invitation-only conference attracted roughly one-sixth of the annual flow of manuscripts to the journal, and a healthy number of international visitors to Canada.

We held the 2019 *CAR* conference on October 25th and 26th, at The Westin in Ottawa, Ontario.

Khim Kelly and Jeff Pittman again shared responsibility as co-editors for the conference with me, including organizing the program, and selecting papers and discussants. The conference attracted 104 submissions (see Table 1 in the Manuscript statistics section). Conference submissions are peer-reviewed as regular journal submissions. With the aid of Editors' recommendations, Khim, Jeff and I chose six manuscripts to reflect a wide range of topics and methods, in keeping with *CAR* conference tradition. As always, conference sessions consisted of presentations by authors and discussants, followed by open debate and discussion with the audience. The conference received positive feedback, and was an enjoyable experience.

PhD and junior faculty consortium

Each year a full-day consortium precedes the *CAR* Conference. The consortium allows faculty experts attending the *CAR* Conference to present their ideas and insights about research to Canadian doctoral students and junior faculty members. The overall objective is to broaden junior scholars' appreciation of research, and to provide background to facilitate their participation in the conference itself. As with the Craft workshop, we offer subsidies to Canadian doctoral students to reduce their costs of attending.

The 2019 consortium featured presentations by Rick Hatfield of The University of Alabama, Ranjani Krishnan of Michigan State University, Mohan Venkatachalam of Duke University and Rodrigo Verdi of MIT. The speakers provided participants with insights and background on topics relevant to the *CAR* conference program.

In total, 28 doctoral students and junior faculty members attended the 2019 consortium, 25 (89%) of them from Canadian universities. Attendees at the Consortium also participate in the *CAR* conference.

Manuscript statistics

Each year, we present statistics that illustrate *CAR*'s national and international reach, its selectivity, the timeliness of manuscript processing, and its topical and methodological diversity.

Canadian mandate and global reach of the journal

Table 1 shows continuing robust submission volume in 2019, with a record number of regular and total submissions. In 2019, 15% of submissions involved a Canadian author, consistent with recent experience. Another 44% of submissions involved at least one author working outside of Canada and the US.

Table 1: New submissions 2015-2019 by submission type, with annual changes and region of origin

	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Regular	503	436	413	390	389
Conference	104	121	119	97	136
TOTAL	607	557	532	487	525
<i>% increase over prior year</i>	9%	5%	9%	-7%	20%
<i>% of Total with a Canadian author</i>	15%	18%	14%	18%	17%
<i>% of Total with an author from outside Canada and the U.S.</i>	44%	39%	40%	44%	37%

Table 2: Publications 2015-2019, with region of origin

	2019*	2018	2017	2016	2015
Volume	36	35	34	33	32
Pages	2694	2261	2182	1751	1747
Articles, including discussants' comments	86	78	74	61	64
<i>% of articles with a Canadian author</i>	19%	21%	12%	13%	17%
<i>% of articles with an author from outside Canada and U.S.</i>	22%	24%	23%	21%	28%

*In 2019, Wiley began publishing bundled conference articles & discussions with a single DOI. Of the 86 articles published in 2019, 2 discussions were published separately from their articles, and 13 discussions were bundled with their articles.

The publication information in Table 2 shows an upward trend in the page count and the number of articles through time, consistent with increasing submission volume.

Comparing the regional percentages in Table 2 with those in Table 1 confirms that the journal generally publishes papers by Canadian scholars at rates similar to their submission percent, and those by non-US international authors at rates below their submission percent. Please note that it is misleading to compare publication numbers year-by-year with submission numbers, because papers vary in the time from initial submission to publication, generally taking from two to four years. Almost no papers are published in the year of submission.

Selectivity

Table 3 reports on first-round decisions, demonstrating *CAR*'s highly selective peer-review process. The "withdraw" decision indicates papers that were not suitable for the journal, either because they did not fit within the journal's Aims and Scope, or because they did not merit reviewers' time. First-round rejections are those where, after peer-review, the Editor found that the paper did not meet *CAR*'s standards, and was unlikely to do so with revision. Papers are rarely accepted on the first round, so we can infer from the sum of rejections and withdrawals that about 20% of submitted papers receive a "revise" recommendation in the first round.

Table 3: First-round rejection and withdrawal decisions, as a percent of submissions, 2015-2019

	2019*	2018	2017	2016	2015
First-round rejections	68%	67%	65%	53%	60%
First-round withdrawals	<u>12%</u>	<u>12%</u>	<u>11%</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>21%</u>
Sum of rejections & withdrawals	80%	79%	76%	79%	81%

* The 2019 numbers represent the 603 submissions that had a first-round decision on May 4, 2020, out of 607 total 2019 submissions.

Turnaround time

Turnaround time, reported in Table 4, is the time from an author's submission until he or she receives a decision. We were once again very close to *CAR*'s goal that 90% of manuscripts should be turned around within 100 days. We closely monitor manuscripts that approach or exceed the 100-day mark, and follow up with Editors and reviewers as needed, to maintain timeliness without sacrificing quality. The median time to provide an initial decision on a regular submission was 61 days in 2019.

Table 4: Timeliness of first-round feedback to authors, 2015-2019

	2019*	2018	2017	2016	2015
# under 100 days	527	488	452	354	379
Total new ms.s	603	557	532	487	525
% under 100 days	87%	88%	85%	73%	72%
Median turnaround time (days):					
Regular	61	60	63	78	75
Conference	76	69	82	83	95

* The 2019 numbers represent the 603 submissions that had a first-round decision on May 4, 2020, out of 607 total 2019 submissions.

Topics and methods

From its inception, *CAR* has taken pride in being open to all forms of accounting research. It is difficult to convey the breadth of the research we publish in tabular form: many papers use multiple methods or span more than one topic area. In keeping with tradition, Table 5 below summarizes authors' self-reports of topic areas and methods for 2019 submissions. If an author identified more than one topic or more than one method, Table 5 reports the first.

Table 5: New submissions 2019, by topic area and method

Topic	Audit	Manag'l	Fin'l	Tax	AIS	Other	Row Total	Row %
Method								
Analytical	8	14	16	0	0	2	40	7%
Experimental	31	23	12	2	0	1	69	11%
Empirical/Archival	102	56	245	39	1	21	464	76%
Case/Field Study	9	7	2	1	0	4	23	4%
Other	5	3	2	1	0	0	11	2%
Column Total	155	103	277	43	1	28	607	100%
Column %	26%	17%	46%	7%	0%	5%	100%	

Tables 6 and 7 below summarize the evolution through time of topic and method percentages. Overall, the mix of methods and topics in 2019 submissions are close to the recent historical averages.

Table 6: Submission mix by method, 2015-2019

Method	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Analytical	7%	5%	7%	6%	5%
Experimental	11%	14%	14%	12%	14%
Empirical/Archival	76%	73%	74%	75%	74%
Case/Field Study/Other	4%	4%	4%	5%	4%
Other	2%	4%	2%	2%	3%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7: Submission mix by topic area, 2015-2019

Topic Area	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015
Auditing	26%	27%	27%	24%	27%
Managerial	17%	20%	16%	18%	11%
Financial	46%	43%	48%	47%	53%
Taxation	7%	5%	5%	6%	5%
AIS	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Other	5%	4%	4%	5%	5%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Update - 2020 events

This report covers activity in 2019, but here I report on a few details from the first months of 2020.

In January 2020, we sent thank you letters to all members of the *CAR* editorial board for their service during 2019.

In March 2020, in response to COVID-19, we temporarily extended reviewer deadlines from 30 to 45 days. We also extended author deadlines by 90 days for revisions due before July 1, 2020, and extended the suggested time for editors to issue decisions by two weeks. Follow-up on manuscripts during this time has also been extended.

In May 2020, we will send an annual update to reviewers, continuing the practice of offering a waiver of a future submission fee as a small token of appreciation to reviewers who provide two prompt reviews. *CAR* has had this practice at least since the 1990s. The practice is now supported by a formal process for tracking who has earned a waiver, and an expiry policy, creating a sustainable process that will retain the goodwill of our reviewer base.

I thank all members of *CAR*'s community: authors, reviewers, editors and staff members, for their enthusiastic support of the journal. Collectively, they create and maintain the strong reputation the journal enjoys, and have made my job much easier and more enjoyable. This is my final report as (now former) Editor-in-Chief of the journal. The journal is now in the very capable hands of the next Editor-in-Chief, Professor Alan Webb of the University of Waterloo. Alan's official start date was May 1, 2020, but he graciously agreed to handle the entire review process for 2020 conference submissions, so his heavy workload began before his official start date. I have worked closely in the transition with Alan, and I have complete confidence in his judgment and know that he has plans to further enhance *CAR*'s reputation during his term.

I want to provide a special word of thanks to Jeff Pittman, the Deputy Editor-in-chief during my term for his constant wise counsel and pleasant disposition, and to all of the Editors who worked so hard to ensure that we provided both high quality and timely handling of manuscripts. Special thanks also go to my faculty assistant at Queen's University, Judith Russell, who helped keep me on schedule through heavy work demands. Last but not least it has been a real privilege to work with editorial assistant Carina Hackett, whose competence, dedication and always pleasant demeanor are noticed and appreciated by the entire *CAR* community. It has been an honor to serve as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal.

Respectfully submitted,



Former Editor-in-chief
Contemporary Accounting Research

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