

## ***Contemporary Accounting Research*** **Editor's Report for January 1 to December 31, 2018**

### **Overview of 2018**

*Contemporary Accounting Research (CAR)* enjoyed continued strong submission volume in 2018, while processing times continued to improve. We maintained our global reach and selectivity. A later section of this report provides detailed statistics.

Our 2018 *CAR* conference at the Banff Centre attracted a sell-out crowd. The Craft of Accounting Research workshop in Calgary, Alberta and the PhD and junior faculty consortium in Banff 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 - 2019 events

### **Personnel & process changes**

In January 2019, Amber Goldie took on the role of Executive Director of the CAAA. 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. Managing Editor Colin Braithwaite continues to oversee accepted manuscripts through the copyedit process up to compilation of each issue.

During 2018, 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 – 2019 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 have begun to "bundle" an article and discussion, with the discussion following the article (as is current practice). 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 will appear in the journal in the second issue of 2019.

### ***Manuscript follow-up process***

We continue 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 2016 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 (2017), *CAR*'s two-year ISI impact factor is 2.065, and its five-year impact factor is 3.120.

## 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 2018 workshop was held on June 14 in Calgary, AB, organized by *CAR* Editor Partha Mohanram. *CAR* Deputy Editor-in-Chief Jeff Pittman, Consulting Editor Alan Webb, and Editorial Board members Alex Edwards and Dushyant Vyas 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 18 participants included thirteen students and junior faculty members from Canadian colleges and universities, along with five 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 attracts roughly one-fifth of the annual flow of manuscripts to the journal, and a healthy number of international visitors to Canada.

We held the 2018 *CAR* conference on October 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity in Banff, Alberta.

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 121 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 since 2002, a full-day consortium has preceded 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 2018 consortium featured presentations by Scott Asay of University of Iowa, Karla M. Johnstone of University of Wisconsin–Madison, Wayne Thomas of University of Oklahoma and Wim A. Van der Stede of London School of Economics. The speakers provided participants with insights and background on topics relevant to the *CAR* conference program.

In total, 26 doctoral students and junior faculty members attended the 2018 consortium, 24 (92%) 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 2018, with a record number of regular submissions. In 2018, 18% of submissions involved a Canadian author, consistent with recent experience. Another 39% of submissions involved at least one author working outside of Canada and the US.

**Table 1: New submissions 2014-2018 by submission type,  
with annual changes and region of origin**

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
Regular	436	413	390	389	334
Conference	121	119	97	136	103
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>557</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>487</b>	<b>525</b>	<b>437</b>
<i>% increase over prior year</i>	5%	9%	-7%	20%	-16%
<i>% of Total with a Canadian author</i>	18%	14%	18%	17%	16%
<i>% of Total with an author from outside Canada and the U.S.</i>	39%	40%	44%	37%	39%

**Table 2: Publications 2014-2018, with region of origin**

	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014
<b>Volume</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>31</b>
Pages	2261	2182	1751	1747	1293
Articles, including discussants' comments	78	74	61	64	45
<i>% of articles with a Canadian author</i>	21%	12%	13%	17%	20%
<i>% of articles with an author from outside Canada and U.S.</i>	24%	23%	21%	28%	29%

The publication information in Table 2 shows variation in the page count and the number of articles through time. We again intend to publish approximately 2200 pages in the 2019 issue.

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 20-25% of submitted papers receive a "revise" recommendation in the first round.

**Table 3: First-round rejection and withdrawal decisions, as a percent of submissions, 2014-2018**

	2018*	2017	2016	2015	2014
First-round rejections	67%	65%	53%	60%	59%
First-round withdrawals	12%	<u>11%</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>16%</u>
<b>Sum of rejections &amp; withdrawals</b>	79%	76%	79%	81%	76%

\* The 2018 numbers represent the 556 submissions that had a first-round decision on April 24 2019, out of 557 total 2018 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 have not yet achieved, but are approaching, *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 declined to 60 days in 2018.

**Table 4: Timeliness of first-round feedback to authors, 2014-2018**

	2018*	2017	2016	2015	2014
# under 100 days	488	452	354	379	293
Total new ms.s	556	531	487	525	437
% under 100 days	88%	85%	73%	72%	67%
Median turnaround time (days):					
Regular	60	63	78	75	81
Conference	69	82	83	95	90

\* The 2018 numbers represent the 556 submissions that had a first-round decision on April 24 2019, out of 557 total 2018 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 2018 submissions. If an author identified more than one topic or more than one method, Table 5 reports the first.

**Table 5: New submissions 2018, by topic area and method**

Topic	Audit	Manag'l	Fin'l	Tax	AIS	Other	Row Total	Row %
<b>Method</b>								
Analytical	4	11	12	1	0	1	29	5%
Experimental	29	28	15	4	0	3	79	14%
Empirical/Archival	101	60	209	24	1	13	408	73%
Case/Field Study	9	6	1	0	0	5	21	4%
Other	7	7	3	0	0	3	20	4%
<b>Column Total</b>	150	112	240	29	1	25	557	100%
<b>Column %</b>	27%	20%	43%	5%	0%	4%	100%	

Tables 6 and 7 below summarize the evolution through time of topic and method percentages. Overall, the mix of methods and topics in 2018 submissions are close to the recent historical averages.

**Table 6: Submission mix by method, 2014-2018**

<b>Method</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
Analytical	5%	7%	6%	5%	5%
Experimental	14%	14%	12%	14%	11%
Empirical/Archival	73%	74%	75%	74%	74%
Case/Field Study/Other	4%	4%	5%	4%	5%
Other	4%	2%	2%	3%	5%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 7: Submission mix by topic area, 2014-2018**

<b>Topic Area</b>	<b>2018</b>	<b>2017</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2014</b>
Auditing	27%	27%	24%	27%	22%
Managerial	20%	16%	18%	11%	14%
Financial	43%	48%	47%	53%	52%
Taxation	5%	5%	6%	5%	7%
AIS	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%
Other	4%	4%	5%	5%	4%
	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Update - 2019 events

This report covers activity in 2018, but here I report on a few details from the first months of 2019.

In January 2019, we sent thank you letters to all members of the *CAR* editorial board for their service during 2018.

In May 2019, 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, supported by fairly informal record-keeping. With the increase in submission volume in recent years, keeping track of fee waivers using informal methods had become unmanageable. Moreover, because the waivers had no expiry date, *CAR* was accumulating a potentially substantial contingent liability. By creating a formal process for tracking who has earned a waiver, and instituting a gradual expiry policy, we aim to create a sustainable process that will retain the goodwill of our reviewer base.

During the first half of 2019, we are migrating more of the proofreading and copyediting responsibilities back to Wiley. Personnel and supervisory responsibilities at Wiley have changed such that we are more comfortable with the quality of the work we are seeing so far in this transition. We continue to monitor the situation closely to ensure that the quality of production remains at a consistently high level.

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 make my job much easier and more enjoyable. It is a privilege to be associated with the journal.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Welker". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Editor-in-chief  
*Contemporary Accounting Research*

08 May 2019