

Contemporary Accounting Research **Editor's Report for January 1 to December 31, 2017**

Overview of 2017

Contemporary Accounting Research (CAR) enjoyed continued strong submission volume in 2017, while processing times continued to improve. We maintained our global reach and selectivity. A later section of this report provides detailed statistics.

Our 2017 *CAR* conference at the Château Frontenac attracted a sell-out crowd. The Craft of Accounting Research workshop in Montreal, Québec and the PhD and junior faculty consortium in Québec City 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 - 2018 events

Personnel & process changes

Following Mary Henricksen's November 2017 departure, Amber Goldie began her term as the Interim Executive Director of the CAAA in January 2018. Judith Russell of Queen's University has been hired for the interim, joining Carina Hackett in supporting the journal's manuscript processing. Their respective roles continue to evolve, but together, Carina, Judith and Amber 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. Since 2016, Colin has had expanded responsibility for copyediting and proofreading, to improve the journal's production quality.

During 2017, 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 – 2018 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.

Manuscript follow-up process

Previously a system of monthly follow-up with editors about in-process manuscripts was undertaken. We have implemented two changes to this process. The first is having more

transparent deadlines related to assigning reviewers and making decisions on papers. These deadlines are more or less in line with our current practice of follow-up, with follow-up taking place one week after the deadline has passed. In addition, we now engage in follow-up every two weeks rather than every month, reducing the time lags before we identify and address processing delays.

Reviewer deadlines

We have changed the amount of time provided to reviewers of regular submissions from 45 to 30 days. This change makes CAR's time provided to reviewers more comparable to most other major accounting journals.

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. In mid-2017, *CAR*'s two-year ISI impact factor was 2.269, and its five-year impact factor was 3.358.

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 2017 workshop was held on June 1 in Montréal, QC, organized by *CAR* Consulting Editor Dan Simunic. Dan originated the Craft workshop in 1999, when he was co-Editor of the journal with Gerry Feltham. *CAR* Editor Paul Hribar, *Ad Hoc* Editors Jean Bédard & Bertrand Malsch, and I rounded out the complement of organizing faculty. The workshop offered ten students the opportunity to present and get feedback on their research, and also featured faculty presentations and a panel discussion with the Editors on the publication process. The 31 participants included twenty-six 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-quarter of the annual flow of manuscripts to the journal, and a healthy number of international visitors to Canada.

We held the 2017 *CAR* conference on October 27th and 28th, at the Château Frontenac in Québec City, Québec.

Khim Kelly and Jeff Pittman shared responsibility as co-editors for the conference with me, including organizing the program, and selecting papers and discussants. The conference attracted 119 submissions (see Table 1 in the Manuscript statistics section). Conference submissions are peer-reviewed as regular journal submissions, but within a shorter timeframe. With the aid of Editors' recommendations, Khim, Jeff and I chose seven 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 2017 consortium featured presentations by Adam Presslee of University of Pittsburgh, Hans Christensen of University of Chicago, John Robinson of Texas A&M University and Steven Kachelmeier of University of Texas at Austin. The speakers provided participants with insights and background on topics relevant to the *CAR* conference program.

In total, 24 doctoral students and junior faculty members attended the 2017 consortium, 20 (83%) 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 2017, with a record high number in the regular submission stream. In 2017, 14% of submissions involved a Canadian author, consistent with recent experience. Another 40% of submissions involved at least one author working outside of Canada and the US.

Table 1: New submissions 2013-2017 by submission type, with annual changes and region of origin

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Regular	413	390	389	334	369
Conference	119	97	136	103	130
SOAR*	0	0	0	0	21
TOTAL	532	487	525	437	520
<i>% increase over prior year</i>	9%	-7%	20%	-16%	35%
<i>% of Total with a Canadian author</i>	14%	18%	17%	16%	17%
<i>% of Total with an author from outside Canada and the U.S.</i>	40%	44%	37%	39%	43%

*The SOAR program began in 2011, and was discontinued in 2013.

Table 2: Publications 2013-2017, with region of origin

	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Volume	34	33	32	31	30
Pages	2182	1751	1747	1293	1661
Articles, including discussants' comments	74	61	64	45	56
<i>% of articles with a Canadian author</i>	12%	13%	17%	20%	23%
<i>% of articles with an author from outside Canada and U.S.</i>	23%	21%	28%	29%	21%

The publication information in Table 2 shows variation in the page count and the number of articles through time. The 2015 and 2016 numbers reflect a contractual page count of 1750 pages. Late in 2016, the CAAA Board of Directors agreed to purchase additional pages for the 2017 issue, in a further effort to reduce the backlog of articles waiting to appear in an issue. We again intend to publish approximately 2200 pages in the 2018 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, 2013-2017

	2017*	2016	2015	2014	2013
First-round rejections	65%	53%	60%	59%	66%
First-round withdrawals	<u>11%</u>	<u>26%</u>	<u>21%</u>	<u>16%</u>	<u>10%</u>
Sum of rejections & withdrawals	76%	79%	81%	76%	76%

* The 2017 numbers represent the 531 submissions that had a first-round decision at the end of April 2018, out of 532 total 2017 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 63 days in 2017.

Table 4: Timeliness of first-round feedback to authors, 2013-2017

	2017*	2016	2015	2014	2013
# under 100 days	452	354	379	293	283
Total new ms.s	531	487	525	437	520
% under 100 days	85%	73%	72%	67%	54%
Median turnaround time (days):					
Regular	63	78	75	81	106
Conference	82	83	95	90	81
SOAR**	-	-	-	-	79

* The 2017 numbers represent the 531 submissions that had a first-round decision at the end of April 2018, out of 532 total 2017 submissions.

**The SOAR program began in 2011, and was discontinued in 2013.

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 2017 submissions. If an author identified more than one topic or more than one method, Table 5 reports the first.

Table 5: New submissions 2017, by topic area and method

Topic	Audit	Manag'l	Fin'l	Tax	AIS*	Other	Row Total	Row %
Method								
Analytical	4	11	18	3	0	0	36	7%
Experimental	27	23	16	4	1	2	73	14%
Empirical/Archival	103	42	214	20	1	12	392	74%
Case/Field Study	5	6	4	0	0	5	20	4%
Other	4	2	2	0	0	3	11	2%
Column Total	143	84	254	27	2	22	532	100%
Column %	27%	16%	48%	5%	0%	4%	100%	

Tables 6 and 7 below summarize the evolution through time of topic and method percentages. Comparisons through time are impeded somewhat by the fact that categories have changed. For example, until 2013, authors could choose "Archival" and "Empirical" as separate categories, along with the eminently empirical categories "Experimental" and "Case/Field Study". Table 6 assumes that authors in this period interpreted "Empirical" to mean "Archival". In addition, because these data were not reported for SOAR submissions in 2013, Tables 6 and 7 pertain only to non-SOAR submissions. Overall, the mix of methods and topics in 2017 submissions are close to the recent historical averages.

Table 6: Submission mix by method, 2013-2017

Method	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Analytical	7%	6%	5%	5%	5%
Experimental	14%	12%	14%	11%	12%
Empirical/Archival	74%	75%	74%	74%	73%
Case/Field Study/Other	4%	5%	4%	5%	5%
Other	2%	2%	3%	5%	5%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 7: Submission mix by topic area, 2013-2017

Topic Area	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Auditing	27%	24%	27%	22%	22%
Managerial	16%	18%	11%	14%	13%
Financial	48%	47%	53%	52%	53%
Taxation	5%	6%	5%	7%	8%
AIS	0%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Other	4%	5%	5%	4%	3%
	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

Update - 2018 events

This report covers activity in 2017, but here I report on a few details from the first months of 2018.

In January 2018, we sent thank you letters to all members of the *CAR* editorial board for their service during 2017.

In April 2018, we sent 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.

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

25 May 2018