

EAC Awards Task Force — Final Report

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Objectives:

- Review existing awards (Tom Fairley Award, Claudette Upton Scholarship, and President's Awards)
- Evaluate effectiveness of existing awards in terms of resources used, value to internal and external stakeholders, and success in raising the profile of editing
- Explore the possibility of adding a French award, including consideration for administration and funding
- Recommend ways to improve existing awards and establish new awards

Phase 1 Deliverable: Report, including guidelines for any newly proposed awards (administrative and promotional structures, budgets required, etc.).

Phase 2: Implement recommendations.

Acknowledgments

We would like to thank the following EAC members and staff for their help in providing information and advice during this phase of the task force discussions: Carolyn Burke, Susan Chambers, Michelle Ou, and Moira White.

1. Review of Existing Awards

In EAC's most recent national survey, only 13% of members "valued or highly valued" EAC's awards. The great majority indicated that the awards were "least valued or only slightly valued" as a membership benefit. This clearly indicates that most members (out of those who answered the survey) do not see the benefits of the awards to themselves as individuals. However, this doesn't indicate what value members think the awards might have to EAC as an organization. Learning what members' thoughts on this would require refocusing the questioning about the awards on the next national survey.

We feel strongly that the existing Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence (TFA) and Claudette Upton Scholarship have the potential to greatly enhance EAC's profile both within the membership and outside the organization. However, as we have noted below in the sections on

each award, they would benefit from specific steps related to definition (TFA), process (both awards), fundraising (both awards) and promotion (TFA).

We reviewed EAC's marketing plans for the awards (including mailing lists and responses to Google ads), the current funding levels, and the processes in place for nominations/entry, judging, and fundraising. We also had input from Moira White who, as a former president, acted as the coordinator for the awards program.

From the information we received and our own discussions and recommendations for the existing and new awards, it became clear that for EAC and its members to receive full value from the awards program, an awards standing committee should oversee it. Currently the past president coordinates the awards with support from national office staff.

We believe a standing committee would result in the following benefits:

- provide greater consistency from year to year
- be able to develop and assist in the implementation of a more strategic and targeted marketing effort
- expand the pool of potential judges (because it would include the networks of all committee members)

The next three parts of this section are about existing awards. Please see part 3 of this report for a complete list of our recommendations.

Tom Fairley Award (TFA)

As EAC's premier editing award, the TFA makes the biggest demand on resources—money, staff, and volunteer time. As part of our considerations, we surveyed past winners of the award to see how they felt about the award, what difference (if any) it had made to them, and what they would recommend as improvements.

In general, the experience of TFA winners is somewhat positive or positive, and all respondents would encourage others to apply for the award. Most see the TFA as having a somewhat positive or positive impact on their business and/or career, and many mention in their comments that the TFA is prominent in their Online Directory of Editors (ODE) entry, website, and/or résumé. However, more than a quarter of respondents consider the award promotion to be inadequate, and more than half are neutral about or don't know enough to assess award promotion. For full details of the survey of TFA winners, please see Appendix A.

As noted earlier, we requested and reviewed information from the national office on marketing. For the TFA, EAC has a list of email addresses to which notifications are sent encouraging applications beforehand, announcing the short list in advance of the conference, and announcing the winner(s) afterward. No print ads have been placed in *Quill & Quire* in recent years because

of expense and a desire to change the perception of the TFA as a book award. The only budget this year is for 30th anniversary posters.

We identified the following issues for the TFA:

- **Fundraising:** Both the TFA and the Claudette Upton Scholarship require substantial funding. While the TFA was originally funded by an endowment, that money has run out. It is imperative that new funding be sought from a pool of potential donors, which might include, but not be limited to, members, publishers, other organizations in related industries (e.g., printers such as Friesens), and the general public.

Appendix B is a summary of an informal meeting about fundraising that Karen Virag and Carolyn Burke had with Kevin Hanson, president of Simon and Schuster Canada. Following that meeting and our discussions about options, we suggest structuring sponsorship in various levels, as many non-profits do, to reflect amounts of contributions and recognition that sponsors receive. We believe fundraising should be the responsibility of EAC staff, with the help of one or more volunteers from the standing committee.

- **Judging:** Judges are confronted with huge amounts of material on widely different subjects that reflect a variety of levels of editing. For all this work, they receive no compensation. The honorarium for judges should be reinstated, and they should be given clear guidelines on how to do the evaluations. They should also be advised of the amount of time required.
- **Focusing:** While the TFA has never been restricted to books, a strong perception certainly exists that it is a book award. Some effort has been made in recent years to counteract this: “Any type of written project—book, magazine, government or corporate report, software documentation—is eligible, as is any type of editorial work.” (quoted from the EAC website). However, the perception persists that it is only for books. If more TFA submissions did include all types of projects and editing, the judges’ tasks would become even more difficult. To help make the judging process easier and more efficient, we recommend that the TFA be focused as an award for substantive editing of book-length projects.
- **Nominating/applying:** Making the nomination packages more consistent would also help to ease the load on the judges and could encourage more applications for the award. There appears to be confusion about what exactly should go into the nomination package, and the amount of material that seems to be expected may discourage some potential applicants.
- **Expanding eligibility:** Currently, applications are restricted to work published in Canada. We recommend that this be changed to work done by a Canadian editor.

- **Marketing and promoting:** The major recommendation made by past TFA winners surveyed was to improve marketing and promotion of the award both before and after selection of the winner (Appendix A). Improving promotion would raise EAC's profile, as well as that of individual winners. Promotion of the winner seems to be at a low level. Targeted promotion of winners within their own regions could be particularly effective. Raising the profile of the award would also make fundraising easier.

One aspect of the TFA for which we did not have good information was how well known the award is among Canadian publishers. To assess the success of the TFA in raising the profile of editing, we recommend that EAC survey Canadian publishers about their knowledge of the award. The most efficient way to reach the largest number of publishers would be to distribute the survey through organizations such as the Association of Canadian Publishers, the Canadian Publishers' Council, and the Literary Press Group.

We have developed a draft of the survey and recommend that it be conducted in September 2014. Following are the reasons for this suggested timing:

1. September is about a month before nominations are open for the 2014 TFA, so the survey might also serve as promotion for the award.
2. Waiting until September will give EAC time to hone the survey and determine the best strategy for distributing it to the publishers' groups. This strategy should fall in line with what are generally accepted as good practices and could be a time-consuming process. The most obvious approach would be to ask the executive director of each organization to include our survey in a communication to its members, as EAC sometimes does for other organizations. Other approaches should also be considered.

The draft survey is included in Appendix C. We wish to thank Susan Chambers for her help in developing this survey.

Claudette Upton Scholarship

The Upton Scholarship has simple, no-cost application procedures, a rich award (\$1,000), and a targeted marketing program. EAC sends out emails to student members and instructors at educational institutions. Currently there are about 100 student members.

Like the TFA, sustainable funding is a concern, as the Upton Scholarship also relies on donations, which currently come from members. Other sources, such as publishers and large educational institutions with publishing programs, may be potential sources of funding.

Given the ease of application and the richness of the award, we speculated on possible reasons for the small number of applications each year (about a dozen). One drawback to the scholarship

application process may be the March 31 deadline, which comes at a very busy time of the school year.

We agreed that the due date for applications should be changed to April 30, which would still leave enough time for the judges to select a winner before the annual conference in early June.

Note: As part of the upcoming governance changes, the Upton Scholarship eligibility criteria will have to be adjusted to change the qualifying category from “student members” to “student affiliates.” With the lower rates for affiliates, more students may join EAC and consequently more might apply for the Upton Scholarship.

President’s Awards

The President's Awards for Volunteer Service were developed as a way of recognizing volunteers, who are the lifeblood of our organization, and to inspire others to become more active volunteers.

While a call for nominations goes out every year, recognition for the recipients could be improved. A marketing plan to encourage nominations and to raise the profile of the recipients should be developed. This should be done in conjunction with the Marketing and Public Relations Committee and the Volunteer Management Committee.

2. Proposals for New Awards

Two new awards—one to honour late member Karen Virag and one for French editing—would provide more opportunities to recognize editors’ accomplishments and highlight different aspects of the profession. In the future, a possible copy editing English award could broaden the suite of awards to recognize the talents of a greater number of members.

Karen Virag Award: We agreed that the first new award that EAC should establish is an award to honour Karen Virag. Given Karen’s efforts to raise the profile of editing (her long-standing participation on the Cultural Human Resources Council as EAC’s representative, her frequent appearance on CBC Radio as one half of the dynamic Grammar Gals duo with Virginia Derksen), we agreed that a fitting legacy for Karen would be an award that acknowledged an individual’s efforts to raise the profile of editing in the community. The award would not necessarily have to go to a member of EAC, which could help raise and expand the profile of the award. We do not believe a monetary sum need be included, but an effective marketing strategy would absolutely be necessary. It was also suggested that the award need not be given out every year, which might also help to make it more prestigious.

New English Award: Subsequently, the first new English-language award should be for copy editing, to be established after the Karen Virag award. Copy editing is the most common editing

skill among our membership so an award for copy editing would be the most broadly applicable. Copy editing is an integral aspect of all projects, regardless of length, scope, format, etc. It is also one of the skills for which EAC offers certification.

A French Award: Before any decision would be made about the desirability of creating an EAC award specifically for editorial projects in French, it was necessary to establish whether existing EAC awards were valued by EAC's membership, were generating the desired interest among potential candidates, publishers and sponsors, were achieving their main objectives, especially for the winners and EAC, and were being promoted adequately. It was also necessary to identify major challenges in administering, promoting, and implementing the awards program. It was deemed advisable to examine the existing awards first to make sure that the creation of a new award in French, or any other awards, would not be based on flawed assumptions about the value of such awards in the minds of EAC members, potential candidates, winners, EAC, and other stakeholders.

There has never been an intention to exclude French editorial projects from the TFA, and the material to invite submissions has been made available in both English and French for many years. However, the number of submissions for projects in French has been very few. This may have to do with a perception that the award is more related to projects in English, the award's name and the fact that Tom Fairley was an English editor.

The implementation of the TFA's program presents a particular challenge in finding a panel of judges who would be bilingual or proficient enough in both English and French to appreciate and compare the merits of French projects against English projects. This is a major difficulty, in view of the fact that the judges' workload is heavy, even when only one language is involved, and in recent years, the judges have not received an honorarium.

During the work period of the current task force, no extensive consultation was launched about the desirability of creating an award for French projects. However, three EAC members actively involved with EAC's francophone affairs were consulted, namely Marie-Christine Payette, EAC's current director of Francophone Affairs; Sandra Gravel, current chair of the Comité Agrément/Principes (French certification committee) and former director of EAC's Francophone Affairs; and Carolyne Roy, current French managing editor of *Active Voice* and former director of EAC's Francophone Affairs.

In an email message, Carolyne thought the idea was fantastic and expressed her full support, though she could not participate herself in an organizing committee. She thought that, because of a shortage of francophone volunteers, it may be difficult to form a selection committee every year, but that EAC should try to find two or three people each year to read all the submissions and pick a winner. Initially, the TFA method could be used but adapted with French criteria.

Marie-Christine agreed with Carolyne that the association's shortage of francophone volunteers would make it difficult to form a proper committee every year. She also agreed that it might be

possible to select two or three people each year to review nominations and select a winner. While she believes it is important to develop a French editing award, she does not have a clear idea how to accomplish this. And although she is already busy with her other duties as Director of Francophone Affairs, she is willing to participate.

In a verbal communication with Louis Majeau, Sandra Gravel expressed strong support for the creation of a French award. She thought that, along with the certification program in French that is being developed, this would be a core element of EAC's commitment to its francophone members, and a major way of promoting the French services and francophone side of the association. She did not feel that, at this time, broader consultation of the membership was required about the desirability of a French award.

Sandra thought that, like the French certification program being put into place, which falls under EAC's single structure of certification including both English and French, the French award program should also fall under a single structure of EAC awards. The award category should be broad enough to elicit wide interest and participation from potential candidates, and should be representative of what targeted editors do. One source that could be investigated in this regard could be the awards program created in 2011 or 2012 by the Société québécoise en rédaction professionnelle. Each year it alternates between two or three categories for an award.

Louis Majeau agrees with the opinions expressed above and supports the creation of an EAC award for editorial projects in French. Unfortunately, he has no expertise in the creation or implementation of a professional awards program, and is not in a position to advise further on the way to achieve this.

3. Summary of Recommendations

General

- EAC should have a standing committee to oversee its editing awards. The chair of this committee does not have to be the past president, but that person seems like a logical representative from the NEC on the committee.
- Promotion of awards is insufficient. Promoting the winners is important because it raises the profile of EAC and the individual winners and highlights the value of editing.
- Better questions to evaluate the way members value our awards program should be developed to be part of the "annual" survey of members.

Tom Fairley Award

- The TFA should be focused as an award for substantive editing of book-length publications.

- Right now nominations for the TFA must be for “an editor's outstanding contribution to a work **published in Canada** in English or French during a stated calendar year.” We recommend that this criterion be amended to include the work of a Canadian editor, regardless of where the work was published.
- EAC should approach publishers for funding contributions. Rather than trying to find one publisher (or other company) to be a main sponsor, EAC could have various levels of sponsorship reflecting the amounts of the contributions, and on-going commitments should be encouraged.
- Fundraising for the awards should be the responsibility of EAC staff, with the help of one or more volunteers.
- Funding should be sufficient to support an honorarium for the TFA judges and the existing award amounts of both the TFA and the Upton Scholarship.
- Clear expectations should be developed for judges (how much time will be required, how to evaluate nominations, etc.).
- Clearer guidelines for nominations (what to include/not include with your nomination) should be developed to make the nominations packages more consistent and easier for the judges to compare.
- EAC should resume advertising in *Quill & Quire*, in addition to other advertising and promotion through media releases.
- EAC should survey publishers to get a better understanding of their awareness of the TFA in order to better promote the award among them (and increase the number of submissions). The survey of publishers should be done later in 2014.

Claudette Upton Scholarship

- The due date for Upton Scholarship applications should be changed to April 30.

President's Awards

- A marketing plan to encourage nominations and to raise the profile of the recipients should be developed in conjunction with the Marketing and Public Relations Committee and the Volunteer Management Committee.

NEW Awards

- EAC should establish an award in honour of Karen Virag that acknowledges an individual's efforts to raise the profile of editing in the community.
- EAC should establish an award specifically for editorial projects in French.
- EAC should consider establishing an English-language copy editing award.

Appendices

Appendix A: Survey of Winners of the Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence

Method

A brief online survey of winners of the Tom Fairley Award (TFA) was conducted between March 21 and April 1, 2014. TFA winners total 31. One is deceased. Of the 30 remaining, 26 (87%) responded to the survey. One winner could not be located. Three did not respond.

The survey included Likert-scale questions and the opportunity to provide additional comments. All survey respondents commented further.

Key Results

	Negative	Somewhat negative	Neutral	Somewhat positive	Positive	Don't know
Overall, how would you rate your experience as a TFA winner?	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	2 (7.69%)	3 (11.54%)	21 (80.77%)	0 (0%)
What impact did your receiving the award have on your editing business and/or career?	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	3 (11.54%)	12 (46.15%)	8 (30.77%)	3 (11.54%)
	Definitely not	No	Neutral	Yes	Definitely yes	Don't know
Do you think the TFA is adequately promoted?	2 (7.69%)	5 (19.23%)	9 (34.62%)	4 (15.38%)	0 (0%)	6 (23.08%)
Do your clients and/or colleagues know that you are a TFA winner?	0 (0%)	1 (3.85%)	5 (19.23%)	12 (46.15%)	1 (3.85%)	7 (26.92%)
Would you encourage others to apply for the TFA?	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	17 (68%)	8 (32%)	--

Discussion

In general, the experience of TFA winners is somewhat positive or positive, and all respondents would encourage others to apply for the award. Most see the TFA as having a somewhat positive or positive impact on their business and/or career, and many mention in their comments that the TFA is prominent in their ODE entry, website, and/or résumé. However, more than a quarter of

respondents consider the award promotion to be inadequate, and more than half are neutral about or don't know enough to assess award promotion.

Recommendations Based on the Survey Results

1. Improve award promotion, using such means as video interviews, social media, better non-member communication, and an award logo.
2. Refocus the award as a book or book-length award, formally recognizing what has, in fact, been the case over some 30 years.
3. Simplify the application procedure and reduce the amount of supporting documentation required.
4. Keep the short list, winner plaque, awards dinner, and the award money.
5. Improve the continuity and timeliness of award administration from year to year.

Appendix B: Summary of meeting with Kevin Hanson, president of Simon and Schuster Canada Regarding the Tom Fairley award (TFA)

Date: September 25, 2013

Present: Kevin Hanson, Karen Virag, Carolyn Burke

The purpose of this meeting was to sound out Kevin Hanson as to whether Simon and Schuster (S and S) would be willing to contribute financially toward the Fairley award. Another goal was to get advice on other groups to approach.

- Kevin was very receptive to the idea of S and S providing some funding for the TFA. He stated that editors are the backbone of book publishing and deserve to be lauded this way. He stated that S and S would be willing to provide funding, but he thinks we should get other publishers on board as well. For example, Penguin Random, HarperCollins, Harlequin. Kevin knows the principals of these groups and is happy to facilitate contact between us and them. [Task force note: At least one of these (HarperCollins) provided funding in the past. It was never expected that the TFA would have a single funder.]
- He also suggested contacting Heritage Canada.
- He said that after we get a couple more publishers on board, we should then contact Carolyn Wood, at the Association of Canadian Publishers, for her advice and support.
- The printers are a missing element; he suggested that we also approach Friesens and Transcontinental.
- In order to make the offer seem more attractive to publishers, he suggested that we do a survey of our members to discover how many of them work for these publishers. If we had a better idea of who has done what for whom, it would bolster our request for money (e.g., "EAC members worked on ___ published books this year."). If any of those books

won awards, so much the better. (I am thinking here of *Half-Blood Blues*, by Esi Edugyan, which won the 2011 Giller; it was edited by EAC member Marie-Lynne Hammond).

- Kevin also offered to put us in contact with publishers in Quebec—this is very important for the creation of a new French editing award.

Appendix C: Survey of Publishers about the Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence (Draft Copy)

Every year, the Editors' Association of Canada (EAC) selects an editor to receive the Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence. The purpose of the Tom Fairley Award is to recognize the outstanding contribution Canadian editors make to publications in Canada. The winner receives a \$2,000 cash prize, and the short-listed nominees receive a cash prize of \$500 each.

EAC is seeking feedback from publishers about whether they are familiar with the Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence and whether they have ever nominated any editors for this award. By participating in this survey, you will help us to improve the way we administer and promote this award.

Please click on the link below and take a few minutes to complete our online survey. You have until _____ to complete the survey.

Thank you in advance for your time and feedback; both are greatly appreciated.

Questions

1. Have you ever heard of the Tom Fairley Award for Editorial Excellence?

Yes No (Skip to question 7.)

2. Have you ever nominated an editor for the Tom Fairley Award?

Yes (Skip to question 4.) No

3. If you answered no to question 2, which of the following options best describe the reason(s) for your answer? (Please select all that apply.)

- a. Do not know how to nominate someone for the award
- b. Requires more time than I can afford
- c. Process is too complicated
- d. Cost is too high
- e. Do not have any editors who have met the criteria for the award
- f. Other (Please describe.)

4. Under what circumstances would you consider nominating an editor for this award?
(Open-ended response.)

5. Do you have any in-house editors who have won the Tom Fairley Award? Yes No

6. Have you ever hired an editor at least in part because he or she had won the Tom Fairley Award?

7. Do you have any suggestions for how to raise the profile of this award so that more publishing companies will know about it?

8. Do you have any other comments or suggestions you would like to share with us?