

Alberta Research and Innovation Authority

2015-16 Annual Report

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Message from the Chair

On behalf of the national and international research and innovation leaders who comprise the Alberta Research and Innovation Authority (ARIA), I am pleased to present ARIA's Annual Report for 2015-16.

The goal of ARIA is to provide the Government of Alberta with independent advice on research and innovation strategy. ARIA also seeks to enhance Alberta's connections with the international research and innovation community.

As this year began the process of rebuilding and refreshing ARIA, in conjunction with the province's reinvigoration of its innovation system, we carried over our focus items from 2014-15 to provide continuity. These included:

- ensuring the government has access to strategic advice on research and innovation from a national and international perspective;
- connecting Alberta's research and innovation system to the global innovation community; and
- engaging a broader set of stakeholders such as Campus Alberta.

The highlights of ARIA's achievements during the reporting period include:

Strategic Advice on Research and Innovation

- ARIA provided advice to the Department of Economic Development and Trade relating to changes in the province's innovation system.
- ARIA provided perspectives to the Government on Alberta's innovation platform technologies strategy and action plans. This developing strategy renews previous versions and adds a focus on omics technologies.
- An ARIA member met with federal Minister of Science Kirsty Duncan, introducing her to the role of ARIA and the value of its members' international expertise to the research and innovation system.
- ARIA provided advice on strategic guiding documents for Alberta's Research and Innovation system.

Connecting Alberta to the Global Innovation Community

- An ARIA member facilitated collaboration between a Government of Alberta technology partnership branch and German research and industry executives. This enabled dialogue on best practices regarding the best way to support start-ups and small business market access.

Engaging a Broader Set of Stakeholders

- ARIA prepared a report titled *Current and Future Trends of Post-Secondary Institutions: An Alberta Research and Innovation Authority (ARIA) Perspective*. It provided insight into future and/or current trends of post-secondary systems and institutions worldwide, and these trends could support the Ministry of Advanced Education policy framework discussions.

In the year ahead, ARIA looks forward to filling its membership and renewing its commitment to providing the Government of Alberta with timely and actionable advice that supports effective research and innovation outcomes for the province and makes Alberta more competitive in the global economy.

Sincerely,



Oryssia Lennie
Chair



ARIA 2015 members (left to right): Peter Nicholson, Laura Kilcrease, Alan Bernstein, Oryssia Lennie (Chair), Florence Gauzy Krieger and Geoff Pradella (Vice-chair). Missing: Matthew Bailey.

Mandate

The *Alberta Research and Innovation Act* established the Alberta Research and Innovation Authority (ARIA) on January 1, 2010. ARIA's purpose is to provide strategic advice and recommendations to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade on research and innovation matters.

Consisting of up to 12 national and international members and supported by a secretariat, ARIA works with the Alberta Innovates corporation, publicly funded post-secondary institutions within Campus Alberta, industry, and government to help the Government of Alberta reach its research and innovation goals.

Core Business

ARIA provides advice and recommendations related to the research and innovation system in Alberta. More specifically, ARIA:

- Identifies leading-edge research areas and innovation policies that will support the diversification of Alberta's economy.
- Provides the Minister of Economic Development and Trade with regular reviews and reports on the performance of Alberta's research and innovation system and makes recommendations to increase Alberta's competitiveness.
- Explores, gathers, and synthesizes information on innovation system best practices from other jurisdictions to assess the status and progress of Alberta's research and innovation system.
- Identifies emerging global science, research, technology, and innovation trends of greatest impact to Alberta.

Results Reporting

ARIA's Goal: The Government of Alberta has access to strategic advice on research and innovation.

Desired Outcomes

- The Government of Alberta is provided with actionable advice based on perspectives derived from national and international research and innovation expertise.
- ARIA is engaged in an active process with the Minister, ministry and stakeholders to identify and refine priority areas for ARIA's strategic advice.

Priority Initiatives

1. Address questions posed to ARIA by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and/or the Minister of Health on behalf of the Government of Alberta, decision-makers and research and innovation system stakeholders.
2. Support the work of and engage with other advisory bodies and major initiatives of the Government of Alberta.
3. Develop and deliver advice on assessing the performance of Alberta's research and innovation system.
4. Develop and deliver advice on appropriate policies and practices to strengthen innovation in the private sector.

Results

Assessing the Performance of Alberta's Research and Innovation System

- ARIA delivered advice on how to constructively diversify Alberta's economy through innovation.
- In September 2015, ARIA provided advice to the Minister of Economic Development and Trade regarding the Alberta Innovates-Technology Futures' (AITF) effectiveness review and the enhancements being proposed in Alberta's innovation system.
- In December 2015, ARIA provided insights and strategic advice on the consolidation of Alberta Innovates.

- In January 2016, ARIA provided comments on an innovation platform technologies strategy and action plans for ICT, Nano and Omics to government. This is part of the government's future plans for innovation and diversification.
- In the winter, ARIA members met in Edmonton for a multi-day, face-to-face meeting, getting a chance to further discuss provincial innovation topics with the Minister of Economic Development and Trade and stakeholders in Alberta's innovation ecosystem.

Supporting Innovation in Alberta's Health and Social Sectors

- ARIA developed a paper titled: *Current and Future Trends of Post-Secondary Institutions: An Alberta Research and Innovation Authority (ARIA) Perspective* with the Science and Innovation Policy and Strategy branch of Economic Development and Trade. The paper provided insights into future and/or current trends of post-secondary systems and institutions worldwide with the aim of sharing knowledge of these trends and informing Ministry of Advanced Education policy framework discussions.

Fostering Private Sector Innovation

- In October 2015, ARIA shared insights and recommendations with Economic Development and Trade branch heads regarding the proposed economic development plan and the role innovation could play.

Identifying Opportunities

- ARIA provided advice to the Government on its Asia Strategy Development project plan. ARIA's advice included a specific focus on the strategic approach, as well as commitment to the plan, and this advice was included in a government roundtable on the topic in June 2015.
- In the spring of 2016, ARIA gave the Minister of Economic Development and Trade feedback on the strengths of the province's innovation system, as well as areas for improvement.
- ARIA provided advice and comments on the early-stage policy development in the Science and Innovation division of Economic Development and Trade.

Next Steps

ARIA has had several members' terms expire recently. As such, a priority goal for ARIA is renewing membership and strengthening the relationships they have with Alberta's dynamic innovation system. With the other strategic evaluation and realignment of Alberta's research and innovation system, ARIA's renewal is timely and will bring national and global perspectives to the new entity and its board.

ARIA is recruiting from former members, esteemed research and innovation individuals and an open call to the general public and plans to have an additional 5-6 members recruited by the next in-person meeting. This meeting will be held in the fall of 2016, with the next scheduled for spring 2017.

In strengthening ties with the innovation system, ARIA plans to put forward several recommendation and advisory papers on diverse topics, such as the Internet of Things, an in-depth examination of the state of research and development in Alberta, and an examination of health procurement as a tool of innovation.

In addition, ARIA will continue to work with Alberta Innovates. The Alberta Innovates Corporation will fund and drive innovations, in a newly streamlined research and innovation system. This will help Alberta compete globally in key sectors with made-in-Alberta solutions. ARIA was pleased to offer their advice on the consolidation process and will be pleased to offer their expert advice in the upcoming years.

ARIA members recommended a name change from Alberta Research and Innovation Authority to Alberta Research and Innovation Advisory Committee, which better reflects the spirit and role of the organization.

Members of the Authority

CHAIR

Oryssia Lennie

Former Deputy Minister
Western Economic
Diversification Canada

Edmonton, Alberta

Photo: Akemi Matsubuchi



VICE CHAIR

Geoffrey Pradella

President and Senior Partner
Pradella Associates Group Inc.

Calgary, Alberta



MEMBERS

Matthew Bailey

Recognized IoT Pioneer, Former
Chairman of Marketing,
Weightless SIG

United Kingdom



Alan Bernstein

President and CEO
Canadian Institute for
Advanced Research

Toronto, Ontario



Florence Gauzy Krieger

Senior Scientific Officer
BayFOR

Munich, Germany



Laura Kilcrease

Founder & Managing Director
Triton Ventures

Austin, Texas



Peter Nicholson

Founding President
Council of Canadian Academies
(Retired)

Annapolis Royal, Nova Scotia

