RSC SRC

Minutes of the Meeting of Members of the College of the Royal Society of Canada

Date: November 13, 2025

Location: Montréal

Chair: Audrey Moores, President of the RSC College

Secretary: Isabelle Archambault, Secretary of the RSC College

1. Welcome and introduction of Council members in attendance

The meeting is called to order by Dr. Moores, who welcomes the Council members and introduces those in attendance.

2. Presentation of the RSC College

A general presentation of the College of the Royal Society of Canada is provided. It includes:

- an overview of the mandate and role of the RSC;
- the organizational structure of the College;
- the various opportunities for members to contribute and become involved.

3. Updates on the College portfolios and activities

The various ways to become involved in the College are presented. The application process for members wishing to join the Council is also explained. Each portfolio is discussed:

a) Member selection

The member selection process is presented, with particular attention given to the inclusion of Francophone and Indigenous individuals.

b) Indigenous inclusion and engagement

Audrey Moores informs the Council that Franck Deer, former President of the College, Françoise Baylis, President of the RSC, and Karly Kehoe, former College member and new RSC Fellow, will participate in an event in partnership with New Zealand. The first activity related to this partnership was initiated at COEE 2024 in Vancouver.

c) International relations

It is noted that the College shares several priorities with other Young Academies internationally.

The Council expresses its desire to strengthen these relationships, particularly with the Young Academy of Japan, which was invited to the College meeting in June 2025.

Trust in science is identified as an important area for collaboration and was highlighted during that event.

d) Francophone portfolio

The Francophone portfolio is discussed. Anyone wishing to contribute to this portfolio is invited to express their interest. Each year, the portfolio organizes an activity at ACFAS in partnership with the RSC. The next activity will address the discoverability of scientific content in French.

e) Interdisciplinary working groups

The objectives and principal activities currently undertaken by the College's various interdisciplinary working groups are explained. Those interested in joining a group or proposing a new working group are invited to come forward.

4. Information and discussion items

The following items are brought to the Council's attention for information and discussion:

- The "At-Risk and Displaced Scholars and Artists" program is presented to members. It is also noted that this College initiative has now been extended to the RSC. Members who know researchers who could benefit from the initiative, or who wish to become involved as mentors, are invited to put forward names;
- Current webinars are presented. Anyone interested in proposing new webinar topics is invited to come forward;
- Facets: members are invited to submit articles in French, English, or a language of their choice to this RSC-affiliated journal.

5. Open discussion: Trust in science

An open discussion is held on the concept of trust in science. During the discussion, those present highlight several issues, including:

- the public's understanding and perception of the term "science," as well as the possibility of using alternative terms such as "research";
- the need to consider what "trust in science" means and how it can be fostered;
- the complexity of engaging in dialogue with communities that have had negative experiences with science or scientists;
- recognition of different ways of learning and producing knowledge, shaped by distinct cultural and social contexts;
- the need to include divergent perspectives in discussions;
- challenges related to public engagement, particularly in a context of increasing dependence on technology;
- trust as a gradual process requiring sustained communication efforts and patience.

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Following this discussion, and in connection with the conclusions arising from the College event in June 2025, Audrey Moores also proposes conducting a survey. The survey would seek, among other objectives, to identify the conditions that the public considers necessary to strengthen trust in science and to gather scientists' views on current practices that foster or limit that trust.

Other matters are also discussed, including:

- opportunities for collaboration with the Global Young Academy;
- the potential influence of research funding sources on public trust, particularly in high-income countries;
- the interdependence between trust in science and equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), particularly when working with marginalized communities;
- issues related to hierarchies among disciplines and the recognition of different forms of knowledge, including knowledge from the Global South;
- the growing politicization of science.

6. Discussion: Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI)

Frank Deer presents the key reflections emerging from the RSC EDI Committee. Audrey Moores adds an overview of concerns raised by the three federal research funding agencies regarding the use of researchers' personal data. In response, it is proposed that a collective statement be drafted on behalf of College members, but without official status, since a formal proposal submitted in the name of the College would not be accepted by the RSC.

The discussion also emphasizes the need to foster in-depth dialogue and a better understanding of EDI, rather than redefining the concept. Participants highlight the potential role of the College as an EDI leader that could influence the RSC. An editorial project on EDI is being considered.

Other points are raised, including the importance of adopting a systemic and inclusive approach to this issue, incorporating dialogue at the international level. It is also noted that EDI is grounded in the Canadian Constitution.

It is further noted that EDI enriches research questions, methodologies and the quality of scientific work, provided that the communities concerned are actively involved.

Finally, the concept of inclusive excellence, which appeared in the RSC's previous strategic plan, is presented. Audrey Moores, who coordinated the work leading to the development of the RSC's new strategic plan, notes that inclusive excellence is also a pillar of the new plan.

7. Other business

No other business is raised.

8. Adjournment