

College endorses the Science Integrity Project's Principles for Sound Decision-Making

Early in 2015, College President Dr. Vanessa Craig, RPBio, and Executive Director Pierre Iachetti, PAg, RPP, were participants in a national discussion about advancing the use of evidence in decision-making, organized under the umbrella of the Science Integrity Project. Vanessa, along with over sixty other scientists, public policy analysts, current and past representatives of public and Indigenous governments, philanthropists, and representatives of non-government organizations met at a forum in Toronto in February 2015 to coalesce around four key principles to guide the initiative (outlined at right).

The College Council endorsed these principles for evidence-based decision-making in late December 2015. These principles underpin many of the foundational requirements of membership in the College, best illustrated through the ***Code of Ethics***. The Principles also relate to a recently published College resource entitled ***Guidance for members employed in decision-making roles***. CM&

→ In addition to putting forward these four principles to guide the actions and intentions of members, the public, and decision-makers, the College Council feels strongly about the need to maintain independence and objectivity in decision-making.



Principle 1

The best available evidence – produced by methods that are transparent, rigorous, and conducted with integrity¹ – should always inform decision-making in Canada.



Principle 2

Information should be openly exchanged among scientific researchers, Indigenous knowledge holders, decision makers, and the public².



Principle 3

Research results should be preserved, protected, interpreted and shared in a way that is broadly understandable and accessible.



Principle 4

Decision-making processes, and the manner in which evidence informs them, should be transparent and routinely evaluated.

1. By “integrity” in the use of science and Indigenous knowledge, we mean that public policies are built upon the best available, most relevant knowledge resources and that the transfer and use of knowledge in policy and decision-making is transparent. Integrity in the use of knowledge in policy-making also requires integrity in the production of knowledge, that is, adhering to professional, ethical, and disciplinary standards in the production of scientific knowledge and codified cultural standards in the production of Indigenous knowledge.

2. Except in rare cases of demonstrated concern regarding privacy and security. For an overview of open access principles see “Concepts of Openness and Open Access” (UNESCO 2015 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002322/232207E.pdf>).