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The future ain't what it used to be

Taking on a new position is supposed to be one of the more stressful things you can face – it's on a list that includes a change in relationship; having a child; losing a loved one; moving your residence; or any of the other life-changing events you might experience.

A balanced dose of stress is healthy and contributes to better results. In many ways, the same can be said about change.

When I joined CASLPA eight months ago, I knew that some degree of change was likely going to be in order – but I was reminded of the need to balance change with a respect for the association's nearly 50 years of history.

Finding that balance point – the 'sweet spot' so to speak – is one of the critical success factors for any association facing the prospect of, or need for change.

As Canada's preeminent association for speech-language pathologists, audiologists and supportive personnel, we are proud of the professionalism our members bring to their work, and to the clients they serve.

We are governed and directed by a dedicated network of professionals – serving in leadership roles at the national and provincial levels. These individuals work hard on behalf of their profession. CASLPA owes much to their commitment and effort.

Former New York Yankee great Yogi Berra is purported to have said "the future ain't what it used to be".

He also said "you can observe a lot just by watching". Over the past eight months, I have been able to observe quite a bit – with the watching supplemented by numerous visits, calls and emails with members across the country. These perspectives provide, at least in my mind, an increasingly clear argument for change.

The landscape for members has seen a marked shift in the last few years. Changing regulatory environments and the impact of changing technology are just a few

of the realities members face on a day-to-day basis. These changes underscore the need for a proactive commitment to change.

The CASLPA Board of Directors has recognized that while CASLPA's history of excellence is impressive, 'standing pat' is not an option. The newly approved strategic plan speaks to this recognition by defining the four goals that position CASLPA for the future.

At the November board meeting, board directors agreed that the recently proclaimed Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act (NFP Act) provided a timely opportunity for CASLPA to undertake a governance review. They acknowledged the complex, ever-changing environment in which CASLPA finds itself as a result of provincial regulatory bodies that have been and are being established.

The fundamentals of good governance stem universally from the manner in which a board conducts its business. Given the heightened need for effective governance in an era of fiscal restraint and increasing accountability, the governance review outcomes will guide the by-law revisions that must be in compliance with the NFP Act by October 2014.

We must learn to view change as a natural phenomenon – to anticipate it and to plan for it. The future is ours to channel in the direction we want to go. We must continually ask ourselves, "What will happen if...?" or better still, 'How can we make it happen?'

While the nature and pace of change is not yet known, change is inevitable. Some changes may be subtle, but others are likely to be more evident. In any case, for CASLPA and its members, we can expect that Yogi's prognostications are likely to hold true.