

Call for Papers: Colloquium on Parliamentary Accountability in the Twenty-First Century

Ottawa, ON – Dates TBC (Fall 2022)

As public trust in political processes, political institutions, and politicians continues to cause concern, calls for new forms of accountability or the tightening of existing scrutiny systems have become ever louder. The analysis of accountability is often framed in terms of ‘gaps’, ‘traps’ and ‘deficits’ but what remains largely uncontested is that Parliament exists at the apex of the accountability system. The language of accountability that has developed over the past decades has, in some ways, been unsatisfying and incomplete because it fails to grasp the complexity of what accountability really means and why it is important.

It is in exactly this context that practitioners and scholars are invited to submit proposed abstracts for a colloquium on ‘Parliamentary Accountability in the Twenty-First Century’ to be held this fall in Ottawa.

The aim is to explore the changing nature of accountability vis-a-vis parliaments and legislatures in Canada and beyond and to find new ways of framing the concept so that accountability/scrutiny mechanisms can be reimagined to strengthen the relationship between citizens and governments.

Without restricting any possible avenues for exploration, submissions are sought on themes including:

- How have traditional scrutiny structures evolved to keep pace with changing pressures?
- How is a balance achieved between blame-allocation and lesson-learning?
- Do multiple and cross-cutting accountability pressures exist and why does this matter?
- How might parliamentary accountability be dissected into intra-party and inter-party dimensions?
- Is accountability always a ‘good thing’?
- How has parliament innovated in relation to deliberative methods or online tools when it comes to securing accountability?
- To what extent is parliament connected into other forms of accountability in order to increase efficiency and avoid duplication?
- How do the accountability pressures placed on different parliamentarians differ and why?
- How does the issue of accountability flow into broader debates concerning loyalty, legitimacy and balance?
- How does the Canadian parliament learn from ‘what works’ in other parliaments around the world?
- If an accountability gap does exist then what does it relate to and how might it be closed?

The colloquium aims to bring together theoretically-informed but policy-relevant insights from a range of disciplines. Presentations from former or serving parliamentarians, parliamentary staff, and public officials are particularly encouraged.

Submissions: Please send a 250-word abstract plus a 50-word bio along with your name to lturnbul@dal.ca and include “Parliamentary Accountability” in the subject line.

Please direct any inquiries to Dr. Lori Turnbull (Director of the School of Public Administration, Dalhousie University - lturnbul@dal.ca) or Charlie Feldman (President, Canadian Study of Parliament Group – info@cspg-gcep.ca).

Deadline: August 1, 2022

