

Hill Climbers: Anderson replaces Cardow in PMO, Trudeau hires new communications aide

PMO policy adviser Greg McFarlane has moved over to become Chief of Staff to Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt.



The Hill Times photograph by Jake Wright
The Prime Minister's Office, pictured in Ottawa.

By [LAURA RYCKEWAERT](#) | May 19, 2014

There's a new manager of government advertising and marketing in the Prime Minister's Office following the recent and relatively quiet departure of **Lanny Cardow** last week.

As recently as May 9, on the National Day of Honour, Mr. Cardow tweeted a picture of celebrations taking place on the Hill as seen from his Langevin Block office window, located directly across the street from Parliament Hill. But by May 12 his name had disappeared from the list of staff in the Prime Minister's Office on the government's electronic directory service (GEDS).

PMO speechwriter Scott Anderson has stepped in to takeover as manager of government advertising and marketing, and he is also now serving as a senior adviser to PMO Chief of Staff Ray Novak.

Mr. Anderson was first hired to work as a speechwriter in the PMO in January 2013 and comes from a media background. Before arriving in the Langevin Block, Mr. Anderson had most recently been senior vice president for digital content strategy and managing director of Canada.com, part of the Postmedia News network. He also worked as senior vice-president of content for Postmedia. Mr. Anderson began with the company when it was still Canwest Publishing. He's also a former editor-in-chief of *The Ottawa Citizen*, and before that was managing editor of *The Telegraph-Journal* in Saint John, N.B.

Mr. Anderson's LinkedIn account indicates that he's currently in the process of studying a master's of communication management, a partnership degree offered by McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont., and Syracuse University in New York. The program is described as the only communications management graduate program in Canada on McMaster's website, and is targeted at "professionals" in government communications, public relations and other similar fields. According to LinkedIn, Mr. Anderson began his degree in 2013 and is expected to graduate in 2015.

Mr. Cardow is no longer listed anywhere on GEDS, and it's unclear where he's working now. Stay tuned to Hill Climbers for an update.

Originally from Guelph, Ont., Mr. Cardow was one of a number of staffers hired in the PMO last September, as part of what was reported to be a wave of PMO staff changes—which included Jenni Byrne's return to the PMO as a deputy chief of staff—to prep the top office for a new session and ahead of a federal election in 2015.

Until recently, there was no senior adviser—or just adviser, for that matter—to the PMO chief of staff. That said, Catherine Loubier works in the office as a senior adviser for Quebec.

No new speechwriter has been hired in the PMO, though as part of the start of the summer intern cycle, a new intern recently joined the speechwriting unit.

In other PMO staffing news, policy adviser Greg McFarlane has once again left the Langevin Block and has crossed the Ottawa River to work for the minister of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, whose office is located at 10 Rue Wellington, as chief of staff.

Steven Hobbs, who until recently was chief of staff to Mr. Valcourt, is no longer listed anywhere on GEDS. Keep reading Hill Climbers for an update.

Before arriving on the Hill, Mr. McFarlane worked as a research officer for the Government of Alberta, according to his LinkedIn, after studying a master of political science at the University of Alberta. Mr. McFarlane has a bachelor degree in political science from Dalhousie University in Halifax, N.S.

Shortly after the Conservative Party was elected to a minority government for the first time in 2006, Mr. McFarlane was hired to work as a special assistant for the Prairies. He left the PMO in the fall of 2008 when he was hired to work as director of Parliamentary affairs to the then-minister of Natural Resources, **Lisa Raitt**. Mr. McFarlane remained in her office for about two years, and stuck around for a short stint after Joe Oliver was shuffled into the role back in 2011 to help oversee the transition until moving over to then Industry minister **Christian Paradis'** office, again as director of Parliamentary affairs. Mr. Oliver is now Finance minister.

Mr. McFarlane returned to the PMO in the summer of 2012 as a policy adviser for energy, environment, and infrastructure, and he'll bring that expertise with him in his new role as chief of staff at Aboriginal Affairs.

Mr. McFarlane isn't the only recent addition to Mr. Valcourt's ministerial office as GEDS indicates that Pierre Yves-Gagnon has been hired to do issues management work for the minister.

Leading staffers in Mr. Valcourt's office currently include: director of Parliamentary affairs Sandra Dykxhoorn, director of policy and regional affairs Moira Wolstenholme, and director of communications Andrea Richer.

Revenue Minister Findlay hires new Parliamentary affairs director

Last week, Hill Climbers reported that National Revenue Minister **Kerry-Lynne Findlay** had recently bid farewell to director of Parliamentary affairs **Alexandre Seguin**, and the minister has recruited a new staffer to take up the role of Parliamentary affairs director in her office.

Nick Kalogerakos was recently added to Ms. Findlay's staff roster as director of Parliamentary affairs. Mr. Kalogerakos joins the National Revenue office from the office of Citizenship and Immigration Minister Chris Alexander, where he had been a senior policy adviser.

Neither Ms. Findlay's nor Mr. Alexander's office responded to Hill Climbers by deadline.

Mr. Kalogerakos first appeared on the government's directory service in the fall of 2012 as a policy adviser to then International Cooperation minister Julian Fantino, who is now the Veterans Affairs minister. In September 2013, Mr. Kalogerakos was hired to work in Mr. Alexander's office, and he's been there ever since.

Now listed as a director in Ms. Findlay's office, Mr. Kalogerakos now works under Chief of Staff Ian West in the office.

Meanwhile, Labour and Status of Women Minister **Kellie Leitch** recently bid farewell to staffer **Gaggan Gill**, who had been a communications and policy adviser for Status of Women.

Ms. Gill is now working as a senior special assistant for Multiculturalism in Employment and Social Development Minister **Jason Kenney's** ministerial office. Despite being shuffled out of the then-named Citizenship, Immigration and Multiculturalism file last summer, Mr. Kenney retained his responsibilities as the minister for Multiculturalism. Mr. Alexander is now Citizenship and Immigration Minister, and there's also Minister of State for Multiculturalism **Tim Uppal**.

Ms. Leitch's office is currently run by acting chief of staff and director of policy David Foster, following the recent departure of Dan Miles, who is working in the Finance minister's regional Toronto office as director of regional affairs.

Ministers Ritz, Blaney, and Lebel tweak staff rosters

Agriculture Minister **Gerry Ritz** has a new private secretary at his side following the recent departure of private secretary **Kaelyn MacGillivray**, as indicated by GEDS.

Carly Williamson has already been hired as a private secretary, replacing Ms. MacGillivray in the office. Back in the fall of 2012, Hill Climbers reported that Ms. MacGillivray had been hired to work for Mr. Ritz as a communications assistant and became the minister's private secretary around the spring of 2013.

Chief of Staff **Aaron Gairdner** is in charge of Mr. Ritz's ministerial office, aided by **Mindy Pearce**, director of policy; **Steven Barrett**, director of issues management; and Jeff English, director of communications, among other staff.

Public Safety Minister **Steven Blaney** recently bid farewell to his executive assistant, **Elizabeth de Viel Castel**.

Ms. de Viel Castel was hired to work as Mr. Blaney's EA in the fall of 2012. Chief of Staff **Andrew House** is in charge of Mr. Blaney's ministerial office and is aided by **Frédéric Boisvert**, deputy chief of staff for operations.

Meanwhile, Infrastructure and Intergovernmental Affairs Minister **Denis Lebel** has hired a new driver.

Hill Climbers recently reported that Mr. Lebel's former driver, **Alex Poirier-Gaboury**, had joined Natural Resource Minister **Greg Rickford's** office as a special assistant. Following up on this staffing change, Mr. Lebel has hired **Richard Périard** as his new ministerial driver.

Chief of Staff **Yan Plante** heads up Mr. Lebel's office and is assisted by **Vanessa Schneider**, director of stakeholder relations; **Benoit Fortin**, director of Parliamentary affairs and issues management; **Sébastien Benedict**, director of policy; and **Mario Lavoie**, director of operations.

New communications assistant in Liberal Leader's Office

The Liberal leader's office recently welcomed a new assistant for communications, **Cameron Ahmad**, to help handle Liberal leader **Justin Trudeau's** media demands, filling a gap left by the departure of **Kate Monfette** last February.

Mr. Trudeau's Chief of Staff **Cyrus Reporter** sent out an emailed message, through **Kate Purchase**, the Liberal leader's director of communications planning, to members of the Canadian Parliamentary Press Gallery on May 14, announcing that Mr. Ahmad has been hired as a special assistant for communications.

Until recently, as indicated by Mr. Reporter's email, Mr. Ahmad had been working as an assistant to Quebec Liberal **Kathleen Weil**, the province's recently appointed minister of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion. Mr. Ahmad volunteered on Quebec Liberal Premier **Philippe Couillard's** March 2013 leadership campaign, and he's also a former president of the Young Liberals of Canada's Quebec branch.

"Cameron's duties will be primarily be focused on media relations, and he should serve as your first point of contact if you have a question regarding the Liberal leader, caucus or policies or are seeking to book an interview with Mr. Trudeau," reads Mr. Reporter's email.

With Mr. Ahmad's addition to the Liberal staff team, director of communications **Mylène Dupéré** will give greater focus to dealing with Quebec and French-language media, while Ms. Purchase will tackle communications in the rest of Canada, according to the email.

In an encouraging move, Mr. Ahmad actually called Hill Climbers last week to notify that he was the new media contact for Mr. Trudeau, and to provide his direct contact information.

Mr. Ahmad's addition to the office comes just as the Liberal leader's office staff lists have been updated on GEDS, shedding more light on who is currently working for Mr. Trudeau and the Liberal research bureau, which are both funded by Parliamentary resources.

As is the case with every party, the line between the party leader's office and party research bureau is often blurred.

Mr. Reporter is in charge of Mr. Trudeau's leader's office as his chief of staff. Communications director Ms. Dupéré oversees special assistants for communications **Alexander Lawrence** and **Justine Villeneuve**, and Mr. Ahmad is in the leader's office, alongside Ms. Purchase who is director of communications planning.

Director of operations and outreach **Marlene Floyd** oversees special assistants for operations and outreach **Jordan Crosby**, **Kiel Dizon-Lawlor**, **Noémie Julian**, **Vandana Fatima Kattar**, **Mark Livingstone** and **Jasdeep Singh Chahal**.

Also currently working in the leader's office are **Lynda Bouraoui**, special assistant for scheduling; **Rheal Lewis**, senior adviser for Parliamentary affairs; and **Adèle-Marie Richard**, special assistant.

Over in the research bureau—though again, the line between the offices is quite blurred, as is typical on the Hill—there's **Michael McNair**, director of policy, research and Parliamentary affairs, who oversees special assistants for policy and research **David Hurl**, **Wallace McLean**, **Ali Pacha**, and **Erica van Wyngaarden**, as well as Marci Surkes, senior manager of policy and research, and Ralph Lysyshyn, senior policy adviser. There's also senior adviser for research Kevin Bosch.

Maryvonne Boucher and Suzanne Sirois do translation work in the Liberal research bureau. Ashley Wright is a special assistant for caucus services; Rick Theis is a senior adviser for issues management; and finally Linda Hooper is manager of finance and administration in the Liberal research bureau.

For the 2014-15 fiscal year, as the third party in the House of Commons, the Liberal party leader's office is set at \$1,191,107 while the Liberal research bureau has a budget of \$1,139,010, adding up to approximately \$2.33-million for this fiscal year.

Carleton MPM program proving beneficial

Carleton University's Clayton Riddell Graduate Program in political management had a bit of a bumpy start when it began in the fall of 2011, but two years and two graduating classes later, the program is proving beneficial to those looking to get in politics. Hill Climbers was able to identify 11 staffers currently working on the Hill who have graduated from the program, out of 45 total graduates to date.

There's Andrew McGrath, who graduated in 2012 and is currently press secretary to Labour and Status of Women Minister Kellie Leitch, and his co-worker, Alexandra Valcour, a special assistant for policy to Ms. Leitch. Michael Seccareccia, who graduated in 2013, is now in the PMO as assistant to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. PMO issues manager Laura Kurkimaki is also a graduate, as is Saro Khatchadourian, currently press secretary to Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Lynne Yelich.

Paul Burbank, a special assistant for policy to Minister of State for Social Development Candice Bergen, is also a graduate of Carleton University's master's of political management (MPM) program, as is Natalia Jankowski, special assistant for case management to Citizenship and Immigration Minister Chris Alexander. Ashton Arsenault, who is currently assistant to the Parliamentary Secretary for National Revenue, is also an MPM grad, as is Sandra Freedman, who is now working as a legislative assistant to Conservative MP David Sweet and who previously worked in Rona Ambrose's office as Public Works minister. And over in the Senate, assistant Laura LeBel is a graduate of Carleton's MPM program.

Hill Climbers was prompted to follow up on graduates of the first two years of Carleton's political management master's program after noting MPM grads had been hired on the Hill in consecutive weeks.

When Carleton's MPM program started in 2012 concerns were raised over news of a donor agreement that had been struck between Carleton University and the Clayton H. Riddell Foundation, which donated \$15-million to launch the program. There was concern over academic freedom and accountability, including over the fact a five-person steering committee with the power of the program budget, curriculum and hiring comprised a number of individuals politically connected to former Reform Party leader Preston Manning. Connections to Mr. Manning also drew the program's self-described "cross-partisan" nature into question.

But two graduating classes later, Carleton's MPM program appears to be a beneficial exercise for those looking to work in or around politics at any level. Graduates told Hill Climbers the program is gaining recognition among political offices through word-of-mouth.

Aside from the 11 graduates who are working on the Hill, Hill Climbers tried to identify every other graduate currently working in a relevant field.

Emile Scheffel, for instance, who graduated in 2013, is now working as a communications aide to Liberal B.C. Premier Christy Clark. Dan White, who graduated in the same class, now works for Ontario MPP Jane McKenna. Ihor Korbabicz, who graduated in 2012, is now a research analyst at Pollara Strategic Insights; Reudon Eversley, a 2012 graduate, is now lead consultant at MEDIA Consultants Inc.; and 2013 graduate Barbara Hann is currently an information specialist at the Department of Foreign Affairs, to name a few more. Hill Climbers identified one grad south of the border: Kevin Geiger is currently a waterfront program outreach lead at the Seattle Department of Transportation.

"The course material definitely does teach you things that are definitely applicable during your day-to-day work life, however, what the MPM program also exposes you to is a network that is obviously very much in the nature of this field, and networking is a key part," said Mr. Khatchadourian of the program in an interview with Hill Climbers, adding that the program not only provides opportunities to network, but helps to hone those skills.

The program's faculty includes conservative pollster André Tucotte, previously the official pollster for the Reform Party and Mr. Manning; Stephen Azzi, a former Liberal staffer; Jennifer Robson, another former Liberal staffer; and Paul Wilson, who was director of policy in the PMO from 2009 until 2011.

"I did my undergrad in political science, which was more theory based, and doing the political management program got you looking at that practical side of politics. You learn from people who have practised politics as it's actually done. People like Paul Wilson, who was the Prime Minister's policy director, [former PMO chief of staff] Guy Giorno taught us political campaigns, Robin Sears from the NDP [former staffer] taught communications strategy," said Mr. McGrath.

"You can only learn so much from a textbook, and it was really invaluable to get that sort of on-the-ground experience," he said.

Mr. McGrath said the program also did a good job at bringing in informed guest speakers, including former U.S. ambassador David Jacobson, who gave graduates first-hand experiences about his job. Mr. McGrath said one of the benefits of Carleton's MPM program is its cross-partisan nature.

"It really sort of builds your own personal network to expand beyond your own party," said Mr. McGrath.

Mr. Khatchadourian said since graduating, he's had people comment on the program when reviewing his resumé, noting they know a graduate or an instructor.

Mr. McGrath, who had worked in the Senate before attending the program and already had a foot in the political door, said he's noticed the program gaining recognition on the Hill "and among those of influence" here in Ottawa.

"When I first graduated, I would say I have an MPM from Carleton and it's, 'Oh, what's that?' Whereas now when you do it, it's, 'Oh, the political management degree.' I think the word-of-mouth sort of aspect to it here in Ottawa has been great. You may notice the staff, the people who graduated from the program are still employed on the Hill, so I think it speaks to the quality of teaching that in a business of incredibly high turnover that those who start on the Hill from this program typically end up staying," said Mr. McGrath.

Carleton's MPM program isn't the only one of its kind in Canada. On the Hill are a number of graduates of Trinity Western University's Laurentian Leadership Program, which in part brings students to Ottawa for a year to intern on the Hill.

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