

ASTTBC Retired Members Survey

Final Report

Applied Science
Technologists & Technicians
of British Columbia



Prepared By; Bruce Stevens, ASCT

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Executive Summary

Approximately 18 % of ASTTBC members are at or within 4 years of retirement. This is a very significant proportion of the association membership and cannot be easily or quickly replaced, given the current annual average increase in membership.

It is essential that ASTTBC address this issue immediately and develop means to encourage members to retain membership in the "Retired Member" category.

As a first step, a survey was created to identify who the potential retired members are, what motivates them and what they need to retain membership and see value in a retired membership. This was sent to 1866 members, over the age of 55, including those already retired. A total of 342 replies were received.

The survey offered some interesting highlights;

- 96 % of potential retired members are male,
- 66% reside in Metro Vancouver and Vancouver Island,
- 80% are ASCT and in the traditional engineering disciplines,
- 50% consider themselves not fully retired and are working to some level,
- 2/3 plan to retire within 4 years,
- 60% of respondents stated they are "proud" to be a part of ASTTBC
- Communication methods (news, e-news, messaging) are considered very well done,
- Member benefits while adequate do need expanding to meet retired member needs
- Retired members want to be recognize and given volunteer and mentor opportunities,
- there is strong support for a mentoring program which would involve retired members,
- Affordable group health, dental and travel insurances is the highest priority for retired members

Primary Recommendations include;

- Include members in local events and activities with opportunities to volunteer,
- Consider creative revenue generating vehicles and models to fund additional services,
- Ongoing advertising campaign to promote retired category
- Better promotion of TechClub and Affinity Program,
- Enhance member services with broader range of health and retirement planning options,
- Develop mentorship program,

Conclusions;

There is generally strong affinity for ASTTBC but improvements are needed to encourage retired members to retain membership. Time is of the essence.

1. Introduction

The impacts of an increasing number of members reaching and nearing retirement has become of significant concern to ASTTBC. As a result, an electronic survey was created to gather a wide range of information and feedback relating to general demographics, membership details, working / retired status, satisfaction levels with current services, attitudes towards mentoring, suggestions for possible additional services and offering the opportunity for general comment. The survey posed a series of 23 questions, with several offering the opportunity for comment and opinion. A copy of the survey, with results is included at appendix A.

This report summarizes the results into the seven categories set out above.

2. General Demographics

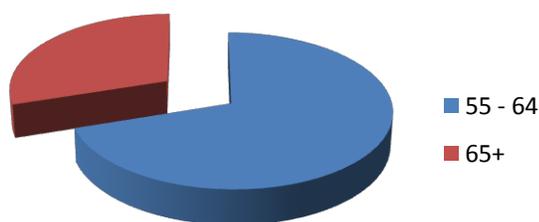
2.1 Survey Coverage

The survey was circulated, by email, to a total of 1866 members, 55 years and older, including those in the "Retired Member" category. A total of 342 replies were received.

There are currently 333 members registered in the "Retired Member" category.

2.2 Ages of respondents

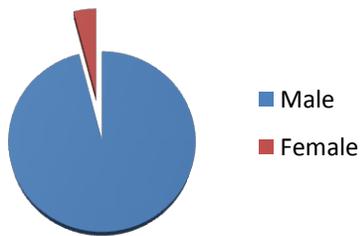
Some 70% of respondents are between the ages of 55 and 64.



This is a very important number as it represents the level of interest in those members nearing retirement and eligibility for the retired member category.

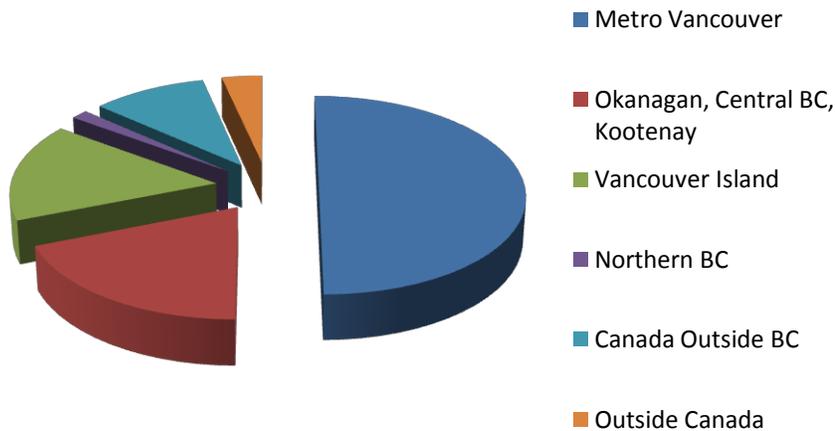
2.3 Gender

Given the age related demographics the overwhelming majority of respondents - 96% - are male. This will, over time rebalance to recognize the increasing number of female Technology Professionals in the career, likely in proportion to the overall membership .



2.4 Place of Residence

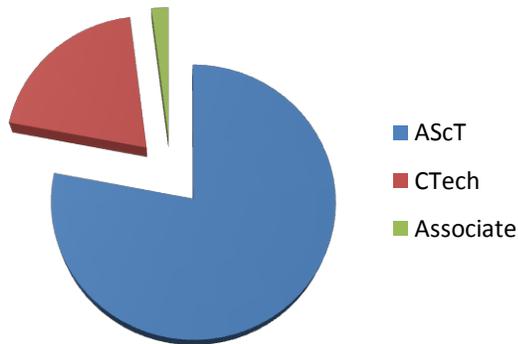
Close to 65% of respondents reside in Metro Vancouver or Vancouver Island. This is followed by 19% residing in the Okanagan, Central BC, Kootenay Regions. Of the remaining 16%, all but approximately 3.5 % reside in Canada.



3. General Membership Details

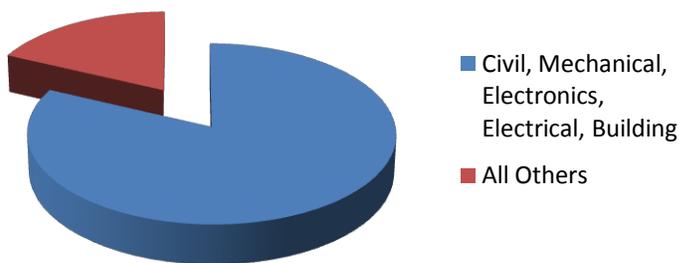
3.1 Certification Level

Some 78% of respondents are registered as Applied Science Technologists, 20% as Certified Technicians and approximately 2% as Associates.



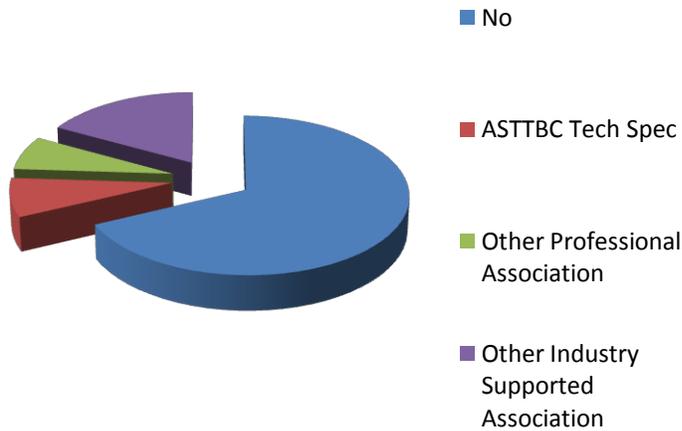
3.2 Discipline

Given the age demographic, the fact that 82% of respondents are from the "traditional" engineering disciplines is understandable. This will over time rebalance to reflect the increased number and variety of technology related disciplines being offered registration.



3.3 Other Memberships

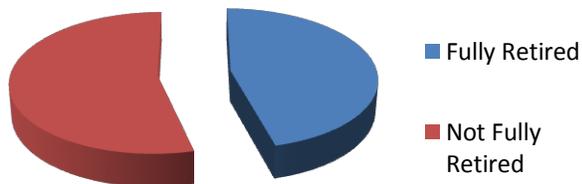
Approximately 32% of respondents hold dual ASTTBC or other designations. 8% hold ASTTBC Technical Specialist titles and 7% hold titles in other Professional Associations such as APEGBC, ASET, OASETT, APEGA and AIBC. There are some 17% of respondents who carry other designations issued by industry supported associations.



4. Retirement Status

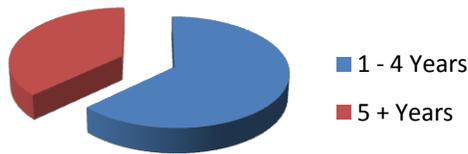
4.1 Consider themselves "Retired"

The split between those who consider themselves "Retired" and "not yet fully retired" is approximately even, with those still not fully retired a small majority.



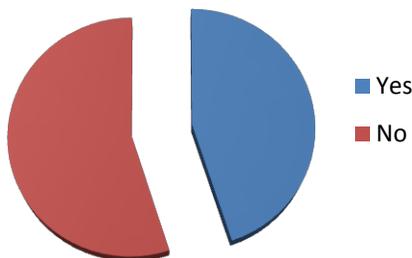
4.2 How long Retired

Almost 2/3 of those who consider themselves already retired have been so for a maximum of 4 years. This suggests that time is of the essence to ensure these retired members needs are addressed.



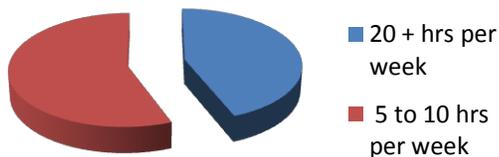
4.3 Actively Working

Of those who consider themselves retired almost 1/2 are actively working to varying degrees. These numbers coincide almost exactly with the response to the question "Are you retired?".



4.4 Hours Working per Week (average)

Almost half of those who consider themselves retired are still working more than 20 hours per week.



4.5 When Plan to Fully Retire?

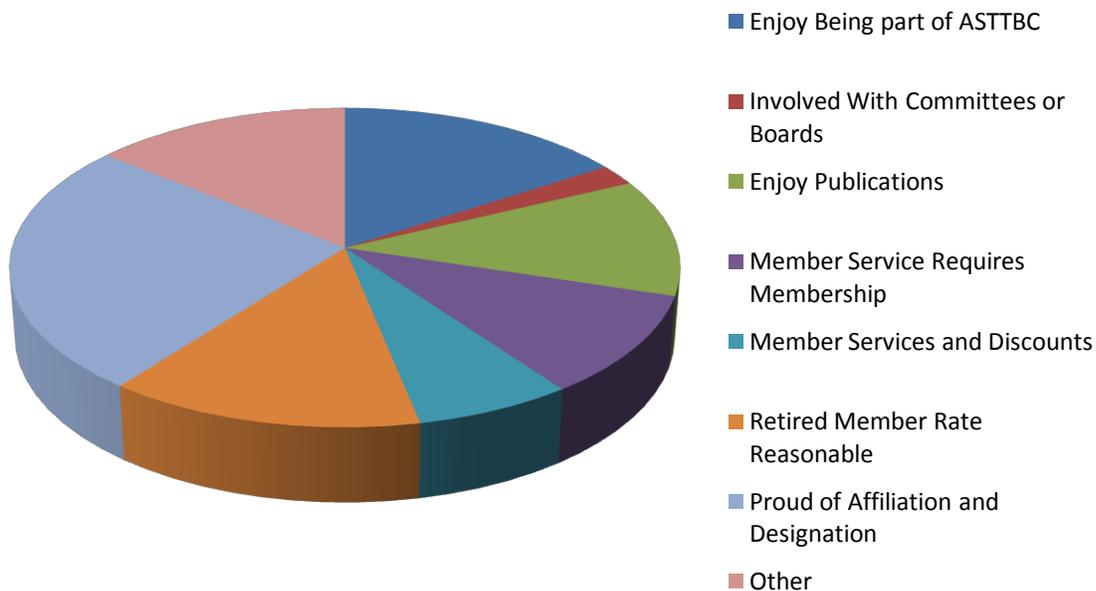
65% of respondents stated that they planned to fully retire within 4 years. The balance see retirement as being 5 to 10 years away. Similar to the condition in section 4.2, the number of respondents planning to fully retire within the next 4 years is a significant majority and again suggests time is of the essence to ensure these members are retained.



5. Value Of Membership and Services

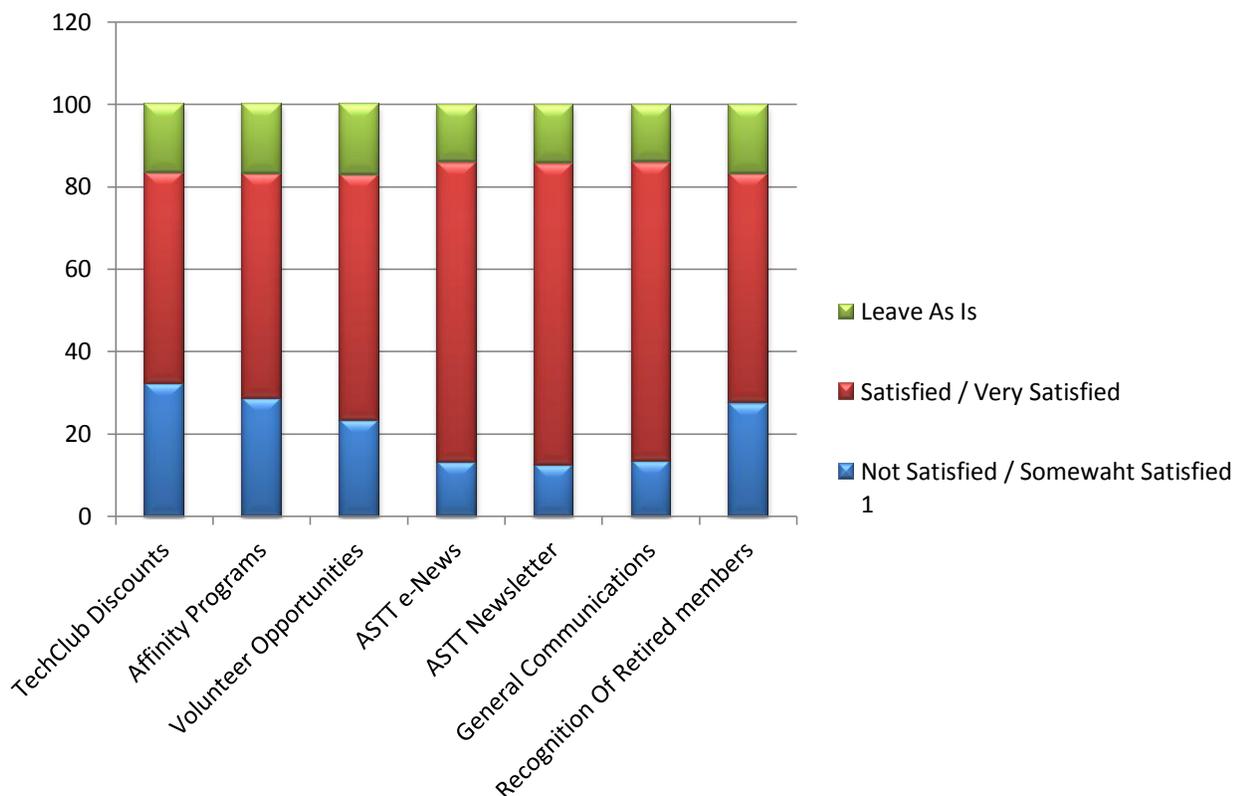
5.1 Why Retain Retired Membership?

This is possibly the most important question in the survey as it identifies the core reasons respondents choose to retain membership. The chart below demonstrates that belonging to, feeling included and the affordability of membership are by far the greatest motivation to retain membership. Services and other material benefits do not appear to be of such great importance. However this is somewhat at odds with the recurring comments in Section 7 about the need for improved member services, especially those focused to retired members.



5.2 Rate Member Services

In general all members services got a good approval rating. Highest satisfaction is in the area of communication. This corresponds to the importance respondents put on belonging and being included. Lower satisfaction is seen in how ASTTBC recognizes retired members. Lowest overall satisfaction is the tangible / material benefits associated with TechClub and Affinity discounts

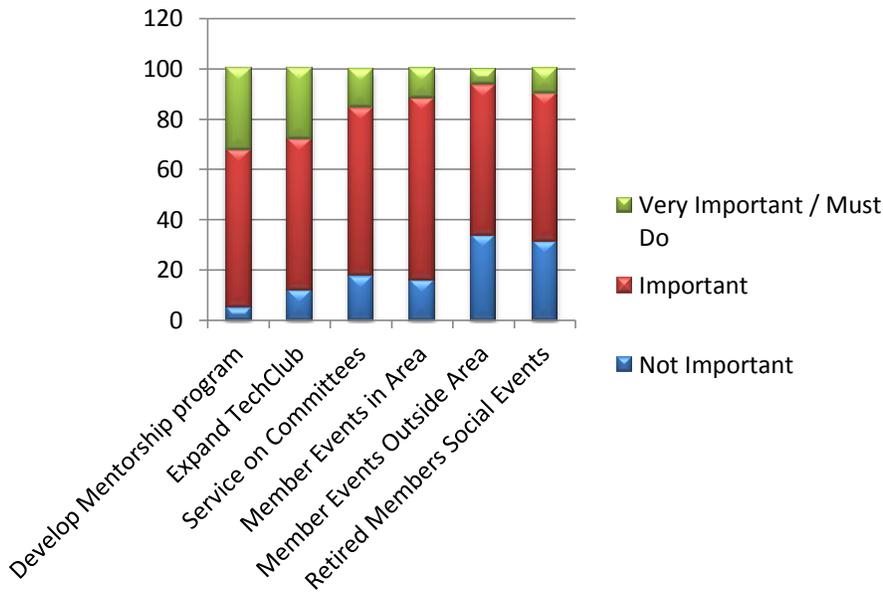


There is a considerable expectation amongst respondents for expansion of TechClub and Affinity Partnerships with corresponding greater discounts as well as the desire for more affordable access to group health, dental and travel insurances.

Meeting these needs will be a real challenge given the volume of membership and does suggest the need to consider alternative and creative means to generate the necessary offsetting revenue.

5.3 Importance Of Various Services and Opportunities

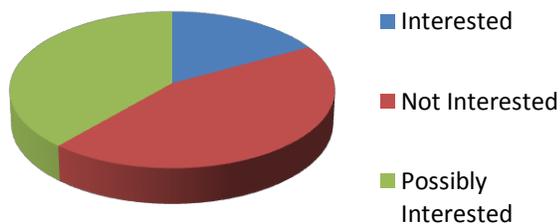
Highest level of importance was put on developing a mentorship program (being included again) and expansion of TechClub. Service on committees and networking opportunities within their areas of residence are also seen as quite important. Lesser importance is placed on member events outside their area of residence and social opportunities.



6. Mentoring

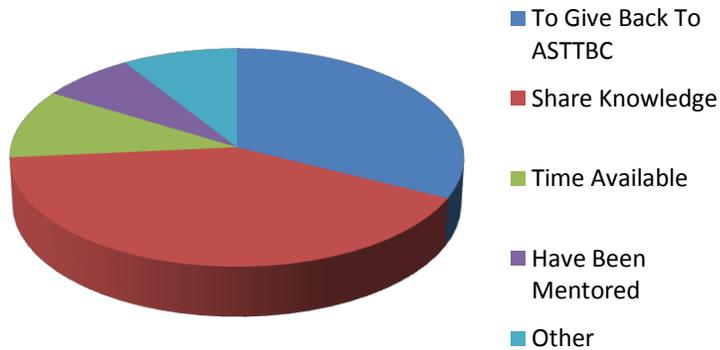
6.1 Interest in Being Involved as a Mentor

Slightly more than 50% of respondents indicated they are interested or possibly interested in being part of a mentoring program. This potential resource, along with a strong indication of support for development of a Mentoring Program is one of the key outcomes from this survey.



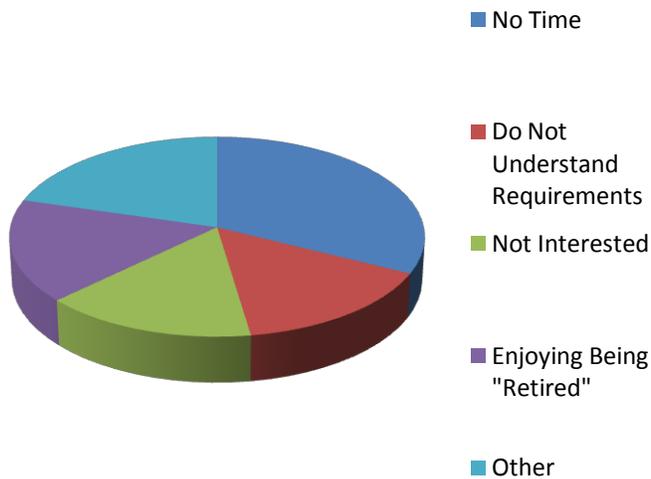
6.2 If "Interested or Possibly Interested" - Why?

The overwhelming reason for respondents considering contributing their time to a mentoring program relates to their desire to be involved and be included. They want to share knowledge and give back to ASTTBC.



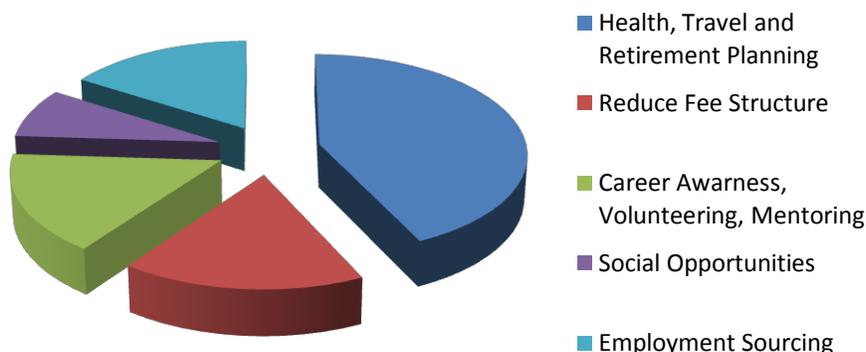
6.3 If "Not Interested" - Why?

Those respondents who do not wish to be part of a mentoring program have, for the most part, stepped away from their past careers and are enjoying "retirement". There are, however some who do not understand what is required and could, once they had more information, choose to be involved.



7. Suggestions for Additional Services

There were approximately 90 suggestions for additional services or adjustments to existing services. These can generally be grouped into 5 categories; Health, Travel and Retirement Planning, Reduced Fee Structure, Career Awareness, Volunteering and Mentoring, Social Opportunities and Employment Sourcing. The relative frequency of the same or similar suggestion being offered is represented below;



By far the most predominant and recurring theme was the desire for increased, affordable and accessible health and dental coverage, travel insurance and retirement planning services. Maintaining a fee structure which is affordable is key. Consistent with the high percentage of members who continue to work part time, many members are requesting job finding support. Similarly, there were a good number of respondents who stated a desire to become involved in mentoring and sharing of career opportunities with students. The interest in social events appears very limited.

As stated in section 5.2, the bulk of these suggestions carry with them a significant cost. Given the current and projected retired and general membership additional sources of revenue will be required to implement these suggestions. Under the current financing model for ASTTBC these revenues are unlikely to be available and as such may require consideration of some unique revenue creating vehicles.

8. General Comments and Observations

At the end of the survey, respondents were offered the chance to give comment, opinion or further suggestions. The majority of comments were positive about the overall value of professional registration within ASTTBC and the good work being done by ASTTBC. The constructive comments centered around several topics, in general order of frequency;

- Retired membership to be free or at most cost neutral,
- A lack of awareness around the Retired Member category,
- Concerns over the lack of progress towards professional recognition and an urging to move ahead with the Professional Technologist designation,
- Allowable working hours too restrictive,
- Create retired member "technical" group meetings,
- Add more flair to newsletters.

9. Conclusions and Recommendations

The survey responses provide a wealth of information about who the current and nearing retired members are, what motivates them and what they need to retain active membership within ASTTBC.

9.1 Conclusions

Generally, the members are satisfied with what ASTTBC membership gives them. However it is critical that a higher percentage of members retain membership in the retired category. To achieve this members must feel included, recognized, valued for their knowledge and see tangible benefits to show that retired membership is a strong "value proposition". Time is of the essence.

Although several of the "expectations" of respondents are cost intensive and do need consideration, some of the limited to no cost recommendations could be implemented quickly.

9.2 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been subdivided into 3 categories;

9.2.1 Limited to No Cost

- Create a "Retired Members" list within each region and include members in local events and activities with opportunities to volunteer,
- Consider alternative, non traditional and creative ways to fund member services,
- Allow retired members to carry title, with the addition of "Retired", ie AScT (Ret'd).

9.2.2 Modest Cost

- Create a retired members page on ASTTBC website with events and chat forum,
- Enhance recognition program for retired members, long term members,
- Ongoing advertising campaign to promote retired category
- Ongoing advertising to better promote TechClub
- expand TechClub content,
- Create a "Senate" of retired members to support / advise Council.

9.2.3 More Significant Cost

- Enhance member services with broader range of health and retirement planning options,
- Develop mentorship program,
- Retired dues be revenue neutral and as low as possible,
- Hold retired members annual symposium (via video link, skype etc),
- Develop a retired members resource center.

Respectfully Submitted

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bruce Stevens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and "S".

Bruce Stevens, ASCT
Regional Manager