

Minister Shirley Bond Talks Tech Skills with ASTTBC



MJ Whitemarsh, ASTTBC Manager of Strategic Partnerships (left) and ASTTBC CEO John Leech pose with Minister Bond on the steps of the BC Legislature.

Technical skills and careers are important to BC's growth and development and this recognition has served as the driver behind a partnership between the Ministry of Jobs, Tourism and Skills Training and ASTTBC. "Over the past four to five years ASTTBC has put in place world-class systems and services to assist new immigrants work through self-assessment against ASTTBC standards and then on to application with ASTTBC as a technologist, technician or technical specialist," said ASTTBC CEO, John Leech who with MJ Whitemarsh, were the ASTTBC representatives at a recent meeting with Minister Bond. "The Minister and Ministry staff has been incredible partners in driving change that will assure newcomers to BC and Canada that they can get into a technical career as soon as possible." ASTTBC has noted, for example, that some engineers in other countries cannot get registered as a PEng with APEGBC but they then can look to ASTTBC as an alternate pathway.

During the meeting the Minister indicated support for future initiatives that showcase technical skills and assist British Columbians as well as new immigrants get their skills assessed and move to a technical career. In some instances this will mean transitioning from one career area to another, due to technological change or changing demands of the marketplace. The Minister encouraged ASTTBC to support refugees as they find their way into the BC workplace.

ASTTBC has been working with pilot programming for First Nations. One example is a Public Works Technician program that ASTTBC is working on with the Musqueam and a number of First Nations communities. ASTTBC anticipates roll out of a pilot program later this year.

ASTTBC is also exploring programming to engage persons with disabilities and employers to explore opportunities in engineering and applied science technology fields.

The hidden jewel in all this is **competency-based certification**, which is now in all areas of professional certification within ASTTBC. Competency-based certification means the assessment of skills is much easier and more effective. “The software ASTTBC had developed to support competency-based certification is amazing,” enthused John Leech. ASTTBC will continue to work with the Ministry in developing further tools, resources and programming to support those wishing to consider a career in engineering and applied science technology.