

APPENDIX to Report of the Public Representatives 2011

Public Representation on ASTTBC Council - History

As a professional regulatory body it is appropriate and customary for the ASTTBC Council, the governing board, to have representation from the community. Public Representatives provide a professional regulatory body with input on decision-making and ensure a third party oversight over the work of a self-governing body such as ASTTBC.

It is usual that the public representatives are required under the governing statute and appointed by the Minister Responsible; however when the *ASTT Act* was enacted it was decided that public representation would be appointed by Council to serve on the Practice Review Board (PRB) as this is the body which has responsibility for the professional standards relating to member registration and practice including member accountabilities. As ASTTBC Council considered the role of the public in the governance of ASTTBC, the Council concluded it would be appropriate to include public representation.

ASTTBC Council has asked Government to amend the *ASTT Act* to include public representation on Council. Acknowledging that changes to the *ASTT Act* would most likely take some time, the Council decided to move ahead and appoint representatives, an option that is possible within the current statute which does not restrict Council only to members of the association. To formally allow for and define the appointment of public representatives, in 2005 Council amended, and members subsequently confirmed, changes to the *ASTT Regulations*. Two Public Representatives were formally nominated by the ASTTBC Nominating Committee and appointed to ASTTBC Council in May 2007. In 2009 the Nominating Committee and ASTTBC Council both indicated an interest in increasing the number of Public Representatives to three to bring the proportion in line with other self-regulating professions. Council amended the *ASTT Regulations* in 2010 to provide for a third public representative. If the members affirm the change to the *ASTT Regulation* this third person will join Council in May 2011.

Role of Public Representatives

Leading up to, and immediately following, the appointment of the first Public Representatives, ASTTBC initiated a search for information governing the roles of Public Representatives serving in other professional associations. The goal was to find information that would best enable the Public Representatives to contribute as members of the Council, report to Government and ASTTBC members, and serve the public interest. We found a dearth of information and as a result created our own model and best practices.

The following framework was developed to guide the Public Representatives on ASTTBC Council:

- provide a tangible link between the expectations of the public, society and provincial government and a professional regulatory body
- serve as an independent voice
- contribute opinions and recommendations to Council governance and decision-making related to issues of public interest
- monitor the governance of the association with a view to ensuring the association serves the public interest
- focus in areas affecting public health & safety and a sustainable environment

- assure a high level of public trust in the association’s professional standards, certification, and the accountability and compliance of the members of the association as they provide quality and value-added services to the public
- assist with continuous improvement initiatives that promote the legislated ‘Objects’ and Council’s Vision, Mission and Goals
- refrain from engaging in ASTTBC Council decisions related to business operations

Public Representatives are expected to:

- represent the interests of the ‘general public’ by raising issues related to decisions being prepared for implementation by Council that have the potential to impact the general public
- solicit appropriate stakeholders to assure adequate consultation and guidance to inform opinions and recommendations to Council
- at appropriate intervals, provide the Public Representatives report to the Provincial Government (Minister Responsible), the general public and ASTTBC members.

In these early days of Public Representatives serving on ASTTBC Council, we are developing and evolving appropriate practices as we establish a new foundation that best represents the public interest and augments the high standards of ASTTBC. Through diligent engagement within Council, we continuously seek comments and suggestions from recognized resources that will enhance our role and mandate.

1. Legislative Foundation: ASTT Act and Regulations

While the foundational purposes of ASTTBC did not change substantially with the 1985 enactment, the *ASTT Act* provided a level of public accountability usual for self-governing professional organizations, as is evidenced by the following excerpt from the Applied Science Technologists and Technicians Act “objects”:

- (a) to maintain, improve and increase the knowledge, ability and competence of the members of
the association;*
- (b) to regulate standards of training and practice of and for its members and to protect the
interests of the public;*
- (c) to establish, maintain and develop standards of ethics among its members;*
- (d) to do all lawful things that are incidental or conducive to the accomplishment of these
objects.*

In the ensuing 24 years under the *ASTT Act* the Association has evolved into a mature and well-respected professional association. ASTTBC is an association committed to protecting the public interest through high standards of professional regulation.

Endorsements from similar provincial and national associations confirm that ASTTBC is an acknowledged leader in professional regulation and that it has proactively implemented initiatives that demonstrate its commitment and accountability to serve the public interest.

While the Council is performing ably within the framework of the *ASTT Act*, it is of concern to ASTTBC Council that the *ASTT Act* is somewhat lacking in its ability as professional legislation to effect continuous improvements. The *ASTT Act* is limited in its powers, and, until the Provincial Government enacts much needed changes, the only interim, but limited option available to ASTTBC to drive change, is to utilize the *ASTT Regulations* wherever possible.

2. ASTTBC Bylaws and Policies

The ASTTBC Council has approved Bylaws and Policies that provide a contemporary model of policy governance. Council operates in an open and transparent manner, with its meetings open to the public.

While the current Bylaws and Policies are representative of self-governing professional associations we are aware that Council and the Executive Director strive to enhance these documents, in particular to ensure a consistent approach to the policy governance model under which Council operates.

3. Council Governance

ASTTBC Council operates under a complementary policy governance model. The meetings are run professionally and efficiently with clear policy recommendations and decisions relative to ASTTBC's legislated mandate and the Council's Vision, Mission and Goals. At all times, the public Representatives are afforded the opportunity to fully engage and participate in providing contributions, opinions and recommendations to Council governance and decision-making relative to issues of public interest.

To enhance linkages with other professional associations ASTTBC and APEGBC share the agenda for their Council meetings. This collaborative practice, in place for many years, serves as a valuable way to provide constructive linkages between the professional associations and serve the public interest. ASTTBC and ABCFP exchanged information for several years but this has been discontinued. ASTTBC has sought similar approach with other related professions. The model warrants further expansion to others fields.

4. Council Work Plan, Budget, Organization and Staffing

The ASTTBC Council has approved the following statements of its Vision, Mission and eight (8) Goals to govern the association. These statements are the foundation and standards of reference utilized to empower Councils' consistency and accountability when reviewing its decisions.

Vision

ASTTBC is the model association for technology professionals.

Mission:

To serve the public by regulating and supporting technology professionals' commitment to a safe, healthy, and sustainable society and environment.

Goals:

1. Self governing professional legislation and regulation that protects the public interest.
2. Assured rights to practice and utilization of qualifications within the scope of the Technology Professionals' education, training and experience.
3. Professional standards and regulation for certification, accreditation, ethics and accountability that reflect contemporary social expectations.
4. Consistent and universal recognition of Technology Professionals by employers, governments, other professionals and regulatory bodies.

5. Member services that enhance professional, career, business and personal interests.
6. Technology education and careers are valued and supported.
7. The association and its members are involved as key stakeholders and contributors to public policy in areas in which Technology Professionals have a demonstrated interest and expertise.
8. Sustained excellence in governance and management of the association.

ASTTBC's Vision, Mission and Goals are specific in their commitment to consider the public interest of safety, health and sustainability through the highest standards of Council and members' professional practice, qualifications and ethics.

ASTTBC operates with an annual budget of about \$2.3 million, with most revenue derived from member annual dues and other fees. The association operates from an office building it purchased in Surrey BC in the mid 1990s. In 2005 ASTTBC paid off the mortgage. As required by the *ASTT Act and Regulations* the Association conducts and publishes an annual audit of the association's finances.

ASTTBC has a well-qualified and very dedicated staff of 18 FTE. There are two staff officers appointed by the Council: Executive Director and Registrar.

5. Boards and Committees

ASTTBC has established Boards and Committees that facilitate achieving its legislated mandate, for example, in setting and maintaining the standards for professional certification and registration, accreditation and practice review. The Board of Examiners and Certification Boards for technical specialist programs provide an invaluable contribution as ASTTBC meets its legislated responsibilities to protect the public interest. The Council and the Executive Director establish committees as needed to carry out its operations. Examples of special groups set up to address public policy matters: BC Women in Technology, First Nations Careers Council, TechGREEN, and Technology Education and Careers Council. Two 'Institutes' are active within ASTTBC and serving members interests: BC Institute of Property Inspectors and Steel Detailers Institute of BC.

6. Professional Certification, Registration and Regulation

ASTTBC's primary role is the professional regulation of technologists, technicians and technical specialists. ASTTBC has in place policies governing the certification and registration of technicians and technologists in sixteen (16) disciplines and technical specialists in eight (8) disciplines. From all accounts ASTTBC has high standards for certification, largely based on an assessment of competencies.

ASTTBC has taken a lead role in working with the Association of Science and Engineering Technology Professionals of Alberta (ASET) and the BC Government to meet the full requirements of the Alberta – BC Trade, Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA). Building on a national portability agreement reached over a decade ago with all other associations regulating technologists and technicians, ASTTBC and ASET have made the minor but necessary adjustments to policy and processes to meet TILMA. The two associations have signed a mutual agreement to commit to the principles of TILMA.

On the national scene ASTTBC worked with other technologist and technician associations to ensure full portability of credentials Canada-wide, all part of the re-invigorated Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT), Trade Investment and Labour Mobility Agreement (TILMA) and New West Partnership Trade Agreement (NWPTA).

7. Professional Regulation Benchmarks

ASTTBC has a strong foundation for professional regulation. Modeled after other ‘senior’ professional associations, ASTTBC utilizes the *ASTT Regulations* and its Policies in governing the many elements of professional regulation. ASTTBC has implemented a Code of Ethics, Professionalism in Practice Program and Ethics and Practice Examination which must be completed by all applicants.

Errors and Omissions insurance is available to members through a program arranged by the association.

In 2008 ASTTBC introduced a web-based tool members can use to record and track their continuing professional development (CPD). This resource is a first step in moving toward formal reporting of CPD

activities. With the exception of house and property inspectors, it is voluntary for members to report their CPD using the web-based software.

ASTTBC regularly reports in a general way on all complaints, outlining the reason for the complaint and decision rendered. Where the public will be best served, the report includes full details of the circumstances. Consideration is always given when reporting to the needs of the public and the interests of the practitioner. ASTTBC’s obligation to serve the public interest will always weigh heaviest when deciding what to report. It has been suggested by at least one external party that ASTTBC does not report sufficient information. For this reason ASTTBC is examining its Regulations, policies and procedures to ascertain as to whether changes are needed to better serve the public interest. There is no hesitation in commending ASTTBC for its effectiveness and commitment to serving the public interest as it pertains to formal complaints against members.

8. Professional Accountability: Complaints and their Disposition

A primary function of a professional regulatory body such as ASTTBC is to protect the public interest. In addition to assuring high standards of professional registration ASTTBC also has in place a regulated process for assuring professional accountability, including receiving and managing public complaints against members. The *ASTT Regulations* spell out in great detail the process that will be followed by the Association in handling a formal public complaint. The *ASTTBC Regulations* governing complaints has been adapted over the years to achieve best practices and meet the current circumstances and legal precedence.

9. Association Programs: Public Policy

ASTTBC is actively engaged in various public policy initiatives where they are directly linked to ASTTBC’s role as a self-governing professional association for technology professionals. These programs generally fit into three areas: (a) promoting technology education and careers; (b) ensuring BC has a highly qualified and fully sustainable technology workforce; and (c) public matters in which technology professionals play a critical role. A few examples of each:

- a) promoting technology education and careers:
 - ASTTBC awards program

- ASTTBC awards through regional science and technology councils
 - Big Little Science Centre (Kamloops)
 - career and trade fairs
 - National Engineering & Geoscience Month
 - National Technology Week
 - Support for the Bert Edwards Science & Technology Elementary School (Kamloops)
 - Support for career programs: catapult, spaghetti bridge, and robotics competitions;
- Skills
- Canada (BC); Girls Exploring Trades and Technology;
 - Tech WORKS! awareness program

b) technology workforce:

- Agreement on Internal Trade and TILMA – ASTTBC taking a lead role
- AIT – ASTTBC taking a lead role
- BC Women in Technology (BCWiT)
- First Nations Careers Council (FNCC)
- NWPTA – ASTTBC engaged and taking a lead role
- Roundtables on Technology Skills Shortages
- Technology Education and Careers Council (TECC)

- c) technology professionals play a critical role:
- Building Code and Standards – BC and national
 - environmental standards and regulation
 - Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) – ASTTBC is a sponsor
 - safety standards and regulation
 - Sustainability – ASTTBC created the TechGREEN program
 - Technology Professionals Canada

ASTTBC has acquitted itself very well in this general area and is recognized as a leader within the associations of technology professionals nationally.

10. Association Programs : Member Services & Benefits

ASTTBC has an array of member services and benefits, many of which are directed to members' professional growth and development and careers. Examples include:

- ASTT e-NEWS monthly for current information
- ASTT News – bi-annual
- Compensation survey
- Continuing Professional Development – facilitate seminars and workshops
- CTEN – Canadian Technical Employment Network in cooperation with sister associations
- Errors & omissions insurance
- Member benefits such as health and dental insurance and other similar programs
- www.asttbc.org