



Technology Professionals: Value to the Public Interest

# 2016 Annual Report of the Public Representatives

May 26th 2017

Serving as Public Representatives on the Council of the  
APPLIED SCIENCE TECHNOLOGISTS & TECHNICIANS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## Role of Public Representatives on the ASTTBC Council

Public representatives provide professional regulatory bodies with input on decision-making, and ensure a third party oversight over the work of a self-governing body such as ASTTBC. Public representatives are, in essence, stewards of public interest, particularly as it relates to safety and protection. Their primary role on ASTTBC Council is to raise matters and concerns that help maintain and improve public trust in the professional endeavours of ASTTBC as a public organization, and the work and conduct of its Council, CEO, staff and membership.

The public representatives have always been provided the opportunity to fully engage and participate in all discussions at ASTTBC Council. The public representatives are appointed by Council, and have been granted full voting rights.

## Purpose of the Public Representatives Annual Report

The Public Representatives Annual Report is an independent statement, and is prepared and presented without the need for Council or staff approval. The 2016 Report covers the calendar period from January through December 2016.

The Report will be forwarded to the Minister of Advanced Education, the Minister responsible for the **ASTT Act and Regulations**, all Members of the BC Legislative Assembly, and the BC Members of the Parliament of Canada. It is also available to other interested stakeholders, and will be posted to the ASTTBC website for public access along with previous Annual Reports. A condensed version will be presented at the ASTTBC Annual General Meeting on May 26, 2017. A summary will also be included in ASTTBC e-NEWS and ASTTBC CONNECT.

## Public Representatives Perspective of Key Advancements & Challenges

Many of ASTTBC Council's key agenda items of public interest that were identified in the 2015 Public Representatives Report continued to be active on Council's agenda in 2016, and indeed will continue to be active topics in 2017. The recommendations offered in the 2015 Public Representatives Report remain valid until these topics have achieved a state of conclusion at Council, so there is little useful purpose in simply repeating them in this Report. This Report will concentrate on two topics on Council's agenda that have rolled over from 2015 into 2016 relating to Professional Standards and Regulation, and on two topics that the public representatives believe require periodic review and realignment (as necessary) by Council.

### Professional Standards & Regulation

Under the governance umbrella of its **ASTT Act and Regulations**, ASTTBC provides a prescribed process of:

- professional certification and membership registration of technologists, technicians and technical specialists in the fields under its jurisdiction;
- monitoring membership professional development efforts that meet ASTTBC's continued professional development (CPD) policy requirements that are designed to assure currency of knowledge and practice; and
- correction and/or disciplinary measures to ensure its members adhere to a code of ethics and practice that is in compliance with the ASTT Act and Regulations.

In the 2015 Public Representatives Report, a requirement of reporting of CPD by its membership was applauded, with a recommendation that ASTTBC Council establishes, as a key objective for 2016/2017, the implementation of a CPD monitoring and reporting process. Council was regularly updated on the development status of such a process at its meetings in 2016. More work remains to be done.

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The public representatives recommend that having a CPD monitoring and reporting process in place continues to be a key objective of ASTTBC Council and ASTTBC staff, and that Council measure progress towards this objective at its meetings throughout 2017.*

*Professional Standards & Regulation, cont'd*

Through the collaborative efforts of ASTTBC and its partners in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, Technology Professional Canada (TPC) was officially incorporated in 2015. Development of TPC continued throughout 2016, and this work will extend into 2017. TPC provides full funding support for Technology Accreditations Canada (TAC) to develop and maintain standardized competency benchmarks across four provinces which are used for professional certification and for accrediting programs offered by the post-secondary schools within the four provinces. The ASTTBC public representatives have been repeatedly assured that public interest, safety and protection have been at the forefront of all discussion in the development and implementation of TPC and TAC. The public representatives, however, have raised concern about the current lack of a national forum where all provinces and territories sit at a common table. This concern remains, and warrants repeating in this report.

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The public representatives recommend that dialog between TPC and the provinces who have retained partnership with the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists (CCTT) becomes a priority of ASTTBC and TPC, with the vision of a once again single national forum.*

*Of update interest, it is encouraging to note that in his January 2017 report, ASTTBC Council president Keith Trulson informed Council that the provincial association presidents from across Canada will be invited to a meeting to discuss national issues that are relevant to all provincial associations. The meeting has been confirmed and will take place on March 11, 2017 in Halifax, Nova Scotia. This is an important first step, and it is hoped that it will be a successful step in formally uniting all ten provinces and three territories into fruitful dialog, agreements, and partnerships.*

**Professional Technologist Designation**

In 2015, ASTTBC Council launched a new designation of **Professional Technologist (PTech)** in BC. ASTTBC has the authority to self-create professional designations within its realm. As a first step in this initiative, Council approved the PTech certification policies and requirements, appointed an inaugural PTech Certification Board, and invited members to apply for PTech registration. In January 2016, Council granted six PTech designations to qualified applicants. The PTech designation was created by ASTTBC Council to acknowledge the advanced qualifications and experience of some of its certified technologists; with the ultimate intent to seek approval for appropriate rights of independent practice. It is the public representatives' understanding that within the engineering framework, rights of independent practice will require agreement from the Association of Professional Engineers of BC (APEGBC). A joint ASTTBC/APEGBC Board was established to discuss matters of common interest, but despite this being an agenda item for some time, little meaningful advancement has resulted. Concurrent with this, is the question of interprovincial mobility of BC's and Alberta's PTech designations. Dialog with ASET (Alberta's equivalent to ASTTBC) has begun, but agreement may not be straightforward because of existing variations. Due to the above complexities, the receiving of new applications for the awarding of an ASTTBC PTech have been suspended until further notice by ASTTBC Council.

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The public representatives recommend that ASTTBC Council undertake, as a high priority, a review aimed at formulating a revised strategy to resolve current barriers with respect to external acceptance of the PTech, so that the registration process for this credential can recommence as early as possible.*

**ASTTBC Outreach & Membership Recruitment & Retention**

The success of ASTTBC is directly tied, in a large sense, to external connections and partnerships, and building and mentoring these relationships is critical to its continuing success. There is an enormous amount of consulting, connecting and operational activity conducted by ASTTBC staff, its CEO, and ASTTBC Council on behalf of its members. As acknowledged in past public representative reports, ASTTBC has long been active in seeking employer recognition of career opportunities under its realm, and the advantages to employers and the public at large of professional certification. ASTTBC staff and its CEO have also been highly proactive in marketing educational pathways and the rewards of careers as engineering technologists, technicians, and technical specialists.

However, certification in the field of applied science technology in Canada in most circumstances is voluntary, and is generally not required in order to work as a technician or technologist. Unlike areas where certification is a requirement to practice, the merits of certification and ASTTBC membership must be continuously promoted to employers, governments, and eligible potential members. Membership numbers in ASTTBC, despite this being a growth sector for jobs and despite the extensive efforts of ASTTBC to recruit new members, have remained relatively flat over the past five years and limited growth over the past ten years for Technologists and Technicians.

ASTTBC Outreach & Membership Recruitment & Retention, *cont'd*

Equally important, indeed arguably more important, for ASTTBC is the retention of existing members. It is essential that present members believe strongly that their membership in ASTTBC is vital to their career and career enrichment, and that the fees they pay for ASTTBC membership is well worth (to them) their dollar investment. ASTTBC publications like ASTTBC CONNECT and e-NEWS are very effective ways to inform its membership of directions and initiatives that have already been made and taken place, but it represents only one step in a successful retention strategy. It is critical that members feel that their views and interests are sought and valued. ASTTBC participation is required on the many committees that are essential for its operation, but input from its membership is more than that. An effective retention process includes a deliberate and meaningful two-way consultation with, and evaluation by, its members on a regular basis.

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The public representatives recommend that ASTTBC Council and staff continue to promote technology careers to BC's youth, schools, parents, and employers, and to continue to explore new ways of doing so.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The public representatives recommend that ASTTBC Council and staff continue an aggressive approach to recruit new members, and to seek new approaches to steadily build on the number of new members annually.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The public representatives recommend that ASTTBC Council initiate, as a key objective for 2017, a review of the means by which ASTTBC Council, staff and CEO reach out to engage its members directly. This review should result in a summary report that includes specific recommendations for ways to enhance consultative membership participation in ASTTBC's business and direction.*

Other Initiatives

The public representatives applaud ASTTBC Council and staff for all other positive accomplishments in 2016 that are too numerous to isolate in this report, and for exhibiting a professional demeanour in achieving these accomplishments.

The 2016 Annual Report of the Public Representatives is respectfully submitted by:

**Rob Campbell, PEng**  
**Brian Carr, PhD, BSc**  
**James Coble, MA**

May 26th 2017

About ASTTBC

Technologists, technicians and technical specialists achieve professional recognition through the APPLIED SCIENCE TECHNOLOGISTS & TECHNICIANS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA (ASTTBC). One of the largest self-regulating associations in BC, the Association has registered 10,000+ Technology Professionals.