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Technology Professionals: Value to the Public Interest

2017 Annual Report of the Public Representatives
as submitted for the ASTTBC AGM on May 25, 2018

Serving as Public Representatives on the Council of the
Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC:

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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 2017 Report covers the calendar period from January 1, 2017 through to December 31, 2017.

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 25, 2018. A summary will also be included in ASTTBC e-NEWS and ASTTBC CONNECT.

Public Representatives' Perspective of Key Advancements and Challenges

Many of ASTTBC Council's key agenda items of public interest that were identified in the 2016 Public Representatives Report continued to be active on Council's agenda in 2017, and indeed some will continue to be active topics in 2018. The recommendations offered in the 2016 Public Representatives Report remain valid until these topics have achieved a state of conclusion at Council, so may not be repeated in this Report unless deemed necessary.

ASTTBC CEO Retirement

ASTTBC CEO, John Leach, will retire in 2018. He will have served ASTTBC in the capacity of Executive Director / CEO for 44 years. Under John's leadership, to mention just a few:

- ASTTBC's membership has risen from 1,100 to 10,500;
- government approval of the *ASTT Act* established ASTTBC's mandate as a self-governing professional and regulatory body;
- a home-base (now mortgage free) headquarters was created in Surrey;
- a fund-raising Foundation was incorporated to promote and support tech careers;
- a professional website was developed to (amongst other things) inform members, the general public, government and employers of ASTTBC activities; highlight member and association achievements; promote the benefits of ASTTBC certification; and to list job opportunities and openings.

Equally important, John has been a tireless advocate and champion for the practice rights of, and public and corporate confidence in, British Columbia's engineering technologists, technicians and technical specialists. There are but the rare few in BC's government and sister/brother-related associations who have escaped John's mission to promote what ASTTBC members do, and could do, and how their support of ASTTBC and ASTTBC certification can benefit the economy of British Columbia.

An ASTTBC Council hiring process of replacing John has been initiated.

Commendation: The public representatives thank John for his years of service with ASTTBC, and wish him all the best in his retirement.

There are benefits available to progressive organizations such as ASTTBC resulting from a change in operational leadership. Given John's lengthy career as CEO of ASTTBC, and acknowledging the deep footprint he leaves behind, this is a unique opportunity for ASTTBC Council to review its functional role in advancing the future direction of ASTTBC under new leadership.

ASTTBC Council President

ASTTBC Council President, Keith Trulson, has passed the reign of President over to Trent Reid. Keith has served the role of President in a highly professional manner, and the public representatives are confident that his successor will do the same. The role of President of ASTTBC Council can be very time consuming and challenging, and is performed in a volunteer capacity on top of one's regular career.

Commendation: The public representatives congratulate Keith for professionally carrying out his role as President, and offer Trent its full support in taking over the presidential duties.

ASTTBC Professional Standards and Regulation

Continuing Professional Development

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;
- membership professional development efforts that meet ASTTBC's **continuing professional development (CPD)** policy requirements; and
- corrective 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 mandatory reporting of CPD by each and every ASTTBC certified member was applauded, with a recommendation that ASTTBC Council approves the full implementation of a CPD monitoring and reporting process in 2017 or 2018. In January 2017, changes to the point-scoring schedule were implemented to improve clarity for ASTTBC members, but a fail proof process of assurance that CPD reports are duly submitted, and the timely review of such reports once submitted, requires further fine tuning.

Recommendation: The public representatives recommend that having a CPD monitoring and reporting process in place by the conclusion of 2018 be a key objective of ASTTBC Council and ASTTBC staff, and that Council measures progress to ensure this timeline as an active agenda item at its scheduled meetings throughout 2018.

Program Accreditation and Professional Competencies

Through the collaborative efforts of ASTTBC and its partners in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario, Technology Professional Canada (TPC) was officially incorporated in 2015. Advancement of TPC continued throughout 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 since 2015 about the resulting lack of a national forum where all provinces and territories sit at a common table. This concern remains, and warrants repeating in this report.

The public representatives are very pleased that, primarily thanks to the efforts of (then) ASTTBC Council President, Keith Trulson, the presidents of technology professional associations from across Canada met in March in Halifax to connect and talk about common interests and responsibilities. This was the first formalized national meeting in some time, and it is hoped that it is the first step in the regeneration of a national forum that meets on a regular basis.

***Recommendation:** The public representatives strongly 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.*

Professional Technologist Designation

In 2015, ASTTBC Council launched a new designation of Professional Technologist (PTech) in BC to acknowledge the advanced qualifications and experience of some of its certified technologists. ASTTBC's ultimate intent is to seek approval for appropriate rights of independent practice. Within the existing engineering framework, rights of independent practice require agreement from Engineers and Geoscientists BC (EGBC) – formerly the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of BC (APEGBC). A joint ASTTBC/EGBC Board exists to discuss matters of common interest, but despite this being an agenda item for many months, little meaningful advancement has resulted with respect to PTech. Dialog with ASET (Alberta's equivalent to ASTTBC) has taken place to assure that inter-provincial mobility between British Columbia and Alberta exists for BC's PTech holders, but existing variations have complicated an agreement. A temporary suspension of the granting of further PTech designations was implemented as a result in 2016.

While the process of granting of PTech designations was recommenced in 2017 with ASTTBC Council approval, the much more difficult challenge of securing outside recognition of this designation has not been achieved.

***Recommendation:** The public representatives restate their support of the PTech designation, and urge Council to continue to pursue a strategy of resolving current barriers hampering external recognition of the PTech.*

ASTTBC Outreach and Membership Recruitment and 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.

The challenges faced by ASTTBC in this realm, and the public representatives' recommendations in its 2016 report, are equally as relevant today as in the past and therefore warrant repeating.

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 continue 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 2017 that are too numerous to isolate in this report, and for exhibiting a professional demeanour in achieving these accomplishments.

2017 Annual Report of the Public Representatives is respectfully submitted by,

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