



Technology Professionals: Value to the Public Interest

# Annual Report of the Public Representatives 2015

May 27th 2016

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

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[www.ASTTBC.org](http://www.ASTTBC.org)

## 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, 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 membership.

## Purpose of the Public Representatives Annual Report

The Public Representatives Annual Report is an independent statement and is presented to the ASTTBC Council without need of their approval.

The report will be forwarded to the Minister of Advanced Education, the Minister Responsible for the ASTT Act, 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 by the Public Representatives. A condensed version will be presented at the ASTTBC Annual General Meeting on May 27th 2016. A summary will also be included in ASTTBC eNEWS and ASTTBC CONNECT.

## Council Governance

ASTTBC Council meetings run openly, transparently, professionally and efficiently. 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.

*COMMENDATION: ASTTBC Council is to be commended once again for their respectful and open treatment of Public Representatives, with special thanks to ASTTBC's CEO and President.*

## Public Representatives Perspective of Key Advancements & Challenges

There is an enormous amount of consulting, connecting and operational activity conducted by ASTTBC Staff and Council throughout any calendar year. This Report will focus on selected items that are deemed by the Public Representatives to be of key interest to the public.

### Rights to Practice for the PTech Designation

In 2015, ASTTBC Council launched a new designation of **Professional Technologist (PTech)** in BC. In preparation for 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 will truly flourish only after it acquires rights of independent practice approval. In engineering-related areas, this will require APEGBC's endorsement, which would then ideally provide a transparent pathway to APEGBC's EngL designation. An APEGBC-ASTTBC joint committee held numerous meetings over the past year to reach an agreement, but as of the end of 2015, APEGBC continues to express mixed reaction to ASTTBC's proposed access to independent rights of practice for this designation. Discussions will continue into 2016.

The Honourable Andrew Wilkinson, Minister of Advanced Education and Minister responsible for the ASTT Act, met with the three Public Representatives in the latter part of 2015. Amongst other topics, Minister Wilkinson emphasized that independent rights of practice for the PTech would not be obtainable without an agreement between ASTTBC and APEGBC, and that he would not entertain playing an intermediary role in achieving such. He also cautioned that increased practice rights must be entrenched with enhanced regulatory monitoring and control by ASTTBC.

The Public Representatives continue to support the PTech designation, and stress that this endorsement is based on an assurance that public protection and safety are not jeopardized. With the PTech designation now in place, the Public Representatives regard settlement with APEGBC as a primary goal for ASTTBC Council in 2016.

*COMMENDATION: The Public Representatives commend ASTTBC Council for its continued pursuit of independent rights of practice for its new designation of Professional Technologist (PTech) in British Columbia.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The Public Representatives recommend that ASTTBC continue to dialog with APEGBC regarding independent rights of practice for the PTech, and in doing so ensure that the focus is on serving and protecting the public in the technology, engineering and geoscience arenas. Further, the public representatives encourage that ASTTBC CEO and Council representatives on the joint committee negotiate in a manner that fosters a mutually acceptable agreement in 2016.*

## Professional Standards & Regulation

A few years ago, ASTTBC, ASET, SASTT and OACETT severed their membership with the Canadian Council of Technicians and Technologists (CCTT). The collaborative efforts of ASTTBC and its partners in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Ontario resulted in the official launching of **Technology Professional Canada** (TPC) in 2015. TPC is an alliance that together represents over 85 percent of the engineering technology and applied science profession in Canada. TPC has established a new organization, called **Technology Accreditation Canada** (TAC), whose stated aim is to “revitalize the national accreditation system.” The public representatives were informed that key stakeholders, such as the National Council of the Deans of Technology (NCDoT) and the Council of Registrars were invited to participate in the development process – which we, the public representatives – see as essential.

This breakaway from CCTT is an issue of business between the national and provincial forums representing the engineering technology and applied science professions. Nevertheless, the decision to split is a matter of public interest, as it has realistic and potential impact on public safety and protection. The Public Representatives on ASTTBC Council have been reassured that public interest has been a key component in the creation of TPC and TAC. Of more local interest, the Public Representatives are pleased to be informed that while this evolution has been underway for some time, a quality and professional process of certification within British Columbia and the mobility of ASTTBC-certified workers across Canada, has continued (but not yet, however, for ASTTBC’s new PTech designation).

The Public Representatives have expressed concern in the past regarding the present lack of a national forum where all ten provinces sit at the same table. The Public Representatives believe that, in the interest of public safety and protection, it is best if all provinces sit at a single table when discussing issues of national concern.

**RECOMMENDATION:** *The Public Representatives continue to support ASTTBC’s role with TPC on the understanding that:*

- *the best interests of public safety and protection continue to be paramount in the certification process of technologists, technicians and technical specialists;*
- *dialogue between TPC and the provinces who have retained partnership with CCTT takes place, with the vision of a once again single national forum;*
- *the mobility of credentials across Canada and internationally is a fundamental principle;*
- *ASTTBC continues to liaise with public and private BC post-secondary institutions offering ASTTBC-pertinent technician and technologist programs to ensure that public safety and graduate consistency is maintained, using appropriate benchmarks under which program accreditation and professional certification are measured;*
- *ASTTBC continues to manage appropriate competency benchmarks, preferably national, to certify technologists, technicians and technical specialists, and to accredit programs offering schooling towards these careers. It is also recommended that such benchmarks be accessible free of charge to the public and private post-secondary institutions.*

## Continuing Professional Development

ASTTBC Council approved a Policy that all members must report their Continuing Professional Development (CPD) plans and achievements. Council has not as yet firmed up a policy for auditing of CPD activity, but the Public Representatives have been informed that Council will most likely prepare such a policy in 2017. The Public Representatives support a process of CPD for applied science/engineering technologists, technicians and technical specialists, particularly considering the rapid advancement of software and hardware technology, techniques and practices, and new materials employed in the industry. Requirement of CPD is, naturally, only as effective as its monitoring and enforcement.

**COMMENDATION:** *The Public Representatives, from the perspective of protecting public safety, commend ASTTBC Council for developing a CPD process.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *ASTTBC Council place a CPD monitoring and reporting process in place as a key objective for 2016 and 2017.*

## Professional Recognition & Conduct

ASTTBC has long been active in seeking employer recognition of career opportunities under its realm and the advantages of certification. It has also been highly proactive in marketing educational pathways, career opportunities and rewards of such careers within the school system, to both females and males, to aboriginals and recent immigrants, to the population-at-large, and to government.

The Public Representatives recognize the advancements of technology and practice that has taken place with ever-growing rapidity in the applied science and engineering/engineering technology professions. Commensurate with this advancement is an expanded, ever-evolving role and responsibility of its practicing professionals. Public safety and protection is at risk if the people working in this industry are not regulated or active in professional development. ASTTBC and other similar regulatory bodies are charged with protecting public safety by setting and maintaining appropriately high standards of professional practice and ethical conduct for its members. All practising engineers in British Columbia must be certified as a P.Eng. or Eng.L. by APEGBC. 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. Perhaps it is time to review and change this?

**COMMENDATION:** *The Public Representatives congratulate ASTTBC and its CEO for the energy and resources they put towards the promotion of technologist, technician and technical specialist careers.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *That in the interest of continued protection of public safety, the Public Representatives invite ASTTBC Council to set aside time, or establish a working group, to discuss a position statement on the topic of required certification for practicing engineering technologists and applied science technologists in British Columbia.*

**RECOMMENDATION:** *That ASTTBC consider revisions to its website to provide easier public access to finding a certified member (as appropriate), along with the process for lodging a complaint against a member.*

## International Recognition & Certification

ASTTBC continues to be an active participant with government and APEGBC in the reviewing and recognition of, foreign credentials with the objective of eliminating barriers, while maintaining standards of professional expectations and practice.

**COMMENDATION:** *The Public Representatives congratulate ASTTBC, and the work of its Registrar, in eliminating unnecessary barriers and biases towards foreign workers coming to British Columbia, while continuing to ensure public best interest, protection, and safety in granting certifications.*

## Other Initiatives

The Public Representatives applaud ASTTBC and its Staff for all other positive accomplishments in 2015 that are too numerous to isolate in this report, and for exhibiting a determined, yet professional, demeanour throughout.

The Annual Report of the Public Representatives 2015 is respectfully submitted by:

**Rob Campbell, PEng**  
**Brian Carr, PhD, BSc**  
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May 27th 2016

## 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.