

2015 AGM & Proposed Resolution on Academic Criteria

THE COLLEGE'S ANNUAL General Meeting, held over breakfast prior to the Conference on March 13th, also attracted a large audience.

In addition to a report on the activities of the Council and the College's numerous committees, AGM participants also considered a resolution brought forward by College members. The resolution proposed an amendment to the College's academic requirements such that those applicants with a MSc or PhD in biology and an excess of 10 years of work experience in applied biology would receive credit for any missing courses through their completed coursework or theses.

The College Council recommended against supporting the motion and made the following statement in response:

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...The College Council recognizes that it's important to ensure that applied biologists working in BC can be part of the College. [Two College members] point out that including these biologists in the College protects the public interest by ensuring they adhere to a Code of Ethics and are accountable to the College for their work and conduct. We agree. In fact, the Council is making efforts to address this issue, and has been working with the Credentials Committee and the Registrar to identify opportunities and options to include more biologists in the College. The recent addition of the self-directed report option is one example of how we can bring biologists into the College. The resolution before you suggests that the criteria to become a Registered Professional Biologist be changed so that the Credentials Committee can examine the theses of applicants to determine whether their thesis is equivalent to missing undergraduate courses.

Although we agree with the idea behind the motion, we are concerned that this motion will not resolve the issue and will constrain the Council from investigating different avenues to meet this goal. Currently our credentialing requirements are rigorous and defensible. The proposed change to our credentialing process will make the process much more subjective. Although some cases might be fairly straightforward, others likely will not. The Credentials Committee will be asked to determine whether, for example, collecting genetic samples and discussing genetics in a thesis is equivalent to a cell biology course, or whether habitat sampling qualifies as a systematics course. We may receive appeals. I.e. why would a thesis count only for applicants with more than 10 years of experience? Why would we consider only a thesis and not peer-reviewed reports? What criteria would we use for a defensible standard? This proposed Rule change has implications, not only for the Credentials Committee's time, but also for ensuring that we maintain a rigorous and defensible process for deciding who has demonstrated, by education and experience, that they are qualified to become an RPBio.

In conclusion, I again want to thank [our members] for bringing this motion forward, and state that the Council agrees with the concept underlying this resolution – that there are biologists practicing applied biology that cannot currently qualify to become members. We recognize this needs to change and we are currently discussing options to address this issue. We ask that you vote against the resolution, so that the Council is not tied to this one method of addressing the issue. ”

The large majority of AGM participants voted in opposition to the resolution and defeated the motion. **CM**



Linda Takahashi, RPBio, was one of many new College members in attendance at the Conference.



Dr. Vanessa Craig, RPBio, College President, recognizes Linda Michaluk, RPBio, Janet Rynestad, RPBio, Warren Warttig, RPBio, and Ross Murray, RPBio, PBIo, for their contributions to the College at the 2015 AGM. Absent from event and photo: Laura Darling, RPBio (former member of the Ethics Committee).