

Biologists Canada Committee Report

The College of Applied Biology's *2013-2015 Strategic Plan* calls for the development of a national umbrella organization to advance the self-regulation of the biology profession in each province. In the summer of 2014, a committee was created to explore opportunities for developing a national umbrella organization.

As the first self-regulating organization for the practice of applied biology in North America, the Council is interested in supporting other jurisdictions in establishing standards for the practice of biology, to raise the bar nationally for the profession, and to help ensure that biologists—who make important and lasting decisions about publically-owned natural resources—are qualified, competent, and accountable.

The development of a national organization, tentatively called Biologists

Canada, is likely to lend legitimacy to existing efforts to establish voluntary or required standards for biologists. It would also provide emergent regulatory agencies with access to advice and suitable templates for standards of entry and competency to help overcome limited capacity.

During the late spring and fall of 2015, the Committee met twice to determine whether advancing self-regulation of the practice of biology elsewhere in Canada is a viable and worthwhile initiative for the College, particularly in light of capacity constraints and other emergent priorities. A decision was made to initiate a discussion with potential partners on this initiative in order to better understand the current status of self-regulation of biologists in Canada, and to determine if there is sufficient collective interest in moving forward. To this end, a

conference call with the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists (ASPB) and l'Association des Biologistes du Québec (ABQ) is being planned for the coming months. As well, a survey of biologists living in non-regulated jurisdictions is planned to solicit thoughts on the value of regulation. As the College Council has recognized that the pursuit of more widespread regulation of biology in Canada is beyond the core responsibilities of the College, the Committee is seeking external sources of funding for the initiative, which has proved more difficult than anticipated.

Please feel free to contact us if you are interested in this initiative:
assistantregistrar@cab-bc.org 

Respectfully submitted,
Garry Alexander, RPBio, Chair, Biologists Canada Committee

Professional Accountability Committee Report

Last year, I reported that the Right to Practice (RTP) Committee had confirmed that advocating for RTP was within the mandate of the College and that we were beginning talks with the provincial government to effect the legislative change required.

Our objective was to protect the public interest and the province's natural resources by ensuring that resource professionals are competent and accountable.

After a year of meeting with Ministers, Deputy Ministers, and senior staff of several ministries, it is clear that while there is some support for moving towards RTP, legislative backlogs negate any chance of

obtaining RTP in the next five years. Fear not—to paraphrase a dead Prime Minister, “RTP if necessary, but not necessarily RTP”.

Are there other ways to get all applied biology practitioners registered? The re-named Professional Accountability Committee (PAC) is moving forward on two fronts:

1) Decision-making authority: With a few exceptions, governments can make resource management decisions without review and sign-off by registered applied biology professionals. The PAC will be approaching government with decision points that should require professional

sign-off and how those requirements can be introduced without legislative change.

2) Marketing: While many employers are recognizing the benefits of hiring RPBios, RBTechs, and In Training members we can do a better job of marketing our membership. PAC will be promoting College membership to government, industry, and the public as an assurance of ethical, competent and accountable professionalism.

Any thoughts regarding these initiatives are welcome! 

Respectfully submitted,
Brian Clark, RPBio, Chair, Professional Accountability Committee