

Biologists Canada Committee Report

The College's **2016-2018 Strategic Plan** includes a statement to promote increased professionalism and scientific credibility in applied biology at a national scale. This supports the objective in the *2013-2015 Strategic Plan*: to develop a national umbrella organization to advance the self regulation of the profession of biology in each province. In 2014, the College Council struck an internal Committee (Biologists Canada Committee) to oversee the implementation of this objective.

As 1 of only 2 self-regulating organizations for the practice of applied biology in Canada, the College is interested in supporting other jurisdictions in establishing standards for the practice of biology, to raise the profile of the profession nationally, and to help ensure that biologists – who make important and lasting decisions about publically owned natural resources – are qualified, competent, and accountable.

In 2016, the Biologists Canada Committee met with officials from the Alberta Society of Professional Biologists (ASPB), which has achieved self regulation of biologists, and l'Association des Biologistes du Québec (ABQ), which has been working diligently for many years to have legislation enacted to regulate the profession of biologists in Québec. Although many questions remain, the ASPB and ABQ support the concept of a national organization for biologists, similar to other professional organizations, such as **Engineers Canada**. The College, the ASPB, and the ABQ agree on the need to gather more information from biologists on their level of interest and support for professional accreditation, professional accountability, and efforts to advance professionalism for biologists in other jurisdictions.

To this end, a survey was developed by the College with the input of the ASPB and ABQ and sent to members of the College, ASPB and ABQ in October 2016. The survey, which was initially targeted to members of the three organizations working outside of BC, Alberta and Québec, is an attempt to collect information from biologists on the interest and support for professional accreditation and accountability, as well as establishing contacts for a national organization in the future. Members were also asked to forward the survey to organizations and individuals in their respective jurisdictions that might have an interest in biologists and professionalism. There has been a lot of interest in the survey from across the country; therefore, the deadline for responding was extended

to the end of January 2017. Results will be summarized and reported in a later issue of *College Matters*.

In addition to drawing conclusions and guidance from the survey results, the interim goals for the Biologists Canada Committee for 2017 are: 1) to develop terms of reference and a work plan for a national organization with our partners, and 2) to continue the search for sources of external funding to support a national organization. The College Council has recognized that the pursuit of professionalism nationally is beyond the core responsibilities of the College, therefore other funding models are needed.

Any questions or thoughts on this initiative are welcomed. 

Respectfully submitted,
Garry Alexander, RPBio, Vice-President and Chair - Biologists Canada Committee.

