

College Council Recommending a Dues Increase for 2016

AT THE COLLEGE Council meeting on June 12th the Council passed a motion to recommend a change in the fee structure for members of the College, which includes an increase in dues for RPBios, RBTechs, and In Training members. In accordance with the *College of Applied Biology Rules*, RPBios, RBTechs, and retired members will have an opportunity to vote on whether to support this dues increase. Voting will be available online for a six-week period beginning July 17th and ending August 28th. The Council recognizes that this is a busy time for many members due to fieldwork and vacations; however, these dates were necessary to give staff sufficient time to issue 2016 dues notices in October.

Details of the proposed dues increase

Council is recommending the following fee schedule changes, effective for 2016 dues payments.

Registered Professional Biologists (RPBio)	\$425/year
Registered Biology Technologists (RBTech)	\$295/year
Biologists in Training (BIT)	\$130/year
Registered Biology Technologist in Training (Trainee (RBTech))	\$95/year

In recognition of the potential for undue financial stress, Council is not recommending dues increases for retired members, students, or for members on temporary leave.

Why is the College Council recommending a dues increase?

The last dues increase (supported by the College membership through a referendum in 2008) was anticipated to provide sufficient revenue for the College for the following 3-5 years. Through prudent fiscal management, leveraging of external grant funding, and continued reliance on volunteer-led committees to undertake the essential roles of credentials assessment, discipline investigations, and audits of members, the College has been able to operate for 7 years without a dues increase.

The College has met the demands of a growing membership and enhanced the status of College members as accountable, self-governed professionals. The Council has outlined an ambitious

Strategic Plan for 2016-2018 to further the Council's goals to increase transparency of the College, expand the categories of membership to include more practicing applied biologists, and to raise the profile of the College and its professionals. These strategic goals are balanced by the necessity for the College to maintain sufficient reserves for unexpected operational events, and for adequate legal funds to support discipline investigations. The College must also ensure ongoing communication with the membership and the public in order to be effective and meet its public-interest mandate.

A budgetary deficit last year and a resulting review of the College's operations indicated that the current level of revenues restricts the ability of our organization to fully function in its role as a professional regulatory body. The College Council considers it necessary to raise dues in order for the College to retain financial stability, maintain the credibility of College members earned through the College's application and enforcement of rigorous standards, increase the legal fund to \$500,000, and also to maintain momentum in building the recognition of our organization and applied biology professionals.

How do I find out more information?

A comparison of the College's dues with those of similar professions and highlights of the College's accomplishments in recent years can be seen on the next page. More information about the proposed dues increase is available on the '*Dues referendum*' page of the College website under the 'current members' section. This includes a Q & A document and financial statements.

How do I vote?

When voting begins on July 17th, RPBios, RBTechs, and retired members of the College will receive an email with information to access the electronic voting platform, and will receive reminders leading up to the final day of voting on August 28th.

A Snapshot of Accomplishments since the last Dues Increase in 2008

- > Developed an accreditation program for post-secondary institutions to provide certainty that graduates of selected programs meet the College's academic requirements leading to RPBio status, developed a self-directed report option for Biologists in Training and applicants seeking RPBio status, and developed professional videos to raise awareness of the practice of applied biology in BC with prospective members, the public, and employers.
- > Signed a *Mutual Recognition Agreement with the Society of Biology* in the United Kingdom to allow our respective members to take advantage of a streamlined process to practice in each other's jurisdiction.
- > Enhanced the ability of the College to ensure members' practice and conduct meet the standards of professionals by releasing an updated *Code of Ethics*, expanding and enhancing the Audit Program, and by developing guidance documents for members (e.g. *Principles of Stewardship*, *Practice Guidance for Members*, *Managing Species at Risk in BC – Guidance for Resource Professionals*, *Scope of Practice Resource for RBTechs*).
- > Expanded the scope and content of *College Matters*, met with members throughout the province to provide updates on important College initiatives, redesigned the College's website for improved access to information and resources, organized CPD events on topics of interest to the membership, and hosted highly successful annual conferences from 2012-15 on environmental legislation and policy updates that attracted over 1,000 participants.
- > Met the goal set in 2008 to raise the legal reserve to \$350,000 to address the risk of litigation in support of the College's mandate to investigate members' actions and conduct when complaints are received.
- > Maintained and developed relationships with MLAs, Cabinet Ministers, local government politicians, provincial ministries, and other professional and regulatory organizations.
- > Improved the effectiveness and efficiency of core College activities, including random audits of members, processing membership applications, and communication to members regarding updated Rules, as well as ethical and professional standards.
- > Engaged more College members by greatly increasing the number of volunteers involved to nearly 50 members, and became a more interactive and transparent organization by diversifying College activities (e.g. roadshows, CPD events).
- > Enhanced the ability of the College to regulate applied biology professionals in the public interest by creating the RBTech membership category. 

How do the College's dues, size, and annual revenues compare to other regulatory organizations?

Organization	Annual Dues (current)	No. members (end of 2014)	Annual revenue (2014)
College of Applied Biology	\$325 (RPBio)	2,214	\$701,062
Association of BC Forest Professionals	\$549.94 (RPF)	5,336	\$2,535,660
BC Institute of Agrologists	\$400 (PAg)	1,338	\$542,490
Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of BC	\$399 (PEng, PGeo)	28,637	\$13,704,099
Planning Institute of BC	\$530 (RPP)	1,850	\$507,537

Note: Only RPBio dues were included in this comparative table due to the lack of parallel categories in other organizations to facilitate comparisons with RBTech and In Training College members.