

**MINUTES**  
**of a**  
**Meeting of the BC Assayers Certification Program Council of Advisors**  
**held at the**  
**BCIT Campus, Room 166, South West 2 Building,**  
**3700 Willingdon Ave., Burnaby, B.C.**  
**on**  
**April 14, 2000, 1.30 P.M.**

***Present:***

Mr. Manzur (Mac) Chaudhry	BC Ministry of Energy & Mines, Victoria
Mr. Rob Edmunds	BC Institute of Technology, Burnaby
Mr. Keith Errington	BC Institute of Technology, Burnaby
Mr. John Gravel (Chair)	ACME Analytical Labs, Vancouver
Mr. Keith Rogers	Intertek Testing Services, Vancouver
Mr. Ray Lett (Secretary)	GSB, BC Ministry of Energy & Mines Victoria.
Mr. Jim McLeod	Cominco Research Labs, Vancouver
Ms. Elaine Woo	BC Institute of Technology, Burnaby
Mr. Lawrence Ng	ALS Chemex Ltd, Vancouver
Dr. Henry Steger	CANMET, Ottawa
Mr. Derek Blundell	Kamloops
Mr. Glen Armanini	Vancouver

**1. Welcome and Introduction Remarks (John Gravel):**

John Gravel called the meeting to orders at 1.40 p.m., welcomed those present and tabled the Agenda. He introduced Dr. Henry Steger (CANMET) to the Committee.

**2. Approval of October 15th, 1999 Assayers Advisory Board Meeting Minutes and Agenda for April 14th 2000 Meeting:**

*Proposed (Keith Rogers) and seconded (Ray Lett) that the Minutes of the October 15th , 1999 Assayers Advisory Council Meeting and the April 14th, 2000 Meeting Agenda be accepted. All in favour.*

**3. Status of Action Items from October 15th, 1999 Meeting:**

**3.1 Awards Committee (John Gravel, Ray Lett, Mac Chaudhry) -Mission Statement and Program Logo**

John Gravel noted that the goals of the Council had never been previously stated and he proposed the following mission statement:

“ We, the members of the Advisory Council, make the following commitment to the people, industry, academic institutions and the Government of British Columbia, that we shall hold the B.C. Assayers program to the highest standards of quality and integrity while ensuring that it continues to serve the needs of all stakeholders.

We therefore pledge the following:

- To provide good council on the direction of the assayers program
- To ensure that the assayers Program receives adequate funding
- To promote public awareness of the assayers program
- To encourage participation of individuals, industries, institutions and government”.

John also distributed a design for a program logo and invited discussion on both mission statement and logo. After discussion, it was agreed that copies of the draft mission statement and logo designs would be circulated to the Council for comments.

*Action: Ray Lett to distribute the draft of the proposed mission statement and logo designs to Council members.*

### **3.2 Introductory article for the Assayers Newsletter web site**

John Gravel - no action has been taken on writing an article due to the absence of Lloyd Twaites . Would any Council members like to volunteer for the task. Elaine Woo and Derek Blundell agreed to write an article for the website.

*Action: Elaine Woo and Derek Blundell to write an introductory article on the Assayers program and advisory Council for the Assayers program-BCIT website.*

### **3.3 Digital copy of Assayer Brochure transfer to BCIT.**

Keith Errington confirmed that he had received a digital copy of the original assayers program brochure from Ray Lett.

### **3.4 Review of a draft of the Assayers Program Information Circular prepared by the Examiners Board.**

Mac Chaudry confirmed that the Examiners Board had completed a draft of the revised GSB Information Circular 1994-2 (Assayers Certification Program) and delivered hard and digital copies to Ray Lett for editing and publication. He noted that the Board of Examiners had approved a new examination fees for Theory examination - \$100, Practical examination - \$250 and replacement copy of Proficiency certificate - \$100. Also noted the new circular has a revised examination syllabus and a section on acid rock drainage accounting.

*Action: Ray Lett to arrange for editing and printing of the new Assayers Program Circular through the B.C. Geological Survey.*

### **3.5 Northern Miner article about the BCIT assayers training program and the B.C assayers certification program.**

John Gravel - no progress with this item due to the absence of Lloyd Twaites. Could Ray Lett contact Lloyd to request any prepared material and forward it to Keith Errington for compilation.

*Action: Ray Lett to contact Lloyd Twaites to request any prepared material for the Northern Miner article and forward it to Keith Errington for compilation.*

## **4.0 Review of Issues raised at the October 15<sup>th</sup>, 1999 Meeting**

#### **4.1 Financial Report: Proposal raised for reduction of annual corporate fees.**

John Gravel - member organizations may be less able to afford the \$1000 corporate membership fee due to weak mining industry in B.C.. I suggested that Council could:-

1. Reduce the annual corporate fees by a fixed sum or
2. Decide on fees annually.

Jim McLeod - raising the annual fee can be difficult, I would cautioned against decreasing the annual fees.

Keith Errington - there had been little advertizing about the program to date. More publicity could increase the number of corporate members and enable a decrease in annual fees.

John Gravel - member companies donate both time and funds to supporting the advisory council. Corporate fees are increasingly less affordable. I suggested that the council consider other ways of funding the program such as increasing the examination fees.

Mac Chaudhry - the program's main benefit is that industry receives the promotion of excellence in assaying. The Examining Board has established the cost of the most recent examination so that this cost could be recognized in the program budget. I disagree with the idea of a floating annual fee.

Keith Errington - should the assayers council become a self regulating body (similar to professions engineers) then revenue could be raised from individual certified assayer membership dues rather than from corporate fees.

Council agreed to revisit the issue at the next meeting.

John Gravel asked for clarification on who decided allocation of council expenditures.

Keith Errington - major expenditures including examination expenses were approved by a committee majority. Minor expenses were approved by the Council Chair and paid though BCIT accounts.

Mac Chaudhry agreed to draft an examining budget so that this could be included in the program budget.

Jim McLeod recommended that the council chair and vice-chair continue to control finances rather that transfer control to a finance sub-committee.

#### **4.2 Promotional poster/brochure for the Assayers Certification Program/BCIT Assayers training program**

Elaine Woo distributed copies of the existing program brochure printing in 1998 and noted a need to update the text, program logo and partner logo's.

Keith Errington - the same material will be needed to update the web site so that the certification and training programs could be more widely publicized.

***Action:** Ray Lett to expedite sending the final approved Assayers Committee mission statement, Committee logo design and revised company logo's to Elaine Woo for inclusion in the new Assayers program brochure and poster.*

### **4.3 Low pass rate for the Assayers Certification Examination**

John Gravel - there had been concerns about the low pass rate for the candidates sitting the assay certification exam. Some suggestions such as giving motivational talks to candidates have been made to improve the pass rate.

Mac Chaudhry - part of the problem is that there are differences between the assayers exam syllabus and the material taught in the BCIT assayers training course.

Derek Blundell - although the BCIT course is excellent I have the impression that many candidates were not sufficiently motivated or dedicated. Also candidates appear to have no financial incentives to pass the exam.

Keith Rogers - agree with Derek. Bondar-Clegg pay all students examination fees. Of the 3 candidates who had most recently passed the exam, two had over 15 years experience.

Derek Blundell - my experience with Cominco (Snip Mine). All examination related expenses were paid on the basis of a candidate passing the exam. Students need to have a financial obligation to the assaying training/examination program.

Lawrence Ng - sat the assayers examination as part of the first BCIT assayers training course group. ALS Chemex did give financial recognition to successful ALS candidates and that of 10 ALS student who started the course only 3 finished the training. Many candidates didn't consider certification an advantage for a future career.

Derek Blundell - candidates from outside B.C are evidence for the word-wide recognition of the assayers program.

Keith Rogers - B.C Certified Assayers were in demand outside B.C. Candidates should be urged to consider assaying as a vocation and understand that a certified assayer is a person to be trusted in the mining industry.

Mac Chaudhry - companies should pre-screen their students to establish suitability for the assayers training and exam program.

John Gravel - companies need guidelines for evaluating a students ability to becoming an assayer. BCIT can assist by providing information on a student to the sponsoring company.

Elaine Woo - BCIT can not give information on students to a sponsoring company during training because of student grade confidentiality rules.

John Gravel - the requirement that students pass a BCIT course module before starting the next part of the course allows screening a student.

Derek Blundell - candidates for the practical examination should clearly demonstrate versatility in all of the required analytical and assaying tasks needed for the exam.

Mac Chaudhry - companies are often unable to give candidates the needed versatility because of the extra cost and time required. I suggested discussion between candidates and the sponsor companies is needed to resolve this problem.

Keith Rogers - can be a problem of too many (5-6) candidates for the practical examination in one company. The numbers limit the ability of the company to practically rotate students between different tasks. A commitment by students to passing the exam was essential.

John Gravel proposed that council develop recommendations and guidelines for companies to inform candidates about expectations required to realistically train and pass the assayers examinations. The guidelines would also recommend companies how to deal with the issue of payment to candidates for training and examination.

***Action Item:** Council members assist John Gravel in developing recommendations and guidelines for companies to inform candidates about expectations required to realistically train and pass the assayers examinations.*

## **5. Presentation by Dr. Henry Steger, CANMET.**

John Gravel invited Dr. Henry Steger to give a presentation of the organization and functions of CANMET. After the presentation, John noted a mutual benefit between the assayers program and CANMET in the development of examination materials and methods development. Council thanked Dr. Steger for his presentation (copy of presentation notes attached to the Minutes).

## **6. BCIT. Training Program Update (Elaine Woo)**

Elaine - development of Module 3 of the training program is almost complete. The fourth group of 9 student started the course in April 1999 and are expected to sit the examination in March 2001. A group of 12 students had started training using distance education in April 2000 and comprised 2 from YT, 3 from Manitoba, 2 from Ontario and 5 from B.C. Students from Arizona and Quebec are interest in the course. Twenty students would be ready to sit the September 2001 exam. Thanks to Jim McLeod, Lawrence Ng and Keith Rogers for providing time and space for filming the fire assaying training CD.

Jim McLeod - Cominco are interested in translating the training CD's into Spanish.

Keith Errington - BCIT plan multi-language media distance education and also possible remote examinations supervised by a responsible person such as a professional engineer.

Elaine - the next CD produced covers Quality Assurance and Control.

## **7.0 Assayers Examination Update**

Mac Chaudhry - eight candidates registered for the December 1999 practical examination, but only 4 sat the exam and of those 3 passed. There are no candidates for the March 2000 examination. I will write to the four students who did not sit the exam and state that they should do so within eighteen months.

### **7.1 New examination test materials**

Mac Chaudhry - the status of the test materials be discussed at the next meeting.

## 8. Financial Report

Keith Errington circulated a financial status report and commented that the net budget was presently \$21,470.51. A request for annual membership fees was generally sent out in April at the beginning of the fiscal year.

## 9. Other Business

9.1 Derek Blundell proposed that the Board of Advisors be changed to the Council of Advisors to avoid confusion with the Board of Examiners.

***Motion:** Proposed (Ray Lett), Seconded (Keith Rogers) that the Board of Advisors be changed to the Council of Advisors. All in favour*

## 10. Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held Friday 20th October, 2000 at 1.30 p.m. at BCIT.

## 12. Adjournment

*Proposed (Jim McLeod), Seconded (Keith Rogers) that the meeting be adjourned at 4.25 p.m. with thanks to those present for attending. All in favour*

Acting Chair Person, John Gravel

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Secretary, Ray Lett

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Date: \_\_\_\_\_