

# *Assayers Foundation of British Columbia*



**MINUTES**  
of the  
**Advisory Council Meeting of the British Columbia Certified Assayers Program**  
Held by conference call

**July 23<sup>th</sup>, 2010**

***Attended:***

<b>Member</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>	<b>Address</b>
Mac Chaudhry	Examiners Board Chair	BC Gov. (Ret.)	Victoria, BC.
Scott Daniels	Chair-Advisory Council	Teck Metals	Trail, BC.
Ray Lett	Secretary-Advisory Council	BC Government	Victoria, BC.
Paul Morrison	Member, Advisory Council	BCIT	Burnaby, BC.
John Gravel	Treasurer, Advisory Council	Acme Analytical	Vancouver, BC.
Wes Johnson	Member, Advisory Council	Consultant	Victoria, BC.
Alice Pang	Secretary, Advisory Council	ALS	N. Vancouver, BC.
Albert Hung	Member, Advisory Council	SGS	Vancouver, BC.
Andrew Pickering	Member, Advisory Council	SGS	Vancouver, BC.

## **Agenda**

Meeting was called to order at 11.38 a.m. by John Gravel who noted that the only agenda item was discussion of a letter he had circulated to Council members concerning the future direction of the BC Certified Assayers Program with a proposal that the program be transferred to BCIT.

## **Minutes of the Advisors Council Teleconference Meeting of the BC Certified Assayers Program held on July 23, 2010.**

*Wes Johnson:* BC Assayers certification Program is within the MEMPR legislation and the Ministry is responsible for funding the program. The Ministry is presently not complying with the MEMPR legislation. Assaying is not trained in most universities. Few universities offer qualification in analytical chemistry and they provide mainly Spectroscopy training. The BC Assayers program qualifies assayers, but there could be improvements to the program like including other elements such as topics on

## *Assayers Foundation of British Columbia*

quality control concerns in the examination. Training and qualification could be better carried out at BCIT because the assayers program is technical rather than academic.

*Scott Daniels:* For clarification, BCIT offers assayer training. BCIT does a great job so far with the training program but funding of the assayer program is a long term challenge currently. The issue needing resolution is seeking adequate funding to sustain the BC Assayer Certification Program.

*John Gravel:* BCIT do have an assayer training program now and it is actually quite successful under the direction of Elaine Woo. There are over 100 students currently enrolled in the program. BCIT provides the training and the BC Government certifies students passing the government exams.

*Paul Morrison:* Right now there is no certification offering by BCIT. Students taking the assayer program receive a BCIT certificate; BCIT can do training & testing but BCIT is not in the role of a certifying body. Professional associations usually have an independent body to do certification.

*Mac Chaudhry:* To address to Wes' opening remark, we do have a good Quality Control training in the assayer program. As Wes said universities do not offer a comprehensive program in this area and people need to have practical experience to pass the examination. I don't see how universities can offer that and the hands-on experience is what's lacking. Unlike university level courses the assayer certification involves both theory and extensive practical experience in order for candidates to qualify.

*John Gravel:* Just to give some history to people who have missed out some of the previous meetings, in the past six to twelve months, close to a year ago, The BC Assayer Certification Advisory council has held lengthy discussions led by Scott Daniels to develop a sustainable, long term program plan and we came up with three primary options, an industry-led program, a government-led program and exist as a professional association with membership due. The problem with the program now is we are not having enough funding to support an examiner board. Up to recently, there is no funding to support an examiner office. In actual situation, a \$50,000/ year budget is required to keep the program running and attract people into it. MEMPR have indicated that they have no funds available in previous meetings. APEGBC and ASTTBC were approached as possibly regulatory bodies willing to include the assayers program, but their annual registration fees for administration would be too high for assayer members. The BC Assayers Program only applies to assayers practising in BC limiting the number of potential fee paying members. Also, the Assayers program presently has no ability to police members and no requirement for post certification professional development. So far, we came up with the industry funding model with ALS, Acme, SGS and Teck as major contributors. What it comes down to is a funding issue. Paul mentioned that BCIT can't certify its own graduate but they are providing the training, why is that?

## *Assayers Foundation of British Columbia*

*Paul Morrison:* BCIT don't do the certification due to conflict of interest. It is the same case as the Professional Engineers, universities offer training for engineers but do not provide certifications.

*Mac Chaudhry:* Paul's making a very good point that an independent body should set the standard and certifying the program to ensure that the assayers, after training, actually meet the standard.

*Scott Daniels:* When people signed up for BCIT assayer program they are sometimes signing up for a distant training and what is missing is the practical component. Certification is offering some assurance to the employers hiring these people that the assayers are competent and meeting certification requirement. Is it possible to have BCIT providing a practical certification?

*Paul Morrison:* BCIT could carry out competency testing as part of the training program similar to that in other BCIT programs.

*John Gravel:* How do BCIT set up for the testing?

*Mac Chaudhry:* 99% of the assayers actually take the examination at BCIT.

*Wes Johnson:* If the BCIT professors are meeting the requirements of the Assayer Board of Examiners the certification can be done by BCIT. Paul said that it's a conflict of interest but seems like they are doing the certification already.

*Mac Chaudhry:* We are doing what we can but the Ministry had washed its hand with the funding issue. There's a limit to what an individual can contribute and we need to get back to the Ministry to get the funding problem resolved.

*Scott Daniels:* I have focused my effort on what is within the potential of what we can have control on (to resolve the funding problem) rather than lobbying the government. We have raised the funding issue to Dave L. but he had made it clear that we are not going to get any funding from the government.

*Mac Chaudhry:* The body of the Assayer Advisory Committee is supposed to advise the minister/ ministry with the problem. We should write a letter to the minister, send our recommendations and ask the minister to make a decision.

*Scott Daniels:* Government will probably default to what they had done in 1974 but if a letter is going to be sent, I will take on the responsibility to send the letter as the chair of the advisory council.

## *Assayers Foundation of British Columbia*

*Mac Chaudhry:* Petition for funding the certification can also be done but we need to send a letter to the minister and it wouldn't hurt to mention that there are a lot of benefits from off-shore industries as well.

*Wes Johnson:* Very glad to hear that BCIT is already involved in the assayer program. Another point could be brought up in the letter is we have a very strong laboratory business in BC.

*Scott Daniels:* Current issue has been the funding of the certification program. We decided that we would go with the industry funding model before. With the political lobbying approach, government will probably look at this group and wonder what the problem was as there are not similar problems with other professional groups.

*John Gravel:* The difference is that the assayer organization doesn't have a mass.

*Scott Daniels:* Future funding of the program is still the main issue and a letter to the Minister, Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources will be written to request government funding. We have industry contributed to fund our program and that shows our importance. What is the timeline of this letter? I would like to set a timeline for it. I would have it ready by mid August for members to review before the next ACM meeting in September. The letter will be reviewed by advisors council members by mid August 2010 before being sent to the Minister.

**Adjournment** at 12.36 a.m. July 23, 2010.

### **Action Item:**

**Scott Daniels** will draft a letter to the Minister, BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources which would include a reminder to the Minister that under present legislation the BC Government is responsible for the assayer program's administration expenses. The letter would include our recommendations and ask the minister to make a decision.