

# Assayers Foundation of British Columbia



## MINUTES

**Advisory Council Meeting of the British Columbia Certified Assayers Program**  
held at  
**Room SW9-118. British Columbia Institute of Technology,**  
**3700 Willingdon Ave. Burnaby, BC.**

**November 26<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.
Elaine Woo	Examiner	BCIT	Burnaby, BC.
Paul Morrison	Member, Advisory Council	BCIT	Burnaby, BC.
John Gravel	Treasurer, Advisory Council	Acme Analytical	Vancouver, BC.
Dave Lefebure	Member, Advisory Council	BC Government	Victoria, BC.
Keith Rogers	Examiner	ALS	N. Vancouver, BC.
Alice Pang	Secretary-Advisory Council	ALS	N. Vancouver, BC.

The meeting was called to order at 11:40 a.m. by Scott Daniels.

*Scott Daniels:* Asked the group to start with self introduction. Since Karina Brino, the new ADM of Ministry of Forests, Mines and Lands, was unable to attend this meeting, Scott went ahead to go through the prepared “Program Sustainability” presentation with the group. The presentation was followed with discussion.

*Elaine Woo:* Asked whether the membership fee is tax deductible in regards to the member funding models.

*Dave Lefebure:* Believed that the membership fee would be tax deductible as other professional membership dues.

*Mac Chaudhry:* In the case that members worked for a unionized organization who ends up paying for the membership dues?

*Scott Daniels:* Most likely the company would be paying for the fee.

*Dave Lefebure:* Regardless of the membership fee, this group should consider tracking the members and maybe start with a small membership fee. This would provide an idea of who’s an active member and start connecting to them.

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*Keith Rogers:* Agree that getting membership going would be beneficial to the group as it would provide a chance for the group to interact with the assayers.

*John Gravel:* The group should also consider a paid position where the person is responsible for contacting members and collecting the membership fee. The paid position is to ensure the continuity of services.

*Dave Lefebure:* The idea of building up membership is to stay connected and start communicating; building an email distribution list or creating a face book page to encourage communication between assayers and the foundation are some of the things that could be considered.

*Elaine Woo:* People may have expectation of what they could get in return when paying membership fees.

*Mac Chaudhry:* It would need to be included and defined in the Act that people who practice assaying in the province would need to belong to the assayers' foundation.

*Elaine Woo:* In some cases the number of assayers in the company increases the credibility and sometimes it is a client requirement before sending in sample for analyses.

*Dave Lefebure:* There are a number of organizations in the mineral industries which made significant income by producing a directory. The benefit of starting a directory probably would be seen in 3 to 4 years. An international directory could also be considered.

*John Gravel:* Setting up some sort of conference to get assayers together could also be considered. This group could also look at the Quebec model which stated that one could not conduct assaying work if the person was not a certified analyst in the province of Quebec.

*Dave Lefebure:* We need to be cautious to proceed as it would not be the group's intention to create situations which could put the labs in the province to become less competitive.

*Keith Rogers:* Believe that companies only need a lead person to be certified but not all individuals who work in the lab need to possess a Quebec certification. It would be unrealistic to have all workers in the lab certified.

*Mac Chaudhry:* 42% of the certified assayers in the last 20 years had been promoted after obtaining the certification; companies must be recognizing these assayers.

*John Gravel:* Mandatory membership payments should be looked into.

*Dave Lefebure:* Has the group looked into recognizing and having different levels of certification?

*Scott Daniels:* Different levels of membership had been looked into; it goes back to the legislation to broaden the base.

*Dave Lefebure:* The assayer group could also look into empowering BCIT to issue or award the certificate when students pass a module. This system would give some credentials to people which they can use especially for those who would not be able to complete the certification program.

*Elaine Woo:* BCIT already has a similar system; people could take individual modules and get certificates for completing those modules. We need to consider changing the legislation to have certified assayers signing the (analytical) certificates.

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*Dave Lefebure:* Legislation may take one to two years and the group must ensure that the correct wording is used when changing the legislation. An alternative is to empower BCIT, which provides the training, to issue certification when student complete a module.

*Scott Daniels:* The advisory council does not have the authority to do that. Change in the act might have to recognize the foundation. We may have some authority under the government through the board of examiners if we want to partner/ co-sign certification with BCIT. It is good to have the momentum for changes and the group is open for options but still need to solve the immediate financial issues.

*John Gravel:* There should be an on-going (financial) contribution from the government.

*Mac Chaudhry:* One option explored before was to have a part time position of a chief assayer (employed by the ministry) equivalent to approximately one-third of an FTE but the idea was dropped.

Stopped for lunch break at 1:14pm and meeting resume again at 1:40pm.

*Scott Daniels:* We talked about legislative changes; we probably need to explore the funding models again but we also need to make sure that we do not distract from our lack of funding issue. The board of examiners is the key and distinct of the program and the survival of the board of examiners comes back to the issues of funding.

Changing of legislation, as Dave Lefebure had pointed out, could take one to two years. We need to find a viable and sustainable way to keep the program going.

*Dave Lefebure:* Due to reduction in the ministry's budget and limited operation funds, the ministry lost one-sixth of its workforce back in April 2010. Chasing government for funding will be a challenge. ADM will probably consider the following: 1) Who benefits from the program? 2) Are there other groups like yours that are supported by the government? 3) Why can't industries support this program? 4) What is the justification for the government (rather than the industries or members) to support this program? This group should also have information for the following things when requesting for funding from the government 1) The amount of funding need from the government. 2) Whether the funding is forever or just over a period of time. 3) What resources is this group bringing to the table? 4) Documentation of the things done by this group.

*Keith Rogers:* Some of these questions have obvious answers. One of the justifications for the government to support this process is that an independent body will need to be responsible for the program. If industries are supporting it financially, it can be biased. Industries would have to always look at the cost and find ways to reduce the cost. Government should be involved to make sure things do not go off-track. The program is set up to monitor and control the process.

*Dave Lefebure:* Government does not play an active role in the regulation of a lot of industries.

*Mac Chaudhry:* The message I'm getting is that government is inclining towards user pay.

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*John Gravel:* Government would probably create a base for the program to develop but it would probably be hard to get a year after year support (financially).

*Dave Lefebure:* We have to look at all these other professional groups outside the jurisdiction of the government; why is this one so unique that we have to keep it as a government program?

*Paul Morrison:* One question to ask is what are the consequences if there is no assayer certification program and how would it affect the Act?

*Dave Lefebure:* ADM is coming to meet with the group in order to provide information to the government. It is not in the interest of anyone to see the program discontinued but government do have a long list of things that they need to deal with.

*Paul Morrison:* It would be interesting to look for groups that match our professional model especially the smaller groups and see how they operate.

*Dave Lefebure:* It would probably mention certification in the act but up to the professional group to administrate the program. The act may need to be updated. It is a challenge that this is a small group. You need to stay focus on how to get through the next couple of years.

Dave Lefebure departed.

*John Gravel:* We should take a look at other groups which get funding (from the government) and check the Quebec model.

*Scott Daniels:* We should look into broaden the base. Some of the industry members had expressed that they may not be able to commit to the same contribution year after year. We should also pursue membership as well as funding from the government. Also need to look into is changing the act to license everyone working in mineral analysis.

*John Gravel:* Dave has suggested a very good idea to recognize people at different levels. We need to find a model to finance the program year after year; may be a model composes of all three- industries, membership and government support.

*Scott Daniels:* We'll have to get the act change and formulate the plan. First, we will need a lifeline for the government to bridge the financial gap and secondly, we will need to look into who's going to pay for the membership. A monthly conference call should be arranged to work things out.

**Adjournment at 3:32 p.m. Nov. 26, 2010.**

The following is the chair's report and scholarship report sent by Scott Daniels prior to the Nov. 26 meeting.

### **Chair's Report:**

A year ago at this time, we were successful in obtaining a \$10k contribution from the Canadian Mineral Analysts. This support was critical to maintaining the Board of

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Examiners for the Certified Assayers Program. A formal letter was delivered to the BC Government's Assayers Program representative Ray Lett, requesting \$15,000 support from the Government. We received no funding based on this request.

At the time of our 14-May-2010 spring AGM, we were faced with the critical situation of the retirement of the Chair of the Board of Examiners. Fortunately, and under the provision of suitable stipends for the examiners, Mr. Mac Chaudhry has agreed to generously continue his role as Chair of the Board of Examiners. We have additionally had Mr. Keith Rogers (ALS Global) replace the outgoing examiner, Derek Blundell.

While the long-term replacement of examiners may remain a challenge, our ongoing critical situation is seeking a sustainable model for funding of the Program. Through the work and leadership of Mr. Bill Clifford (Anachemia Science), we have successfully raised a one-time contribution from Industry totaling \$38k (\$10 each from ALS Global, Acme labs & SGS Global, \$5k from Teck Resources, \$2k from Anachemia Science and \$1k from Rock Labs).

Models for sustainable funding have been identified, prioritized and now explored: membership, industry and government. Wishing to pursue what was potentially within our control, we explored a membership model first. This failed because of an insufficient number of "members" to support the costs of the program. Second, we pursued an Industry funded model. This failed because most Industries were unable to commit to ongoing annual financial contributions as made in 2010. With this, a letter was written and sent to Mr. Bill Bennett (BC Ministry of Energy Mines and Petroleum Resources). The letter reviewed the history bringing us to our current crisis and recommended "a return to government financial support for this Program."

The fall of 2010 was riddled with a political game of musical chairs and "who's who?" As the dust of these changes begins to settle, all signs are that the Certified Assayers Program remains within the area of responsibility of the BC Geological Survey Branch and that this branch is under the area of responsibility of the ADM Karina Briño, Mines and Mineral Resource Division. Mr. Dave Lefebure, Chief Geologist BC Geological Survey, will be attending our 26-Nov-2010 meeting and we look forward to Mr. Lefebure's assurance of Government support for the Certified Assayers Program.

### **Scholarship Report:**

**Applicants:** 7 candidates applied & applications critically reviewed against 15 selection criteria by the Committee (Elaine Woo, Mac Chaudhry, Ray Lett (Chair)).

Awards of \$1000 generously funded by the Canadian Mineral Analysts made to:

- Chun Hong Zhou-SGS, Vancouver.
- Loida Smith –Vale Inco, Mississauga.
- Helen Chan, Barrick Technology, Lab, Vancouver.

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Cheques were mailed to Chun Hong Zhou, Loida Smith & Helen Chan on October 21<sup>st</sup>, 2010.

### **Outstanding Issues:**

1. Loida Smith & Helen Chen confirmed that they have received their cheques, but nothing received from Chun Zhou. Need to confirm with John Gravel if all of the cheques have been cashed or if a problem exists with delivery of the cheque.
2. “Regrets – Application Unsuccessful” letter needs to be sent to the other 4 candidates.

There has also been a \$ 500 BCIT graduate achievement scholarship funded by the BC Assayers Foundation that was awarded in June 2010 to Kenson Lo who is currently working at ALS-Mineral Labs in North Vancouver.

### **Action Item:**

**Scott Daniels** to arrange monthly conference call.