

**HARMONIZATION  
REPORT  
TO  
THE CANADIAN COUNCIL OF LAND SURVEYORS  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**May 25-26, 2009  
Calgary, Alberta**

The objectives of this report are to summarize discussions and activities pertaining to “Harmonization of Entry Standards to the Profession” since the 2008 CCLS AGM, and to provide arguments leading to generating specific action items to move this initiative forward. Harmonization has strong ties to the Labour Mobility initiative of the federal and provincial governments. Several talks on how to best achieve harmonization have occurred since the 2001 signing of the Mutual Recognition Agreement by all regulatory land surveying groups. Members attending the 2008 AGM emphatically agreed that **“the time to talk has run out and both individuals and associations have run out of patience and capacity to wait and listen to more talk”**.

An MOU is being developed between CCLS and CBEPS along with terms of reference and policy documents for accreditation. On December 16, 2008, representatives of CCLS, BECC and CBEPS met by teleconference to investigate policies and processes to shift some of operations and responsibilities of the BECC to CBEPS.

The discussion centered on the relationship between the harmonization initiative, BECC, CBEPS and CCLS (or its successor, Professional Surveyors Canada). The following points were made:

- Process and documentation to transfer functions and duties from BECC to CBEPS are needed,
- The academic syllabus is ‘owned’ by the member associations and CBEPS is willing to administer it as a service provider,
- Aspects of policy and strategic direction with respect to syllabus need to be considered in the relationship between the Professional Surveyors Canada, the Associations, and CBEPS,
- Communication with OAGQ is very important and strategies need to be investigated,
- Professional Surveyors Canada can, by agreement with the regulatory bodies, represent them for such things as funding applications and policy input at the federal level. CBEPS could also do this in situations that apply to its work.

It was noted that since the profession does not currently have harmonized entrance requirements, CBEPS must be able to provide certification services under different association standards until full harmonization is realized.

**What Needs to be Done:**

The following work needs to be done to actually implement the syllabus. It is a substantial amount of work and federal funding has been secured by CCLS to help get it done in a reasonable time frame. Even with full funding the work is substantial and it will take at least a year to complete. Several specific action items have been identified and a list of next steps has been generated for the development of full harmonization:

**Process and Policy Considerations:**

- The proposal currently has five items in the options schedule. Consideration needs to be given as to which of these items will have parallel syllabus examinations provided through CBEPS.
- There was a discussion of how to qualify the ‘other’ options described as ‘post secondary advanced geomatics courses as approved by relevant body (CBEPS, APBELS, AERC, OAGQ-BE).’ It was suggested that there may be a system of pre-approval of options. There needs to be policy built around acceptable options with input from APBELS, CBEPS, AERC and OAGQ.
- There is inconsistency between the processes for accreditation of university programs and the process for granting equivalencies to courses and exemptions to candidates who do not complete an accredited program. A disconnect also exists between the university degree that the profession requires and the availability of an alternate route outside of a degree program.

**Consultation with Regulators and Post Secondary Institutions:**

A review of the currently accredited post secondary programs will need to take place and a transition period and process established once the syllabus is ready to implement. The institutions will also be consulted in developing the details around the syllabus items to ensure that the transition will consider the interests of the candidates, the profession, and the institutions.

**Detailed Syllabus Work:**

It is suggested that this is work for subject matter specialists represented by the CBEPS special examiners. This will require:

- A detailed review of the item descriptions,
- A critique of the description of pre-examination studies with increased detail,
- A review of texts and references,
- Rewriting of learning outcomes,
- Rewriting and in some cases creation of study guides.

The discussion turned to what was required to move forward and four key areas for action were determined.

**First:** Awareness of the basic core and electives syllabus exists but the larger issues are not widely understood and now need the attention of the Directors so that the member associations can consider the syllabus proposal in its full context and then move forward on other harmonization issues. Communication support and strategy is needed.

**Second:** CBEPS and CCLS require clear, open and structured communication links. There is general agreement that the core and electives syllabus and the accreditation and equivalency processes are naturally part of the CBEPS function. However, there needs to be a transition phase. CBEPS and CCLS need to jointly effect the transition. Communication will continue to be important beyond that transition phase and links between CBEPS and CCLS (and its eventual successor Professional Surveyors Canada) need to be carefully considered and developed.

**Third:** OAGQ and CBEPS need to consider a communication strategy and CCLS may be able to provide a forum. CBEPS has invited OAGQ to sit on its Board as an Observer.

**Fourth:** Harmonization needs to move forward, beyond just the implementation of the core and electives syllabus. The formation of a Harmonization Committee with specific terms of reference under the CCLS structure was ratified at the interim CCLS Board meeting in February 2009, but it still needs to be populated. The following points were made discussing this particular action item:

- Goals of the initiative need to be re-clarified,
- Where are we all going with harmonization?
- Develop a communication strategy for all involved,
- Identify the common requirements of the associations,
- With respect to the committee structure, the following options were suggested:
  - The committee members be a group of regulators,
  - The group consists of a member from each of the previous 5 examining boards,
  - The CCLS Board be the group,
  - A CCLS Director be a CBEPS liaison.

**Closing Notes:**

- The GGE Department at UNB has developed a new surveying program in response to associations' demands across the country. The program entitled, "Bachelor of Geomatics", or B.Geom., would make it easier for graduates from a recognized two-year technical program in surveying, to continue their education for an additional two years at the university level, in fulfillment of academic requirements to become a professional surveyor. UNB has recently asked for accreditation of this program.
- The University of Calgary has made certain changes to its Geomatics Engineering program. It has received an extension in its accreditation for one year to allow the new national syllabus to be more fully developed and implemented.
- Care must be taken to ensure that the regulatory operations of the larger associations are not transplanted into the smaller ones. This is a symptom of "Reconciliation of Entry Standards". *Harmonization*, on the other hand, will result in a fairer playing field for all parties.
- Full harmonization must include common standards for articling processes among the regulators (Resolution 6).
- To be viable and relevant, a member-based organization must deliver services valued by its members and must have professional staff in order to do so effectively. But members should not expect to receive these services for free. Continued heavy reliance on volunteers is not a viable solution.
- Timeliness and effective two-way communication (more than simple information exchange) is critical to advancing this initiative. Clear consensus and direction needs to come from regulatory bodies before policies can be finalized at the national level.
- We need more than proactive planning. There is a need for an increase in interactive planning. Instead of continuing to communicate only within our own profession, we must be able to develop and effectively utilize inter-professional language.
- Current trends cannot be ignored and need to be examined – use markets, education and environment as guides to define and steer our future.
- CBEPS, CCLS and Associations need to develop a joint Change Management Plan during the transition to Professional Surveyors Canada.
- Action items have been clearly identified and agreed upon. The Board now needs to identify who will do what, by when, and the level of resources needed.

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