

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

SEPTEMBER 6-8, 2008
WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

The most significant update being presented to the CCLS Board of Directors stems not from the activities of the BECC and its Harmonization Task Force, but from outside of these groups. On July 18, 2008 in Quebec City, Canadian Premiers renewed and strengthened mechanisms for unimpeded labour mobility under the Agreement for Internal Trade (AIT). The Provinces agreed to achieve automatic mutual recognition of credentials for professionals and other skilled workers by April 2009.

The Premiers have stressed that, "...full market participation and unimpeded mobility of labour is vital to Canada's economic growth." and "...any worker certified for an occupation by a regulatory authority of one province or territory shall be recognized as qualified to practice that occupation by all other provinces and territories." Premiers further directed that any exceptions to full labour market mobility will have to be clearly identified and justified.

Effective January 1, 2009, strengthened mechanisms include monetary penalties to a maximum of \$5 million. **Premiers are willing to legislate if necessary** (emphasis added by author), however they also note that each jurisdiction is working within their own unique circumstances and experiences.

This "wake-up" call should reverberate loudly with every professional surveying organization in the country. On June 17 2001, all professional surveying jurisdictions have signed a Mutual Recognition Agreement. Section 4.4 of that agreement states, "...we agree that all associations will continue to work towards the harmonization of academic qualifications." It is noted that the Syllabus Review Task Force/BECC is well along its way to fulfilling its mandate of a thorough examination of the academic requirements for the profession, but there is still much to accomplish.

Although significant efforts are being coordinated by the CCLS, the complexity and magnitude of the principles of harmonization require the assistance of a large number of organizations and individuals. There is a need to press all professional surveying bodies, which have very specific legislated responsibilities, to be more engaged and proactive in developing action items for making the process of becoming a surveyor more transparent and consistent across the country without lowering standards.

While it is important to consider the internal philosophies of the future of the profession, harmonization efforts must also support the students' perspective. The basis for processes of accreditation should shift from inputs - what is taught, to outputs - what is learned. Technical skills under the revised syllabus structure must be maintained while students gain an education in professional skills, such as teamwork, effective communication and lifelong learning.

The Canadian Board of Examiners for Professional Surveyors (CBEPS), on behalf of the other Boards of Examiners, have agreed to deliver presentations to each association on a core and electives structure for the proposed new syllabus. The main objective is to provide the BECC with feedback and opinions on the feasibility of the revised syllabus structure and its content. With presentations being substantially complete, concrete responses and specific recommendations must be communicated to the CCLS through the BECC on a timely basis in order to move Resolution #4 forward. The realization of other resolutions is dependant on it. Communication is essential, but action produces results.

Legislators have made the Labour Mobility mandate clear. Perceived or real barriers to the achievement of a modern harmonized profession are focussed on local needs and are poorly understood outside of their spheres of influence. Local governance policies, cultures and language are also contributing factors to the disparate nature of our profession. Collaboration on a national basis is a logistical challenge that is not easily overcome, but is also not insurmountable.

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