

GeoGazette

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Geoscientists Canada Meeting

The 14th Annual Meeting of Members (provincial constituent associations) and the 28th Board of Directors Meeting was held June 3-4 in Vancouver, British Columbia. Andy Cameron, P. Geo (Director), David Carter, P. Geo (Executive Director) and Gavin Kennedy, P. Geo (President) attended the meeting on behalf of Geoscientists Nova Scotia.

Some of the key topics that were discussed included Canadian Geoscientists Standards

Board projects such as licensure of Internationally Trained Geoscientists and a framework for licensing professional geoscientists in Canada, the upcoming 4IPGC conference, and the new identity (logo) for Geoscientists Canada.

An update on the status of the strategic plan was provided and a new committee was initiated to look at facilitating inter-provincial mobility through incidental practice agreements between constituent associations.

During the meeting the final signatures on the Memorandum of Understanding to share information with respect discipline and enforcement were obtained, and this database is now available to Geoscientists Nova Scotia.

The meeting was a productive one and a good spirit of cooperation was evident between constituent associations.

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4IPGC Conference and Competition for Travel Bursary

Geoscientists Canada will be hosting the 4th International Professional Geology Conference (4IPGC) in Vancouver from January 22-24, 2012. The conferences are held every 4 years in different countries around the world. 4IPGC will coincide with Mineral Exploration Roundup 2012. The theme of the conference will be "Earth Science-Global Practice" and will provide valuable coverage of topics related to professionalism and practice issues affecting Earth scientists globally. The Call for Abstracts/Call for Papers have gone out and the submission deadline is September 15th, 2011. For more information visit www.4ipgc.ca.

In support of the conference, Geoscientists Nova Scotia plans to award a travel bursary valued at up to \$1000. The travel bursary will be awarded to a professional geoscientist (P. Geo, member in good standing with Geoscientists Nova Scotia) to offset travel expenses to attend and make a presentation at the conference.

Geoscientists Canada project facilitates discussion between associations on a new collective framework on admissions processes for internationally-trained geoscientists

-James Moors, P.Geo, Past President Geoscientists Canada

Five years ago my wife and I met a woman who had recently moved to Canada from Germany where she had a successful dentistry practice. She immediately applied to practice in Canada and now, five years later, she has yet to receive her license. So what about geoscientists? The answer in general terms is that because the scope of geoscience practice is so similar around the world, such a situation is less likely to arise. However given differences in university geoscience programs between Canada and other parts of the world problems can arise or significant delays can occur when an immigrant applies for their P.Geo license here. In fact up until recently significant delays and/or problems were not uncommon when Canadian P.Geo's crossed provincial borders, let alone international ones!

Happily recent amendments to Canada's Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) signed by the Premiers in April 2009 has removed many of the hurdles that regulated professionals within Canada used to face when applying to practice in a different part of the country. Although perceived by some as a top down solution imposed by government that left many of the 40 plus regulated professions in Canada facing considerable challenges complying with the new rules, prior work on aligning registration requirements and inter-provincial collaboration by the geoscience professional associations across Canada has placed us well ahead of the curve.

Until the AIT was amended, it was permissible for a provincial or territorial association to put a transfer applicant through a complete reassessment of their credentials and to refuse to re-register a P.Geo in good standing who had been previously accepted for registration elsewhere in Canada. Academic training was the common source of this conflict as individual jurisdictions had slightly different university course requirements, and/or ways of assessing candidates, particularly with degrees obtained in the more distant past. Thankfully, a cooperative effort by all the associations under the umbrella of Geoscientists Canada, just prior to the AIT amendments, had resulted in the collectively agreed to *Geoscience Knowledge and Experience Requirements for Professional Registration in Canada*. This hard-won document clearly sets out the outcomes - from both academic training and practice experience - that must be demonstrated by a candidate before they can be accepted as a P.Geo. It has been endorsed for use by all the associations and now greatly facilitates the application of consistent requirements in admissions decisions right across the country. With this part of the house in order, we have now moved forward onto other matters.

Considering P.Geo applications from those who obtained their academic training and work experience in geoscience in Canada is an "apples with apples" process.

However what about internationally-trained applicants? They throw many varieties of "oranges" into the mix - differently structured geoscience degree programs, contrasting practice environments, other languages and cultural norms, etc. Or worse still as a refugee, maybe not being able to contact your university to arrange to have academic transcripts submitted or arrange for a former supervisor to vouch for your work experience. An added complication is that not all associations handle internationally-trained applicants in a similar manner. Such disparities expose risks, whereby applicants may seek out the province or territory that is the easiest "in" and then become eligible for licensure anywhere in Canada under the AIT, without reassessment.

Geoscientists Canada's Internationally-Trained Geoscientist ("ITG") project is currently addressing this very issue. Now in its second year, the project is developing a comprehensive understanding of all the assessment methods used across the country and is facilitating the development of a commonly-agreed framework or protocol. (As an example of differing assessment methods, some jurisdictions use written exams, others interviews, others a combination of both. What is the more appropriate? Do methods even need to be the same, if outcomes are similar?). The ITG project has the added benefit of allowing the profession in Canada to gain a much more thorough understanding of admission requirements and assessment methods used for entry-to-the-profession decisions in other countries. The ever increasing mobility of labour and resources dictates that all professional geoscientists be similarly qualified so they can readily register in multiple international jurisdictions - this applies as much for Canadian P.Geo's seeking recognition overseas, as for internationally-trained geoscientists applying for licensure in Canada.

Furthering our understanding of how geoscience is regulated as a profession elsewhere in the world, and maintaining open dialogue and developing strategic alliances with professional associations in other countries are all key to improving the overall quality of the vital professional services that all geoscientists provide to society and to better protecting the public interest, at a global scale. The dialogue side of this equation will be in full force during Mineral Exploration Roundup 2012 when Geoscientists Canada, in cooperation with the Association of Mineral Exploration B.C. will host the 4th International Professional Geoscience Conference ("4IPGC"). Under the theme "Earth Science - Global Practice", 4IPGC will cover a wide range of topics related to professionalism and provide an excellent forum for discussion around issues common to geoscience practice around the globe. The conference takes place only once every four years, and as the inaugural Canadian event we will be working hard on your behalf to put on a great show. We look forward to seeing you there. For more info go to www.4ipgc.ca

Environment Committee Update

Scott McCarthy, P. Geo, Committee Chair

The Environment Committee was assembled in late November 2010. The committee members include Scott Conrod, P.Geo, Andy Cameron, P.Geo, Jason Muise, MIT, and Scott McCarthy, P.Geo (chair). The members have a strong background in contaminated sites (assessment and remediation), air emissions and water quality, and bring experience from both private practice and government.

The committee was in the very early stages of assembly when Nova Scotia Environment (NSE) issued a press release that a draft Contaminated Sites Regulation would be circulated for comments. This is a key document for those practicing in the area of environmental site assessment and remediation, which provides a definition of Site Professional (those who are deemed as qualified by NSE to file ESA reports, closure documents, certificates of compliance etc.).

Geoscientists Nova Scotia has a significant percentage of members (more as a percentage than most other provincial associations) who practice environmental geoscience. The committee, therefore, certainly sees this definition of Site Professional as a key issue with the potential to impact our members who practice in this discipline. The draft regulation from NSE has left this

definition open to non-professionals, which is of concern given that this work is defined in the Geoscience Profession Act, and for other reasons including liability and the protection of the public interest. In most provinces, this definition of Site Professional only includes registered professional engineers and geoscientists (members in good standing, or members with licenses to practice, with the applicable provincial association (s)).

Our focus has been on raising the profile of the association in all of the sectors where our members practice, with the regulators, and with the public in general, and to assist Council with responses to issues that may affect the membership. Ideally, we will see the efforts of the committee result in an increased awareness of environmental geoscience as a recognized discipline of professional practice. Since its inception, the committee has completed the following:

- Met with NSE senior managers in January 2011 (prior to release of the draft regulations) to identify Geoscientists Nova Scotia as a key stakeholder, and to discuss our legislation and the areas of practice covered;
- Formulated a response that was put forward by Geoscientists

Nova Scotia to NSE;

- Had an introductory meeting (March 2010) with the Executive Director of NSE (accompanied by senior managers) to discuss issues such as licensure of NSE staff (and other provincial departments), site professional definition, and to identify Geoscientists Nova Scotia as a key stakeholder;
- Contact has been established with the Engineers Nova Scotia, Environment Committee Chair. It is noteworthy that the response from Engineers Nova Scotia with respect to the Site Professional definition in the draft Contaminated Sites Regulations was very similar to ours;
- The committee has held regular meetings and has identified several opportunities to raise awareness of professional practice in environmental geoscience and issues of relevance to the Association and its members.

More recently we have been engaged with proposed changes to the NS Environment Act and have provided a response. We are very pleased to have been able to coordinate and respond to the issues that have presented themselves since our formation. We welcome any input regarding areas or opportunities for the committee to pursue.

Membership Update

	Pending Applications	MIT's	P.Geo's	Certificates of Authorization	Student memberships
Totals	26	17	145	19	8

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Upcoming Events

Geology Matters
Westin Hotel, Halifax
October 24-25, 2011

Atlantic Reclamation
Conference
Membertou Trade &
Convention Centre,
Sydney
October 26-28, 2011

4IPGC
Westin Bayshore,
Vancouver
January 22-24, 2012

Executive Director Update

David Carter, P. Geo

Here is a quick update on the recent activities of Geoscientists Nova Scotia and some interesting items:

- APGNS representatives participated in the Annual Meeting of the Members and 28th Board of Directors Meeting of the Canadian Council of Professional Geoscientists (Geoscientists Canada) in June. The meeting was held in Vancouver B.C. and included separate meetings of the Staff Liaison Group and the Executive Committee as well as the Board and Members meetings. The meetings provide a valuable opportunity to participate at a national level and to coordinate professional registration and regulation activities across the Constituent Associations.
- APGNS was represented by Gavin Kennedy, P.Geo, President, Andy Cameron, P.Geo, Director, and David Carter, P.Geo, Executive Director.
- At this Board of Directors meeting, Ontario and Alberta suggested and the Board passed a motion that Geoscientists Canada create a Task Force to look into Incidental Practice and other mobility issues. Geoscientists Canada was looking to staff this Task Force and Geoscientists Nova Scotia was invited to submit an appointment, and nominated Andy Cameron, P.Geo to the position. The task force will develop Terms of Reference by September for approval by the Board, have a progress report for the November Board meeting and a final report by June of 2012.
- APGNS continues to work closely with the other Canadian geoscience regulatory bodies to facilitate professional mobility and transferability of professional membership. This includes our participation on the Canadian Geoscience Standards Board, through our Representative Cliff Stanley, P.Geo, as well as the Geoscience Licensure Task Group, the Geoscience Professional Practice Guidelines Steering Committee and Internationally Trained Geoscientists Task Group. Members should be aware that in addition to their status as a "member-in-good-standing" with APGNS, professional mobility also requires the successful completion of the National Professional Practice Examination.
- The province of Nova Scotia is proposing legislation to change the Limitations of Actions Act. We responded to this proposed change in 2009 with Engineers Nova Scotia and others. The proposed legislation will replace the existing limitation periods with two standard periods of 2 years from when the claim is discovered, or 15 years from the underlying event upon which the claim is based.
- The Nova Scotia Department of Environment recently released a discussion paper proposing revisions to the Environment Act. The proposed changes could be significant to professional geoscience practice in Nova Scotia. The discussion paper was reviewed by the APGNS Environment Committee. A response identifying APGNS as a key stakeholder with significant concerns and a request to be included in the review and revision process was submitted.
- Pat Ryall, P.Geo, represented APGNS at a recent meeting of the Discipline and Enforcement Officers Group. The MOU regarding sharing of information has been implemented and APGNS has agreed to participate in a national database regarding discipline and enforcement. The development of consistent policies among the Constituent Associations continues to be a key issue for this group.

