

2023 College of Applied Biologists ANNUAL REPORT



Strategic Plan 2022 - 2024

Our Vision

Responsible resource management supported by accountable and trusted professionals.

Our Mission

To serve the public interest by regulating applied biology professionals.

Our Values

- **Collaborative:** We build relationships with others to protect the public interest.
- **Accountable:** We are responsive and open in our relationships with the public, employers and College registrants.
- **Respectful:** We value Indigenous Knowledge in the management and protection of natural resources.
- **Ethical:** We follow the principles of administrative justice and take a fair, transparent and judicious approach to the application of College processes.

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Photo: Golden larch reflected in a mountain tarn in the fall. Purcell Mountain range, BC, Canada, by Shawna and Damien Richard - Shutterstock.

One More Year Leading through Regulation

Another year has passed since our last AGM and our role as one of the first fully regulated jurisdictions for the practice of applied biology in the world. The College of Applied Biologists continues to lead the way through the implementation of the *Professional Governance Act* and the strengthening of our regulatory approaches, including the newly required Indigenous Awareness course and professional development activities, a new Legal Requirements course, development of better-defined areas of practice, and new professional guidelines for erosion and sediment control.

We continued engaging with registrants to better refine and define reserved practice, with discussions with registrants, governments, industry, regulatory partners and the public on the rights and responsibilities that professionals regulated by our College must uphold.

“We continue engaging with registrants to better refine and define reserved practice.”

Throughout 2023, the College hosted a webinar and numerous public information sessions, which discussed the path to reserved practice and were well-attended by registrants

and non-registrants alike. For a better understanding of what reserved practice is, the implications to applied biology professionals' practice, the webinar remains available on the [College website](#).

We continue developing necessary practice guidance documents. Currently, we are polling registrants to provide feedback on the most important practice areas to address next. These guiding documents are

critical to understand and appreciate the limitations of our practice and when other professionals' input is required. The College of Applied Biologists could not accomplish all these tasks without the leadership and hard work of all the dedicated staff and volunteers,



Seán Sharpe, RPBio,
Board Chair

including the many members of Committees, Task Forces, public Lay Member appointees and, of course, our dedicated Board of Directors.

It has been my honour to work with these fine people the last year. As I move into my coming role of Past Chair, after serving in various roles on the College Council/Board over the past decade, I reflect and am proud of our registrants in all the changes that have occurred, the growth and

maturation of the College and the regulation of professional applied biology practice across BC. Volunteering with the College is rewarding and necessary, and I encourage all registrants to consider getting involved in a Committee, a Task Force and the Board itself. 🌍

Submitted by Seán Sharpe, RPBio,
Board Chair

The Growth of a Regulated Profession

2023 was the first full year of the profession of applied biology having reserved practice. It has been a year of learning, change and (especially) growth.

Since the Professional Reliance Review was launched in 2017, the number of College registrants has gone from 2300 to 3385, or a 47% increase in registrations—and applications are not slowing down.

With the growth in registrations, there is a corresponding increase in audits, complaints and subsequent disciplinary actions, and inquiries from applicants, registrants and employers. To help deal with these pressures, the College continues to: expand our roster of talented and committed volunteers for the Board, Committees and Task Forces through merit-based recruitment processes; enhance our technology tools (registrant portal, website, internal network); and increase staff capacity.

Increased reporting requirements from government have also stretched the College, and with the passing of the new *International Credentials Recognition Act*, those pressures will continue to grow.

“It has been a year of learning, change and (especially) growth.”

These are challenges to be sure—but they also offer much potential. As the first jurisdiction in Canada and beyond to achieve reserved practice, we have the opportunity to lead by example, showing other jurisdictions the benefit of having qualified, competent and

accountable applied biology professionals as full partners in sustainable resource management. 🌱

Submitted by Christine Houghton, CEO



Christine Houghton,
Chief Executive Officer





Brittany John

Mark De Croos continues to be the chair of the Finance Governance Committee and he does a phenomenal job of breaking down finances and providing sound recommendations to the Board.

2023 was Theresa Fresco's final term as a Lay Member on the College's Board. We would like to acknowledge the energy and unique insight she has brought the last almost six (6) years. Of course, she will not be going far as she has recently been appointed to the Investigation Committee.

Theresa and Brittany John also served as co-chairs of the Continuing Professional

*Susan Wells was appointed in December 2023 as Lay Board Member but her first Board Meeting took place in January 2024.

Development Task Force, which provided recommendations to the Board on updates to the CPD standard and policy.

Brittany continues to be a part of the Finance Governance Committee and is excited to be participating in a panel at the CAB's annual Conference this year.

The Board is happy to welcome Jason Kuzminski and Susan Wells* as the newest Lay Members, and we look forward to them participating on the College Board and serving in the public interest. 🌍



Mark De Croos



Jason Kuzminski



Susan Wells



Regulatory bodies are required to have four lay board members appointed by government serving on their boards. Lay board members bring an external perspective from registrant board members and contribute to the board's duty to represent the public interest in the governance of the profession(s).



Theresa Fresco

The College continues to operate from a strong financial position with a healthy balance sheet. Applications and registrations for all designations continue to see growth with Registered Professional Biologists (RPBio) increasing by 5.45%, Registered Biology Technologists (RBTech) by 5.88%, and Biologists in Training (BIT) up 11.13%.

Operations are close to pre-pandemic levels with the resumption of in-person outreach activities and important meetings with statutory committee members.

Added requirements from the *Professional Governance Act* and the *International Credentials Recognition Act* along with effectively implementing reserved practice continues to stretch the College's capacity. Our ability to adapt and evolve will continue to ensure that we deliver on the College's mandate. 🌍

Balance Sheet

Year End December 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	2023	2022
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash	\$ 896,878	791,979
Short-term investments	1,022,678	1,116,894
Accounts Receivable	378,421	263,221
Prepaid expenses and deposits	42,246	25,449
	\$ 2,340,223	2,197,543
Tangible capital assets	24,188	22,446
Intangible assets	32,282	39,232
	\$ 2,396,693	2,259,221
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 143,999	127,599
Deferred revenue	1,149,575	1,067,416
	1,293,574	1,195,015
NET ASSETS		
Operating Fund	460,364	435,597
Capital Fund	56,470	61,678
Contingency Fund	19,793	35,000
Legal Contingency Fund	566,492	531,931
	1,103,119	1,064,206
	2,396,693	2,259,221

Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets
Year End December 31, 2023, with comparative information for 2022

	Operating Fund	Capital Fund	Contingency Fund	Legal Contingency Fund	Total 2023	Total 2022
REVENUE						
Annual Dues	\$ 1,302,616	-	-	-	1,302,616	1,126,625
Course fees	172,550	-	-	-	172,550	157,700
Application	161,890	-	-	-	161,890	128,378
Conference	78,815	-	-	-	78,815	46,010
Other fees	49,074	-	-	-	49,074	35,160
Interest income	24,403	-	-	23,061	47,464	17,907
	1,789,348	-	-	23,061	1,812,409	1,511,780
EXPENSES						
Advertising	9,487	-	-	-	9,487	12,412
Amortization	-	16,417	-	-	16,417	15,973
Bank charges and processing fees	44,491	-	-	-	44,491	42,983
Conference expenses	104,004	-	-	-	104,004	70,389
Board and Committee meetings	132,555	-	-	-	132,555	105,528
Database and website	49,817	-	-	-	49,817	26,765
Insurance	11,270	-	-	-	11,270	9,569
Office and general	144,023	-	-	-	144,023	99,139
Professional fees	66,249	-	-	-	66,249	59,539
Rent	42,577	-	15,207	-	57,784	43,266
Salaries and benefits	1,126,432	-	-	-	1,126,432	891,580
Training	10,967	-	-	-	10,967	17,624
	1,741,872	16,417	15,207	-	1,773,496	1,394,767
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses	\$ 47,476	(16,417)	(15,207)	23,061	38,913	117,013
Net assets, beginning of the year	435,597	61,678	35,000	531,931	1,064,206	947,193
Interfund transfers	(22,709)	11,209	-	11,500	-	-
Net assets, end of a year	\$ 460,364	56,470	19,793	566,492	1,103,119	1,064,206

The Annual Report contains a summarized version of the financial statements. The full audited statements are available on the College's website.

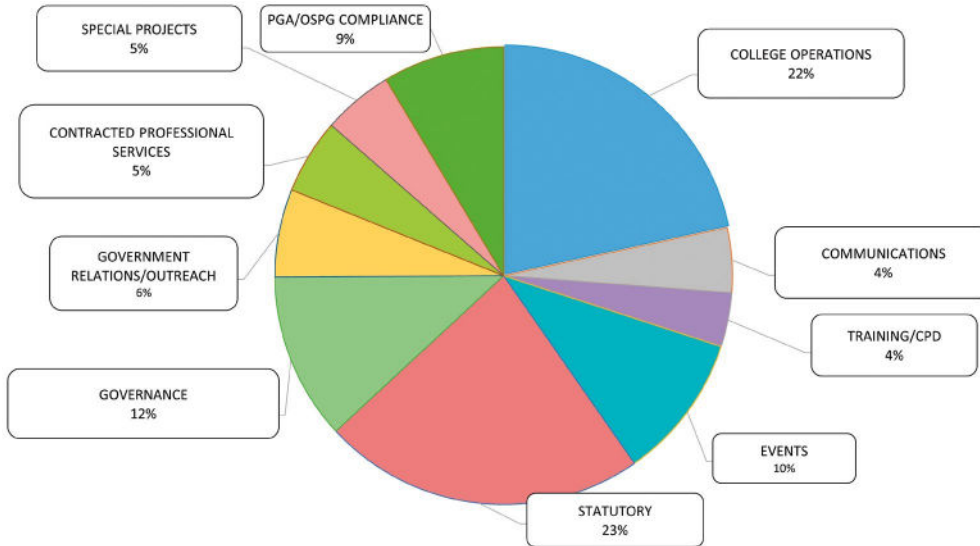
Mark De Croos

Chair - Finance Governance Committee

Christine Houghton

Chief Executive Officer

Expenses Allocations to Categories



→ The Finance Governance Committee provides oversight of budget development, monitoring and financial audit.

Expenses Categories	
Statutory	404,436
College Operations	383,407
Governance	209,117
Events	182,671
PGA/OSPG Compliance	152,607
Government Relations/Outreach	110,272
Contracted Professional Services	93,977
Special Projects	88,246
Communications	81,049
Training/CPD	67,714
Total Expenses FY 2023	1,773,496

In 2023, the Nominations Committee continued to deliver a fair, transparent and impartial elections system in compliance with the *Professional Governance Act*. During the 2022/23 nominations cycle, the terminology for the College's governance body changed from Council to Board. This report makes use of the current terminology.

Four registrant members of the Committee and the Chair were appointed in June 2022. The Committee began its work in October 2022 after having had a Lay Committee member appointed. The Committee reviewed the College Board's June 2022 self-assessment to execute a gap analysis and identify desirable competencies for potential nominees. The Committee provided its *final report to the Board* in June 2023, where it was approved. Only one application for each of the two vacancies was received, so there was no election in 2023. Both applicants were qualified by the Committee and acclaimed.

The Committee adopted the following improvements to the nominations process that had been recommended from the previous year:

- > Clarify on Prospective Nominee Form that the Regulatory Understanding merit refers to professional regulation, not just following laws and regulations


- > Add clarification to volunteer service section of Prospective Nominee Form that allows applicants to indicate current positions or service terms that are ending in the future
- > Add pronouns to the Prospective Nominee Form that applicants can provide voluntarily
- > For reference checking purposes, add area to Prospective Nominee Form for applicants to identify which of their competencies the reference is able to describe
- > Write op/ed for *College Matters* on importance of voting in the Board election (appeared in December 2022 issue of *College Matters*).

2023 Nominations Review

- > 40 registrants contacted directly
- > Two applications received
- > Two nominees qualified by the Committee for acclamation.

2023 Elections Review

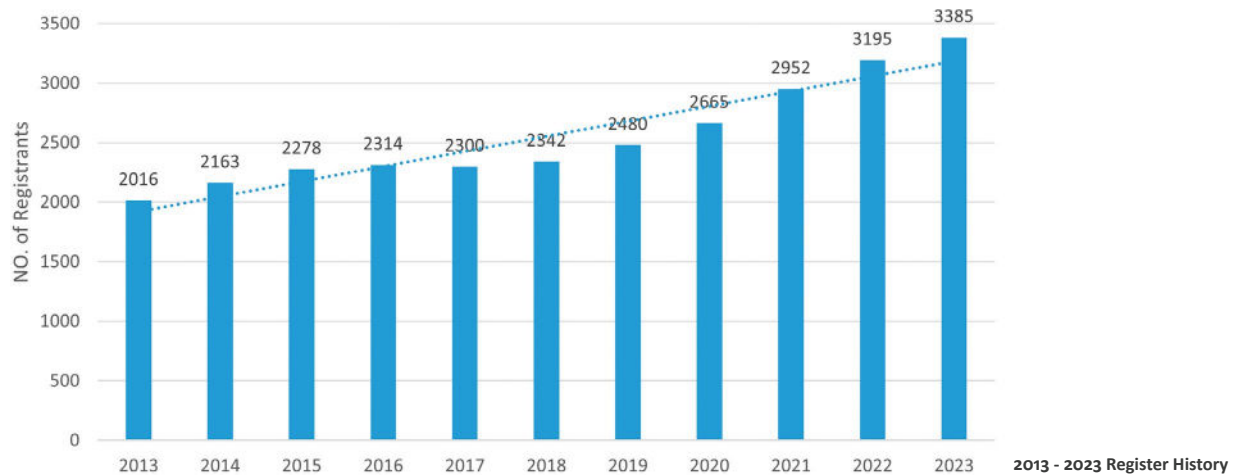
- > Both nominees were acclaimed
- > No election was held. 🌐



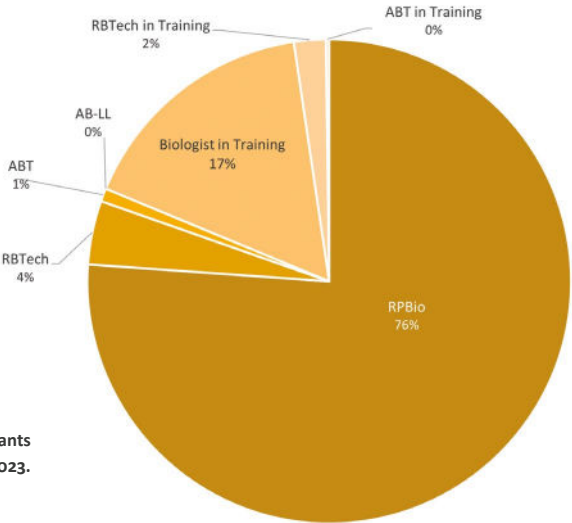
The Nomination Committee's work includes communicating vacancies, identifying competencies, conducting a gap analysis of identified competencies and assessing potential nominees via a written application, interviews and verification of references.

CREDENTIALS COMMITTEE REPORT

- > The College Register had 3385 registrants (as defined by the *Professional Governance Act*) and 50 Student Biologists as of December 31, 2023.
- > There was an increase of 190 College registrants, and a decrease of 9 Student Biologists, in 2023 from 2022.
- > RPBios make up the vast majority of registrants (76%), with BITs being the next largest registrant category (17%).
- > The remaining registrants (7%) included small increases of RBTech (+7), RBTech in Training (+12), ABT (+1), and ABT in Training (+3) registrants in 2023.



- > In 2023, the College received a combined 938 completed applications for all six categories: 1) Apply to Join, 2) Reclassify (e.g., BIT to RPBio, ABT to RBTech), 3) Reinstate, 4) On Leave, 5) Retire and 6) Resign. This was a 23% increase in applications from 2022.
- > In 2023, the majority of applications the College received were for new registrations and for registrants to reclassify. A total of 401 completed applications to join, reclassify or reinstate were received for practicing registrant categories (RPBio, RBTech, ABT and AB-LL), and 290 applications to join, reclassify or reinstate were received for in-training registrant categories (BIT, RBTech in Training and ABT in Training). These figures represent increases of 17% and 5%, respectively, from 2022. 🌐



Percentage of College Registrants as of December 31, 2023.

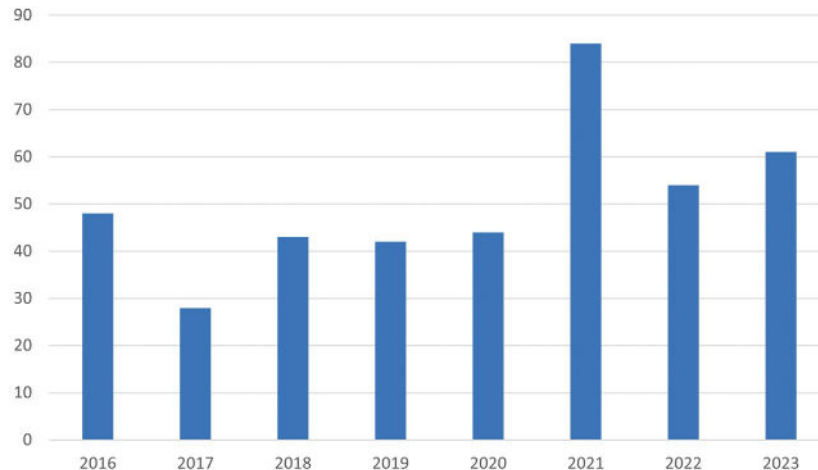
2023 Audits

Sixty-one (61) registrants were audited in 2023. All were found compliant.

Practice review

In 2023, the Committee reviewed the College’s policies related to audits and practice reviews and recommended updates to policies to improve clarity, effectiveness and transparency. The College Board approved updates to the following policies:

- > Policy 8-200: Audit Program
- > Policy 8-300: Practice Review Program
- > Policy 8-400: Audit and Practice Review Extension and Exemption Requests 🌐

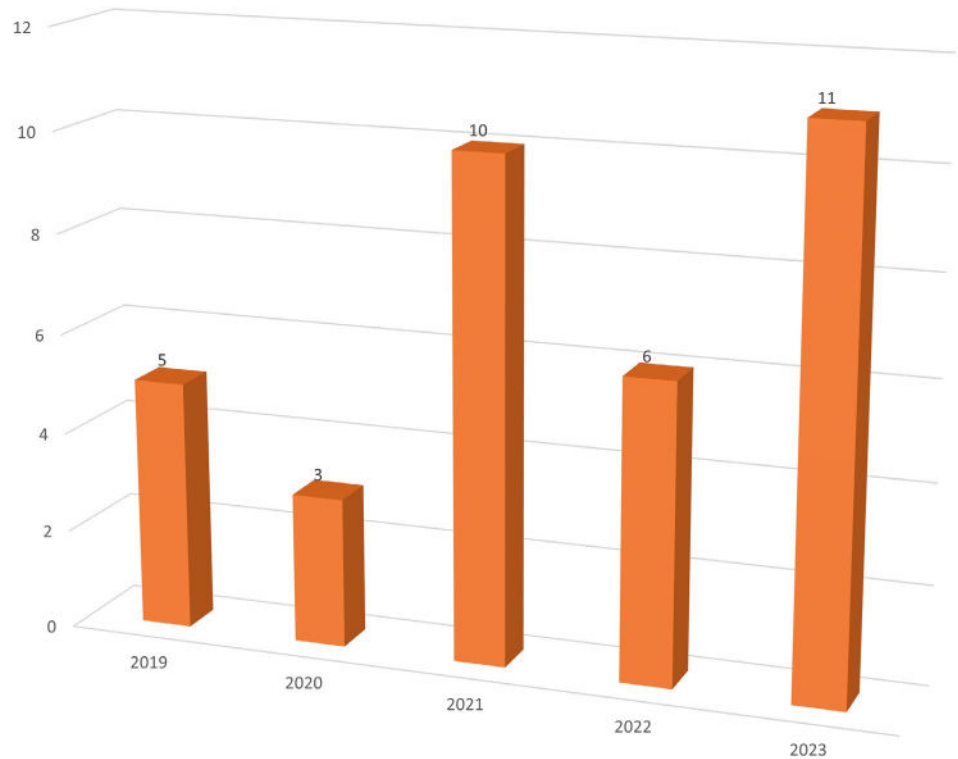


Number of audits by year 2016–2023.

Note: For 2021, 3% of total registrants were selected. This was an error as 3% of the *eligible* registrants should have been selected.

- > The College received eleven (11) complaints in 2023.
- > One (1) complaint was under investigation.
- > Three (3) complaints were dismissed.
- > The Investigation Committee issued three (3) Citations in 2023.
- > The Discipline Committee issued one (1) Notice of Hearing in 2023.

Complaints received by year from 2019 to 2023.



INVESTIGATION & DISCIPLINE COMMITTEES REPORT

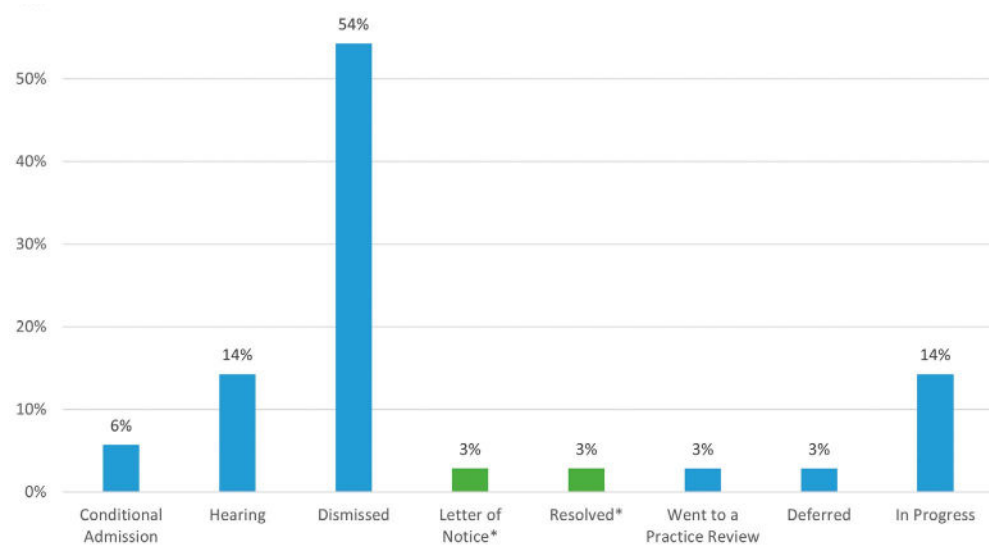
2023 Complaint Summary:

- > Hearings: 2
- > Dismissed: 3
- > Deferred: 1
- > In progress: 5

The results of the 2023 complaint files reviewed by the Investigation Committee and the Registrar are published in the *Discipline Digest*. Any current or past citations and hearing results are posted on the College's website. 🌐

Summary of complaint outcomes from 2019 to 2023.

Note: *These were options under the *College of Applied Biology Act* & College Rules and not options under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA). Conditional Admission under the PGA includes a Reprimand or Remedial Action by Consent (RRAC), Consent Order (CO) or Alternative Complaint Resolution (ACR).



→ **The College Celebrated 20 Years!**

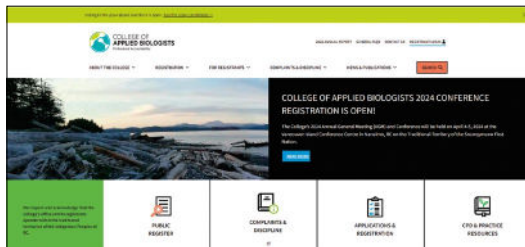
In June 2023, the College of Applied Biologists marked 20 years as a professional regulator. When biologists founded their professional association in 1984, it was with the objective to lobby government for the right to title, self-regulation and a Code of Ethics to protect the public interest. The efforts of these biologists were recognized in 2002 when the BC government began the process of drafting the *College of Applied Biology Act*, a statute which came into effect on June 20, 2003.

In the 20 years since, the College has become a key contributor to the resource management sector, regulating applied biology professionals who are competent, qualified and ethical.



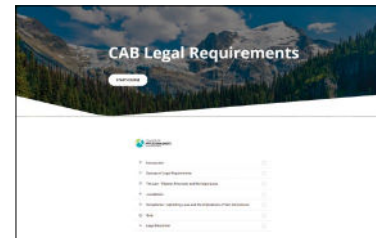
→ **The College launched its new website**

The College's new website has a new, modern look and it's more user-friendly.

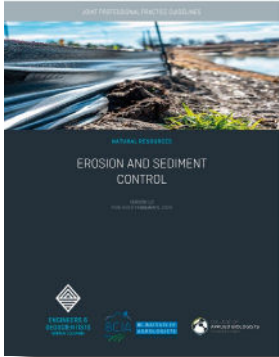


→ **Legal Requirements Course**

The Legal Requirements course was activated in October 2023 and is mandatory for all applicants. The course covers federal and provincial legislation and other legal frameworks that registrants identified as being commonly used by applied biology professionals. It is a self-paced online course delivered via the College's Learning Management System.



2023 HIGHLIGHTS



Erosion and Sediment Control Practice Guidelines



The College, along with the BC Institute of Agrologists (BCIA) and Engineers and Geoscientists BC (EGBC), finished new practice guidelines for practitioners who develop erosion and sediment control (ESC) plans and monitor their implementation. The guidelines are the culmination of nearly three years of work by authors and reviewers with significant experience in the application of ESC.

Areas of Practice Reviewed



In 2023, the College updated the list of areas of practice of applied biology to better align with requirements under the *Professional Governance Act* (PGA) and Applied Biologists Regulation. Development of the list was led by a task force of volunteer registrants and the new list was approved by the College Board on September 29, 2023.



Updated CPD Program

In 2023, the College updated the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Program to support the *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act* by incorporating continuous learning about Indigenous Peoples. A task force of volunteer registrants and Lay Board members proposed adding new requirements for registrants to include continuous learning about Indigenous Peoples and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in the CPD plans. The proposed updates were approved by the College Board on September 29, 2023, and come into effect starting in 2024.



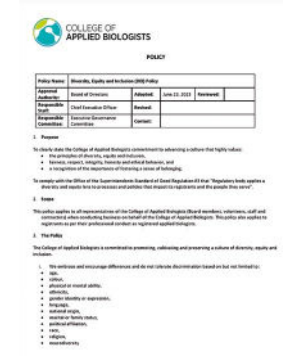
2023 College Connections Readership and Click %



New Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Policy

The purpose of this new DEI policy is to clearly state the College of Applied Biologists' commitment to advancing a culture that highly values:

- > the principles of diversity, equity and inclusion,
- > fairness, respect, integrity, honesty and ethical behavior, and
- > a recognition of the importance of fostering a sense of belonging.



Calvert Island, BC. Photo by Karen Barry, RPBio.

Save the dates!

2025 Conference in Prince George, BC

The College's 2025 Conference will take
place in Prince George, BC
on April 10 & 11, 2025



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