

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

Current State Assessment Report

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Prepared by

Freestone Integrated Communications Ltd.
Sandbar Coaching and Consulting

For



Association of
**British Columbia
Land Surveyors**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
What is Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)?	2
Current State Assessment and Recommendations.....	3
EDI governance.....	3
Reflect the community you serve	3
Public declaration of your commitment to EDI	4
EDI policy for the ABCLS	4
Language	4
Articling	5
Registration.....	6
Complaints and discipline processes.....	6
Code of Ethics	7
Survey plan certification	8
Continuing competency: Inclusion of EDI training and education	8
EDI resources for land surveyors and land surveying companies	9
EDI leadership by the Board of Management.....	9
Future strategic plan and policy development	10
Data collection.....	10
ABCLS communications.....	11
Use of the term “member”	11
Respectful Workplace Policy.....	11
Review and reflect on traditional practices	12
Promotion of careers in land surveying.....	12
Our Commitment to EDI: Public Statement by the ABCLS	13
EDI Action Plan	14
EDI Policy.....	16
Appendix A: Respectful Workplace sample policy	17
Appendix B: What we heard/learned from ABCLS stakeholders	19
Appendix C: How other BC regulators approach EDI	22

INTRODUCTION

Equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) is a priority commitment for the Association of BC Land Surveyors (ABCLS) in its role as the regulator of the land surveying profession, and as an employer.

As a part of its commitment to EDI, the ABCLS recognized that it needed to take a step back and objectively evaluate and assess the current state of EDI in the organization, and indirectly, across the profession.

In support of this effort, Freestone Communications and Sandbar Coaching and Consulting were engaged to complete a current state assessment of EDI at the ABCLS. As a part of the assessment process, a number of stakeholders and employees were consulted to learn about their perceptions of how the ABCLS could better address EDI matters in its regulatory function. Freestone and Sandbar also independently reviewed documentation and the various regulatory processes of the ABCLS, and conducted an online review of how other regulators are tackling EDI in their organization and with their profession.

The outcome of this consultation, review and assessment is this report, which includes an EDI Action Plan, an EDI policy, and a statement the ABCLS can share publicly that expresses its EDI commitment.

It is important to note that while the focus of this assessment was on the regulatory function of the ABCLS, the review naturally spilled over into looking at the ABCLS as an employer and into EDI throughout the profession in British Columbia.

It is also critical to highlight the evolving legislative environment for self-regulating professions in BC. *The Professional Governance Act* (PGA) provides a governance framework for self-regulating professions that incorporates best practices for professional governance. The PGA initially governs the five professional regulators overseeing forest professionals, engineers and geoscientists, agrologists, applied biologists, and applied science technologists and technicians (please see Appendix C for a review of the EDI efforts of these regulatory bodies). As one of its many requirements, the PGA includes a requirement for Indigenous Peoples awareness education.

The ABCLS receives its legislated mandate under the *Land Surveyors Act* in BC and does not currently fall under the PGA. However, the ABCLS is committed to aligning with regulatory best practices, including the practices outlined in the PGA.

WHAT IS EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI)?

Equity is the fair and respectful treatment of all people. Equity is an approach that ensures everyone has access to the same opportunities.¹ Equity recognizes that advantages and barriers exist and that, as a result, we all don't start from the same place; we all come from diverse backgrounds. Equity is a process that begins by acknowledging that unequal starting place and makes a commitment to correct and address the imbalance.

Inclusion is the creation of an environment where everyone feels welcome, is treated with respect and is able to fully participate. Inclusion is about those with different identities feeling and/or being valued and welcomed within a given setting (e.g., a team, workplace, or industry).

Diversity is the demographic mix of the community, with a focus on the representation of all people. Diversity is the presence of difference within a given setting; diversity of identities, like race and gender identity and, in some cases, ethnicity, religion, nationality, or sexual orientation.

The Equity and Inclusion Office at the University of British Columbia has a helpful, up to date list of other terms related to EDI: <https://equity.ubc.ca/resources/equity-inclusion-glossary-of-terms/>

Bolger, Meb. "What's the Difference Between Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity?" General Assembly blog. <https://generalassemb.ly/blog/diversity-inclusion-equity-differences-in-meaning/>

CURRENT STATE ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

EDI governance

Creating an EDI Advisory Committee is a critical step to ensure that EDI principles and opportunities are elevated and pursued, and are not lost in the day to day business of regulating the land surveying profession.

An EDI Advisory Committee can provide advice and make recommendations to the Board of Management and leadership team of the ABCLS. An Advisory Committee can:

- Identify opportunities to promote and support fair, respectful, culturally safe and inclusive practices for the ABCLS and its role as the regulator of the profession.
- Identify systemic bias, real and perceived, and opportunities to increase awareness and encourage change within ABCLS and in the practice of land surveying.
- Increase awareness and promote equity, diversity and inclusion in the various processes of the ABCLS, including registration, complaints, continuing competency, the promotion of land surveying as a career and others.
- Identify training and education opportunities for the Board of Management, its committees, employees, land surveyors and land surveying firms.
- Support the development of EDI resources and supports for land surveyors and land surveying firms.

The membership of the Advisory Committee could consist of land surveyors and individuals from outside of the profession that reflect the diversity of the community the profession serves.

The responsibility areas outlined above are aligned with the EDI committees and advisory groups of other professional regulators. To move the Advisory Committee concept forward, the ABCLS should develop terms of reference and initial goals and objectives. Finally, it is recommended that reasonable annual funding be available to support EDI efforts at the ABCLS. Where an organization dedicates funding is indicative of what it deems important.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Create an EDI Advisory Committee.
- Create terms of reference for the EDI Advisory Committee.
- Recruit a diverse group of members for the EDI Advisory Committee.
- Determine and approve annual funding for EDI efforts at the ABCLS.

Reflect the community you serve

When a professional regulator engages key stakeholders and the community when setting priorities or strategy or undertaking change, it can help mitigate the risk of racism and discrimination. The ABCLS is a legislated, self-regulating professional association; a status that has some limitations on who can serve on the Board of Management and its committees. It can be challenging for a regulator to adequately reflect the public and community you are mandated to protect.

Embracing EDI means finding ways to reflect and include the community you serve. Greater public representation on committees and the EDI Advisory Committee are two ways of bringing more diversity to the ABCLS and the profession. EDI guest speakers or

speakers from underrepresented groups, such as Indigenous Peoples, for Board of Management meetings, the AGM and other gatherings can bring the community into the ABCLS and create rich learning opportunities. When the ABCLS develops its 2024-2026 strategic plan, there may be opportunities to consult with a broader group of stakeholders including key stakeholders, registrants, the public and underrepresented groups.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Greater public representation on ABCLS committees, where possible.
- EDI guest speakers or speakers from underrepresented groups at Board of Management meetings, AGMs, townhalls and other meetings.
- Consider including community and stakeholder consultation in the development of the next strategic plan.

Public declaration of your commitment to EDI

It is critical for the ABCLS to communicate your commitment to EDI with the public you are mandated to protect and with land surveying professionals.

An EDI statement has been created and is included in this report on page 13. It is recommended that this statement be posted on the ABCLS website. An article on EDI and the ABCLS' commitment should also be published in an upcoming issue of the Association Update newsletter.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Revise and/or approve the public EDI statement.
- Publish the EDI statement to the ABCLS website and within the ABCLS Annual Regulatory Report.

- Communicate your EDI commitment and statement through various communications tools and channels, including the Association Update newsletter and the website.

EDI policy for the ABCLS

Inclusion refers to a workplace culture where all people are valued and respected. Creating policies, training programs, removing biases, identifying and removing barriers, and providing safe spaces all support an inclusive workplace culture.

While it is important and helpful for every organization to have a documented EDI policy that outlines their commitment to and expectations of their employees, it is also important that each organization review all their employee policies to ensure they are developed with an EDI lens. This will create alignment between the organization's values and culture with equity, diversity and inclusion behaviours. A sample EDI policy has been created for the ABCLS and can be found on page 16. This policy has been crafted to be more of a policy statement or guiding principle, as the aim is to ensure that EDI is infused throughout all ABCLS policies. This policy should also be shared with land surveying companies as a sample policy for their own organization.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Review and implement the EDI policy for the ABCLS.
- Share the EDI policy as a sample template for EDI policies within land surveying companies.

Language

People's feelings, responses and behaviours are impacted by the language they hear and use. The choice of words, pronouns and

salutations can signal that a workplace or environment is inclusive or exclusionary.

A commitment to EDI means a commitment to how language, words, titles and pronouns are used in written and verbal communications.

The use of gender neutral language is an important first step for the ABCLS. For example, he/him and she/her pronouns should be eliminated and replaced with they/them pronouns, or alternatively, sentences can be written to avoid the use of any pronouns. All salutations (Mr., Mrs., Ms.) should be eliminated from correspondence, minutes from the Board of Management or Committee meetings, and other official documentation. The Officers of Board of Management should not be referred to as Mr. President, Ms. Vice President or Madame Chair; first names should be used instead. The Chair of a Committee should be just that – Chair and not Chairman.

Finally, pronouns can be added to signature lines for official ABCLS emails and correspondence. The addition of pronouns in official correspondence demonstrates a welcoming culture to all but should not be mandatory for employees or Board members.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Review the use of language, pronouns, salutations and word choice to ensure all communications are gender neutral.
- Consider the addition of pronouns to ABCLS email signatures, business cards, LinkedIn profiles, etc.

Articling

The ABCLS outlines in policy the Requirements for Admission to the Association as a Land Surveyor (policy #6.11). Within that policy are 13 competencies that every land surveying candidate for

admission to the profession are evaluated against. In 2019, the ABCLS amended the articling process, removing the requirement for a defined amount of field time and replacing it with field survey competency. Key competency #3, “Conducts field surveys effectively and accurately”, includes the requirement to be competent in field work but does not mandate the amount of time required in the field.

During the consultation process, it was highlighted that the physical demands of a land surveying professional could be perceived as a barrier from an EDI perspective. Field work by a land surveyor could include accessing and working in remote and physically challenging outdoor spaces. An individual with a disability or less physical strength may have a difficult time performing this type of work and consequently may be deterred from pursuing the profession. Moreover, the duration of field time can be a barrier for those with young families. The duration of field time is set by land surveying firms and is not specified by the ABCLS. The physical demands and duration of field work may impact a registrant’s ability to successfully complete their articling.

Land surveying firms may not be aware that there is no longer a requirement for a specified amount of time in the field. In the future, new technology and equipment could reduce or eliminate the need for land surveyors to be physically present in the field in certain circumstances. There is an opportunity to educate, build awareness and provide training on the roles and responsibilities of the land surveyor in training, the articling principal, and the land surveying firm. As well, the association can ensure that the articling orientation includes clear expectations of what is required to perform field work competently.

Written communication in English (key competency #5) and oral communication in English (key competency #6) are two other competencies that could be viewed as discriminatory or exclusive from those individuals who communicate with English as their second language.

The ABCLS would benefit from a full evaluation of these competencies and the remaining ten competencies to determine if they are reasonable today, if and where any perception of discrimination may be present, and if they contribute to and uphold the ABCLS' mandate to protect the public.

The final step in articling to become a professional land surveyor is the Professional Assessment Interview. The interview is the first time a registrant appears in person. To ensure procedural fairness, there may be value in recording all interviews and the subsequent deliberations. This would bring transparency to the decisions that are made, and protect both the ABCLS and the examiners involved. In addition, the ABCLS should evaluate if registrants should be able to appeal the results of the Professional Assessment Interview.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Further evaluate the 13 competencies/ requirements for admission to the Association as a land surveyor with an EDI lens.
- Evaluate recording all Professional Assessment Interviews and including an appeals process.
- Develop education and training resources on the roles and responsibilities in the articling process.

Registration

The ABCLS is responsible for the examination, licensing and registration of land surveyors

in British Columbia. The registration process appears to be fair and unbiased as it serves the profession and protects the public. However, nuances can occur when the ABCLS makes decisions that can significantly impact an individual's career. As such, as is the case with any regulator, there may be opportunities for improvement.

Many regulators are considering and implementing registration data collection and analytics to monitor trends in articling and registration. The ABCLS could develop a registration scorecard or reporting tool to track trends in the registration process. This could include applicant demographics, registration extensions that are approved or denied, and the why behind decisions made and any links to applicant demographics. It is also recommended that the ABCLS implement a process to conduct an annual review of all registration denials as a way of identifying trends that may be occurring or may develop over time.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Initiate data collection, assessment and analytics on the registration process.
- Conduct annual, objective debriefs on denied registration applications and extensions.

Complaints and discipline processes

Regulators in BC and other provinces have stated or would likely state that their complaints and disciplinary processes are objective and fair. The complaints and disciplinary processes at the ABCLS are also seen to be objective and fair.

The Chartered Professional Accountants of Alberta made the following statement that could apply to any regulator's complaints and disciplinary process:

“CPA Alberta’s conduct and discipline processes have, as a foundation, the concepts of fairness, objectivity and lack of bias. The processes are therefore developed in such a way that equality and fairness are inherent. In 2021/22, staff working in these areas will evaluate how systemic issues can create inequalities, which would help identify any necessary changes to conduct and discipline processes.”

In other words, we believe in our processes but also understand there may be outside forces that create inequalities that need to be addressed. It is important to note that the complaints process is the most tangible way the public interacts with the ABCLS, and is the most overt part of your public protection mandate. As such, it demands greater scrutiny and ongoing evaluation.

Complaints need to be viewed from the perspective of both registrants and the public. Other regulators have commented that the process to file a complaint or attend a hearing could be a barrier to some individuals based on their personal experience, language, physical limitations and more.

It is recommended that the ABCLS review and evaluate its complaints and discipline process with an EDI lens. There would also be value in gathering EDI related data from complaints and disciplinary actions over time, to identify and monitor any trends. Data analytics may show patterns or commonalities with a particular group of people or in a particular part of the process, such as the withdrawal of complaints as one example. Conversely, the data may also confirm that the processes continue to be objective and fair.

As other regulators tackle the same issues around complaints, conduct and discipline, new ideas or approaches may emerge. For

example, some regulators are looking at how healing circles could be incorporated into their disciplinary processes. It is recommended that the ABCLS monitor the progress of other regulators, or perhaps even collaborate with other regulators, to determine what changes, if any, need to be made to ensure these key regulatory areas are always inclusive and respectful.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Review and evaluate the complaints and discipline process with an EDI lens.
- Continue to gather complaints and discipline data and include EDI related data where possible, allowing the ABCLS to monitor trends over time.
- Monitor the progress of other regulators on where they make changes to their complaints and discipline process.
- Consider increasing the number of public members appointed to the Complaint Inquiry Committee and consider diversity when making appointments to this Committee.

Code of Ethics

Most regulators have not changed their practitioner code of conduct or code of ethics to reflect or enforce EDI on the profession. There is nothing in the ABCLS Code of Ethics that contradicts or goes against a commitment to EDI. As regulators continue to progress in their EDI work, and as the understanding of EDI continues to grow and evolve, regulators may find that these codes need to change to reflect EDI principles. The ABCLS is encouraged to monitor trends and actions by other regulators in this area.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Monitor the progress of other regulators.

Survey plan certification

Currently, any land surveyor that reviews a survey for accuracy is required to complete a Survey Plan certification. Section 3 of the certification reads:

“I am a British Columbia Land Surveyor and certify that **I was present** at and personally superintended this survey and the survey and plan are correct.”

In the stakeholder consultation process, it was revealed that there has been past discussion as to whether or not the signing surveyor must be present in person to assess a survey. If they must be physically present, trained and experienced surveyors with a physical limitation may be unable to complete a certification or participate in a survey review. While this requirement is set by the provincially mandated position, the Director of Land Titles, and therefore is not within the authority of the ABCLS, the current requirement impacts the profession. The ABCLS should consider leading a review of this certification requirement and evaluate modifying or removing the need for an in-person evaluation of all land surveys.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Lead a review of the survey plan certification.

Continuing Competency: Inclusion of EDI training and education

One of the requirements of the *Professional Governance Act* is the need for regulators to provide “continuing education programs or requirements that support reconciliation with Indigenous peoples in British Columbia” (Section 57.1). Even though the land surveying profession does not currently fall under the PGA, the ABCLS aims to align itself with the best practices outlined in the

legislation, including the Indigenous Peoples reconciliation education requirement. The ABCLS is currently developing an Indigenous reconciliation strategy, and may soon include Indigenous Peoples awareness education as a part of a land surveyor’s continuing professional development.

Several consultation participants identified that while there does not appear to be conscious discrimination, there is a possibility that discrimination may be occurring unconsciously. The ABCLS can take proactive action on EDI by providing and supporting ongoing training and education on EDI principles for the Board of Management, its committees, ABCLS employees and for the land surveying profession.

The ABCLS could support continuing competency in a variety of areas including:

- Unconscious bias training
- Language considerations
- Workplace of respect

It is also recommended that the ABCLS support education that builds an understanding of the difference between not consciously excluding people from the ABCLS and the profession, and actively including people. In this context, exclusion and inclusion are not opposite sides of the same coin. Actively including people requires the ABCLS and its registrants to proactively make changes to language, marketing and behaviors (i.e., using gender neutral pronouns, and gender and/or culturally neutral language in all marketing and communication letting all people know they are welcome in the profession). Training and education resources should also be made available to land surveying professionals and land surveying companies.

Finally, as mentioned elsewhere in this report, other regulators have highlighted how their

Board of Management or Council benefited from having EDI guest speakers and teaching moments at some of their meetings.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Implement the Indigenous Peoples awareness education as a part of the Continuing Professional Development program.
- Unconscious bias training for the Board of Management and ABCLS team, as well as unconscious bias training and resources for registrants.
- The EDI Advisory Committee to consider and implement other training opportunities.
- Determine EDI guest speakers for future meetings of the Board of Management.
- Review and assess the Continuing Professional Development program to ensure it is aligned with regulatory best practices, and consider where training in some areas may need to be mandatory.

EDI resources for land surveyors and land surveying companies

In embracing EDI, the first step by the ABCLS is to consider how EDI impacts your role as a regulator. The second step is to bring EDI to land surveyors and land surveying companies by providing them with EDI tools and resources. Regulators have a duty to uphold the standards of the profession and for many regulators, encouraging and supporting EDI with the professionals they regulate was a natural evolution.

The ABCLS should create a dedicated web page or a portal where EDI resources for land surveyors and land surveying corporations could live. Examples of resources that could be included are:

- Sample EDI policy, respectful workplace policy and more

- Resources to access unconscious bias training
- Sample EDI statements
- Relevant literature and materials
- Contact names for EDI champions in the community that can provide training and additional resources
- Family focused policies and benefits templates including maternity/paternity leave; out of town travel/accommodation guidelines/policies that limit time away from home
- Recommendations on field work accommodations for persons with disabilities

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Develop and make available EDI resources for land surveyors and land surveying companies.

EDI leadership by the Board of Management

A commitment to EDI begins at the top. It is critical that the Board of Management embrace and be seen to embrace equity, diversity and inclusion, and Indigenous Peoples awareness and reconciliation. With the composition of the Board of Management changing from year to year, it is necessary to cement the importance of EDI with incoming Board members each year.

The *Land Surveyors Act* requires that individuals are elected to the Board of Management, instead of being appointed. The PGA also requires that most Board members are elected. Board elections can be a barrier to individuals who represent different groups and/or competencies, and who may not be well known amongst voting registrants. Elections can make it difficult for the ABCLS

to ensure its Board of Management reflects the community. When the *Land Surveyors Act* is up for review, the ABCLS should initiate a discussion on moving away from Board elections and instead appointing individuals to the Board of Management.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- The Board of Management takes steps to communicate its leadership on EDI and Indigenous Peoples education.

Future strategic plan and policy development

In 2023, the ABCLS will begin the development of its next strategic plan, covering the time period of 2024 to 2026. Most regulators have included their commitment to EDI in their strategic plans, as a priority, goal or key initiative. It is recommended that the ABCLS consider how it can best incorporate its EDI commitment in this foundational, guiding document.

As mentioned in the section on reflecting the community you serve, it is also recommended that the ABCLS consider incorporating a wider community consultation effort as a part of their planning process.

Going forward, it will be important for the ABCLS to be mindful of when and where to consider and include EDI principles and direction in policies, standards and other documents and communications.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Determine how to best incorporate your EDI commitment in the next iteration of your strategic plan.
- Include EDI principles and direction in future policies, documents and public and registrant facing communications.

Data collection

As the ABCLS advances in its commitment to EDI, it will be important to monitor, measure and report on your progress.

As the EDI Advisory Committee and leadership team of the ABCLS bring to life the EDI Action plan and other EDI initiatives, it is important that reasonable performance measures are included and monitored.

A key area where additional data, intelligence and measures may be helpful is in better understanding the make-up of ABCLS registrants. Many regulators are thinking about how they can use demographic data to better understand how well they reflect the community, and their progress in advancing their commitment to EDI.

The Canadian Centre for Diversity and Inclusion (CCDI) notes that the gathering and reporting on data like this is “widely considered a basic practice for organizations truly dedicated to diversity and inclusion”. The CCDI goes further to state that applicants, members and employees must not be harmed or discriminated against because of the demographic information they report.

The ABCLS should consider the ongoing collection of equity-relevant data from its registrants, including areas such as race, gender, disability and other EDI measures. A demographic survey of registrants, collecting equity-relevant data would provide a baseline for measuring future progress. As is the case with all regulators and organizations, the collection of data must be informed by human rights and anti-racism best practices, and respect everyone’s dignity and privacy.

Finally, the ABCLS should consider conducting a survey of current registrants to learn more about their perspectives on EDI in the

profession. Consideration should also be given to completing exit interviews with any registrants that leave the profession.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Consider how to best collect demographic and equity relevant data from registrants.
- Conduct a survey of current registrants to learn more about their perspectives on EDI in the profession.
- Complete exit interviews with any registrants leaving the profession.

ABCLS communications

The ABCLS can demonstrate diversity and representation in the land surveying profession by ensuring all people see themselves reflected in your marketing and communications.

Diversity and representation should be evident in all materials, activities, publications, web content and social media content. The goal is for the community to see themselves reflected in land surveying profession. This can be achieved with photos and images, illustration and of course, choice of words or language.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Ensure ABCLS public and registrant communications reflects a diverse population, both with images and content.

Use of the term “member”

Throughout this report, when talking about professional land surveyors, the term “member” has not been used. The ABCLS is encouraged to use the term “members” judiciously. It is acknowledged that land surveyors are technically members of your association. However, when the ABCLS is talking with government, stakeholders and the

public, it is best you refer to your members as “land surveyors”. First, “land surveyors” is plain language and there is no confusion about who you are referring to. Second, and more importantly, calling members “land surveyors” or “registrants” is more in keeping with the regulatory function of the ABCLS. Members suggests a “club” or individuals that you will take care of, instead of professionals you regulate. For example, instead of saying that one of your regulatory functions is to register members, you should say that one of your regulatory functions is to register or licence professional land surveyors/practitioners or land surveying corporations. In addition, as another example, the “Members Directory” on the ABCLS website should be refreshed to be the “Registrant Directory.”

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Limit the use of the term “member” when communicating to or about professional land surveyors and land surveying corporations.

Respectful Workplace Policy

A respectful workplace policy is a critical step for organizations that have made an EDI commitment. WorkSafeBC requires all employers to take reasonable steps to prevent or minimize workplace bullying and harassment, and develop a policy statement on how workplace bullying and harassment is not acceptable nor tolerated.

The purpose of a respectful workplace policy is to ensure that everyone understands an organization's commitment to the principles of dignity and respect, and their own role in contributing to a culture of respect. It also includes procedures to address incidents and complaints.

A template Respectful Workplace Policy has been included in Appendix A. This policy can be customized for the ABCLS and provided as

an EDI resource for land surveying companies to use in their own organizations.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Customize the Respectful Workplace Policy for the ABCLS and implement it as a part of the suite of organizational policies.
- Share the Respectful Workplace Policy template with land surveying companies, as a part of the library of EDI resources for all registrants.

Review and reflect on traditional practices

The traditional approach and culture of the land survey profession may unintentionally present barriers to inclusion.

The following traditions were identified by consultation participants as requiring further review:

- Toasts to partners: It was identified that not everyone is married and not everyone calls their partner their husband or wife. It is recommended that this tradition be reframed or eliminated all together.
- Prayers at meals: While it is important to give thanks for food, any reference to a specific religion or god should be revised to simply reflect gratitude.
- Offering alcohol as the only toast option for celebrations: It was identified that sometimes land surveyors toast the completions of events or other milestones with a shot of scotch. It is important to provide other options for

toasting to allow those who do not drink alcohol to participate.

- Introducing spouses at ABCLS functions can be uncomfortable for people who are single or in a non-traditional relationship. As such, the practice of introducing spouses or partners at functions should be avoided.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Review established traditions and make changes, or eliminate the tradition entirely.

Promotion of careers in land surveying

Like many regulators, the ABCLS has stated that they openly welcome anyone to the profession. While the intent is to be inclusive, the profession historically predominantly attracts Caucasian males.

While the ABCLS is not responsible for recruitment, the organization is positioned to promote land surveying as a career. There was consensus among the stakeholders consulted that the land surveying profession is not well known and that there is a need to raise its profile. In communicating about land surveying as a career, the ABCLS could attract more land surveying professionals and in turn, foster greater diversity in the profession.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

- Consider the development of a public relations campaign to increase awareness of land surveying as a career choice.

OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Public Statement by the ABCLS

The Association of British Columbia Land Surveyors (ABCLS) is committed to equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) in its role as the regulator of the land surveying profession in British Columbia.

We believe:

- In fostering a culture that embraces the uniqueness of individuals and communities.
- The public is best protected and served by a land surveying profession that is comprised of diverse backgrounds, perspectives and experiences.

We commit to:

- Actively recognizing, developing and promoting initiatives that support equity, diversity and inclusion in our policies, practices and events.
- Executing on our EDI Action Plan to bring equity, diversity and inclusion into our role as a regulator and with the land surveying professionals and land surveying companies we regulate.

We aim to be:

- Viewed as leaders in EDI practices.
- Recognized for our commitment to EDI principles in the way we speak, work and act.
- Perceived as a profession that is a rewarding career choice for all people regardless of their gender, age, culture, ability or background.

EDI ACTION PLAN

The Association of BC Land Surveyors (ABCLS) is committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in its role as the regulator of the land surveying profession in British Columbia.

This EDI Action Plan builds on the July 2022 current state assessment report by mapping out the actions and recommendations contained within the report.

The ABCLS is dedicated to achieving a more diverse, equitable, accessible and inclusive environment as a regulator and for our profession.

EDI is a continuous improvement effort. A commitment to EDI and the actions and changes that come with it do not have end date. This Action Plan outlines the goals and objectives the ABCLS will pursue in the short term and over the next four years.

We all have a role to play in advancing equity, diversity and inclusion. Individual land surveyors and land surveying firms also must embrace EDI. It is our hope and expectation that we can weave EDI into the work we do and into the culture of the profession.

2022 to the end of 2023		
Objective	Key Actions	Accountability
EDI governance	Create an EDI Advisory Committee	ABCLS Leadership Team
	Create terms of reference for the EDI Advisory Committee	ABCLS Leadership Team
	Recruit members for the EDI Advisory Committee	Board of Management and ABCLS Leadership Team
	Finalize and approve annual funding for EDI efforts	Board of Management
Reflect the community you serve	Greater public representation on ABCLS committees	
	EDI guest speakers	Board of Management and ABCLS Leadership Team
	Community and stakeholder consultation	Board of Management and ABCLS Leadership Team
Public declaration of your EDI commitment	Revise/approve public EDI statement	Board of Management
	Publish statement to the ABCLS website	ABCLS Leadership Team
	Communicate EDI commitment	ABCLS Leadership Team
EDI policy for the ABCLS	Review and implement the EDI policy	Board of Management
	Share the EDI policy as an EDI resource for registrants	ABCLS Leadership Team
Language	Review the use of language, pronouns, salutations and word choice	ABCLS Leadership Team and EDI Advisory Committee
	Consider the addition of pronouns to email signatures	ABCLS Leadership Team
Articling	Evaluate 13 competencies with an EDI lens	Board of Management
Registration	Data collection, assessment and analytics	ABCLS Leadership Team
	Annual debriefs on denied registration applications	Board of Examiners and Secretary
Complaints and discipline process	Review and evaluate the process with an EDI lens	Complaint Inquiry Committee
	Monitor the progress of other regulators	ABCLS Leadership Team
Code of Ethics	Monitor the progress of other regulators	ABCLS Leadership Team
Survey plan certification	Lead a review of the certification process	Board of Management

2022 to the end of 2023, continued

Objective	Key Actions	Accountability
Continuing competency	Implement Indigenous Peoples awareness education as a part of the CPD program	ABCLS Leadership Team
	Unconscious bias training for the Board of Management, ABCLS team and registrants	ABCLS Leadership Team; EDI Advisory Committee
	Determine EDI training opportunities and guest speakers	EDI Advisory Committee; ABCLS Leadership Team
EDI leadership by the Board of Management	Communicate the Board's leadership and ongoing commitment	Board of Management
Strategic plan and policy development	Incorporate EDI into the next strategic plan	Board of Management; ABCLS Leadership Team
	Include EDI principles in future policies and documents	Board of Management; ABCLS Leadership Team
Data collection	Conduct a survey of registrants on EDI	Board of Management; ABCLS Leadership Team
ABCLS communications	Ensure communications reflect the diversity in the community	ABCLS Leadership Team
Use of the term "member"	Limit or remove the term from all communications	ABCLS Leadership Team; Board of Management
Respectful Workplace Policy	Customize and implement the policy	ABCLS Leadership Team
	Share policy template as a resource for registrants	ABCLS Leadership Team
Reflect on traditional practices	Review established traditions and make changes as required	Board of Management; ABCLS Leadership Team
Articling	Evaluate recording all Professional Assessment Interviews and including an appeals process	Board of Examiners; Board of Management; ABCLS Leadership Team

2024 to the end of 2026

Objective	Key Actions	Accountability
Complaints and discipline process	Gather data and evaluate trends over time	Complaint Inquiry Committee; Board of Management; ABCLS Leadership Team
EDI resources for land surveyors and land surveying companies	Develop and make available EDI resources to registrants	ABCLS Leadership Team in consultation with the EDI Advisory Committee
Strategic plan and policy development	Include EDI principles in future policies and documents	Board of Management; ABCLS Leadership Team
Data collection	Collect demographic and equity relevant registrant data	Board of Examiners; Board of Management
	Complete exit interviews with registrants leaving the profession	Secretary
ABCLS communications	Ensure communications reflect the diversity in the community	ABCLS Leadership Team
Promotion of careers in land surveying	Development of a public relations campaign to increase awareness of land surveying as a career choice	EDI Advisory Committee; ABCLS Leadership Team

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION (EDI) SAMPLE POLICY

Organization name is committed to an inclusive and respectful workplace. This includes treating colleagues with dignity and fairness, and maintaining a workplace that is free of harassment, discrimination and violence. Our workforce will be representative of all sections of society, and our employees will feel respected and will be able to give their best. This means welcoming colleagues and registrants with different backgrounds and capabilities.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Provide equity, fairness and respect for everyone in our employment, whether temporary, part-time or full-time;
- To ensure our practices and procedures on how we recruit, retain and engage with employees are aligned with the BC Human Rights Code.

Our Commitment

Organization name commits to:

- Consistently encouraging equity, diversity, and inclusion in the workplace.
- Creating a working environment free of bullying, harassment, victimization and discrimination.
- Promoting dignity and respect for all.
- Promoting a culture where individual differences and the contributions of all employees are recognized and valued.
- Providing training to all managers about their rights and responsibilities under this EDI policy.
- Addressing complaints of bullying, harassment, victimization and discrimination by employees, the public, suppliers, visitors and others.
- Regularly reviewing and amending employment practices and procedures to ensure fairness and alignment with changes in the law.
- Monitoring the make-up of the workforce with data and trends on age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion or belief, and disability to encourage greater equity, diversity and inclusion.
- Annually assessing how the equity, diversity and inclusion practices and the EDI initiatives are performing, and where change or updates may be required.

APPENDIX A: RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE SAMPLE POLICY

Organization name believes employees have a right to work in a respectful environment and is committed to upholding the human rights of all employees. Specifically, Organization name will ensure that every employee has a right to equal treatment under the protected grounds and aspects of employment established by the *British Columbia Human Rights Code*. Organization name commits to creating a workplace where employees are free of discrimination, harassment or bullying in any form.

Definitions

Bullying: Bullying is usually seen as acts or verbal comments that could psychologically or 'mentally' hurt or isolate a person in the workplace. Sometimes, bullying can involve negative physical contact as well. Bullying usually involves repeated incidents or a pattern of behaviour that is intended to intimidate, offend, degrade or humiliate a particular person or group of people. It has also been described as the assertion of power through aggression.

[Definition provided by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety]

Harassment: Harassment can be best defined as any act in which a person is abused, threatened, intimidated or assaulted in his or her employment. Generally speaking, workplace violence or harassment includes:

- Threatening behaviour – such as shaking fists, destroying property or throwing objects
- Verbal or written threats – any expression of an intent to inflict harm
- Verbal abuse – swearing, insults or condescending language
- Physical attacks – hitting, shoving, pushing or kicking

[Definition provided by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety]

Discrimination: Acts or behaviors that exclude individuals for reasons associated with race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation

Details

Organization name will not discriminate against any of its employees under any of the protected grounds established by the BC Human Rights Code which include: race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, physical disability, mental disability, marital status, family status, source of income, and sexual orientation.

Furthermore, Organization name will ensure equal treatment for its employees, including, but not necessarily limited to, the following processes:

- Job applications
- Recruitment
- Training
- Transfers
- Promotions
- Apprenticeship terms
- Dismissal
- Layoff

Organization name will ensure that this right to equal treatment is upheld in the areas of rate of pay, overtime, hours of work, holidays, benefits, shift work, discipline, and performance evaluations.

Accommodation

Employees who require accommodation according to any of the protected grounds listed are asked to bring this to the attention of Management. Organization name will take the steps needed to provide accommodation up until the point of undue hardship. It is up to the employer and the employee to work together to find a reasonable accommodation.

Complaints

Employees who feel they have been discriminated against are encouraged to raise their concern with their supervisor, Human Resources, or another member of the Management team.

[Organizations are encouraged to develop a detailed and thorough complaints process that aligns with their organizational structure.]

APPENDIX B:

WHAT WE HEARD/LEARNED FROM ABCLS STAKEHOLDERS

From May 5 to 26, 2022, one on one interviews were completed with 10 ABCLS stakeholders including members of the Board of Management, committee members and employees.

While interview questions were prepared, the nature of the discussion was fluid, allowing for natural movement between questions. The following questions were used as the basis of the interview process:

- In your opinion, how does the ABCLS encourage women, LGBTQ2, Indigenous people and others to enter the profession?
- In your opinion, how does the ABCLS, consciously or not, put up barriers for women, LGBTQ2, indigenous people and others that discourages them from entering the profession?
- Whether it is your own experience or what you have heard from others, are you aware of discrimination or unfairness during the articling process? If so, what did you experience/hear?
- Registration includes verification of academic credentials, successful completion of articling, written examinations, field project reports, and the professional assessment interview. As you think about the registration process, are there any components that could be perceived as unfair?
- How could any part of the registration process be perceived as discriminatory to applicants who are licensed outside of Canada?
- As you think about practice reviews, standards of practice, and continuing competency requirements, are there any components that could be perceived as unfair? Are there are “standards of practice” which act as barriers to a career in land surveying?
- In your opinion, are their circumstances where one’s gender identity, indigeneity, or background could influence a practice review or competency requirements? Please explain.
- In your opinion, are their circumstances where one’s gender identity, indigeneity, or background could influence how a complaint or discipline action is managed (either as the personal filing a complaint or as the practitioner who the complaint is against)? Please explain.
- Are there barriers in the land surveying profession for women, other gender identities, Indigenous people, people with disabilities and others? Please explain.
- In your opinion are there any barriers to nomination/election to the ABCLS board and appointment to committees/panels?

Stakeholders that were consulted

[Names Redacted]

Observations and learning

There was consensus from the stakeholders consulted that the ABCLS is a committed group focused on regulating the land surveying profession. Stakeholders identified that the processes currently in place including articling, registration, continuing competency, and complaints are regularly reviewed and updated to encourage and support any individual interested in the profession. Participants stated that the small size of the association lends itself to a culture of comradery and genuine interest in each other. It was consistently identified that the industry has traditionally attracted a white male demographic which continues to be the highest representative group in the association. However, there was an expressed desire among all interviewees to attract a more diverse range of practitioners and to raise the awareness of the profession overall.

The stakeholders stated that there are few processes, activities or actions taken by the association that could consciously result in discrimination of current or potential practitioners. It was unanimously felt that the processes in place for attracting registrants, articling, practice reviews, standards of practice, continuing competency and complaints left little room for conscious discrimination of land surveyors of any represented or unrepresented group. Similarly, nominations to a committee or election to the Board were identified as fair and non-discriminatory in process.

Entering the land surveying profession

The primary feedback from the interviewees is that the ABCLS is committed to encouraging everyone to consider the profession, and that there is no conscious intent to put up barriers to any individual interested in pursuing land surveying as a career. The ABCLS has implemented a Career Awareness strategy to support the attraction of diverse individuals to the profession, and to provide staff support to the BC Land Surveyors Foundation to offer scholarships to potential students. Many stated that the profession generally has a difficult time promoting themselves and that additional efforts in this regard would raise the level of interest amongst all groups and communities.

Articling, practice reviews, standards of practice, and continuing competency

The majority of stakeholders consulted stated that they are neither aware of nor have heard of discrimination or unfairness in any of these processes. However, there were three areas that were identified as possible or perceived barriers.

Field work

There was input from stakeholders that the physical demands of a land surveying professional could be perceived as a barrier. One of the 13 Key Competencies for Land Surveying requires completion of field work requiring the ability to access and work in remote and physically challenging outdoor spaces. An individual with either a disability, or less physical strength may have a difficult time performing this work and consequently be deterred from pursuing this profession.

English language competency

Stakeholders identified that there may be situations where an individual's ability to communicate in English, both written and verbally, could be viewed as a barrier in the articling or practice review process. While no specific issues of discrimination were identified, there was a sense that there may be a lack of patience or understanding on behalf of examiners when it comes to the candidate's English language capability.

Foreign trained surveyors and field work requirement

There was consensus among those interviewed that the registration of applicants licensed outside of Canada is not being influenced in any way by ABCLS practices. Currently, applicants require official language proficiency and certification of their academic qualifications by the Canadian Board of Examiners for Professional Surveyors (CBEPS) before applying for registration as a land surveyor in training in BC. However, there was concern raised related to the need for a senior land surveyor moving to Canada, with no intention of doing field work, being required to complete field work as a part of the articling process to be registered. This was identified as an area that could be reviewed and reconsidered.

Complaints and disciplinary processes

Stakeholders stated that they do not believe nor have they heard that there is any perception of, or opportunity for, discrimination with the complaint and disciplinary process. Stakeholders raised that there is always the possibility of discrimination toward ABCLS practitioners.

Nominations and elections to Board of Management and committees

Interviewees stated that the current process for nominations and election to the Board and committees has improved with the move to merit-based requirements. No barriers related to equity, diversity and inclusion were identified. Currently both men and women are equally represented on the Board of Management and its committees, but greater effort to proactively reach out to a broader diversity of applicants would be helpful.

Working at the ABCLS

Employees at the ABCLS described a positive work culture with long tenured employees. Individuals expressed that they liked their work and felt the association was well aligned with EDI principles.

APPENDIX C: HOW OTHER BC REGULATORS APPROACH EDI

The first five regulatory bodies listed below were chosen for review because they must adhere to the requirements of the *Professional Governance Act*.

Association of BC Forest Professionals (ABCFP)

Forest professionals often work in partnership with Indigenous Peoples. As a result, the ABCFP has publicly stated its commitment “to building respect between Indigenous Peoples and the forestry profession” and supports reconciliation through education, awareness and inclusion. “Fostering diversity and inclusion” is one of the guiding principles in their current strategic plan.

To achieve this principle, the ABCFP has done the following:

- A publication was created and mailed to First Nations communities across BC in 2021. The brochure explained forest professionals’ commitment to forest stewardship and Indigenous Peoples reconciliation, the role of the ABCFP and more.
- As a part of their annual registration renewal, all forest professionals must indicate whether they have adequate knowledge about Indigenous Peoples, culture, rights, title interests and more in order to carry out their professional duties.
- All new registrant trainees must complete a learning module on working effectively with Indigenous Peoples.
- ABCFP provides registrants with professional development opportunities to support their knowledge of Indigenous Peoples.
- Indigenous Peoples are represented on their Council.
- The BC Forest Professional magazine includes articles on Indigenous Peoples and the connection to forestry. A publication dedicated to celebrating the Indigenous members of the ABCFP was also created.
- ABCFP participates in Indigenous-led events, student career and education fairs.
- The ABCFP also includes links to resources to support learning, listening and reconciliation.
- ABCFP is a member of the National Steering Committee for Gender Equity in Forestry, which aims to create a National Action Plan to promote gender equity across Canada’s forest industry. The Action Plan has three pillars of action: 1) leverage data to identify gaps and establish a baseline for gender representation; 2) fostering an inclusive culture that advances gender equality; 3) develop new branding that welcomes diverse and inclusive cultures. The website, www.freetogrowinforesstry.ca was launched to promote and support inclusion and diversity and achieve gender equality and meaningful inclusion of women, Indigenous Peoples and new Canadians in the forest sector.

Applied Science Technologists and Technicians of BC (ASTTBC)

- One of the values of the ASTTBC is Inclusion, and on the website, ASTTBC states that it “embraces the principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, cultural safety and humility.” The principle of justice is also mentioned.
- The ASTTBC includes a Diversity Statement from Technology Professionals Canada, dating back to September 2018. The statement is general and brief, and leads with the following commitment: “The member associations of Technology Professionals Canada adhere to the principles of equality and inclusion, and celebrate diversity in their membership, in their volunteer practices, and in employment and human resource practices.”
- There is an article in the April – June 2022 issue of their magazine, ASTTBCConnect, that talks about the regulator’s efforts to comply with the *Professional Governance Act* and its commitment to diversity. It is stated that in 2021, ASTTBC completed a research project on women in engineering and technology, with the goal of improving gender balance. It was also stated that, “Long standing relations with Indigenous communities continues and training on Indigenous reconciliation was taken by staff and council (as well as several thousand registrants).”
- Fulfilling the requirement in the PGA, registrants are required to complete courses from Indigenous Awareness Canada as a part of their continuing professional development. Two hours of Indigenous awareness training is required every year.

BC Institute of Agrologists (BCIA)

- The BCIA has “Inclusivity” as one of its value statements: “The success of BCIA and its Members rely upon responsible consideration of the opinions, concepts, beliefs and principles of all people of British Columbia.”
- One of the strategic directions outlined in the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan is to “maintain a progressive BCIA organization by including membership and relationships reflective and inclusive of British Columbia’s diversity.”
- The BCIA has a working group in place to oversee the transition to the PGA.
- BCIA has Indigenous Cultural Awareness Training requirements. A foundational course must be completed and declared in a professional development report by December 31, 2022. A variety of courses are available, but any course must have a minimum total of six hours of course content.
- A mandatory demographic survey was conducted in 2022 in conjunction with the registration fee renewal. The survey was related to the PGA and will also provide BCIA with benchmarks for future comparisons and program improvements. Results of the survey were not available to the public.

College of Applied Biologists

- The College states that its mandate includes cooperation with various groups, including First Nations governments and Indigenous Peoples. One of the outcomes of this work includes “collaborative relationships with Indigenous organizations and support for Indigenous individuals interested in becoming registrants”.
- As of May 2022, the College has a mandatory training course in Indigenous Awareness. All registrants are required to take this course and a new Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct course over the next 2.5 years.
- There is no commitment to EDI stated on the College’s website.

Engineers and Geoscientists BC

- The EGBC Strategic Plan 2022-2027 includes a social responsibility statement: “We reflect the diversity of the public we serve. We have a positive impact on the world – by advancing Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and climate action. We make progress by continually educating ourselves and taking meaningful action.”
- The Engineers and Geoscientists BC are “committed to establishing standards of conduct for and addressing issues related to equity, diversity and inclusion in professional environments.”
- Fostering diversity and inclusion is a key principle in their 2017-2022 strategic plan.
- An EDI statement by the Engineers and Geoscientists BC has been developed and can be found on their website under a dedicated EDI page.
- A dedicated email address (diversity@egbc.ca) has been set up to allow anyone to obtain more information on their EDI initiatives.
- EGBC has Professional Practice Guidelines – Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, which were first created in 2016 and have been updated to reflect the new PGA and increased awareness of EDI issues. The guidelines outline specific expectations and obligations for individual and professional firm registrants of EGBC, including expectations for inclusive workplace environments; PGA requirements; current EDI best practices and more. A webinar on the guidelines was also created.
- EGBC engaged with registrants and various organizations on the topic of EDI starting in fall 2020 in a multi-stakeholder consultation process.
- EGBC is collecting optional self-identification data from registrants to better understand demographic trends, barriers and opportunities.
- EGBC endorses Engineers Canada’s 30 by 30 goal, which seeks to increase the number of newly licensed women engineers to 30% by 2030.
- The EGBC has a Women in Engineering and Geoscience Division, with a dedicated Committee, which as a mandate “to promote, enhance and facilitate opportunities for women to succeed in engineering and geoscience.” Various podcasts, career panels and discussions have been created.

Architectural Institute of BC (AIBC)

- The AIBC reports that it will be fully transitioned to the *Professional Governance Act* by fall 2022.
- AIBC acknowledges that continuing education in Indigenous Reconciliation is required under the PGA, and that the details of the new requirements are under development.
- There were no other details on their EDI commitment.

Society of Notaries Public of BC (SNBC)

- There is no information available on the SNBC site on their commitment to EDI.



For

