

CSMLS 78th Annual General Meeting

16:00 hr., Friday, June 20, 2014
TCU Place (Salon C/D), 35 22nd St. E,
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

The Chair, Natalie Campbell introduced Chris Hirtle, Vice President, Western Shore, Nova Scotia as the Chief Scrutineer for the meeting and Trica VanDenakker, Winnipeg, Manitoba as the Parliamentarian. The Chair introduced the CSMLS Leadership Team and the members of the Board of Directors, noting that the Director Atlantic, Greg Dobbin and Director, British Columbia and Yukon, Maria Klement were absent from these proceedings. The Secretary for the meeting was CSMLS Executive Assistant, Lisa Low.

The Special Rules for the AGM are designed to facilitate the exchange of information and ensure that everyone who attends has the opportunity to be heard. These rules take precedence over any other rule of order; Ms. Campbell reviewed key points for all in attendance.

1. Call to Order (post Pre-AGM presentations)

The Chair called the meeting to order at 1650h with 70 voting members present. The non-members present were identified and the assembly consented to their attendance at the meeting.

2. Approval of the Agenda

As there were no further changes or additions, the Chair declared the agenda adopted as circulated.

3. President's Address: Natalie Campbell, Fort Smith, NT

I wanted to take this opportunity to touch on a component of CSMLS's strategic plan that I feel strongly about – enhancing support at the provincial level. As a medical laboratory technologist living in the Northwest Territories, I know the feeling of not having a strong, credible, outspoken voice at the regional level. It was one of my reasons for volunteering with CSMLS in the first place. I wanted to have someone represent our professional needs and advocate on our behalf.

My participation on the CSMLS Board of Directors over the years has afforded me the opportunity to meet and speak with members from all over the country. Time and time again, I hear similar stories from our members. This isn't a critique of our provincial societies, who do great work, often with limited resources. Rather, it is the recognition that there are limits to the advocacy capacities of these organizations and an opportunity for CSMLS to provide greater support at the provincial level.

It was with this idea in mind that the Board of Directors added enhanced provincial support to the CSMLS strategic plan in 2013. Since then, the staff has begun the process of figuring out what this could look like, which was no easy task.

There are a number of areas CSMLS could and would like to get involved with. But, much like our provincial societies, CSMLS has a finite amount of resources. Whatever efforts, we engage in, we want to do to a higher level. So we need to be selective in how we proceed. The potential areas of support we have identified are:

- **Education** – Are we offering the right courses? What are the unique educational needs of each province and territory and how can CSMLS meet those needs?
- **Networking** – How can we support the provinces and territories from a networking perspective? What tools can we offer to help them stay connected? After all, we firmly believe in the power of community which is one of the reasons we are here at LABCON to begin with.
- **Advocacy** – What could provincial advocacy look like? What are the distinct advocacy goals of the provinces and territories? We have heard from several provinces that would like additional support, which leaves us with the question of how can we possibly resource these types of initiatives?
- **Public and Government Relations** – How can CSMLS help increase awareness at the local and provincial level and get our members more involved? CSMLS has a long, successful history of advocacy with the federal government. However, many of the decisions that impact our profession are made at the provincial level, as education and health are funded locally. This represents a great area of opportunity for our profession.

As you can see, this exercise has raised more questions than answers. That doesn't mean that work isn't already underway.

In late 2013, CSMLS launched Communities, an online forum for members to connect virtually with each other and share thoughts, challenges, and ideas.

In early 2014, CSMLS provided government relations and lobbying training to representatives from the provincial societies who joined us at our Council for Government and Public Relations. We had a great meeting this April and were even joined by prominent Liberal MP, Dr. Carolyn Bennett. This council has the potential to be a tremendous vehicle for knowledge transfer amongst the various provincial societies and the CSMLS.

Some members of this Council joined CSMLS in its annual Lobby Day in Ottawa. Not only were they able to provide their local perspectives, but it was another learning and development opportunity we were able to provide to our provincial partners.

CSMLS has begun working with the Prince Edward Island Society for Medical Technologists as they look towards the possibility of regulation. CSMLS has long been a supporter of regulation and will act as a resource for PEISMT as they go along this journey. A journey our friends in Newfoundland and Labrador know all too well.

These are just a few examples of where CSMLS is getting more involved at the local level; others we will discuss later in the AGM. We believe we have a role to play here, but we need the help of the membership in order to be successful. Before we dive into the heart of the AGM, here are a few things I'd like you to consider:

1. **Share your experiences.** We need to hear what is going on at the local level. What

challenges you are facing and what the impacts are. As I mentioned, we need to prioritize how and where we get involved and we need your input to help us determine where we can have the greatest impact.

2. **Share your ideas.** If you have thoughts or ideas on how CSMLS could be more active at your local level, let us know. We want to hear from you, so don't be shy about throwing ideas out there. They may not all stick, but you never know what might just come of it.
3. **Get involved.** When opportunities come up, take advantage of them. Connect with your peers and participate in discussions on Communities. Step forward when volunteer opportunities present themselves. Be sure to celebrate National Med Lab Week. You all have the capacity to provide leadership in this profession and we want to help you do that.

My vision of CSMLS is that of a strong, confident voice for this profession; one that is heard at the national and local level. We aren't there yet, but I'm confident we can achieve this. I invite you to talk to myself, my fellow Board members and the CSMLS staff while you are here at LABCON. Let's keep this discussion going over the next few days and beyond. And with that, I will hop off of my soap box and we will continue with the AGM agenda.

4. Minutes of the 77th Annual General Meeting:

The minutes of the AGM held Friday, May 10, 2013, Victoria Conference Centre, 721 Government Street, Victoria, British Columbia was approved by the Board of Directors and published on the CSMLS website.

5. Business Arising from the Minutes

Bylaw changes were implemented following acceptance by Industry Canada.

6. Auditor's Report and Financial Statements

The auditor's report and a condensed version of the financial statements were published in the CSMLS 2013 Annual Report. The Chair noted a full detailed financial report is available from the national office upon request and is also available to members attending the AGM.

There were no questions about the report and the following motion was approved:

"Be it moved that the Auditor's Report be accepted as circulated."

(Tania Toffner, Adam Chrobak)

7. Annual Report for 2013

The Annual Report will be available online at www.csmls.org. Additional copies will be available for order by emailing info@csmls.org and were also available to members attending the AGM.

The Chair highlighted some of the key milestones for the year including:

- The review of the Diagnostic Cytology Competency Profile
- Expansion of the Prior Learning Assessment process to include medical laboratory assistants
- Exam policy review and revisions, including reducing the number of exam attempts from

six to three to protect the certification exam integrity

- The development of new Key Performance Indicators to ensure meaningful information about CSMLS's organizational performance is reported to the Board of Directors
- Expanded government relations activities including joining the College of Medical Laboratory Technologists of Manitoba in calling for the regulation of medical laboratory assistants
- The launch of a new Self-directed Bridging Program funded by the Employment and Social Development Canada, providing internationally educated MLTs with the tools and resources to help with their learning plans.
- The development of a series of exam preparation videos, with funding from the Ontario Government, Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration.

8. **Report from the Board of Directors**

Members of the Board of Directors provided an update on Board activities since the beginning of the year.

9. **Report of the Nominating Committee**

Heather Autio, Past President and Chair of the Nominating Committee, Abbotsford, BC reported the results of the Ballot to the Assembly for the election of officers for 2015.

She noted that the Nominating Committee is a committee of the CSMLS membership, and she thanked the members of the 2013/2014 Committee for their service. She noted that the call for participants will be published in the fall CjMLS and asked members to consider volunteering for this committee.

For the second year, CSMLS has offered electronic voting. CSMLS decided to implement electronic voting in 2013 to reduce our carbon footprint and to provide members with an easier way to exercise their right to vote. The Society also realizes significant cost savings by moving away from paper-based voting, over \$25,000 annually.

The membership was notified through the CJMLS, email and social media.

We then reminded the membership via weekly emails about the voting process. 1,128 members participated in this year's election. This was slightly below last year's participation rate of 1,188.

Thank you to those members that voted.

Heather Autio reported the results of the ballot and the following were the successful candidates:

Vice President – **Mary Costantino**, Weston, ON

Director, Quebec – **Lucie Alain**, Gatineau, QC

Director, Manitoba & Saskatchewan – **Michele Sykes**, Winnipeg, MB (by acclamation)

"Be it moved that the Report of the Nominating Committee be accepted as presented."

(Heather Autio, Michele Perry)

10. New Business: Appointment of Auditor

The following motion was presented and approved:

“Be it moved that the firm of Stevenson & Lehocki, Chartered Accountants, be appointed as auditor for the CSMLS for the year ending 2014.”

(Tania Toffner, Twyla Pearce)

11. New Business: Amendment to the Bylaws

The following blanket motion was presented and approved by the 2/3 majority as required by the Bylaws.

WHEREAS the Corporation was incorporated under the Canada Corporations Act; and
WHEREAS, it is considered to be in the best interests of the Corporation that it be continued under the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act (the "CNCA") pursuant to section 297 of the CNCA;
BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. *The board of directors of the Corporation is authorized and directed to make an application under section 297 of the CNCA to the Director appointed under the CNCA for a Certificate of Continuance of the Corporation.*
2. *The Articles of Continuance (transition) of the Corporation, which have been submitted to this meeting, are hereby approved.*
3. *The current By-Law dated. May 2013 of the Corporation (as amended to date) is repealed effective on the date that the new By-Law dated June 2014 which has been submitted to this meeting and is hereby approved becomes effective in accordance with the provisions thereof.*
4. *Each of the officers and directors of the Corporation is authorized to take all such actions and execute and deliver all such documentation, including the said Articles of Continuance (transition), the notice of registered office and of directors in the forms fixed by the Director appointed under the CNCA, which are necessary or desirable for the implementation of this resolution.*
5. *This resolution shall become effective when approved, sanctioned and confirmed by at least two-thirds of the members of the Corporation at a meeting duly called for such purpose.*

Termination

There being no further business, on motion duly made, seconded and unanimously carried, the meeting then terminated.

(Heather Autio, Terry Akister)

12. Further Business

The Chair invited questions from the membership, noting that any comments under this section would be recommendations to the Board of Directors only and not motions to vote. They could not be regarded as binding as they were not pre-circulated to the membership for consideration as required by our bylaws.

William Younger, Winnipeg, MB

Mr. Younger asked about international activities, and noted that we have a current Canadian that is going to assume the presidency of the IFBLS. We have two of our Board members who will be going to the GAD (General Assembly of Delegates) and was wondering if the Board had considered opportunities for members to attend the General Assembly of Delegates through perhaps sponsorship of poster sessions or maybe like the Nordic regions; they organize a charter flight and members buy into that. I don't know if there are any discussions around those types of opportunities. The other piece about international activities is the World Medical Laboratory Development Fund and I was wondering if there has been any activity in regards to that.

Natalie Campbell, Chair recognized that the World Medical Laboratory Development Fund has not had a lot of activity and that is something that the Board have certainly considered as well as the Grants, Scholarship & Awards Committee. The Grants, Scholarship & Awards were recently reviewed and revised and there will be some formatting changes to be implemented in January 2015, which will increase the amount, but decrease the frequency of a grant that would help to fund a member's participation in the IFBLS conference internationally. It would fund up to \$3,000.00 and be offered every other year in correlation with the IFBLS conference. Members, including students will be able to apply.

Moses Ogunkunle, Yellowknife, NT

Mr. Ogunkunle began by thanking the CSMLS and Board of Directors for granting him the scholarship for the course that he completed at UBC.

Mr. Ogunkunle has been following the CSMLS website and emails about the internationally educated MLT's. Moses was once an internationally trained MLT and knows the difficulties to attain certification in Canada. He noted that the exam attempts have been reduced from six to three, understanding that after the second attempt there is a review and after the third attempt the applicant must go back to school, and that was his concern. He asked if the CSMLS or the Board of Directors have discussed with the schools who have MLT programs, whether they are ready, to absorb the students into their programs. He remembers when he came to this country in 2008 he wanted to go straight to school and the director of that program (school not mentioned) told him that even if he applied ten times they would not admit him. He then spoke with the admissions officer and indicated he wanted to apply for the 18 month bridging program so that he could write the CSMLS exam, but was not accepted.

Another item of concern was the planning of alternative professions for the internationally trained. He indicated that he received the CSMLS survey, and that he was not against the alternate professions, but he was not in support of it. He indicated that he made several comments on this survey. Mr. Ogunkunle asked for better clarification on these two issues; individuals going back to school, are they ready to take them and for individuals planning alternate professions. The profession that is closest to the MLT in this country is MLA. When he came to this country, he had applied to two places to work as an MLA. He was interviewed for one of the positions and at the end of the interview they indicated he did well, but they would not hire him because in three months time when he wrote and passed his MLT exam he would leave his current position. Mr. Ogunkunle asked for further information.

Christine Nielsen, CEO addressed Mr. Ogunkunle's concerns.

One of the challenges that the Professional Standards Council, which is a council of the regulators had faced, was that many people head to the exam and see the exam four, five, six times and that was seen as too many in the interest of protecting the security of the exam. So after an issue paper and review of what other professions do, the decision was made to take it down from six to three. So a candidate can come to exam two times and then there is a mandatory intervention, where there is a customized learning plan done by the Certification Department to identify the specific gaps that the individual had on their last two exams. The specific learning plan is put in place with mandatory requirements to refresh the training and then eligible to exam one more time. That decision was not made hastily in light of the need for accessibility for the internationally trained to the exam and in light of the need for us to have fair and transparent policies. The regulators discussed the impact of these decisions with Fairness Commissioners (in four different jurisdictions in Canada: Ontario, Quebec, Nova Scotia and Manitoba) and they felt that as long as we provide notice to all clients and we do not discriminate between domestic and international clients, reducing the length of time for the exam was fair. So that was the decision in the interest of the integrity of the entire process to limit the exposure of the test to people who were having difficulty passing. The other issue that we had heard because we have talked to our clients for over 12 years, is several people said, 'I just plan to see the exam one time and I plan to pass it the second time', and that is terrible news for someone who runs a national exam to hear, because it suggests maybe they didn't even study. So it became a throw away exam and we are concerned that the client doesn't realize how important that test is on their journey to regulation. So, under advice we moved to three exams, only. The nice thing is for those who are currently in the system, we are honouring our original commitment, so there will be a few people who will take their fifth exam in the next little while, but that will be cut off. We will allow for an extension for those who are currently in the process to see through what the system was when they applied.

On the issue of bridging programs or the access to full time CMA accredited programs, the challenge with CMA accredited programs is the CSMLS has to talk to all different jurisdictions. There is no national board of education, unlike many countries of the world, so we acknowledge the need for bridging and have supported a creation of a new bridging program in Atlantic Canada, designed to actually serve the needs of Canada. It is piloting locally, but will be available, I would say globally. I would say pan-Canadian but with the right set of circumstances, I am sure it could be piloted outside of Canada as well. There is still the bridging program in Hamilton, Ontario through Mohawk College. Michener Institute has started up their program again this past January and the CSMLS is completing a \$439,000 project called Self Directed Bridging to really help those people who don't have a full time program or bridging program to help them make better choices on the courses that are available and to provide them with a better advice to do a clinical placement to help meet the needs to practice in Canada.

On the subject of alternate careers, we've been holding focus groups with the internationally educated. An alternate career is nobody's goal when they come to Canada, whether you are a physician, a nurse or a medical technologist. We have been very careful doing the research on what kind of advice the CSMLS wants to provide when it's clear that maybe the process may be too long for you, too cumbersome, too costly or a bad fit if you were very specialized while you were offshore. With great care we have been working on a microsite, a place that's on the web where people can go to access their skills and behaviours that map what a medical technologist does to eight to ten professions in Canada that are all unregulated. We are trying to position it as either interim employment; on your way to becoming a medical technologist or possible substitute employment. There were very rigid criteria around the careers that were selected. We should have a final report coming out in the fall and one of the most important things for you to know is how sensitive we were to how nobody wants to hear about an alternate career. Do they want to hear

when they are in their home country that they might need a plan B or C when they come to Canada? Or do we tell them about it when they've missed a milestone, they can't get their documents or they can't get certified or they are struggling to get full time employment. We are very sensitive to the issues of the community and that is why we spent a lot of time and effort focusing on eight to ten focus groups across Canada to really know how we should position this so it will be received better by people to be used productively.

This is a huge passion of the CEO and the Board of Directors to see full employment for every internationally trained technologist, but to also acknowledge that the journey is long for some and impossible for others. We are trying to put in place some steps and mechanisms to help.

Linda Crawford, Toronto, ON

Mrs. Crawford indicated that she was an internationally trained medical laboratory technologist and when she moved to Canada 35 years ago, she wrote the then 'CLST' exam and while she recognizes that she did not have the language barrier that many foreign trained technologists have, she believes the new exam criteria is eminently fair. She remembers studying for the exam and quite honestly, she felt that anybody who thinks their first time taking the exam is a "throw away" perhaps isn't serious about a career in medical technology.

13. Resolutions

The following resolutions were presented and approved by the assembly:

"Be it resolved that we extend our sincere thanks to:

- *all volunteers for their dedicated work in support of the mission of CSMLS; and CSMLS staff for their extra effort and hard work during the past year."*

(Patrica Verbeke, Colin Power)

"Be it resolved that we extend our sincere thanks to the following:

- *to the 2014 Exhibitor's and Sponsors who continually support LABCON and add to its success."*

(Lisette Vienneau, Mary Kratchmer)

14. Adjournment

There being no further business the Chair declared the meeting adjourned at 1736h.