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To: BOABC Members and the Executive Committee
From: Manjit S. Sohi, Chair Examination Committee
Date: April 27, 2010
Subject: Report - Examination Committee

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Over the past two years, some BOABC members expressed concerns regarding the examinations and certification programs and the perception of losing the autonomy of the BOABC. Members had misunderstandings and confusions regarding the Examination Committee (EC) and direction it has taken in relation to BOABC examinations and certifications. Questions were also raised about the involvement of the International Code Council (ICC), ownership of the exams, security of the exams, and the role and responsibilities of the BOABC and the ICC in relation to the examination of the BOABC membership.

Background

In 2008, the Examination Committee was established to align BOABC's policies and practices of examination and certification of its members with the Alliance of Canadian Building Official Association (ACBOA). The previous Certification Committee was administering the examinations of members and also certifying, which is contrary to the ACBOA and the ICC security guidelines and conflict-of-interest principles. Therefore the Certification Committee responsibilities were split into two: the Examination Committee and the Certification Committee.

Previously, the BOABC was conducting its examinations and certifying members with an in-house developed comprehensive examination regime with manual created exams. Due to the limited number of questions in the exam bank, it was not practical to offer more examination sittings to achieve certification in a timely manner. In order to improve the examination process and take advantage of technological changes, the BOABC signed a Support Service Agreement (SSA) with the ICC in May 2001. Under this agreement, the BOABC developed and administered computer based exams for Level I and II. In April 2008, Mr. Eddie Ho, VP Certification BOABC, extended this agreement on behalf of the BOABC to include Level III examination to be conducted similar to Level I and II. The newly endorsed agreement enables BOABC in collaboration with the ICC to develop and deliver Level III examinations in a similar format as Level I and II.



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Responsibilities of ICC

As per the SSA endorsed by BOABC with the ICC, the ICC agrees to provide the following services for the development and maintenance of examinations:

- ICC with its Psychometric Support Services will assist EC in the development and validation of question bank for exams, establishing the cut score for questions, generate compute base tests, mark tests, deliver tests to BOABC in a secure manner and provide individual test reports to candidates and analytical test reports to the BOABC.
- Meet with EC twice a year to review the test report amend and adjust irrelevant questions, and improve the existing question banks.

Responsibilities of BOABC

- BOABC will develop the question banks under the guidance of the ICC.
- BOABC will review and approve the cut score for questions.
- BOABC will administer the examinations and notify candidates of test results.

Ownership of Exams

- ICC owns and retains all rights to questions approved and use for Level I.
- ICC and BOABC jointly own and retain all rights to questions approved and used for Level II & III.
- These questions and answers will not be used in any jurisdiction in Canada without prior written approval from the BOABC.
- In the event of termination of this agreement, the ICC will provide all questions to the BOABC.

Security of Exams

- The ICC maintains all test materials in a secure storage.
- ICC test services area has restricted access for authorized personnel only and 24 - hour electronic monitoring with alarmed response.
- Access is given only to those individuals whose job functions directly relate to exam development, production, and evaluation of examination materials.



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- Access to the test development computers requires multiple-level password access. Once the user gains access to the computer, another password is required for access to the specific database.
- Any draft or printed exam materials that are being discarded are stored in locked bins and then shredded before being discarded.
- Exam reviews are generally conducted via electronic media (computer with projector) and if paper copies are used for review, they are continuously monitored by ICC staff and secured by them.
- Only approved EC members have access to the examination questions during exam committee meetings and these persons are directly monitored by ICC staff at all times that they are provided with this access.

Based upon the above information and a review of the Support Service Agreement, the BOABC have not lost control over the examination process or the content of examination materials.

Examination Committee Activities for 2009-10

In February 2009, the EC met with ICC staff over three consecutive days to review, validate, and establish cut scores for five Level III examinations. Upon approval of the question banks and the development of examinations, the BOABC was able to accommodate exam sittings for 345 examination candidates.

Prior to the implementation of a new examination format, BOABC staff conducted phone interviews with members, who were in mid-stream of Level III exam writing in order to provide them an opportunity to choose between the old or the new exam-writing format. Based on the feedback, the EC established two examination papers in the old, manually administered format to accommodate members wishing to continue with this format. In 2009 the BOABC administered total of 348 exams.

The majority of BOABC examinations are now provided for sittings that are proctored by Colleges and Universities in locations across British Columbia, Whitehorse in the Yukon Territory and Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories.

Below is the summary of exam sitting results for 2009. These numbers include BOABC Members who completed examinations and Students who are permitted to take the Level One examination, by way of an agreement [recently renewed] between the BOABC and the Architectural and Building Engineering Technology Program at BCIT.



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	Wrote	Passed	% Passed
Level 1	80	35	44
Level II	74	21	29
Level III			
Exam 6	55	44	80
Exam 7	44	41	93
Exam 8	2	1	50
Exam 9	46	31	67
Exam 10	44	32	73
Old Format	3	2	67

On May 25th and 26th 2010, the EC is scheduled to meet with ICC staff to review questions and review the Test Report Analysis provided by ICC for exams conducted in the past year, including the April 2010 sittings.

The EC will also develop examination questions and answers related to 6 storey wood frame, Part 10 and other unique to BC amendments for the 2006 Building Code.

Respectfully Submitted,

Manjit S. Sohi
Chair, Examination Committee