

BCSLS 2008-2012 Strategic Plan
[Approved by the Board Oct. 3, 2008]

Executive Summary:

Key Focus: Protecting and furthering the interests of the Medical Laboratory Technology Profession in BC

Key Goal: To do what is necessary to identify, promote and prove the relevance, value and viability of the BCSLS as the representative group and voice of the Medical Laboratory Profession in BC – making the BCSLS indispensable.

Themes: Strengthen Our Foundation
Build on Our Success
Move in New Directions

Strategic Outcomes: Must be “**S.M.A.R.T**”

- Specific
- Measurable
- Attainable
- Realistic
- Timely

Format: Each Objective in the plan will identify the issue, the desired outcome, the actions to be taken and the measurement of the results. They will also include timelines.

Objectives: The Objectives are delineated in the following categories, which will parallel the Annual Operating Plans:

- 1. JOINT BCSLS / BCAMRT REGULATORY COLLEGE IMPLEMENTATION**
- 2. PROGRAMS and SERVICES**
- 3. MEMBERSHIP**
- 4. ADVOCACY**
- 5. COMMUNICATIONS**

6. GOVERNANCE

7. OPERATIONS

8. REVENUE and FINANCES

Strategy Flow

Goal → Objectives → Actions → Measurement → Control → Adjustment → Ultimate Success.

Content:

As identified in the BCSLS Strategic Planning Session on January 26, 2008, the overall objectives can be summarized as follows: [*See Summary Report produced by Donald Golob Consulting, February, 2008.*]

1. Joint BCSLS /BCAMRT Regulatory College
 - a. Work with the Joint College Steering Committee to plan for and implement the Joint Regulatory College
 - b. Communicate with the membership throughout the process
 - c. Determine what the role of the BCSLS will be once the College is up and running
 - d. Determine the best structure for the BCSLS to be sustainable, in the long term, once the College is a reality
2. Programs and Services
 - a. Programs and Services array & delivery method
 - b. Professional Development Opportunities for members (Continuing Education)
3. Membership
 - a. Increase and maintain
 - b. Student members
 - c. New Professional Groups as members
 - d. View of the MLTs and MLAs as Professionals
 - e. Interaction and communication
4. Advocacy
 - a. Protecting and furthering the interests of the Profession
5. Communications
 - a. Communications and Publications
 - b. Public Relations
 - c. Internal and external networking and collaboration

6. Governance
 - a. Statutory Obligations
 - b. Constitution and Bylaws
 - c. Policies and positions
 - d. Board of Directors and Standing Committees
 - e. Strategic Planning
7. Operations
 - a. Organizational and Operational Model
 - b. Annual and Multi-Year Operating Plans
 - c. Operational Leadership and Administrative Support
 - d. Society Office and Staff
 - e. Committees and Volunteers
 - f. Technology
8. Revenue and Finances
 - a. Financial Model
 - b. Annual and Multi-Year Budgets
 - c. Membership Dues
 - d. Financial Reserve

Plan Review:

Once the 2008-2012 Strategic Plan is completed it should be reviewed at each and every Board of Directors meeting and annually to determine progress towards desired outcomes. It is also important that the plan be reviewed, adjusted, modified, changed etc. when necessary, as it is a living and dynamic document. It, like the organization, should exist in perpetuity and be passed on from one Board to the next.

This Plan has been developed by:

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Executive Director, BCSLS
In consultation with the BCSLS Board of Directors
and Donald Golob Consulting of North Vancouver.

Introduction and Acknowledgements:

The BCSLS 2008-2012 Strategic Plan was developed in consultation with the Board of Directors of the BCSLS and with the assistance of Donald Golob, of Donald Golob Consulting, North Vancouver. The plan evolved from a planning session held with the Board in Richmond, BC on January 26, 2008. This planning session involved a comprehensive environmental scan, a thorough SWOT analysis [Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats] and a complete issues identification process. A Summary Report of the planning session was produced in February of 2008 and this report forms the basis on which the BCSLS Strategic Plan was developed.

The Summary Report is a very comprehensive document and contains a lot of useful information. Much of the information in this report is not repeated in the Strategic Plan, as the plan succinctly delineates a very clear and specific set of actions to be undertaken, over time, to address the issues and opportunities identified in the planning process. The Summary Report and the Strategic Plan should be read together in order to understand why specific actions are being suggested.

The BCSLS would like to thank Donald Golob for his assistance. We would also like to acknowledge and thank the British Columbia Association of Medical Radiation Technologists [BCAMRT] for their willingness to share information and ideas from their own planning process, including the format of this document. The BCSLS and the BCAMRT are partnering in a proposal to establish a Joint Regulatory College for Medical Laboratory and Radiation Technologists. Both organizations are very similar in many respects and share common ideals and goals. Having the strategic plans of both organizations parallel each other to some degree is logical and we thank the BCAMRT for their willingness to collaborate.

The Plan:

1. Joint BCSLS / BCAMRT Regulatory College Implementation

1.1 Work with the Joint Steering Committee to plan for and implement the Joint Regulatory College

The Issue:

Medical Laboratory and Medical Radiation professionals are not regulated in B.C. In most other provinces they are. This means that Standards of Practice are not legislated for public protection and that the Professional Associations [BCSLS / BCAMRT] do not have any control over the professions vis a vis who may practice in the province. These voluntary associations are merely observers at the table with other health profession regulatory colleges when it comes to inter-provincial practice issues and labour mobility. They also cannot make continuing education mandatory. In the case of the BCSLS, the association only represents approximately one –third of practicing MLTs and MLAs in BC. We really do not know how many practicing professions there are in the province.

The Provincial Ministry of Health invited the two associations to submit a proposal for a Joint [Umbrella] Regulatory College and provided the associations with \$60,000 of seed funding to prepare the proposal. The proposal was submitted to the Ministry in July of 2007. Since then progress has been limited however the proposal is still on the table.

At the BCSLS Board planning session in January of 2008, the decision was taken that although the association needs a Plan A [with a Regulatory College] and a Plan B [without a regulatory College] the focus in the short term should be placed on developing a Plan A until the BCSLS and the BCAMRT hear otherwise from the Ministry of Health. We need to be optimistic and pro-active.

Desired Outcome:

The professions of MLT, MLA and MRT are regulated in the province. Standards of Practice are legislated for the public's protection.

Actions:

- Reactivate the Joint BCSLS /BCAMRT College Steering Committee [the Committee]
- Meet face to face to develop a strategy around moving the proposal forward, including discussions with Ministry staff and perhaps ultimately with the Minister of Health
- Meet with Ministry staff to discuss the B.C. Health Human Resources Plan 2008-2013 and determine if and how this planning process might help move the College proposal forward as well [note: the College's mandate is public protection not HHR solutions , however these roles may not be mutually exclusive]
- Determine if a pro-active lobbying effort during the forthcoming provincial election [May 2009] may be necessary or even advisable
- Consider the implications of a Regulatory College on the BCSLS and BCAMRT and plan accordingly
- Determine how both organizations need to restructure operations and resources should regulation proceed
- Determine what the process will be if the College is approved and what roles the Associations will play in that process, including funding
- Determine next steps should the College be given the go-ahead

Measurement:

A Joint BCSLS /BCAMRT Regulatory College becomes a reality and the two associations become actively engaged in its establishment and operation

Timelines: Fall of 2008 through to the spring of 2009

1.2 Communicate with the BCSLS membership throughout the College approval process

The issue:

In order for the Joint College to secure government approval there needs to be a broad base of support including Medical Laboratory Professionals, employers and related organizations. If all MLTs and MLAs across the province are to become supportive of the College they need to know all the facts including the implications for them and the costs associated with regulation. We need to keep the members informed of these implications and of the process towards a College.

Desired Outcome:

All MLAs and MLTs in the province are supportive of the Joint Regulatory College.

Actions:

- Meet with Union representatives [HSABC, HEU & BCGEU] to explain the College proposal and the implications of a Joint Regulatory College for their membership
- Provide facts to the Unions so that if they host information sessions for their members they are relating the correct information
- Ensure that the BCSLS website has current College updates for members
- Utilize the Objective Newsletter to give members current College updates
- Seek out opportunities to speak with the membership at various events – Congress, AGM, live events etc.
- Consider a College specific mail-out to the membership in a timely fashion once the process for approval is understood
- Respond to request for information on College status

Measurement:

The entire membership of the BCSLS is informed of the College approval process and of the implications of a College for them.

Timelines: Fall 2008 through to the spring of 2009

1.3 Determine what the role of the BCSLS will be once the College is up and running

Issue:

In British Columbia there is legislation that prevents a College and a Professional Association from being one in the same entity. They must be separate organizations. It has been made clear by government that the role of the College is public protection, while the role of the Association is the interests of its membership. There is very clear distinction also between the role of the College, the Professional Association and the respective unions. Once the College becomes a reality the BCSLS needs to know exactly what its mandate will be and how it will fulfill that mandate. An obvious and traditional role for the Association is the Continuing Education of its members, who will likely be the licensed practitioners in the province. Exactly how this role will be fulfilled needs to be thought through and solidified.

Desired Outcome:

The role and mandate of the BCSLS will be clear, understood and accepted by government, members, employers and associated organizations.

Actions:

- Initiate discussions with other Med Lab Professional Associations in Canada, where a College also exists, to clarify and understand their roles and how they fulfill them
- Armed with the above information look at the current role and function of the BCSLS to determine what changes if any need to take place
- In consultation with the Steering Committee , initially , and ultimately the Board of the College, develop a clear understanding of the Continuing Education requirements of the proposed College [other similar Colleges will be of great assistance here]
- Examine the Governance of the BCSLS [structure, Constitution and Bylaws, policies and procedures etc.] to determine what needs to be changed to reflect the new reality
- The relationship between MLTs in BC, the BCSLS and the CSMLS will need to be reviewed and adjusted to reflect the establishment of the College in BC. This will include assessment of Foreign Trained Professionals
- The agreement between the BCSLS and the CSMLS will need to be amended accordingly
- Look at what other programs and services currently provided by the BCSLS are still relevant and appropriate under the circumstances

Measurement: A new Strategic Plan will be in place for the BCSLS to guide its future.

Timelines: This process will commence in earnest after approval of the College by Cabinet [preliminary work could begin after approval in principle by the Ministry pending Cabinet approval].

1.4 Determine the best structure for the BCSLS to be sustainable, in the long term, once the College is a reality.

Issue:

The new College, once approved, will license all Med Lab practitioners in the province. They will likely pay yearly licensing fees to the College. An issue of concern to the Board of the BCSLS is the sustainability of the BCSLS, as a voluntary organization, in this new environment. The proposal to the government to establish the new College suggested that a portion of the yearly licensing fee would be returned to the Professional Associations [BCSLS & BCAMRT] to allow them to fulfill their mandate. This concept will soon be enshrined in the new Amendments to the Health Professions Act [Bill25] currently before the Legislature, so the suggestion made in the proposal has some legitimacy. It needs to be approved by the Board of the new College and incorporated into the by-laws. Membership in the professional organization will still not be mandatory.

Desired Outcomes:

The BCSLS is structured in such a way that its long term sustainability is ensured.

Actions:

- Ensure that the BCSLS has the organizational structure and resources it requires to fulfill its purposes and obligations
- Once the College becomes a reality ensure that a portion of the yearly licensing fee is returned to the BCSLS to allow it to function in a sustainable fashion [requires a College by-law]
- Review the structure of the BCSLS vis a vis membership to determine the most effective and efficient way of operating under the new circumstances
- Address the issue of start-up financial commitments to the new College particularly with regard to repayment of these initial commitments back to the BCSLS over time
- Ensure the financial sustainability of the BCSLS from both a portion of the licensure fee and proceeds from educational programs and other sources

Measurement:

A Financial and Operational Model is in place that ensures the long term sustainability of the BCSLS.

Timelines:

This process will begin once the College is approved and will continue as implementation evolves, particularly as the by-laws are being developed by the College Board.

2. Programs and Services

2.1 Programs and Services Package and Delivery

Issue:

The main activity of the BCSLS is providing education events for our members - annual Congresses and Telehealth sessions, for example. The adoption of on line provision of continuing education (Telehealth) was a major step for the society, and a move designed to provide continuing education for the non Lower Mainland MLTs and MLAs. Providing continuing education, of one sort or another, takes up considerable time and resources of the society. Despite a comprehensive product offering less than one-third of the MLTs and MLAs in the province belong to the BCSLS. Obviously many practitioners don't find the association useful. Of those that belong there is an imbalance with a higher percentage of members living outside the Lower Mainland. The BCSLS needs to find ways of making the Association indispensable to Med Lab professionals in BC. This task will be much easier if the College proceeds, as continuing education will likely become mandatory.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will deliver an array of programs and services that will make the organization indispensable to all Med Lab professionals in BC.

Actions:

- Review the programs and services that the BCSLS offers and how it delivers them, to identify those that it should maintain and those it should stop offering.
- Review programs to be maintained to see if modifications or updates are necessary to make them current
- Survey all BCSLS members [and non-members if possible] to determine their needs for future programming and to gauge the level of satisfaction with what is currently being offered
- Continually search for new programs and services to offer members
- Avoid duplication and strive to be the provider of choice of education programming
- Once the College is proclaimed, work with the new Board to determine the continuing education requirements and how to offer them

Measurement: The programs and services offered by the BCSLS are being utilized by all Med Lab Professionals in BC

Timelines: These activities should begin immediately and continue on an ongoing basis.

2.2 Professional Development Opportunities – Continuing Education [CE]

Issue: See 2.1 above

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will deliver an array of continuing education programs and services that will make the organization indispensable to all Med Lab professionals in BC.

Actions:

- Deliver continuing education & professional development sessions (Telehealth, Back to Basics, MLA Day, and Live Events etc.)
- Look at new ways of delivering live events such as the annual Congress
- Ensure education events will contribute to the Society's yearly revenues
- List Society educational events in each issue of OBJECTIVE and on our website
- Provide information to members on a wide range of educational opportunities (provincial, national, international)
- Organize events in partnership with educational institutions [e.g. BCIT , CNC] and other associations e.g. Health Regulatory Organizations [HRO]
- Promote the use of the Dr. Phil Reid Bursary for educational events in local areas
- Provide mentoring to Society members and future members (foreign trained professionals)
- Complete the Back to Basics [BTB] update - all modules
- Complete the rewrite of the BTB exams, including exam question bank and multiple choice
- Examine the feasibility of alternate delivery methods for CE- e.g. CD, DVD, webcasts.
- Survey members on a regular basis to determine what they want in CE
- Determine the continuing education requirements of the Regulatory College when it becomes a reality
- Examine the continuing education offerings of other colleges to determine what might work for the BCSLS membership
- Modify and refocus the structure, operations and resources of the BCSLS as necessary to achieve the above objectives

Measurement:

The continuing education programs and services offered by the BCSLS are being utilized by all Med Lab Professionals in BC.

Timelines: These activities should begin in earnest in 2008 and should be continuing on an annual basis.

3. Membership

3.1 Increase and maintain

Issue:

We have MLAs and MLTs as our members. The MLAs were added to the membership in recent years. Membership is voluntary, which in itself creates issues. We have 1/3 of the total number of MLTs and MLAs in BC as our members. The vast majority of our members come from outside the Lower Mainland, where the majority of the MLAs and MLTs in BC are employed. Those who are members of the BCSLS are long time members. We have a total membership of roughly 1400, with 400 being MLAs and 1000 being MLTs. We appear to be experiencing a slow decline in membership in the past few years, which may have to do with the accuracy of the membership database. All MLTs and MLAs in BC do not consider membership and involvement in their professional association to be an obligation and responsibility of being a member of a health profession. When the Regulatory College becomes a reality, licensing will be mandatory in order to practice in BC. Continuing education will likely be mandatory also. The role of the BCSLS will be to provide that continuing education to all licensed practitioners. However, BCSLS membership must be addressed regardless of whether the College proceeds or not. The BCSLS must become indispensable to all MLTs and MLAs in BC.

Desired Outcome:

All MLTs and MLAs in BC are members of the BCSLS

Actions:

- Clearly articulate and communicate effectively the importance, value and benefits of membership in the BCSLS to all MLTs and MLAs in BC
- Determine how best to recruit new members among practitioners in BC – i.e. what type of recruitment program will work best when we cannot communicate directly with all MLTs and MLAs in BC
- Instigate discussions with the unions to determine if we can work together around membership growth
- Make sure we understand [by survey] what members and potential members want vis a vis membership, programs, benefits etc. so that we can make membership attractive – give a reason to belong
- Conduct presentations for members on current issues e.g. licensure
- Provide more effective assistance to internationally trained professionals
- Ensure that the membership database is current, accurate and maintained
- Follow up with members who have not renewed their membership, going back at least three years
- Research and address the issue of rural vs. urban members
- Develop a “Members Only” section on the BCSLS website, with tangible benefits
- Calculate and promote the actual value of the programs and services delivered by the BCSLS to its members
- Create a better working relationship with large private employers [BC BIO , LifeLabs] to encourage membership
- Promote the concept of “giving back” to the profession and explore an “active retired” classification

- Determine how the BCSLS might restructure membership in the event the College becomes reality
- Make it clear to MLA members how much of their membership fee is for liability insurance

Measurement:

All MLTs and MLAs in BC see value in belonging to the BCSLS and are active members in good standing with the Society.

Timelines:

The above activities need to begin immediately, but due to the magnitude of the task, some priority setting will be required. Also the future of the College could affect that priority setting. Most of these activities should be ongoing with particular attention being paid to member retention. It is much easier to retain a member than attract a new one.

3.2 Student Members

Issue:

The BCSLS does provide for Student Membership for full-time students in programs leading to MLT certification by the CSMLS and /or MLA Certification by the BCSLS. The Society has not, however, taken full advantage of the opportunity that this membership provides. Students are our future members. They should be welcomed, nurtured and involved.

Desired Outcome:

All students of all programs, public and private, should be members of the BCSLS.

Actions:

- Develop a high profile with the MLT and MLA programs, both public and private providers
- Speak at all graduation ceremonies and career fairs at all the Institutions
- Encourage students to participate at all live events, especially Congress and Telehealth

Measurement: All MLT and MLA students belong to the BCSLS and participate actively.

Timeline: Ongoing

3.3 New Professional Groups as members

Issue:

There are other professional groups that exist within the Med Lab community and they should be pursued to become members of the BCSLS if they are not already.

Desired Outcome:

All professional groups within the Med Lab Community are members of the BCSLS

Actions:

- Work with all professional groups within the Med Lab Community to ensure they see value in belonging to the BCSLS – these groups could include the Provincial Hematology Interest Group [PHIG], the Cytogenetics Group, the Anatomic Pathology Group, and BCCDC Microbiology Interest Group etc.

Measurement:

All potential interest groups within the Med Lab Community have been approached and belong to the BCSLS.

Timelines: Ongoing

3.4 Value and Profile of MLTs and MLAs as Professionals

Issue:

MLTs and MLAs in BC play an important role as key members of the Healthcare Team providing quality health care to the public. This role is often not understood. As the new BCSLS poster says “Medical laboratory professionals perform tests that provide vital information about your health. In fact, up to 85% of decisions about your diagnosis and treatment are based on lab test results.” All too often, Med Lab professionals exist in the shadows of doctors and nurses. Once a year the CSMLS and the BCSLS engage in National Med Lab Week to promote the profession. This needs to be an ongoing activity, not just once a year. There is an opportunity for the BCSLS to take a lead role in this activity and thus promote membership in the Society at the same time. As the profession’s profile is raised, so will be that of the BCSLS.

Desired Outcome:

The public, allied health professionals, the media and all Med Lab professionals understand, recognize and appreciate the important role that MLTs and MLAs play in providing quality Health care in BC. All Med Lab professionals want to be part of their professional association as a result. [“Pride in profession”]

Actions:

- Identify and take advantage of all opportunities to promote the value and importance of Med Lab professionals in BC
- Do a better job of taking advantage of National Med Lab week in 2009 and in years to come
- Continue efforts to establish a Regulatory College in BC
- Take on an active role as the representative voice of MLTs and MLAs in BC
- Distribute the BCSLS poster to all labs across BC and encourage its display
- Let the membership know that we are doing this on their behalf, thus encouraging membership growth and sustainability
- Participate in as many health care forums and events as possible on behalf of the profession

Measurement:

Med Lab professionals are recognized by the public, the media and their colleagues for the important role they play in providing quality health care in BC.

Timelines: Ongoing

3.5 Interaction and Communication [networking]

Issue:

The BCSLS provides networking opportunities to its membership through live events such as the annual Congress and the Real CSI event held at the Justice Institute. MLA Day has also been a successful networking event for MLAs. This is an important function for a professional association. The last Joint Congress with the CSMLS and BCSLS was an excellent example of a well attended national event. While these events are important and necessary, they are not always well attended for an organization with 1,400 members [and another potential 2000-3000 non-members] around the province. The Academies, which were developed to encourage networking in the regions, are all but non-existent. The BCSLS needs to explore ways in which this networking can be encouraged so that a greater percentage of the membership can be more actively engaged.

Desired Outcome:

All BCSLS members engage in some sort of networking around the province so that ideas and experiences can be shared.

Actions:

- Explore new ways of networking in a province where distance is a barrier, perhaps utilizing our website to create a members blog, a chat room, or an intra-net
- Consider a “travelling road show” whereby staff would visit sites around the province to meet with members and discuss issues
- Re-examine the role of Academies to ensure that the relationship and operation of the academies reflect the BCSLS’s bylaws as they now stand and their role within the structure and operation of the BCSLS
- Determine if the Academies need revitalizing in order to fulfill the networking and educational function or if another mechanism may be more appropriate
- Explore ways of making a new “members only” portion of the BCSLS web site more effective and interactive

Measurement

All members of the BCSLS are more connected through better use of technology.

Timelines:

These activities should begin in 2009 and continue until positive results are achieved

4. Advocacy

Issue:

MLTs and MLAs in BC are facing a number of issues as a profession. The profession is not regulated as it is in other provinces and universal standards of practice are not in place to protect the public. Critical labour shortages are facing the profession now and these shortages will only get worse over time. Working conditions are not the best due to these shortages. The BCSLS is the only organization that can collectively and effectively speak on behalf of and represent the professional interests of MLTs and MLAs in BC. However, the BCSLS only represents about one-third of the total number of MLTs and MLAs in the province so advocacy has its challenges. The BCSLS has not actively or consistently asserted its role and mandate as the voice of Med Lab professionals in BC. The BCSLS needs to become more vocal, more high profile and more assertive in its advocacy role on behalf of the profession.

Desired Outcomes:

The BCSLS will be recognized by all Med Lab professionals, allied health care professions, government, Health Authorities, unions, private employers, the media and the public as the representative voice of MLTs and MLAs in BC.

Actions:

- Identify the forums that exist that deal with and impact the Med Lab profession and reaffirm by our presence at these forums that indeed we are the representative body for our profession
- Communicate and promote the BCSLS role as the representative voice of the profession to our members and other key stakeholder groups in BC - e.g. HRO
- Continue to represent our profession with Government regarding the establishment of a Joint Regulatory College
- Establish a group of BCSLS Ambassadors, made up of senior members of the Society, to lobby Provincial MLAs and MPs where necessary, on issues of importance to the profession
- Ensure that links are established with all provincial ministries that might impact the profession e.g. Economic Development Ministry regarding Labour Mobility
- Differentiate between our role and that of the CSMLS on a national level
- Protect and further the interests of the profession regardless

Measurement:

Those with questions / issues relative to the Med Lab profession in BC will contact the BCSLS with requests to participate in focus groups and on committees to represent the profession

Timelines: This activity must be ongoing.

5. Communications

5.1 Communications and Publications

Issue:

The BCSLS provides information and publications to its members which meets their interests and needs. This is done through vehicles such as the web site, the Objective newsletter [email and hardcopy] etc. and through live events such as Congress and Telehealth. Communicating and interacting with its members and other stakeholders is an important function. Technological advances make it possible for the BCSLS to communicate in a variety of ways. One of the challenges is that only 50% of the BCSLS membership has email so BCSLS needs to look at a variety of ways of communicating.

Desired outcome:

The BCSLS is able to communicate with and provide information to its entire membership in a timely and effective fashion.

Actions:

- Establish a mechanism to determine how members want to receive their communication – e.g. by email, by mail, by visits to the website etc. This can be part of the annual membership renewal process
- Fulfill the requests to have the Objective newsletter mailed to members on a regular basis for those who do not have email
- Build the “members only” section of the web site so that members can access specific information to meet their needs
- Look for alternative means of communicating e.g. fax blasts versus email blasts
- Continue with the Telehealth program to communicate province wide in an effective and efficient way

Measurement:

All BCSLS members are satisfied with the level of communication and information they receive from their professional association.

Timelines:

Ongoing

5.2 Public Relations

Issue:

The BCSLS must deal with a variety of issues from external sources. There is no Regulatory College in BC to act in the public interest; consequently public enquiries are often directed to the Society. There is a growing frustration among Internationally Trained Professionals that their situation cannot be dealt with more expeditiously, more fairly and more empathetically than the current process demands. Students attending or planning to attend private colleges in particular call with questions or concerns about the programs offered and certification in general. Other enquiries relate to the education programs we offer to non-members such as Back to Basics. All of these issues need to be handled in a professional and courteous way as this function reflects on the reputation of our members and the BCSLS.

Desired Outcome:

All enquiries and interactions with the BCSLS office and the public at large are handled in a professional, courteous and timely fashion.

Actions:

- Ensure that staff of the BCSLS are equipped to respond to all enquiries in an appropriate, knowledgeable, timely and responsive way
- Ensure that Internationally Trained Professionals are provided with accurate and helpful information in a timely and empathetic way
- Ensure that students, our future members, are provided with the necessary guidance to help them along their career path and are encouraged to join the BCSLS as students or as certified professionals
- Ensure that those seeking assistance with educational programs are provided with the necessary information to make good decisions
- Respond to media and public enquiries in a professional way to protect and further the interests of Med Lab professionals in BC

Measurement:

All enquiries to the BCSLS office are handled professionally and in a timely and courteous fashion.

Timelines:

Ongoing

5.3 External Networking and Collaboration [Strategic Partnerships and Alliances]

Issue:

The BCSLS is an integral part of a huge and complex health care system in BC. It does not operate in a vacuum. It is necessary to network and collaborate with other organizations in the province in many different ways. A good example is the proposal for a Joint Regulatory College in collaboration with the BCAMRT and possibly the Cardiology Technologists Association of BC [CTABC]. The Society also works with unions, groups like HRO, educational institutions and small working groups within our own profession. This networking and collaboration is good public relations and as labour shortages take hold of the system such collaboration may even be more important in future.

Desired Outcomes:

The BCSLS will become known for its willingness to cooperate, collaborate and communicate with its partners with the health care system in BC.

Actions:

- Participate in organizations such as HRO [Health Regulatory Organizations] to be better informed should the Joint Regulatory College become a reality
- Partner with employee unions to become more effective in lobbying and advocacy on behalf of the profession in BC
- Establish and maintain links in all appropriate government Ministries to raise our profile and be aware of issues such as labour mobility etc.
- Participate in external programs such as Skills Connect for Immigrants-Healthcare, so that Internationally Trained Professionals can be more easily integrated into the profession in a timely way
- Continue to partner with the BCAMRT to facilitate the establishment of a Joint Regulatory College
- Work with groups in the profession to assist in the delivery of CE – PHIG, BCCDC Micro Course etc.
- Develop a database of exhibitors, sponsors and Ambassadors as a contact list for event and program support

Measurement:

The BCSLS is the voice of the profession that is asked to be at the table in all important initiatives that affect our members.

Timelines:

Ongoing

6. Governance

6.1 Statutory Obligations

Issue:

The directors of the BCSLS are required to manage or supervise the management of the affairs of the Society in accordance with the BC Society Act, any other applicable laws, and the society's Constitution and Bylaws – they have no choice but to ensure the BCSLS is abiding by these documents. To do so the BCSLS Directors must be aware of what those obligations are and fulfill them on an annual basis.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will be aware of and fulfill its statutory obligations under the BC Society Act, its Constitution and Bylaws and all other applicable laws.

Actions:

- Review the BC Society Act, the BCSLS Constitution and Bylaws and all other applicable laws to identify the BCSLS statutory obligations on an annual basis as a priority item at a Board meeting
- Advise the Directors and members of these obligations and any rights and responsibilities they may have under these obligations

Measurement:

The BCSLS is aware of its statutory obligations and reviews them annually.

Timelines:

Review at the first meeting of the new Board of Directors [2009] and once each year thereafter.

6.2 Constitution and Bylaws

Issue:

The directors of the BCSLS are required to manage or supervise the management of the affairs of the Society in accordance with the BC Society Act, any other applicable laws, and the Society's Constitution and Bylaws. Although the BCSLS has made some minor amendments to its name in its Constitution to reflect the change in name in recent years, it appears that the BCSLS has not reviewed its Constitution and Bylaws in any significant or formal way since its incorporation in 1969. Given the length of time since incorporation, the identification of the matter with the academies, and the identification and recognition of the central role that the Constitution and Bylaws plays in the Society's structure and operation, and the crucial role it plays in the directors' fulfilling their duties under the BC Society Act, that a review of the constitution and bylaws using external legal expertise is in order. [Golob, 2008]

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS Constitution and Bylaws will be revised to reflect the current interests and needs of the BCSLS and its members.

Actions:

- In consultation with Legal Counsel, revise the BCSLS Constitution and Bylaws to reflect the way in which the BCSLS wishes to be structured and operate
- Implement a Constitution and Bylaws monitoring and review process on an ongoing basis
- Educate the Directors about the importance of these documents and about their responsibilities in relation to these documents
- Post the new Constitution and Bylaws on the BCSLS website
- Ensure that the BCSLS operates according to the Constitution and Bylaws on an ongoing basis

Measurement:

The BCSLS is operating within the confines of a new Constitution and Bylaws that are reviewed on a regular basis.

Timelines:

The review should begin after the 2008 AGM so that changes can be circulated and approved at the 2009 AGM.

6.3 Policies and Positions

Issue:

Policies are developed by the BCSLS Directors to provide operational direction and details in addition to the Bylaws. They are more easily changed to reflect operational realities. Bylaws always supercede policies. Positions are statements made on specific issues to reflect the majority opinion or consensus of the Directors of the Society on behalf of the membership. They often relate to issues affecting the Med Lab profession as a whole. Policies and position statements also need to be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure currency and relevancy.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will have policies that complement the Society's Bylaws and provide operational direction to staff. The BCSLS will have current position statements to express the collective opinion of its members.

Actions:

- Review the policies and position statements of the BCSLS to ensure that they are current and relevant and meet the ongoing requirements of the BCSLS
- Amend as necessary

Measurement:

The BCSLS is governed first by its Constitution and Bylaws, and secondly by its policies [Golob, 2008]

Timelines:

The review should take place before the first Board meeting in 2009.

6.4 Board of Directors and Standing Committees

Issue:

Governance is an important function within the BCSLS which has tended to be underplayed in relation to the focus on direct provision of programs and services and the reliance on the ED and other paid staff within the organization. Orienting prospective directors to the structure and operation of the BCSLS as an incorporated Society and how it is structured and operates within this context, before the prospective directors get onto the board, would be prudent. This makes sense from the perspective of ensuring new directors know what to do before taking office and it ensures the continuity of and consistency within the organization in terms of how the governance function is carried out at any point in time. Providing the orientation and ongoing support the directors need to do their jobs, given the volunteer nature of the position and the demands on their time, is an important consideration. This points to the importance and requirement of including appropriate support and resources for the board in the annual operating plan and budget of the BCSLS, and to protect it within the budget on an ongoing basis. [Golob, 2008]

Desired Outcome:

The Board of Directors of the BCSLS will have all the people in place to fulfill its governance requirements according to the BC Society Act and the Constitution and Bylaws of the BCSLS. The Board will understand its duties and responsibilities and it will have the resources available to it to fulfill these duties and responsibilities.

Actions:

- Maintain a Nominations Committee, Chaired by the Past President, to seek nominations to the Board of the BCSLS on an annual basis and advise prospective candidates of the role and responsibilities of Directors
- Institute a Director's Orientation Program that outlines the duties and responsibilities of Directors as well as the purposes, operations and activities of the BCSLS
- Provide copies of the BC Society Act, the Constitution and Bylaws and other relevant materials to Directors
- Ensure that adequate resources are in place to support the Board of Directors through the annual budgeting process
- Ensure that the responsibilities for Standing Committees of the Board are assigned

Measurement:

The Board of the BCSLS has all the directors in place at all times and they are well equipped to fulfill their duties.

Timelines: Ongoing

6.5 Strategic Planning

Issue:

Every organization requires a Strategic Plan to delineate its goals and objectives and to identify how it will achieve the desired outcomes within a specific operational framework. When the organization develops and approves the Strategic Plan all of its activities, on an ongoing basis, must contribute to the achievement of the goals and objectives outlined in the plan. The Strategic Plan is often broken down into one year Operational or Management Plans to accomplish the overall goals and objectives. It is the Board's responsibility of develop the plan, measure its performance and outcomes, and adjust the plan over time to meet changing needs and circumstances. To be effective Strategic Plans must be specific, measureable, attainable, realistic and timely. They must be revisited on a regular basis to monitor progress and to adapt to change. Strategic Plans are dynamic, living documents and they are a continuum.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will have a comprehensive Strategic Plan in place and all activities will be directed at achieving the plan. The plan will be reviewed on a regular basis to monitor, review and revise where necessary.

Actions:

- Develop and adopt a long term Strategic Plan for the BCSLS
- Monitor, measure, review and revise the plan as necessary
- Establish a regular review process and adapt to change
- Communicate the plan to the BCSLS membership
- Post the plan on the BCSLS website
- Renew the plan for subsequent years

Measurement:

A Strategic Plan is in place at all times, with all activities focussed on achieving the plan.

Timelines:

The first Plan will be approved on October 3, 2008 or shortly thereafter and regular reviews will be established on an ongoing basis.

7. Operations

7.1 Organizational and Operational Model

Issue:

The BCSLS's current operating and financial model does not appear to truly or accurately represent what the BCSLS requires to fulfill its purposes in its constitution or achieve its goals – in the near term or the long term. This situation exists for a variety of reasons including how membership dues are set and when, the lack of understanding of what it costs to service a member and to provide the programs and services the BCSLS offers and the resources the organization as a whole requires to function. The BCSLS needs to examine its operating model to determine if it will be able to accomplish its goals and objectives it has set. This review should examine two scenarios: one with a College and one without, as each scenario is drastically different.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will have an operating model in place that will meet its needs well into the future.

Actions:

- Determine an operating model that will meet the needs of the BCSLS and its membership with or without a College
- Ensure the balance between paid staff and volunteers in this model
- Base the financial model and yearly operating plans on this operating model
- Constantly review this model to ensure it is working

Measurement:

The BCSLS has the volunteers and professional staff it requires at all times and uses outside expertise where necessary. It is meeting its goals and objectives.

Timelines:

Begin the process with the new Board after the 2008 AGM

7.2 Annual and Multi-Year Operating Plans.

Issue:

An Annual Operating Plan [Management Plan] delineates where the Society will focus its activities and allocate resources to achieve its strategic plan in a given fiscal or calendar year. The Operating Plan evolves from the Strategic Plan. Ideally an organization will have multi-year operating plans in place to provide clear direction over the duration of the strategic plan. The BCSLS will have this five year plan approved and in place by the fall of 2008. The Operating Plan for 2008-09 fiscal year is already in place and is being implemented. The next step would be the multi-year operating plans. At the very least the Operating Plan for 2009-10 should be approved long before the current plan expires in May of 2009.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will have a current Operating Plan in place at all times and a new plan ready to roll out before the end of the current fiscal year.

Actions:

- Develop a framework for an Annual Operating Plan
- Prepare an Annual Operating Plan each year, in conjunction with the annual budgeting process, for Board approval in April of each year if not sooner
- Ensure that reports are given to the Board at each meeting on the progress towards implementing the Operating Plan
- Adjust the plan as necessary to accommodate change and provide flexibility

Measurement:

The BCSLS has an Operating Plan in place at all times which is monitored and adjusted as deemed appropriate by the Board.

Timelines:

Ongoing

7.3 Operational Leadership and Administrative Support

Issue:

It is necessary that the BCSLS has the skills, abilities and leadership at the operational level to implement the Strategic Plan once approved. The BCSLS has an Executive Director who currently works under an Employment Contract for 28 hours per week. It also has the services of a part-time Executive Assistant who work on average between 18-20 hours per week. The BCSLS Office in Vancouver is open five days a week. This minimum level of leadership and support is absolutely necessary for the BCSLS to function and be successful.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS must have the leadership, skilled personnel and administrative support it needs to achieve the Strategic Plan and remain viable at all times.

Actions:

- Develop a plan to retain the leadership and skilled personnel the BCSLS requires to fulfill its mandate
- Assume responsibility to supervise the leadership and personnel as part of the governance responsibilities
- Review the requirements for administrative support on a regular basis and adjust if necessary
- Immediately review the needs for administrative support if the College becomes a reality

Measurement:

The BCSLS has the leadership and administrative support it requires all times.

Timelines:

Ongoing

7.4 Society Office and Staff

Issue:

The BCSLS has an office in Vancouver that has served the Society well for over a decade. The office serves as the registered address required by the BC Society Act and also allows the BCSLS to conduct the business of the Society. The staff alternate days in the office, allowing it to be open to the membership five days a week. The Executive Director works out of his home office two days a week. This situation has worked well for all involved. The office is however on the small side with limited storage space for files and materials that are required on a daily basis. It certainly does not allow both staff to work at the same time should the need arise. There is an opportunity to look at slightly larger space in the same packaged offices that would create a much more functional situation for staff and significantly add to productivity. This should be researched, especially with the possibility that the College could still become a reality down the road.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS office should meet the needs of the Society and provide a working environment for staff that is both functional and supports productivity. Future needs should also be considered in the advent of a College.

Actions:

- Research the possibility of acquiring new, larger office space provided it can be easily accommodated within the financial structure of the Society
- Review the requirements for office space should the Regulatory College become a reality

Measurement:

The BCSLS has a functional office space at all time to meet its needs.

Timelines:

October, 2008

7.5 Committees and Volunteers:

Issue:

The BCSLS depends on committees and volunteers to carry out the work of the Society. It is important that the BCSLS has the right type and number of committees to carry out the work of the Society. It is also important that there is proper oversight and that they provide value to the organization. The big challenge is getting the volunteers to work on these committees to fulfill their mandates. In a time when members are stressed in the workplace it is difficult to convince people to become involved in the Society's activities particularly if they are time consuming. The BCSLS needs to review how it engages committees and how it goes about recruiting people to serve on committees.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS has the right number and type of committees it needs to fulfill its mandate and volunteers are willing to step forward to give back to the profession and the Society.

Actions:

- Review the committee structure within the BCSLS and ensure that the right mix exists
- Determine how the business of the Society can be done if volunteers are not available to serve on committees
- Develop a promotional piece to encourage volunteers to give back to the profession and to the BCSLS
- When the College becomes a reality, explore ways of providing continuing education credits for volunteer activities

Measurement:

The BCSLS has the appropriate committee structure in place to fulfill its mandate and has a supply of willing volunteers to step forward and give back.

Timelines:

The review should begin after the 2008 AGM.

7.6 Technology

Issue:

The BCSLS communicates with its membership in a variety of ways: email, direct mail, web site, live events, etc. Maintaining contact and interacting with the membership is very important to the BCSLS. This is not without its challenges. Approximately 20% - 25% of the members have not provided email addresses. The BCSLS needs to determine how best to communicate with all its members and if possible with all MLTs and MLAs in the province.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will use technology to change and enhance the way it communicates and interacts with its membership. The BCSLS is able to communicate with all MLTs and MLAs in BC, not just our members.

Actions:

- Review the way in which the BCSLS communicates with the membership and how it delivers programs and services to see how technology could be used to enhance these functions
- Develop a plan to utilize technology more effectively to communicate and interact
- Survey members to determine how they would like to receive communication - preferred mode
- Determine how to utilize the Society web site more effectively to communicate and deliver programs and services
- Determine how the new Event Registration/ Membership package [Gifttool] can enhance communication and service delivery
- Ensure that the Objective newsletter is mailed to members in hard copy on a regular basis, if requested
- Research how the BCSLS might possibly communicate with all MLTs and MLAs in the province

Measurement:

The BCSLS can communicate and interact effectively with all members at any time and ultimately can communicate with all MLTs and MLAs in the province. Increase email communication to the highest possible percentage of members.

Timelines:

September 2008 and ongoing.

8. Revenue and Finances

8.1 Financial Model

Issue:

The BCSLS must have a financial model that is sustainable in the long term. That means not just providing for operations year by year but providing for the future. The model to date has been relatively successful in that it has provided for a considerable surplus to fund the start-up of a Regulatory College when it is proclaimed. Should the College not go ahead these funds could be used for programs and services for members or could simply be retained as surplus for a “rainy day.” The BCSLS has operated with a deficit in the recent past and this cannot become the norm. Deficit financing is not prudent for a non-profit and should not be condoned. Therefore, a Financial Plan must exist to support the long term plans of the Society.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will have a financial model that supports the organization on an annual basis, allows for future plans and ensures the viability of the BCSLS over the long term.

Actions:

- Develop a Financial Model that meets the needs of the BCSLS and generates a surplus each year
- Diversify revenue sources in future to ensure long term viability
- Develop annual operating plans and budgets that reflect the needs of the BCSLS and its commitments
- Review and revise expenditures to adjust to changing circumstances
- When the College is proclaimed develop a plan for repayment of the seed funding and its use in future years

Measurement:

The BCSLS has a surplus budget each and every year to ensure its long term viability.

Timelines:

Ongoing

8.2 Annual and Multi-Year Budgets

Issue:

The BCSLS has an Annual Operating Plan [see 7.2] which delineates the activities the organization will undertake in a given fiscal year commencing on May 1st of each year. An Annual Budget outlines what resources will be necessary to implement the Annual Operating Plan. Multi-year budgets forecast what financial resources will be required over several years in order to implement the entire long term Strategic Plan. This provides additional planning capabilities over the long term. The BCSLS has not had multi-year budgets to date but taking this approach might be prudent.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS will have Annual and Multi-Year Budgets in place at all times and these budgets will be monitored and revised as necessary.

Actions:

- Prepare an Annual Budget for Board approval by April of each year
- Prepare a multi-year budget for Board approval by April of each year
- Monitor and review these budgets at each Board meeting

Measurement:

The BCSLS has an Annual Budget in place for the current year and a multi-year budget in place for subsequent years in the Strategic Plan.

Timelines:

By April of each year.

8.3 Membership Dues

Issue:

Membership dues are the single highest revenue producer for the BCSLS. Non-membership income / revenue includes education programs, live events and Congress. The amount of the annual dues has traditionally been determined by how much the Society needs to operate in a given year. They have also been determined by a simple percentage increase over the previous year regardless of what the organization wanted to achieve. This is not the best way of ensuring the resources necessary to implement a long range plan. Another issue is that a membership dues increase must be approved by the membership at the AGM each year and in order to meet the timeframes of the CSMLS membership mail-out [October each year], BCSLS dues must be approved two years in advance. This does not allow for any major adjustments in the budget each year. It ties the organizations hands to a great degree. A membership dues increase has also been based on what the Board felt the membership would put up with rather than a pragmatic strategic approach that stresses value for dollars paid. This entire process needs to be revisited.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS has a dues structure that enables it to meet its mandate and provide value for money to the members.

Actions:

- Conduct an annual review of the membership dues structure to ensure that the dues revenue enables the Society to achieve its mandate
- Determine the value of the services the BCSLS provides to its members for the dues they pay and communicate this information to the membership
- Conduct a regular survey to determine the level of satisfaction members have with the service provided for the dues they pay
- Revisit the agreement with the CSMLS and determine if there is a better way of handling membership dues

Measurement:

The BCSLS has a dues structure that provides the necessary resources to meet its mandate, that provides the membership with value for money that they perceive as valuable and that allows for flexibility and change within the Strategic Plan.

Timelines: beginning after the 2008 AGM

8.4 Financial Reserve

Issue:

The BCSLS requires a financial reserve to ensure that it can continue to operate and meet its obligations if its regular sources of revenue are interrupted, to meet obligations if it decides to wind down its operations, and to provide funds for projects that are not budgeted for if the Society considers them a priority. To date, the Society has established a considerable reserve, however, this reserve has been put aside to provide start-up funding to the proposed Regulatory College. This start-up funding will be repaid to the Society over time and these funds could be put back into a general reserve. If the College does not proceed the reserve could be used for other purposes.

Desired Outcome:

The BCSLS continues to build a reserve of funds for future circumstances, depending upon what happens with the Regulatory College.

Actions:

- Develop policies that identify what the reserve is for , the size of the reserve it requires , the circumstances under which money can be withdrawn and how it can be spent
- Develop a plan to build the reserve and maintain it
- Review these policies and plans on an annual basis
- When the College becomes a reality, determine a re-payment process and schedule for the start-up funds and ensure a reserve is created in their place in the short term.

Measurement:

The BCSLS has an adequate financial reserve in place at all times, with policies in place to manage it.

Timelines:

Beginning in the fall of 2008 [once direction is received on the College] and ongoing from there.

Summary:

March 10, 2009 will be the **Fortieth Anniversary** of the BCSLS [BCSMT]. The Society has a long and successful history. For decades we have provided programs and services to the provinces MLTs and more recently to MLAs. The BCSLS and its members are an integral component of BC's Health Care System. We represent the province's third largest health care profession. It is the mandate of the BCSLS to protect and further the interests of the Medical Laboratory Profession in BC.

If the BCSLS is to continue this tradition of service and excellence it needs a comprehensive long term Strategic Plan. Long gone are the days of non-profits surviving by chance and good luck. A pragmatic approach is needed if the BCSLS is to meet and exceed its expectations.

The BCSLS is also at a crossroads of sorts. The long awaited Regulatory College is still on the table and could conceivably be declared within the next year. If this happens the future of the BCSLS will be changed and it will likely be very different. Opportunities will exist to reach all of the Medical Laboratory Professionals in BC in different ways and for the first time we will be truly representative.

If the College does not move forward for some reason, the BCSLS will revert to "Plan B" and look at ways of making itself indispensable to the province's Med Lab professionals in the future. We must continue to be even more viable.

Either way, the BCSLS must strengthen our foundation, build on our success and move in new directions. This 2008-2012 Strategic Plan is designed to help us do just that.

Malcolm Ashford,

Executive Director,

BC Society of Laboratory Science