

2018 SIA Annual Convention: Workshop Session Report

Version: April 26, 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key points from the table break-out sessions during the workshop sessions in the afternoon of April 11, 2018.

Articling Program

- Re-establish a mentorship program
- Improve communications about the articling program for new articling members and prospective members
- Increase in number of branch events
- Increase direct communication from the branch executive to articling members

Using the Designation

- SIA to clarify when it is appropriate to use the designation and what is the proper format
- SIA to develop a rationale for using professional designations for those employers who may have a policy to not include designations on business cards

Professional Liability Insurance

- SIA to investigate whether or not to require members to declare that they carry professional liability (errors & omissions) insurance or their employer carries it

Enforcing Mandatory Registration

- Members be encouraged to reach out to colleagues that are not yet registered
- Have dedicated presentations for every program year and department at the College of AgBio about the profession of agrology
- Reach out to other universities and colleges in Saskatchewan and Alberta about the profession of agrology

INTRODUCTION

The workshop sessions took place in the afternoon on April 11, 2018 as part of the 2018 SIA Annual Convention in Prince Albert, SK. The workshop features two sessions:

- Session 1 Professional Practice (1:30 pm to 3:00 pm)
- Session 2: Education & Awareness (3:30 pm to 5:00 pm)

The workshop was facilitated by Magpie Marketing, an external marketing consulting firm. The workshop included brief presentations before breaking into 4 separate table discussion (two per session) that asked questions of those in attendance. The purpose of the workshop was to:

- Engage articling members about SIA's role and function as a regulator
- Facilitate networking among articling members and full members
- Provide feedback to the SIA Provincial Council, branches and Provincial Office

The report includes the questions asked during each break-out table discussion and the key discussion points for each question.

SESSION 1: PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Articling Program

Q1: What can and how could SIA do better to prepare articling members for full membership?

- Re-establish a mentorship program
- Improved communication about the articling program
 - o Better articulate the purpose and advantages to membership
 - o Detailed description of the articling program and process to becoming a full member
 - Discussion of key competencies to develop during the articling program
 - Description of the purpose of each milestone
 - Provide program information prior to the orientation
 - o Increased use of social media to share information about SIA, the profession, upcoming events and registration
 - o Utilise webinars for events and CPD opportunities for members (could include webinars about the articling program)
 - o Creation of a forum for articling members to connect online
- Educational requirement clarification
 - o Should include links to academic programs outside Saskatchewan
 - o Requirements could differ depending on the scope of practice
 - Detailed description about the scopes of practice (perhaps a Friday email article)
 - o Alternatives to taking university courses
 - Challenge exams
 - Considerations of experience
 - Intensive week long courses
- Connections to prospective members
 - o Better engagement with university students
 - More in-class presentations at university
 - o Connect with clubs, like 4H to inform high school students and their parents about careers in agrology
- Incentives for articling members (awards for top articling members)

Q2: What more could the branches do to support articling members

- Involvement in a mentorship program
- More branch events
 - o Different types of events (perhaps less formal events)
 - Keep doing tours
 - Facilitate more networking
 - o Use various locations for events to reduce travel for some
 - o Be more inclusive of all scopes of practice

- Provide for virtual meeting attendance
 - Branches could be more involved at the high school to promote agrology
 - Directly reach out to articling members
 - Welcome emails or packages
 - Have a dedicated point of contact for articling members
 - Return to doing a full member inductee ceremony at branch events
 - Increased use of social media
- Q3: How can full member be more involved in the articling program
- Actively participate at the branch level
 - Attend branch events
 - Speak at branch events
 - Be part of a mentorship program
 - Have a requirement that every 5 years each member needs to attend a branch event/AGM

Using the Designation

Q1: How can we encourage members to always use their designation?

- Article outlining the proper use of the designation
 - Where it is appropriate to use the designation
 - Why members should use their designation
 - Proper formats for the designation (i.e.: no dots)
- Incentives to members for use of their designation
 - No designation = you owe me a beer
- Need to get employers involved and have their support
 - SIA can provide a brief explanation that can be forwarded by a member to their employer
- Members can be advocates in their companies to encourage individuals to use their designations

Q2: How can we encourage members to write their designation properly?

- Include it as part of the mentorship program
- Be part of the inductee process for full members or articling members

Q3: Should it be a requirement to use our professional designations? Why or why not? If so, how?

- Yes! It's the only indicator available to the public to distinguish who is a registered agrologist and who is not.
 - It is part of pride in the profession
 - Part of the profession's role to protect the public
 - Provides credibility to an individual's practice
 - Creates public awareness of the profession
 - Can be a conversation starter to explain the role agrologists play in society
- How?
 - Branded window decals, bumper stickers, coat patches
 - SIA should ensure it always uses the designation when writing members' names in reports, documents, name tags, etc.

SESSION 2: EDUCATION & AWARENESS

Professional Liability Insurance

Q1: How does professional liability insurance protect both the professional and the public?

- Protects the financial interest of both parties
 - o Part of protecting the public
- Protection to the professional
 - o Provides piece of mind when giving advice
 - o Serves as a guarantee of service

Q2: Should SIA require that members confirm each year that they are covered by professional liability (errors & omissions) insurance or their employer carries this insurance?

- Yes!
 - o Have a check box that members need to check verifying they are covered
 - o It is part of SIA's role to protect the public to ensure proper protections should a mistake be made
 - o Have a form that verifies coverage that can be completed by the member or their employer
- No!
 - o It is an individual's or employer's choice whether or not to carry professional liability (errors & omissions) insurance.

Enforcing Mandatory Registration

Q1: What is each member's ethical responsibility to support programs that enforce mandatory registration?

- The Code of Ethics requires members to report those in unauthorized practice
 - o It is part of a member's responsibility to the profession
- Members should have a conversation with individuals to encourage them to be registered
 - o Use "Find a Member" link on the website to double check if someone is registered or not

Q2: How can members be more involved in identifying those not in compliance?

- Members can inform the SIA or council of those in unauthorized practice
- Be ambassadors of the profession in your work place
 - o SIA should develop key talking points or Q & A about the profession that can be shared
- Use the registration of staff at your company as a competitive advantage

Q3: How can the College of AgBio better prepare students to understand the profession they will enter?

- SIA should be reaching out to other universities and programs rather than solely focus on the College of AgBio
- All faculty at the College of AgBio should be registered with SIA
- Increased class presentations to students
 - o There should be ample time allocated to SIA in first, second, third and fourth year classes to present to all students about the profession of agronomy
 - o Have a mandatory session about professionalism at the College
 - o Time for SIA presentations during graduate seminars
- Being a student affiliate member of the SIA should be a requirement of all programs at the College
 - o Encourage student affiliate members to attend branch events (hold branch events at the University)
- Continue the student ambassador program
- SIA should prepare a detailed description of educational and program requirements for registration with SIA.