

MEETING NOTES
SURVEYING ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING
TEXAS BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS

October 28, 2022
10a.m. – 2:30 p.m.

In person: TBPELS Offices, 1917 S IH-35, Austin, TX
Also via Zoom

Discuss and Possibly Act on the Following Agenda Items:

- Call to Order – Chairman Hodde called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.
- Introductions / Agenda -Attendees
 - Members of the SAC, Board Liaisons, and TBPELS staff introduced themselves and new SAC members were welcomed. All SAC members were in attendance.

Attendees:

Jon Hodde, RPLS – SAC Chair
Manny Carrizales, RPLS - SAC Member
Davey Edwards, RPLS, LSLS - SAC Member
Vasileios Kalogirou, RPLS - SAC Member
Paul Kwan, RPLS - SAC Member
David McDow, RPLS, LSLS - SAC Member
Stan Piper, RPLS, LSLS - SAC Member
Dorothy Taylor, RPLS - SAC Member
Heather Welch-Westfall, RPLS - SAC Member
Coleen Johnson, RPLS – TPBELS Board Member Liaison
Mark Neugebauer, RPLS, LSLS – TBPELS Board Member Liaison
Lance Kinney, PhD, PE – TBPELS Executive Director
Ed Brannan, PE – TBPELS Licensing Technical Specialist
Rick Strong, PE – TBPELS Director of Licensing and Registration

- Exam Update
 - Current Exam Report / Update – Mr. Strong updated the committee on the current RPLS, Reciprocal (RCP), and LSLS exams. The September 30, 2022, exam went very well with good attendance. Grading is being finalized and results will be released next week. The overall pass rate looks better than the previous exam. In addition, pass rates of various subsections of examinees(2 year versus 4 year degree holders and 1st time test takers versus repeat test takers) were discussed. This analysis will continue with the exams going forward.
 - State Specific Exams / Timeline Review – Mr. Strong updated the committee regarding progress along the previously approved exam development timeline. The exam specifications

and process flow were approved at the last board meeting as recommended by the SAC. Since then, all exam questions have been reviewed and categorized within the exam specifications by exam workgroup / subject matter experts. The team was able to pull 10 sample exams from the item bank and will now begin review of the sample exams for content, formatting, duplicate questions, etc. The plan is to have at least 3 exams ready for the first year of delivery, beginning in October 2023 , with at least 3 more for the following year either ready or in process.

Dr. Kinney reported that communications with NCEES indicate that they can make the Principles and Practice of Surveying (PS) exam for Texas applicants available within a day of notification from TBPELS. So, this switch can be implemented at any time.

The committee discussed exam delivery timing for a conversion to the national PS exam coupled with a Texas State Specific Exam (TSSE). It is very important that potential examinees, the surveying community at large, TSPS, educators, and the public be made aware with as long a lead time as possible. Applicants need to know what to study and understand the exams required for registration; educators need to know about the content and exam process to properly prepare applicants, etc.

TBPELS staff also noted that with the new format of a 4 hour TSSE exam, it could be offered more times per year. Currently, the RPLS and RCP exams are offered twice a year (April / October timeframe). The new exam could be offered three times per year to increase access. In addition, the national PS exam is offered year-round through computer-based testing.

Another option considered by the SAC is to possibly offer the TSSE at different locations around the state. This idea was discussed favorably, but research should be done to identify the need, the best locations, travel access, etc. and it was determined to run a converted TSSE for a year and monitor attendance, home locations of examinees, volumes, etc. and revisit next year to see if this would be appropriate. It was felt having at least the first three exams in Austin would be prudent to start the process.

TBPELS staff reported that the exam workgroups are ready to go with the exam; the TSSE is far enough along the development path that we can assure 3 exams will be ready very soon. Given this and all other considerations – the proposal is to move forward with the national PS exam along with the TSSE exam starting October 2023. The April 2023 exam would remain the same as the current exam. Three exams would be offered with a rough schedule of Spring (March), Summer (June), and Fall (October) of each year. The first 3 exams would continue to be offered in Austin.

- Possible Recommendation to Board to Adopt PS plus TSSE

After much additional discussion, the SAC supports the idea of moving to the national PS exam with the TSSE and have both required for registration as an RPLS in Texas. The exam would be first offered in October 2023. The April 2023 exam will be the same as the current RPLS exam. To avoid confusion, the national PS exam would be allowed for Texas applicants starting in May 2023. The TSSE would be three times per year and national PS exam offered all year. Communications would be made promptly to the surveying community starting in December 2022 to give as much preparation and awareness as possible.

A motion was made (Edward / Taylor) to recommend to the TBPELS Board to implement the aforementioned exam process of requiring the national PS exam and the TSSE for registration as an RPLS in Texas. A vote was taken and unanimously passed.

- 32 Hour Course Guideline Discussion and Review Plan

Dr. Kinney briefed the SAC on ongoing discussions concerning the 32-hour educational requirements related to certain 2 year and 4 year degree plans as listed in the statute. The previous TPBLS board had developed a guideline for acceptable courses to obtain the required 32 hours , and during the merger TBPELS brought over the guideline without changes. This guideline is many years old and given potential changes in education and professional practice, it is an appropriate time to review, discuss, and re-issue an updated guideline.

The SAC discussed the history of the guideline, the statutory language and 32 hour requirements called out in the Act, and how to best develop a plan to review and update the 32 hour guideline.

After discussion, the SAC recommended that staff put together a stakeholder workgroup to review the guideline and make recommendations back to the SAC to consider before passing on for full Board consideration. The committee should be broad enough to cover multiple stakeholder groups but not too many attendees to become unwieldy. Recommended stakeholder groups include educators from 2 year and 4 year programs; practicing RPLS, including recently registered as well as experienced practitioners; industry representatives for input on hiring and expectations of RPLS; representatives of professional surveying organizations in the state; SAC liaison(s); TBPELS Board liaison; and TBPELS staff to facilitate discussion. The timeline would be to develop the workgroup by early 2023 and hold 1-2 meetings in January – March 2023. This information would be presented to the SAC in spring 2023 and a possible recommendation regarding the 32 hour guideline made to the TBPELS board at the May 2023 meeting.

- Murdough Center – Surveying Ethics Program

Dr. Kinney reported that agency staff has been working with the Murdough Center for Engineering Ethics at Texas Tech for quite a number of years and they have a high quality and extensive ethics program available for the engineering profession. This program is a multi-hour comprehensive ethics review. TBPELS utilizes this program for licensing, compliance, and continuing education on the engineering side. However, there is no parallel professional ethics program available for surveyors – either through universities or NSPS.

As such, staff began exploring the idea of developing a similar ethics program for land surveyors. This could be used for both licensing and compliance issues. Other states use Murdough on the engineering side and have indicated interest in a surveying option as well.

The program as proposed would be completely focused on professional practice issues related to surveying. This would NOT be a surveying practice course (how to survey, technical issues, etc.) but rather related to codes of conduct, professional practice, etc. and focused on ethical professional practice.

A draft version has been constructed by the team at Murdough based on surveying professional practice tenets and guidance, and it now needs to be reviewed by practicing professional land surveyors. The SAC made some suggestions on reviewers and staff will contact these individuals and put them in contact with Murdough.

The SAC felt this would be a benefit to the licensing and compliance process, both in Texas and nationwide.

- Legislative Update

Dr. Kinney reported the legislative session is coming up in January 2023 and noted that TBPELS tracks bills. There is discussion of possible amendments to the surveying act related to decoupling of the FS exam, but no bill has been filed yet. All legislation has a long process to go through. TBPELS cannot be for or against bills; only provide information. Staff will keep the SAC and Board updated on any bills related to the agency or surveying and asks that SAC member do the same.

- Rules Report

- SOAH Rules

Dr. Kinney reported that the rules related to compliance with Occupations Code 53 and the opportunity to appeal denials of a license or registration due to a criminal conviction are in the development and publication process. He will provide updates as they occur.

- Other Items from Committee Members

None at this time.

- Adjourn – the committee adjourned at 1:55 p.m.