

**MEETING NOTES**  
**SURVEYING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SAC) MEETING**  
**TEXAS BOARD OF PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS AND LAND SURVEYORS**

**April 21, 2023**  
**9 a.m. – noon**

**Via Zoom**

**Discuss and Possibly Act on the Following Agenda Items:**

- Call to Order
- Introductions / Agenda -Attendees
  - Jon Hodde, RPLS – SAC Chair
  - Manny Carrizales, RPLS - SAC Member
  - Davey Edwards, PhD, 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
  - Michael Sims, PE – TBPELS Director of Compliance & Enforcement
  - Rick Strong, PE – TBPELS Director of Licensing and Registration
- Exam Update
  - Current Exam Report / Update
  - State Specific Exams / Timeline Review

Mr. Strong described the current exam process and where the agency is in the exam development process. The April 2023 RPLS and Reciprocal exams were the last of that version. The PS Exam will now be available starting in early May 2023 to all Texas applicants. The rules for the Texas Specific Surveying Exam (TSSE) and Principles and Practice of Surveying (PS) Exam are in process and published in the Texas Register for comments.

The exam workgroups have developed multiple versions of the TSSE and are in the final review process to have them ready for the first exam delivery in October 2023. The workgroups are also working on additional versions of the TSSE so we can have a number ready going forward.

The PS Exam is available via Pearson VUE testing centers year-round. An examinee can take the PS Exam at any location in the US. The TSSE will move from 2x/year to 3x/year.

Mr. Strong noted that Mr. Brannan has been doing an excellent job of coordinating and organizing the exam development process.

The SAC discussed the exam development process and commended the team on the progress. Mr. McDow has been involved in the process and noted that he feels the TSSE will be a good exam. He thanked Mr. Strong and Mr. Brannan for their work on the exams. Ms. Johnson echoed the comments on the work done on the exams.

The SAC discussed next phases and such things as the possible delivery of the exam around the state. Currently the exam is only offered in Austin; after the exam has been delivered through 2024 the agency will look at the volume and analyze where examinees are located. We will then determine if it would be good to offer the exam at locations in other parts of the state. However, we will only do it if it makes sense and does not create a burden or hurdle for examinees.

- 32 Hour Course Guideline Discussion and Review Plan

Dr. Kinney provided a background on the current 32-hour worksheet and how it is used as part of the self-reporting portion for applicants who have a non-surveying degree. The worksheet was developed in the 1990's by the previous board and has not been updated. There has been interest in the surveying / education community concerning the applicability of the currently listed course topics, the alignment with current education and practice, and whether some of the listed topics are in alignment with the current surveying statutes.

Dr. Kinney also described how the form is used in the application process. The form is self-reported by the applicant. The staff uses this as a starting point for what is claimed and cross references it with the official transcripts provided by the applicant. Course syllabi and descriptions are reviewed (either provided by the applicant or from the university websites). It was noted that the form itself is neither approved nor disapproved as a stand-alone document and staff does not take it at face value. Some forms submitted by the applicants are incomplete or include courses that ultimately are not approved upon review. The form is also not used as a final log of courses approved or not approved – it is simply the initial claims of the applicant. All applicant's education is reviewed and must be approved by Board staff as part of the application review process. Finally, it was discussed that courses claimed must be related to the practice of surveying or have surveying content (i.e. – just claiming a Civil Engineering course does not automatically count unless it can be tied to the practice of surveying).

Staff has started a review project to determine if changes are needed, and if so, to recommend changes to the SAC and board for review and possible approval. There have been two workgroup meetings – one with surveying educators and one with a select group of practitioners including recently licensed RPLS,

more experienced RPLS, and a few RPLS representing surveying firms. Each group had a remote meeting discussion and then had an opportunity to provide a markup of the 32-hour form – to change, add, edit anything they wish. These responses were compiled and the entire packet provided to the SAC for review and comment.

The next phase is for the SAC to review the info and to provide their own possible edits and recommendations. This info will then be compiled and shared with all the stakeholders for another round of discussions. The goal would be to provide a summary and possible recommendations to the TBPELS board in August 2023.

The SAC discussed possible changes and feedback to the form. This included not listing individual course names on the form as there are numerous names for courses that include similar topics across all universities in Texas (and outside of Texas). It was noted that this form is used by applicants, agency staff for review, mentors to make sure applicants have the correct coursework, and by educational institutions to make sure their courses and programs are applicable toward licensure. Therefore, the form should be developed with input from all groups and be helpful for all stakeholders.

The SAC members also noted that the form should not be tied to a specific surveying program or degree and should be achievable by graduates from varying programs. This includes both 4 year and 2 year programs, as well as for individuals with non-surveying degrees and what courses they need to complete to augment their current degree plan.

The team discussed certain areas where minimum numbers of hours might be required – for example, a minimum of 9-12 hours in the surveying category or 6 hours in the mathematics category. It was noted that some individuals could have met certain mathematics requirements at the High School level (such as college algebra, trig, or calculus). The group also discussed certain categories that are on the current form as developed by the previous board that do not align with the current statute, including business, ethics, or communications courses.

The SAC made no recommendation at this time, but committed to reviewing all provided information and developing their own individual draft forms in the next 2-3 weeks.

- Rules Report

- TSSE Exam Rules – these rules were developed based on feedback from the SAC at the last meeting, were presented to the Board, and are now available for public comment in the Texas Register. Due to timing, they will be presented for possible adoption by the board at the August 2023 meeting.
- 134.23(f) – this rule was amended and during the amendment process a section of the rule was inadvertently dropped off while editing the rule. As a result, subsection (f) was repealed. This rule will be re-proposed at the May 2023 meeting to put this section back in. This is non-substantive as the section was previously adopted and no edits will be made, but we still need

to follow the formal rule amendment process. The team is reviewing the rule package to see if any other rules need amending and the SAC will be notified in Basecamp if necessary.

- Legislative Update – at this time TBPELS is tracking several hundred bills. There are some that may impact the agency, such as Senate Bill 1659 which would change the Sunset Review date of TBPELS, along with many other regulatory agencies, to 2033. The board has been in communication with the Texas Society of Professional Surveyors on legislative issues and will continue to communicate on any issues that arise.
- New SAC Member Posting – May / June – Last year TBPELS used a new process to request applications for the SAC. It is time to begin this process again and Dr. Kinney asked the SAC about any possible changes to the process. The process overall worked well; we will modify the form to allow people to use the same info they submitted last year if they wish, or to amend their previous information, or to submit a completely new application. The 3 members whose current terms are ending are Mr. Hodde, Dr. Edwards, and Mr. Kwan. This process will begin in late spring / early summer with a target of recommendations for the August board meeting.
- Other Items from Committee Members – since this meeting moved to Zoom, the SAC recommended setting up the next meeting in person at the TBPELS offices. The TBPELS team will also work to communicate to the surveying community the TSSE and exam processes and make sure everyone is ready for the transition.
- Adjourn