

Appendix A: AIA Council Candidate's Questions

To help AIA members in their ballot choices for the January 2010 Council elections, each candidate is asked to respond to the following questions. Responses will be posted to the AIA website and sent to members in the election package.

1. Governing the profession of Agrology requires that Council members believe in the value of and need for the profession. In your opinion, what is the value of and need for the profession of Agrology?

Value: Agrology provides a forum for representation of practitioners in the industry. The designation of Agrology provides credibility for practitioners – recognition by regulators, Government, and other professions. Being a part of the profession of Agrology also provides opportunities for networking with, and learning from, peers.

Need: The profession of Agrology provides standards that can be used to help ensure a basic level of competence for practitioners. The profession also provides guidelines and “rules” – ethical guidelines – for practitioners to adhere to. Having standardized competency expectations and guidelines helps to protect the interests of the public.

2. AIA Council recognizes that it is entrusted to act in the public interest. In doing so, Council considers not only the views of members but also the views of the public that AIA serves. Council as a whole must seek to understand and bring those views into their decisions at the Council table.
 - a. What do you see as the challenges of understanding the broad and diverse public perspective?

It can be a challenge to get an accurate and inclusive depiction of “who” the public are and how decisions will impact each sector – rural, urban, business/industry, NGO – and then clearly understanding what is important to each interest group. How to bring various and sometimes opposing views of the different groups into the decision making process for Council will be difficult.

- b. What do you see as the challenges of understanding the diverse views of the membership of AIA?

Again - getting an accurate depiction of “who” the membership are – “traditional” Agrologist, environmental practitioner, student - and understanding what is important to each interest group. The role of Agrology is evolving, and it will be important to ensure that the various views and perspectives are brought into the decision making process for Council.

- c. What are your thoughts and/or experiences with regard to understanding public perceptions?

A lot of public perception is guided and shaped by two factors: how will a decision impact me in the short term; and lack of information. The Public's perception and

attitude can be swayed by immediate impacts (lifestyle, employment, NIMBY, etc). Negative or pre-conceived perceptions can be compounded by lack of good information or balanced viewpoints. Providing accurate, unbiased information allows people to look at the big picture – if they choose to – in order to make better long term decisions for the betterment of themselves and society at large.

3. Council's job is to govern. As such it has chosen to use a system of governance that clearly delegates achievement of outcomes (Ends) to the CEO and authorizes him, within pre-stated limitations, to choose the means of achievement. This frees Council to be proactive rather than reactive; primarily *focused on the future*, rather than the past or present; and *emphasizing strategic leadership*, rather than administrative detail.

- a. What has been your experience in determining what future based outcomes should be for an organization?

Being a Manager in an evolving business, I have opportunities to delegate various duties – managing project work, safety, mentorship - and put my time and energy into seeking long term business strategies and opportunities for the company. By delegating "day to day" activities, I have been able to look for ways to implement changes to pursue different avenues as the business climate evolves. When a strategy or direction has been determined corporately, I have then focused on finding people and resources to ensure success in the pursuit of these new goals.

- b. What are the strengths you would bring to that process?

I can work collaboratively within a group to achieve a goal. I have experience in managing the "big picture" and delegating duties to appropriate personnel or groups as needed to achieve success.

4. As noted above, Council's governance system does not prescribe means to the Ends. Consequently, assuring that AIA achieves what it should and avoids what is unacceptable, is neither about Council approving programs and activities nor about checking to see that such activities were done. Instead, Council applies a high level of rigour in monitoring achievement of Ends and ensuring that the CEO has complied with Council stated limitations. Monitoring in this system compares the Council's written policies with the CEO's compliance.

- a. Have you had any comparable experience?

My experience is not in governance, but more in an Operations management role. My duties include setting operation and safety goals, and delegating personnel to manage the execution of specific project work. I would not scrutinize every aspect of their work – however I would be reviewing results and ensuring that our goals are met (safety programs and reporting, project completion and compliance, etc).

b. What would you bring to the process?

I can offer Management experience, "fresh eyes", and maturity.

5. Council speaks with one voice. Translated this means that Council makes decisions as a whole. In practice, this means that Council members are expected to deliberate openly and candidly, seeking to understand diverse viewpoints. Yet when a decision is made by majority rule, all Council members respect the decision when speaking externally.

a. What has been your experience in deliberating in a diverse group?

I have worked with various groups and functions in the past relating to input and decision making for sport and school activities. I participated in a Parks Canada focus group providing input for the long term vision for the Pacific Rim National Park.

b. If others were to describe how you operate in groups, what would they say?

I take a collaborative approach and work to include all perspectives and opinions in the decision making process. I am respectful of other's pinions, but can still keep focused on meeting the intended goal.

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