

## Construction industry pushes to include apprentices in College of Trades

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Ontario apprentices should have an official place among the members of the proposed College of Trades, various construction industry representatives said at a recent public hearing.

"Currently the bill refers to its members as journeypersons and employers of journeypersons and sponsors of apprentices — it does not include apprentices as members and we believe it should," said Ed Frerotte, apprenticeship and training co-ordinator for the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Local 128. "Apprentices are the future of the trade and should be named specifically and not just in the 'other' category."

The first of two public hearings on Bill 183, the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, has been held with the second hearing scheduled for tomorrow. The bill proposes that the college be organized into four divisions, representing construction, services, industrial and motive power. Kevin Whitaker, college implementation advisor, delivered the proposed framework for creating the College of Trades earlier this year.

Pat Dillon, business manager for the Provincial Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario, cannot imagine how intentions to professionalize the trades can be done without the "the people who are the future professionals" being a part of it.

"In some ways we think the bill is flawed in not including apprentices as members of the college," said Dillon.

Mike Carter, training director at the Ontario Industrial and Finishing Skills Centre, said that though Bill 183 does outline the necessary scope to make the College successful, apprentices need to be formally recognized. Carter said he expected Bill 183 to be a so-called "coming out party" for Ontario apprentices and finds their exclusion from a membership class puzzling.

"Apprentices, from the time they sign their contract for apprenticeship to the first day they go to work, fill a very substantial role to the employers who employ them and substantial economic role in the markets they participate in," Carter said.

"This journey from day one and all that goes with it, to their becoming a full status journeyperson is an important formal construction journey which tends to stretch from three to five years."

Barry Stevens of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers said the inclusion of apprentices is necessary so they can directly represent themselves on changes to regulations that affect them, such as ratios.

Among Whitaker's College of Trades' recommendations was a three-phase, 27-month process to get the institution up and running. The first phase, slated to last 12 months, would see the appointment of adjudicators to the three-person ratio and compulsory status panels. The ratio-review panel is to begin its work during this phase as well.

The second phase has the compulsory status review panel begin dealing with applications submitted to it. In the last stage, the college would be officially established.

Dillon said that the College's two critical functions of dealing with ratios and compulsory certification require industry experts to develop the criteria around those issues.

He believes the College is a "monumental project" and its rollout should be phased, including the work of the panels themselves. Dillon said this phased panel work could start with the construction division since there are compulsory trades people and apprentices already registered.

"The phasing should start with construction since it is all about trades training," Dillon explained.

"You have a ground to start on. The criteria around compulsory certification and ratios are primarily for construction anyway."

The phasing in of different sectors of the proposed College makes sense, according to Stevens.

"It is an opportunity to implement a new process in a controlled environment," said Stevens.

"The construction sector may be the most complicated sector in the proposed college. There is a time honoured saying in the trades, 'measure twice and cut once' — take your time and get it right the first time."