

# COUNCIL REVERSES DECISION TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT NATIONAL AD CAMPAIGN

457th MEETING, JUNE 4, 5, 2009

*By Jennifer Coombes*

AFTER INITIALLY ELECTING not to support a national advertising campaign financially (see “Hard sell: National ad campaign still hopes for PEO support,” *Engineering Dimensions*, May/June 2009, p. 38), council has reversed its decision and will now support the second year of the campaign in the amount of \$194,121 (or \$2.61 a PEO member) for 2009. This support is conditional on PEO being granted the opportunity to co-chair the campaign advisory committee, which will ensure that its interests are being addressed. (The first year of the campaign was funded entirely by Engineers Canada.)

Prior to council’s decision on the funding motion, President-elect Diane Freeman, P.Eng., presented an overview of the national ad campaign, including the value the campaign could potentially bring to PEO, and its objectives—to change both the attitudes of the public on the profession’s value and the attitudes of parents whose children might be considering engineering as a career. She also discussed which components of the multi-year campaign have been launched and the positive change in attitude that had already been noted among parents, and particularly the parents who have seen one or both of the ads.

For councillors concerned that PEO’s money won’t necessarily be reflected in Ontario, Freeman assured them that PEO will have the opportunity to tailor messaging for the province and effectively target advertising placements. She added that this kind of exposure would not be affordable to PEO by any other means.

In a benchmarking survey regarding the ad aimed at parents, conducted just four months after the launch, nearly two-thirds of those who saw the ad had subsequently visited the associated website, 61 per cent had discussed some aspect of it with their children, 59 per cent had

discussed it with another family member or friend, and 58 per cent had said they are now more likely to encourage their children to pursue a career in engineering.

Similar positive results were observed for the ad aimed at employers. More than 10 per cent of employers surveyed reported seeing one or both of the ads (parent- or employer-targeted), and those who had seen an ad reported holding a more positive view about the value a P.Eng. would bring to their companies.

While the advertising campaign will continue to target parents and employers, emphasis in the upcoming phases will shift to elementary and high school students, teachers, guidance councillors and engineering graduates.

Council will be provided an update on the campaign at its November 2009 meeting, at which it will also be advised of the cost to continue PEO’s support beyond the next year.

## NATIONAL LICENSING

Council has returned to first principles regarding the proposed National Framework for Membership and Licensure that was first presented to it in September 2008 (see *Engineering Dimensions*, November/December 2008, p. 50) and, before proceeding further with a response to the Engineers Canada Task Force working to develop the concept, will explore six points raised during the proposal’s introduction that have to date gone unaddressed.

These six points are:

1. compiling a list of the “problem(s)” with PEO’s current licensure model, and categorizing these problems to determine “*the problem*”;
2. compiling a list of guiding principles, criteria, constraints and expectations to be used to judge licensure model options;
3. compiling a list of assumptions being made (implicit and explicit) and making an initial determination on their validity;
4. identifying the value to both the public and the member in each stage of the current and any proposed licensure model;
5. compiling a list of views answering the questions, “Who are we?” or “Who should PEO license?” and
6. informing about, and engaging in, the above and future licensure model tasks a wide range of stakeholders.

A national licensing model has been promoted as better able to protect and serve the public interest, provide registration practices that are transparent, objective, impartial and fair, and enhance members’ interests.

Since the concept was first introduced to council, many presentations have been made to stakeholder groups across Canada, including Engineers Canada's 12 constituent members; PEO volunteers; senior public servants, including the attorney general; the Office of the Fairness Commissioner; and parliamentary assistants. The model has generally been well received.

However, several recent developments that might affect certain aspects of the national model, in particular, the premiers' Agreement on Internal Trade (AIT) and the *Labour Mobility Act*, caused council to decide to revisit the issue.

At its April meeting, council struck from the agenda a plenary session on the national licensing model, and directed the president and CEO/registrars to cease all activity on the project. At the same time, it appointed a task force to manage any further progress of the project (see *Engineering Dimensions*, May/June 2009, p. 50).

Council has directed this task force and the CEO/registrars to address the six points introduced at the September 2008 council meeting and to make recommendations on a PEO response to the Engineers Canada Task Force for consideration by council.

### NATIONAL MOBILITY

The AIT and *Labour Mobility Act* have created the need for PEO to revisit the issue of national mobility as well.

At the June meeting, council approved creating a National Mobility Task Force, with a mandate to:

1. review the current status of mobility throughout Canada;
2. determine the strengths and shortcomings of the current Inter-Association Mobility Agreement (IAMA);
3. make recommendations to support national mobility in light of the *Labour Mobility Act*, AIT and international trade (NAFTA and EU), to improve the current IAMA agreement as warranted; and
4. provide recommendations for consideration at the September 2009 council meeting.

The task force will comprise President Catherine Karakatsanis, P.Eng.; President-elect Freeman; Vice President Corneliu Chisu, P.Eng.; Councillor Roydon Fraser, PhD, P.Eng.; former councillor Peter DeVita, P.Eng.; George Comrie, P.Eng., chair, Licensing Process Task Force; Councillor Santosh Gupta, PhD, P.Eng., chair, Experience Requirements Committee; CEO/Registrar Kim Allen, P.Eng.; and Councillor Bruce Clarida, P.Eng.

### ENFORCEABLE CODE OF ETHICS

After four years of discussion and extensive consultation, council has rescinded its March 2008 motion that would have made all elements of the Code of Ethics enforceable. Currently, section 72(2) of Regulation 941 excludes an action that is solely a breach of the Code of Ethics from the definition of professional misconduct.

In February of this year, after receiving the draft regulation changes for an enforceable Code of Ethics, a motion was made to rescind the March 2008 decision, which was defeated.

Although the motion wasn't rescinded, it was the consensus of council that it needed further information before proceeding with the issue. Council then requested feedback from various sources, including the Professional Practice Examination Subcommittee, the Complaints and Discipline committees and Gordon Andrews, PhD, an ethics authority, on the need and a possible process for considering updates to the Code of Ethics (see *Engineering Dimensions*, May/June 2009, p. 49).

After considering this feedback, council decided to rescind the March 2008 motion. Council's decision does not prohibit the matter from being revisited at a later date, however.

In discussion of the issue, Councillor Fraser said: "My suggestion is that we need to get together an appropriate group to determine which ethics we would enforce and which we wouldn't." He suggested that council have the CEO/registrars form a task force to develop guidelines as to which ethics should be enforceable.

For the time being, a breach solely of the Code of Ethics remains expressly excluded from the definition of professional misconduct.

### LICENSED SPECIALTIES

At the June meeting, council received an assessment from the Professional Standards Committee (PSC) regarding the ongoing development of new licensed specialties (see *Engineering Dimensions*, May/June 2009, p. 49) that are intended to relate to engineering requirements in demand-side legislation.

In February, council had directed the PSC to review the licensed specialties protocol, and assess and prioritize a list of 16 identified specialties.

The committee decided, however, the information in the policy paper on this subject is insufficient for it to perform the required task. The PSC said it does not believe it is the appropriate committee for this project for several reasons. First, the committee does not feel the rationale it uses to prioritize standards and guidelines can properly be applied to designations. The need for standards is often driven by the need to prevent further government intrusions into PEO's regulatory authority, whereas the need for designations may be driven by the public's need to identify practitioners who can offer specialized services. Second, since no prioritization criteria were provided in the policy paper, the PSC said it is not sure on what basis the specialties should be prioritized. Third, some PSC members believe a few of the proposed specialties are too broad to cover in one designation.

In light of these comments, council reconsidered the assignment of the project and determined that a task force comprising the chairs of the PSC, and the Academic Requirements and Experience Requirement committees or their delegates, plus Councillors Chris Roney, P.Eng., and Len King, P.Eng., could better move the licensed specialties project forward. Σ