

DEFINING THE IDEAL PLAN



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IT HAS NOW been two months since I took office and they have been demanding, eventful and insightful for me. I am convinced, more than ever, that PEO is an extremely effective self-regulatory body and should remain so. We cannot stay as we are, however. We must continually improve and adapt to our ever-changing global environment and, indeed, that is council's role.

As the board of directors for the association, council is responsible for providing strategic planning, and developing and implementing corporate policy. In essence, council sets the direction and monitors the progress. As president, it is my responsibility to ensure the integrity of any process developed by council.

In order to set the direction for this year and beyond, PEO council and senior management recently met on June 19 and 20 to participate in a workshop to build a stronger and more cohesive leadership team, and to create the foundation for effective long-range planning.

This initiative, my first as president, was an important and necessary step to ensure that all of the decision makers at PEO are provided with a clear and agreeable vision for the future. Since the term of a PEO president is limited to one year, it is unrealistic to believe that any major initiative can be successfully completed solely under his or her guidance. A “big picture” plan is required to serve as a filter with which ideas can be tested and to provide the continuity needed to ensure we are following the desired path.

The facilitator-led workshop focused on ways to build PEO's vision through the review of case studies, professional research, and breakout discussion groups. I came away from the session very impressed with the enthusiasm and focus of our group. Their desire to work together for the betterment of our profession was infectious and, collectively, a draft “envisioned future” for PEO and several strategic intents were developed that will help move the association towards this future. The Executive Committee has since been tasked with incorporating any further suggestions that may arise and to forward the revised version to council for its September meeting.

The envisioned future we developed is designed to be an ideal one—one that is ambitious, and one that may even be unattainable. Its purpose is to inspire council members and PEO staff and to provide a grand vision to strive toward.

As part of this future, the vivid description enhances our current enviable status, and includes a profession that will have the best-educated individuals who are capable of understanding and responding to the requirements that best protect the public. Ontario-licensed P.Engs will achieve a position as the highest publicly trusted profession, and will be sought after worldwide for their valued expertise. Our members will be regarded as exemplary practitioners from the perspective of integrity, competence, ingenuity and cost effectiveness, accountable for protecting the public interest by preventing failure and accidents in all fields of engineering practice. In addition, governments worldwide will view PEO as a leader in the development of public policy, and as an association that promotes and implements inclusiveness and diversity that drives innovation.

In order to achieve this status, our leadership must define the vision points that will serve as measuring sticks to gauge the effectiveness of our progress. Some of the ideas discussed to achieve this future include: increasing the confidence of the public, governments and members in the value of self-regulation and licences to practise engineering; improving PEO's international profile; integrating professional development with the licence since it is an essential function of licensure; developing appropriate practise standards to prevent failure and accidents in all fields of engineering practice; and increasing awareness that PEO members uphold professional responsibility and ethics to the highest standards.

While the results of the session are still a work in progress, they do reflect the commitment of PEO's leadership to a progressive and forward-thinking approach.

Thank you to my colleagues on council and senior staff for their valuable and insightful contributions. I truly believe we're on the right track to establishing a landmark vision for our profession in Ontario. Σ