

# PEO PROGRAM UPDATES DOMINATE COUNCIL MEETING

479th MEETING, JUNE 4, 2012

By Nicole Axworthy

THE JUNE MEETING of council was full of presentations on PEO committee initiatives and other programs, including the 2012 work plan of the Education Committee (EDU), Engineer-in-Residence (EIR) Program and National Engineering Month (NEM). EDU Chair Bruce McCowan, P.Eng., updated council on the activities of the committee, and made a case for PEO's interest in pre-university education outreach in terms of nurturing "completely acquainted" engineers of the future. PEO members, he said, work to established standards and can help influence curriculum, so that students are appropriately prepared for a career in engineering. Contact with PEO members through PEO's education outreach efforts can "help equip members of the future with the appropriate attitude" for their professional responsibilities as engineers, he noted. McCowan also connected the EDU's work to PEO's envisioned future, which sees licence holders being "the best educated individuals" and students "excited to become a P.Eng.," as well as to sections of the *Professional Engineers Act* and By-Law No. 1 that deal with raising public awareness. McCowan highlighted EDU's current initiatives, which include new publications with improved messaging targeted toward several specific age groups, an education conference and workshops, consideration of a province-wide engineering challenge, and collaboration with PEO's

Government Liaison Program to engage the education ministry, among other things. "What we do in high school [outreach] activities does not contravene the act," he emphasized.

Jeannette Chau, P.Eng., PEO manager, student and government liaison programs, presented an overview and intended outcomes of PEO's EIR program. She noted the program's new initiatives, including increased social media efforts, a penpal program, EIR mentorship and a new website. Chau also stressed the need for more volunteer P.Engs, as there are schools on a waiting list for an EIR.

Matthew Ng, P.Eng., PEO chapter manager, highlighted the success of NEM's March 2012 program with new partner Engineers Without Borders, as well as a history of the program leading to recent changes to its service provider and funding partners (see In Council, *Engineering Dimensions*, November/December 2011, p. 69).

Bill Goodings, P.Eng., secretary, Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE), and OSPE Director Valerie Davidson, P.Eng., also made a short presentation on OSPE's interest in providing input to EDU and EIR activities.

## CBCF PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITY

PEO member Gordon Hicks, P.Eng., made the final presentation, encouraging council to consider a pilot program with the Canadian Breast Cancer Foundation (CBCF) that could help develop

PEO's social responsibility model by engaging members in such initiatives as CBCF's Leaders for the Cure and Run for the Cure as well as workplace events and programs. Hicks said PEO's support of a female-oriented cause might help to attract more women into engineering by presenting the profession as more open and compassionate than it is currently perceived as. Although the proposal did not ask PEO to be involved in fundraising, Hicks said, the organization's support and promotion of the cause would add credibility to CBCF's outreach activities and provide value to PEO.

At the end of Hicks' presentation, President Denis Dixon, P.Eng., FEC, suggested that while PEO might be interested in working on a mutually beneficial partnership with CBCF, the engineering advocacy body, OSPE, should also be involved. Councillor Chris Roney, P.Eng., BDS, FEC, questioned whether PEO has a policy on such charity requests, noting the number of such requests his company receives. The decision to partner with CBCF was deferred to a future meeting.  $\Sigma$