



by Gordon Sterling, P.Eng.
President

Because this is my last column as your President, I'd like to bring you up to date on the status of the issues and activities on which I said we'd concentrate this year.

Chief among them, because it drives everything else that we do, was finalizing the Strategic Plan and beginning to work toward achieving its imperatives. As you'll recall, the plan aims to redefine PEO as a regulatory body through initiatives to increase its role as the regulator of engineering in Ontario, thereby increasing the relevance of the P.Eng. licence and PEO to professional engineers, Ontario business and industry, and the public. I am pleased to report that Council endorsed the plan in June, and that staff and volunteers worked throughout the summer and the fall to draft detailed action plans for each initiative and ensure resources in 2002 to begin implementation. Look for the plan on the Regulatory Business, Concerns and Issues page under The Registrar's Corner button on PEO's website at www.peo.on.ca or on the Reports page under Publications. As the plan unfolds, the Registrar will update Council on progress, and you will be kept apprised through coverage in the publications and on the website.

One of the Strategic Plan initiatives to which I've given priority is the development of a questionnaire that will enable us to paint a broad picture of who professional engineers are and what we do. Again, I'm pleased to report that we've made progress here too, and that shortly you will begin to receive the new Professional Profile Form with your annual licence renewal. Developing a practice profile of Ontario's engineering profession is necessary if we are to guide the govern-

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ment in establishing engineering-related public policy that reflects the realities of engineering practice. The accumulated practice information will also yield insights that will help us proactively fine-tune our legislation, guidelines and other programs to promote competent and ethical practice. Through this process, PEO's admissions and practice standards should always be—and be seen to be—rigorous, current, relevant to the needs of society, and free of artificial barriers to licensing.

Another area in which we've made progress is in the establishment of the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE). The growth of the society is a topic of vital concern to all of us because the Ontario engineering profession needs both PEO, the licensing body, to serve the public's interest and maintain the profession's integrity, and OSPE, to serve the profession and professional needs of individual engineers. Indeed, it is essential that we have an advocacy body to advance the self-interests of all professional engineers by boosting professional engineering's profile with the public, government and business in a way that PEO cannot.

But for engineering to flourish in the future, we'll need more than a strong OSPE. We'll need engineering graduates who see acquiring their P.Eng. licence as being an imperative step in developing as professionals. And we'll need practising engineers who also see the value of our professional designation, no matter where their careers take them. For once you have gone through the rigours of earning your P.Eng., it should only be natural that you maintain your licence, because it shows that you possess the technical knowledge, innovative thinking and analytical approach to problem solving that are the hallmarks of our profession.

This year, PEO has had success in redefining the boundaries of the profession to keep up to the fast pace of changing technology, so that even engineers going where no engineers have gone before will find their practice recognized within our ranks. This was accomplished by Council

approving definitions and scopes of practice in the area of bioengineering, which were among the recommendations in a comprehensive report of the Bioengineering Subgroup of the Engineering Disciplines Task Group (EDTG). At the same meeting earlier this month, Council also approved recommendations from the EDTG itself that set out a process PEO can use to identify emerging areas of engineering, to define their bodies of knowledge and the areas of practice requiring licensure, and to work toward enshrining these new areas in legislation.

To really thrive, however, engineering also needs members who take pride in belonging to a highly respected profession and show this pride by using their P.Eng. designation, supporting their colleagues, ensuring that engineering work is controlled by licensed engineers and lastly, but not least, giving their spare time. PEO always needs new chapter volunteers, committee members and Councillors who have a desire to advance our profession by improving its operation.

Serving as your President for the past 12 months has been challenging and more time consuming than I could ever have imagined, but it is an experience I would not have missed. I have been privileged to travel across Canada and to meet colleagues from all parts of the country, each of them dedicated to the public interest and to the profession. I thank PEO's sister associations for the warm hospitality shown to my wife Valerie, to whom I owe a huge debt for her constant support, and to me. Similarly, thank you to my colleagues on the board and the staff of the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers. Further thanks must go to PEO's staff, Councillors, committee and chapter volunteers for their commitment to moving us forward. Finally, I must thank all of you for the honour you accorded me in choosing me to serve. PEO has come a long way over the past year, but the road ahead is long and rough. I trust we can continue to travel it together to pave the profession's future. ❖