

## STRENGTHENING OUR PROFESSION



Catherine Karakatsanis, MEng, P.Eng., FEC President

AS A COUNCIL, we operate best when there is an atmosphere of collegial exploration and consensus-building on issues of substance. I am very pleased that council operated in just that way this year. With the support of PEO staff and our member volunteers, we accomplished a lot this year, making many well-informed and sound decisions that have advanced the mandate of PEO and the public interest.

One area that we focused on was the governance of PEO. Council wants to show leadership for the profession by bringing PEO more in line with best governance practices. We explored a range of today's best board practices and governance models and council moved them forward at our February council meeting. To ensure the integrity of PEO's decision-making processes, council strengthened the role of the president in relation to its fiduciary responsibilities and established a process of ongoing improvement whereby the Execu-

tive Committee facilitates a regular review of governance issues.

Council is also preparing to take a bold step within the Canadian engineering profession. It endorsed the concept of having council elect the president from its group of member-elected councillors. Today, PEO is the only regulatory body of the six reporting to the attorney general of Ontario that does not have its council elect the president/chair. As such, council will be undertaking a member consultation to prepare for the next steps in its review. It is anticipated that a change would result in several meaningful advantages that would improve council's performance by:

- ensuring the president enjoys the confidence of council;
- selecting the president where all individuals have first-hand knowledge of the person;
- enhancing the public interest role of the office through participation of the lieutenant governor appointees (representatives of the public) in the selection;
- ensuring the implementation of council's long-term strategic direction and policy initiatives and furthering key relationships;
- ensuring the president enters office with a clear mandate and has the support from council to carry out that mandate; and
- enabling orderly succession planning.

I look forward to your feedback in the upcoming member consultation.

In my term, we have also had the opportunity to build and strengthen relations with our engineering partners across the country. Our work on the Engineers Canada Synergy Task Force governance review, for example, has explored ways in which our national organization could improve its processes to better serve its constituent

associations and the engineering profession as a whole. The resulting proposal seeks to improve the effectiveness of Engineers Canada by leveraging the strengths of the constituent associations and building a national consensus on issues of importance to the profession.

We are also exploring opportunities to create a mutually beneficial relationship with Engineers Without Borders (EWB). Our discussions build on a shared vision between PEO and EWB that sees Ontario engineers as global leaders contributing to an improved quality of life for all. Such a relationship would also raise the social conscience and skills of our licence holders and would support the self-regulation role by enhancing the global image of the profession within the public and among young engineers and engineering students.

As we strive to make PEO the global leader in self-regulation, I am very proud of the way PEO council has come together to work as a focused team with the best and collective interests of the profession in mind. It has indeed been an honour to serve as PEO president for the 2009-2010 term. The support I have received from my entire team, colleagues on council, President-elect Diane Freeman, P.Eng., the CEO/registrar, Kim Allen, P.Eng., our membership, PEO staff and our colleagues at Queen's Park, has been truly rewarding and is very much appreciated. I leave my position with full confidence that the momentum gained this term will continue under the progressive leadership of President-elect Freeman and your council.

Thank you again for allowing me the privilege of representing the best profession. Σ