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Progress for the common good

J. DAVID ADAMS, P.ENG.

PRESIDENT

As we move into spring and new beginnings, your Council has reaffirmed its intent to progress the many outstanding issues facing our profession.

Recognizing the special nature of a volunteer organization such as PEO, with its multiple personalities, your CEO/Registrar Kim Allen, P.Eng., and I, your elected President, have developed a comprehensive leadership agreement governing how we will work together effectively.

This written, working relationship, reported in its entirety in this publication (p. 30), stresses a shared mutual respect and understanding of our different roles and responsibilities.

I urge you to read it and sign on, as it applies equally to all committees, chapters, volunteers, staff and members as they relate to one another.

Kim and I have already installed a similar modus operandi for operating committees, declaring they be self-governing and accountable to Council in fulfilling their mandates.

For the first time in recent memory, your Council has developed a dynamic work plan for the year ahead. We will measure and communicate our progress, incorporating your suggestions, as deemed applicable by Council, as we go along.

Please email your recommendations to daveadams@peo.on.ca to advance your ideas.

Major work plan proposals under review include:

1. a multi-tiered licensing model, with the inclusion of engineering students as the initial step in the process, followed by recent graduates involved in a structured, measured internship program. A portion of this internship will involve a wiki-type mentorship, engaging experienced engineers with recent graduates on the Internet. Based upon knowledge

gained in the actual practice of professional engineering, an internship with these features, in my opinion, could be accomplished in fewer than four years.

2. recognizing the increasing demand for perfection and intolerance of any shortcomings, we will place renewed emphasis on the development of guidelines and practice standards. Also related to this demand is the development of a position paper on both primary and secondary professional liability insurance.
3. investigating and recommending changes in academic requirements for licensure, appropriate for today's world. It is interesting to note some sister organizations in other provinces and in several US states have recently stated a requirement for a master's degree for licensure.

To address this last issue, we have launched a specialist designation study at PEO, which would include an internship in the specific area of study. Also, a software engineering specialty is currently under review.

As an alternative, many employers have requested our graduates possess an improved ability to express themselves, particularly in the written word, as well as have financial skills. To this end, some have suggested that a pre-engineering degree in arts and science be instituted, just as the doctors have done, to cope with new scientific knowledge.

With respect to practice in neighbouring states, we will also consider recommending that our graduates write the American prerequisite examinations in engineering fundamentals, immediately upon graduation.

We will also reactivate plans for a reciprocal recognition agreement with Michigan.

We continue to review the requirement for competence assurance with the preparation of a white paper distributed to stakeholders for their input.

Regulatory compliance for unlicensed practitioners/firms will receive increased attention. We plan to make mandatory the reporting of discipline and area of practice of all engineers who serve the public, including holders of Certificates of Authorization.

Further, we will seek removal of the major exception clauses from our Act. These clauses, inserted in our Act in 1984, are found only in Ontario and Quebec law and many believe are widely abused. No other provinces allow such practice exemptions.

We will bring to a satisfactory conclusion the several options for a new headquarters building.

PEO continues to enjoy success in our Government Liaison Program. Now, let us embark on a mission to assist the public and the governments of the day, with meaningful technical views on relevant issues. To accomplish this, we plan to establish a Centre for Engineering and Public Policy at PEO. This will tie in nicely with our study of the engineering curriculum to develop a Canadian competitive advantage.

We plan to add to our broad engagement with our membership and the public with a digital edition of *Engineering Dimensions* (details in the July/August issue). And, I might add, "we expect to have a good time, as we work together."

In conclusion to this, my first letter to you, may I share with you one additional ingredient we must all bring to our new beginnings in 2008? That is humility.

Humility is the one indispensable condition for true fellowship, though it is often not an esteemed virtue today.

If we are to be successful in engaging one another in the performance of our duties for the common good, we must grow smaller in our own estimation so that our purpose and meaningful relationships may grow larger.

Thank you, and may we progress our fine organization together. ◆