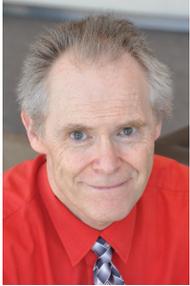


## LOOKING BACK WITH DISCERNMENT, FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE



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THE ARRIVAL OF spring is always an interesting time for us at *Engineering Dimensions*. There's the anticipation of a new president, whose priorities and image are certain to fill up a lot of news space in the coming issues. As well, the early spring season is a time to bring you news of the results of the recent council elections: Who is back in? Who didn't make it back? Are there any new faces on the scene? (See "Introducing PEO council 2012-2013" starting on page 24.)

Council composition seems to take on new significance with each passing year, especially as members hold forth on such issues as the precise role of the PEO president and method of election—from within elected council by council or directly by members from the vast talent pool of members at large, many of whom might need a little prodding to become more involved in the governance of their profession. On that note, read carefully the letters to the editor in this issue, starting on page 72. You'll see a good reflection of the priorities and concerns of readers—with the qualities and attributes of councillors high on the list.

You should also take the time to review President Denis Dixon's first President's Message (p. 3). Given the recent debate about the role of the PEO president vis-à-vis council, it's interesting to note a new leader's priorities and perspectives. Denis is especially keen on how the president and council can work together to increase the relevance of engineering, and how we can make best use of members and their licence fees to govern the profession. Speaking of resources, the audited financial statements and treasurer's report (p. 58) put the 2011 dollars-and-cents story fully on display.

In this space, I always like to draw attention to the theme and why we've chosen it. PEO's complaints and discipline processes have been getting a lot of attention lately, and not all of it has been as positive as we would have hoped for. The recent report of PEO's Complaints and Discipline Process Task Force (p. 32) is the association's most

recent effort to respond to constructive criticism of some of its past practices in these core processes.

The regulator's willingness to listen to and involve those who believe they have not been well served by the complaints and discipline system indicates PEO's commitment to balancing transparency and accountability in the public interest with an updated appreciation for due process and justice by and for one's professional peers. It also shows that PEO is serious about becoming a world leader in engineering self-regulation.

Although PEO likes to think it already does a good job of ensuring complaints are handled expeditiously, this doesn't mean it can't do better. There is always a tension in preserving the concept of adjudication by one's professional peers without relying too heavily on input and influence from outside legal experts. I can remember years ago hearing complaints about PEO's justice system becoming muddied by plea bargaining, pre-trial negotiations and other lawyerly techniques. As such, some might find it ironic that several of the recommendations in the recent review of the complaints and discipline processes involve training of the members of the Complaints and Discipline committees on legal procedures, the handling of evidence and other best practices.

However the approved recommendations are implemented, it's expected PEO's exercise of reviewing the operation of two of its legislated functions will inspire new confidence among members and the public as to the efficacy of PEO justice.  $\Sigma$

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