

## [ LETTERS ]

### IN NEED OF COMMON STANDARDS

I read with some dismay our President's Message in the September/October 2009 *Engineering Dimensions* ("PEO and national issues," p. 3). Ms. Karakatsanis notes that PEO alone among the provincial licensing bodies is yet to embrace the initiative to establish a National Framework for Membership and Licensure. I attended one of the sessions last year in which the national framework proposal was presented by then president David Adams, P.Eng., and Registrar Kim Allen, P.Eng.; I was greatly encouraged by what I saw and heard.

Many engineering graduates who are neither licensed nor even members of a provincial association are, nonetheless, using their skills and knowledge in ways that can be reasonably described only as engineering. Many of them see no reason to become members and do not require any sort of licence to practise because their field of endeavour does not fall within a provincial regulatory framework. I am convinced that engineering associations would do themselves and the Canadian public considerable good by establishing a common set of national licensing standards, particularly to address areas outside their provincial jurisdictions. This is the best hope for provincial associations to attract members from "non-traditional" fields of engineering and perhaps to engage them by means of some sort of licence that is meaningful to the public and brings value to membership. I strongly urge PEO council to support this initiative without further delay.

Malcolm D. Imray, P.Eng., Ottawa, ON

### BRAKING NOT BREAKING

My letter—or "soap box statement," if you will—does not even pertain specifically to engineering issues, but since it's on our *Engineering Dimensions* magazine, I felt an urge to offer input. I may not be the only individual writing to you about this.

The item that caught my eye was the overleaf to the September/October issue. This piece of paper was advertising

The Personal Insurance with the support of OSPE, with the statement "Reduced breaking distance = Reduced insurance premium."

Now, I'm not an English major, but the spelling of the word "breaking" caught my eye as the actual word to be used is "braking." Spell-check would not have caught this as both are words in the English language. It's

well discussed that many professional engineers do not necessarily have proper English or writing skills. This is a sad situation that I know the universities are trying to correct by



### DISCUSSING ENERGY ISSUES

I read with great interest two items in the September/October 2009 issue of *Engineering Dimensions*

magazine concerning wind power generation of electricity.

The first item is the mention by Colin Andersen on page 17 of *The Journal of Policy Engagement* that "Western Denmark, for example, currently meets 50 per cent of its electricity needs through wind power." While I do not question the accuracy of this statement, I would like to refer to Wikipedia.org in its article "Wind Power in Denmark," which states that "wind power provided 19.7 per cent of electricity production and 24.1 per cent capacity in Denmark in 2007, a significantly higher proportion than in any other country." They go on to say that "while wind power accounts for almost 20 per cent of the power generated in Denmark it covers only 10-14 per cent of the country's demand. Power in excess of immediate demand is exported to Germany, Norway and Sweden. The latter two have considerable hydropower resources, which can rapidly reduce their generation whenever wind farms are generating surplus power, saving water for later. In effect, this is a cheap way for northern Europe to store wind power until it is needed—an opportunity which is not generally available for wind power generators."

The second item is the letter from David Moffat, P.Eng., on page 66 of the magazine in which he strongly criticizes PEO for inviting to the AGM "Tom Adams, an energy consultant, [who] outlined what he feels are weaknesses in the use of wind as a viable power source."

I consider that honesty, integrity and objectivity are the essential factors that PEO should have in the important discussions on energy and I think the two items are not very good examples of these factors.

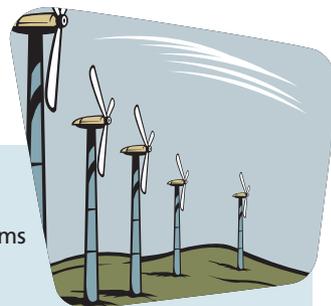
Richard F. Clark, P.Eng., Ottawa, ON

making English a mandatory subject for all students, at least in their first year.

However, I find it rather disconcerting that wording such as this on a magazine for professional engineers is displayed up front. It goes back to the old joke: "Back when I started university, I couldn't even spell 'engineer'; now I am one!"

If The Personal makes a simple mistake like this in public, what kind of mistakes are they making on the insurance policies? Maybe the writers for The Personal Insurance advertising should be the ones taking those English classes!

Barry A. Derks, P.Eng., Mississauga, ON





## “UNLITERATE” ENGINEERS

I recently received my September/October *Engineering Dimensions* with the ad from The Personal Insurance Company around the cover. It says “Reduced breaking distance = Reduced insurance premium.” I’m glad our reputation for being unilliterate calculator pushers who can’t spell good is being maintained.

Henry Ko, MASC, P.Eng.,  
Montreal, QC

P.S. Quebec enforced a mandatory snow tire law for the first time last winter. Statistics on reduced accidents, etc., have not been released but an expected reduction was quoted as rationalization for the law. However, one taxpayer noted that no insurance premium reduction was given for the expected reduction in payouts.

## LICENSING AND MOBILITY

I would like to thank George Comrie, P.Eng., for his fine, explanatory article on professional self-regulation (“Professional self-regulation: Protecting the core,” *Engineering Dimensions*, September/October 2009, p. 49) and, in turn, offer some comments on the proposed licensing framework put forward to Engineers Canada by our CEO/registrar. George is quite right that the proposed licence was generated largely to enable standardization of admission requirements and enforcement policies across Canada in answer to the premier’s Agreement on Internal Trade under the *Ontario Labour Mobility Act, 2009*.

George contends that “only people licensed to practise some aspect of engineering and those in the process of becoming licensed (e.g. engineering students and interns) can be included in the profession and its governance.”

While on the surface this concept should permit mobility, it does not address the current request by government for full mobility because it ignores the fact that exemption clauses to licensure in Ontario and Quebec will prevent almost as many engineers in those provinces as are currently licensed from participating. For acceptable mobility in all provinces, any new Canada-wide licence should also incorporate those now practising without a licence. Such is the reason for a new framework for licensure.

We should also be diligent in preserving the limited and provisional licences PEO has successfully developed over the years, as they are serving the profession well.

In addition, to many, it would be a step forward to include those who have achieved the academic portion of the licence and who wish to continue their affiliation with the profession by allowing some form of membership for these graduates.

It is therefore suggested current university designations of BEng, MEng, BAsC, etc., be used to identify such candidates for affiliate membership, at the same time protecting the professional licence P.Eng./ing. for practising or retired engineers. This enlargement of the profession would encourage all graduates to contribute new ideas, concepts in governance and further extend engineering principles to the outside world of business, science and education.

The trick to achieving full mobility will be the “institution of similar licensing requirements and processes,” as George points out. Surely co-operation among the provinces and the members can achieve these definable goals. The task is not insurmountable; after all, we are engineers!

Dave Adams, P.Eng., MBA, Hanover, ON  
PEO Past President



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Address letters to [jcoombes@peo.on.ca](mailto:jcoombes@peo.on.ca).