

GREEN LIGHT FOR OCEPP

By Donald Wallace



ONTARIO CENTRE FOR ENGINEERING AND PUBLIC POLICY

PEO COUNCIL HAS spoken loud and clear.

At its September 18 meeting, council approved four motions affecting the future of the Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy (OCEPP):

- to establish the centre on a continuing basis;
- to provide financial support in PEO's 2010 budget;
- to name the PEO president and PEO CEO/registrar as council representatives on the centre's advisory board; and
- to include special allocation to seed a fundraising program in 2010 to help the centre become self-supporting.

A formal business plan and a more detailed budget will be presented to council in November. In the meantime, if you'd like to check out the presentation I made at the September 18 meeting, you can view it on the Events page of our website (www.ocepp.ca).

My initial reaction—aside from joy—was one of deep gratitude. I am very thankful to council for its support over the past year, with many members eagerly sharing their time and well-reasoned ideas. I am also indebted

to Kim Allen (PEO CEO/registrar) and Howard Brown (consultant on numerous PEO endeavours). Without their inestimable support and counsel, you would not be reading these words today.

Looking back on the September 18 vote, a couple of key points emerge. Most importantly, council values the centre's accomplishments over less than a year, notably in helping to build bridges between engineers and Ontario policy-makers. It is easily apparent that council also recognizes the centre's effectiveness in encouraging engineers to promote their expertise to Queen's Park and to become more engaged in the policy arena. As David Zimmer, LLB, MPP for Willowdale, said just two days earlier: "The centre has become a force in the engineering and public policy worlds."

While the centre was created in June 2008, activities did not get underway until a few months later, when I joined as executive director. Since this spring, the centre has added three contract staff. Here is a snapshot of what we've been up to:

- hosting a major public policy conference for more than 200 leading engineers, legislators, university professors, policy-makers and executives from across the province;
- launching our flagship publication, *The Journal of Policy Engagement*, to wide acclaim (the most recent issue is in the centre of this magazine);
- organizing two quarterly policy engagement series presentations, drawing 150 influential policy-makers from more than 20 government ministries as well as industry leaders;
- establishing strong working relationships with MPPs, senior civil service personnel, a wide array of professional organizations, business professionals from diverse sectors, as well as senior officials and academics at Ontario's leading universities; and
- sponsoring a range of events throughout the province.

I expect 2010 to be even more exciting.

In addition to continuing our core activities, several new initiatives are in the wings, including further conferences, symposia and events; holding round-table discussions on topics of critical interest to government, industry and academic leaders; and co-publishing a series of books on such pressing issues as Canada's medical isotope crisis. I invite you to participate in our many activities and to share your thoughts with me (dwallace@ocepp.ca). Σ

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