

INNOVATIVE PEO GOVERNMENT LIAISON INITIATIVES LEAD TO BIG CHANGES

By Howard Brown, Kaitlynn Dodge, and Jeannette Chau, P.Eng.

THIS ISSUE OF *Engineering Dimensions* is all about innovation, and we all know that engineers are known for being leaders in innovation.

Case in point: when PEO's Government Liaison Program (GLP) was launched in 2005, it was seen as a trailblazing idea in government relations. Fast forward eight years, and the program is still unique among engineering associations in Canada. The GLP and the Government Liaison Committee (GLC), which was formed two years ago to provide oversight and guidance for the GLP, have led to significant changes in PEO's relationship with government and, in turn, government's perception of the engineering profession.

PEO committees usually comprise volunteer PEO members. The GLC is the first PEO committee to comprise representatives of various engineering-related groups. It includes representatives from the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE), Consulting Engineers of Ontario, Engineers Canada, the Ontario Centre for Engineering and Public Policy (OCEPP), engineering students, engineering interns, engineers involved in politics, chapter GLP chairs, PEO councillors, and PEO's Advisory Committee on Volunteers (ACV).

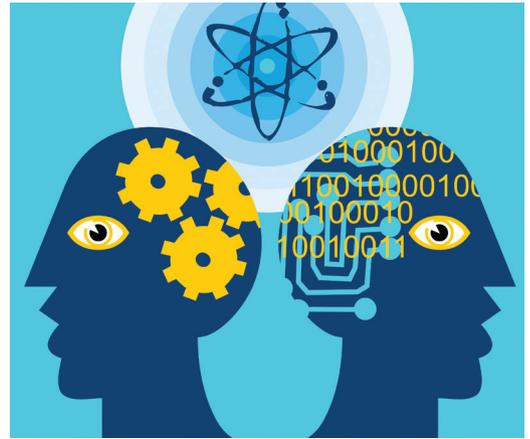
Diversity within the committee provides it a balanced perspective and ensures the government liaison activities in which PEO engages are within PEO's regulatory mandate, and to the benefit of the engineering profession overall. This multi-level engineering collaboration model is now being looked at by other engineering organizations, such as Engineers Canada.

The GLC has, in turn, generated other innovative programs. For example, the committee helped organize PEO's first Take Your MPP to Work Day, which gives MPPs an opportunity to see a day in the life of an engineer. NDP MPP Cindy Forster (Welland) became the first MPP to take part in the program and see professional engineers in action when she visited Niagara College in Welland on May 31.

Christine Elliott, MPP (Whitby-Oshawa), deputy leader of the Ontario PC party, says she has been impressed with PEO's encouragement of engineers seeking office. She has spoken at two of PEO's candidate colleges, which have been held over the years to encourage engineers to get involved in politics.

Other MPPs, too, have applauded PEO's leadership in encouraging its licence holders to make a contribution to public office. At a recent PEO council meeting, at PEO conferences, at Queen's Park receptions, at GLP academies and congresses, and at chapter town hall and licence ceremonies, MPPs have been outspoken in complimenting PEO and its chapters on their contributions to public policy.

Moving forward, the GLC and GLP will continue to look for ways to evolve and stay innovative as the excitement of a minority government at Queen's Park draws public attention to provincial issues.



The members of PEO's Government Liaison Committee are:

- Barry Steinberg, P.Eng., CEO, Consulting Engineers of Ontario, GLC chair;
- Chris Taylor, P.Eng., PEO Eastern Region councillor, GLC vice chair;
- Urszula Adach, P.Eng., former Scarborough Chapter GLP chair;
- Hafiz Bashir, P.Eng., Kingston Chapter GLP chair;
- Ishwar Bhatia, P.Eng., PEO lieutenant governor-appointed councillor;
- Darla Campbell, P.Eng., Oakville Chapter, an engineer active in a riding association;
- Bernard Ennis, P.Eng., PEO's director, policy and professional affairs, and director, OCEPP;
- Jonathan Hack, P.Eng., director, OSPE board;
- Doug Hatfield, P.Eng., FEC, member, ACV;
- Rick Hilton, P.Eng., PEO lieutenant governor-appointed councillor;
- Jana Levison, EIT, engineering intern;
- Jonathan Risto, P.Eng., representative, Engineers Canada's Bridging Government and Engineers program; and
- Zoe Zeiler, engineering student.

Ex-officio members are:

- Annette Bergeron, P.Eng., PEO president 2013-2014;
- Howard Brown, PEO government relations consultant;
- Jeannette Chau, P.Eng., committee advisor; and
- Michael Price, P.Eng., MBA, FEC, PEO acting CEO/registrar. Σ

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