

COUNCIL GREENLIGHTS CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, COMPETENCY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE TASK FORCE

492ND MEETING, MARCH 21, 2014

By Jennifer Coombes

PEO'S PLANS TO develop a continuing professional development (CPD) program are moving ahead. At the March meeting, council approved the terms of reference for the Continuing Professional Development, Competency and Quality Assurance Task Force, which will be responsible for preparing a plan for a "a comprehensive program of professional development and quality assurance with a strong focus on competency." The terms of reference also state: "Council is implementing this policy in recognition of the fact that PEO should be proactive in regulating the profession. A proactive stance focuses on preventing faulty engineering practice rather than relying on a system for punishing licence holders for practice failures that could possibly have caused harm."

Council has directed Gerard McDonald, P.Eng., PEO registrar, to find volunteers for the task force according to the membership requirements set out in the terms of reference. McDonald will present a list of volunteers to council for approval at its June 2014 meeting.

The plans for CPD began anew in September with a unanimous council vote in favour of developing a program, and discussion of the matter continued at the February meeting. Any CPD program put in place for PEO is expected to take several years to develop and will involve broad consultation with stakeholders. In addition, several councillors are calling for the matter to go to member referendum.

EVIDENCE-BASED REGULATIONS DEVELOPMENT

The ongoing work and policies of many of PEO's committees and task forces that form the basis of regulation changes in the works are

coming under increased scrutiny by the Ministry of the Attorney General (AG). As of January 2014, the AG's office introduced a preliminary regulatory impact assessment requirement as part of a new emphasis on evidence-based policy. The new requirement applies to all current and future regulation amendments under development, including the limited licence/LET regulation amendment, the discipline-specific Certificate of Authorization, and academic and experience requirements.

A preliminary regulatory impact assessment requires PEO to identify the policy intents, stakeholders, and qualitative and quantitative impacts of any proposed regulation change.

According to background information in the briefing note for council, "many of the originating council motions cannot be drafted in regulation because their policy intent was not clear enough to support drafting and to meeting the government's new regulatory impact assessment criteria, and did not pass PEO's peer review requirement."

To facilitate PEO's compliance with the new government requirements, where the need for a regulation is required, the Legislation Committee will work with the applicable committees and/or task forces that put forward recommendations to council for regulation changes that are now in the works. Each committee or task force will be asked to clarify policy intents and analysis to support the preparation of a preliminary impact assessment document. To expedite PEO's regulation-making process, any future regulation developments will be done on a smaller scale to produce a series of regulation amendments rather than an omnibus amendment having an impact on several areas.

CANADIAN FRAMEWORK FOR LICENSURE

Council has accepted the recommendation of PEO's National Framework Task Force (NFTF) and will not be concurring with two of the most recent elements (component documents) of Engineers Canada's Canadian Framework for Licensure (CFL)—dealing with the Code of Ethics, and titles, rights and responsibilities—presented to constituent associations for concurrence. Council based its decision on task force commentaries explaining its objections to the two elements. While the task force provided considerable input into the development of both documents at a prior stage, few, if any, of its previous suggested changes were accepted with no feedback as to why the input was not accepted.

[IN COUNCIL]

The CFL Code of Ethics document is proposed to “promote a common standard across the country, enhancing the safety of the public and providing a unifying statement of the high standard expected in the profession.” The document proposes an enforceable Code of Ethics focusing on professionalism and ethical engineering issues and a complementary code of conduct, both of which could be used as grounds for disciplining engineers by constituent associations.

Council unanimously agreed with the task force that a Code of Ethics is “a non-enforceable statement of ideals and aspirational goals and is distinct from an enforceable code of professional conduct.”

With the titles, rights and responsibilities element, Engineers Canada’s intent is to institute consistent titles for engineering licence holders across Canada with defined rights and responsibilities associated with the titles. The policy direction for the element states, “common titles, rights and responsibilities will promote a common standard across the country, enhancing the knowledge of safety of the public, facilitating increased mobility and allowing for licence holders to work wherever necessary.”

PEO’s NFTF opposed the document for several reasons, among them that rights and responsibilities are associated with licences not titles. It is the licence that allows the right to practise and the right to use titles. Also, it said, the document appears to require associations to create separate classes of members for P.Engs, limited licence holders and EITs (engineering interns), and to provide all members with the same membership rights, regardless of class. In Ontario, limited licence holders and EITs do not have the same rights as P.Engs, not having, for example, the right to vote in council elections and the right to run for council.

Council directed the registrar to forward the commentaries to Engineers Canada with notice that PEO council does not concur with the elements in their current state.

PEO STRATEGIC PLAN

At the March meeting, Registrar McDonald outlined his intentions for developing a new strategic plan for PEO and solicited council’s views on launching the process. PEO’s most recent strategic plan, spanning the years 2005

to 2009, was approved in 2005, but yielded mixed results, according to McDonald. In his presentation, McDonald told council he looks at a strategic plan as “not an ends, but rather a means” to chart a clear direction for the organization. Part of the June council workshop will be devoted to strategic planning discussions.

ENGINEERS CANADA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Council appointed new PEO directors to Engineers Canada’s board at the March meeting. Past President Annette Bergeron, P.Eng., FEC, will serve a three-year term on the board, as will George Comrie, P.Eng., FEC. Diane Freeman, P.Eng., FEC, will continue in her role as a director for a further two years. All of the terms will be effective as of the 2014 Engineers Canada annual general meeting on May 24. Former PEO and Engineers Canada president Catherine Karakatsanis, P.Eng., FEC, and former PEO councillor Phil Maka, P.Eng., FEC, will retire as PEO representatives on the board at the AGM.

WEB PUBLICATION OF COUNCIL ATTENDANCE AND RECORD OF VOTES

Council has approved publishing a record of attendance and recorded votes of all council members on PEO’s website, to be implemented with the first meeting of the 2014-2015 council. While this information is currently available in meeting minutes in the council section of PEO’s website, publishing it in summary form will make it more accessible to those interested in the attendance and performance of members of council.

COUNCIL HONORARIA

Council defeated a motion to draft a bylaw that would provide PEO presidents and councillors with an honorarium for their service on council. The suggestion for providing such a stipend was made to attract more people to run for council.

Under the proposed plan, an honorarium of \$70,000 to \$90,000 would have been paid to the president to offset leave without pay from his or her full-time employment, to compensate for lost earning time, or to hire an assistant. Elected and member-appointed councillors would have been paid between \$125 and \$500 a day, depending on the length of the meeting or whether attending in person or by conference call. Non-member council members would have been paid the difference between what they receive through the government’s per diem rate and the elected/member appointed councillor honorarium.

The majority of councillors expressed the view that being paid for their work on council would be self-serving and contrary to the spirit of volunteerism.

LIMITED LICENCE EXPERIENCE GUIDE

Council unanimously approved the *Guide to the Required Experience for a Limited Licence in Ontario*. The guide was required because it is referenced in a proposed amendment to section 46(1)2 of Regulation 941. The guide will be available on PEO’s website once the regulation is approved. Σ