

[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE]

BRINGING STRATEGIC GOALS INTO FOCUS



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THE FIRST THREE months of the 2015-2016 council term was certainly a busy and productive time at PEO. Here's a look at what we've been working on to increase the relevance of our profession.

COUNCIL WORKSHOP

Under the theme of "Bringing strategic goals into focus," council worked together at its June retreat/workshop to hammer out PEO's priorities for this year. These include:

1. potential act changes to implement the Elliot Lake recommendations;
2. follow-through on Elliot Lake recommendations;
3. continuing professional development;
4. specialist designation; and
5. repeal of the industrial exception.

Council also gave strong direction that we must keep you informed and seek your input throughout the process of developing our proposals aligned with the above priorities. Look for the president's messages in *Engineering Dimensions* and other articles throughout the magazine, as well as updates from PEO via other media channels such as the PEO website, email and PEO's LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook feeds.

In line with our focus on "innovation, recognition and collaboration," we are planning to hold five regional town halls this fall. See page 15 for the date in your region. Please help spread the news and invite other members to attend, either in person or via web conferencing or teleconferencing, to enable accessibility for more members, including those who live in remote areas of Ontario. It will be a great opportunity for neighbouring chapters in each region to pool their resources and share their expertise to ensure these town halls are a success in each region.

ELLIOT LAKE INQUIRY RECOMMENDATIONS

For those who were unable to attend PEO's annual general meeting luncheon in Toronto, Peter Doody delivered an important and informative presentation on the findings of the Elliot Lake Commission of Inquiry. As former counsel to the inquiry, Doody reminded PEO to continue its efforts to imple-

ment the commission's recommendations, many of which were originally submitted by the association and are now included as high-priority strategic objectives in PEO's 2015-2017 Strategic Plan. With permission, I've provided a portion of his remarks that put into context the importance of our efforts and capture how many outside our profession perceive the situation:

"Now, it is three years after the collapse [of Algo Centre Mall in Elliot Lake], two-and-a-half years after the [PEO] practice bulletin, one-and-a-half years after the policy roundtables, and seven months after the report was released. But:

- The practice bulletin is not yet a performance standard;
- There are no legally enforceable requirements of what must be done when carrying out a structural adequacy inspection;
- There are no legal requirements for the contents of a structural adequacy report;
- There is no certified specialist program, so any professional engineer can provide an opinion with respect to the structural integrity of a building to which the public has access;
- There is no mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) education requirement for professional engineers in Ontario, so engineers are not required to certify they are taking steps to stay current with new developments; and
- There is no clear direction that engineers should not alter a draft report simply because a client asks them to do so.

"I urge PEO to take the steps necessary to fix these things. I learned today that the newly adopted strategic plan includes an objective that the inquiry recommendations be implemented. That objective should be given a high priority.

"There are many things left undone that are beyond PEO's control because they require action by the province, but in which you could help:

- There are still no province-wide minimum maintenance standards;
- There are still no requirements to ever inspect buildings after they are occupied;
- There is still no ability to order work be done to prevent future structural safety issues;
- There is still no way for a member of the public to learn whether a building to which she has access is safe; and
- There is still no way to ensure that engineers conducting structural inspections can be assured they have all the relevant reports and documents.

"Members of the public have the right to expect that when they enter a building, they can be sure it was not only built safely and soundly but maintained so it is still safe and sound. Their lives depend on that. This organization can help to satisfy that expectation.

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“I urge you to take all necessary steps to carry through on your commitments made to the public and to the inquiry, and put into place those aspects of the inquiry’s recommendations that are within your power. And please go further. Lobby the provincial government to put in place the other recommendations. Peoples’ lives may depend on it.”

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In May, council was updated on the progress of the work of the Continuing Professional Development, Competence and Quality Assurance Task Force. It has developed the framework for a proposed Continuing Professional Development (CPD) program that:

- is a made-in-Ontario solution;
- recognizes there are both practising and non-practising licence holders; and
- ensures CPD requirements will be based on the risk that the work of each member presents to the public and the profession.

The task force continues to refine its proposed program and carry out research to justify the kinds of program elements that should be included. Its recommendation will be provided to council in December 2015.

As Doody alluded to in his AGM keynote address, ensuring members’ competence and ethical conduct are core responsibilities of every self-governing regulatory body. To remain relevant to the public, PEO must meet the public’s ever-increasing demand for accountability. A properly designed CPD and quality assurance program helps provide such assurance to the public, government and employers of the competence of our PEO licence holders.

NEW LET CLASS OF LIMITED LICENCE

In May, long-awaited amendments to Regulation 941/90 of the *Professional Engineers Act* were filed. These amendments included changes that will introduce the new licensed engineering technologist (LET) class of limited licence on July 1, Canada Day. This change provides qualified limited licence holders a protected title and designation from PEO that reflect the holder’s willingness to be held professionally accountable by both the licensing and certification bodies.

PEO has also changed its Certificate of Authorization (C of A) to permit limited licence holders to be responsible for engineering services offered or provided to the public. We believe that enabling limited licence holders to be responsible for engineering services offered or provided under a C of A, within the limitations of their licences, meets the needs of both the marketplace and the practitioner.

Further, the academic requirement for a limited licence has been generalized to accommodate applicants with technical degrees, or diplomas in a broader range of disciplines.

Applicants for a limited licence will now be expected to demonstrate an equivalent depth of knowledge within the proposed limitation of their licences to that expected of applicants for a professional engineer licence.

These are exciting changes in our profession that come after more than 13 years of constructive and continuous collaboration and negotiation involving PEO, the Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists and the office of the Attorney General of Ontario. I encourage you to visit the PEO website for more details: www.peo.on.ca/index.php/ci_id/2201/la_id/1.htm.

INTERNATIONAL ENGINEERING GRADUATES

One of the most rewarding benefits of serving as PEO president is having the opportunity to engage with many groups within the greater engineering community to exchange ideas, discuss PEO initiatives and celebrate the profession and those within it who make significant contributions.

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (BUET) Alumni Night event. Together with the high commissioner of Bangladesh of Canada, I was honoured to commemorate the great successes of prominent scholars and engineers, such as BUET alumnus Fazlur Rahman Khan, a Bangladeshi-American structural engineer who ushered in a renaissance in skyscraper construction during the second half of the 20th century. Canada and Bangladesh continue to enjoy a co-operative relationship as members of the Commonwealth, the United Nations and the international network of communities. I very much enjoyed celebrating alongside my professional colleagues in the Bangladeshi community.

The event allowed me to elaborate on the work PEO has undertaken in recent years to enable newcomers to better use the skills, education and experience they bring with them. For example, obtaining an Ontario professional engineer licence no longer requires Canadian citizenship, or to have permanent resident status in Canada. With the elimination of the residency requirement, we have seen qualified applicants arrive in Canada with many of the licensure requirements already met and ready to immediately enter the engineering workforce. Further, through our Financial Credit Program, qualified newcomers to Ontario may be eligible to apply for licensure at no cost if they do so within six months of arriving.

Immigrants are the talent pool for building a skilled and diverse work force. And, with about one-third of the almost 80,000 professional engineers licensed by PEO educated outside of Canada, international engineering graduates are a significant and integral part of our profession. I know that because I am an internationally trained engineer myself.

As part of our strategic plan, we are currently reviewing ways to better communicate to newcomers the requirements for licensure and the process involved so their journey and transition into the Ontario workforce is as smooth as possible.

As always, I welcome your suggestions for improvement. Σ