

LEADERSHIP MATTERS



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President

IN MY LAST MESSAGE, I outlined the five priority issues on which PEO council agreed to move forward. We considered more than 30 suggested priorities for the next year, including some potential changes to the *Professional Engineers Act*.

By consensus, council agreed that following through on the recommendations of the Elliot Lake Commission of Inquiry must be our first priority. This one priority will require us to bring to conclusion the work of the Continuing Professional

Development, Competence and Quality Assurance (CPDCQA) Task Force. It will also involve work to create a performance standard for structural condition assessments of existing buildings and designated structures, as well as the development of criteria for designating specialists to do this work.

Council also agreed PEO must take advantage of opportunities to ensure it has the legislative authority to implement the Elliot Lake recommendations, should a chance to amend the *Professional Engineers Act* arise.

WE RESPECT

Council gave strong direction that we must continue to respect our members by keeping you informed and seeking your input throughout the process of developing our proposals for a PEO continuing professional development (CPD) program, as referenced in Elliot Lake recommendation 1.24.

As you are aware, our CPDCQA Task Force has been developing a proposal for a PEO CPD program. In May, it shared with council its vision for what a program that accounts for members' practice differences might look like. While the task force sees a mandatory program for PEO members, it does not mean everyone would need to take courses or other educational activities. Rather, all licence holders would be required to engage with the program to assess their risk and determine whether CPD or quality assurance measures need to be undertaken. Therefore, the impact on the great majority of our members will be minimal.

WE COMMUNICATE

In late July, the task force engaged Ipsos Reid to conduct a survey of members on the proposal. I hope you had the opportunity to provide your comments, as the task force will

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present its full proposal, guided by your survey responses, to council in November.

I encourage you to keep an open mind and review the task force's recommendations objectively when they come out this fall. This group is working to develop a CPD program that would address the risk to the public inherent in each licence holder's field of practice in a meaningful way, not just a simple, window dressing-type solution. I think it's safe to say that the proposed program's impact for most PEO members will be minimal, while those who self-identify as having higher-risk practices would be required to do more.

WE INNOVATE AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Seeking act amendments for the Elliot Lake recommendations does not mean we will necessarily establish in our legislation a specialist designation that includes an exclusive scope of practice, as proposed in Elliot Lake recommendation 1.6.

At the council workshop in June, we heard a presentation that laid out several options for PEO in regard to this recommendation. These options were: to maintain the status quo (which council dismissed as presenting an unacceptable risk to PEO's credibility, since the basis of recommendation 1.6 was our own submission to the inquiry); using PEO's regulation-making powers to establish a structural engineering specialist designation (any exclusive scope of practice would emerge as other legislation requires PEO-designated specialists to do certain tasks); and writing regulations under PEO's act to provide an exclusive scope of practice for the PEO-designated specialists.

Following careful deliberations, council gave direction to the Legislation Committee and staff to:

- seek broader authority for mandating a CPD program (the act gives authority to PEO only to use its regulation-making powers to provide for continuing education for members);

[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE]

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- seek authority to introduce exclusive scopes of practice (the act provides only for protecting the title of a PEO-designated specialist). Council was clearly in favour of PEO designating specialists to do structural assessments and complete structural adequacy reports. There was less agreement on PEO establishing exclusive scopes, although a small majority of councillors thought it strategic to acquire the necessary authority to do so, even if we might never use it;
- seek authority to require licence holder disclosure of certain information, such as disciplinary actions (PEO's regulation-making power does not cover writing regulations for such an obligation);
- ensure proper authority for posting public discipline-related information on PEO's website; and
- seek "housekeeping" amendments (related to the Elliot Lake recommendations).

The Legislation Committee has since developed policy for the proposed act amendments, which is scheduled to go to council for approval at its September meeting.

WE COLLABORATE

Traditionally, issues such as implementing a CPD program and requesting changes to the act have generated much conversation amongst our members, as well as a fair share of misinformation. That is why I have called for town hall meetings this fall so we can discuss, together, implementation of the Elliot Lake recommendations, as well as other current PEO issues. Under the theme of "You Talk, We Listen," these town hall meetings will be held in each of the five chapter regions: in Ottawa on September 29; in North Bay on October 6; in London on November 3; and in Toronto on November 9 and 12.

It is important that members be provided a forum to learn more about the proposals before council and to have their concerns and opinions heard by decision makers at PEO. So I

encourage you to join me and your professional colleagues as we strive to make PEO and the engineering profession stronger and more accountable. Please watch your inbox and the PEO website for further details on these meetings.

WE DELIVER

And, as a reminder, you can follow the progress on our work related to PEO's 2015-2017 strategic plan on our website. There is considerable detail in the strategic plan, comprehensive strategies document, and progress updates about the work we plan to be doing over the next several years to deliver the PEO of the future.

WE SHARE AND ARE RECOGNIZED

Recently, I was invited by the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) to attend the organization's annual general meeting. The NSPE represents individual engineering professionals and licensed engineers across all disciplines in the US. I was honoured to be the first PEO president to address its House of Delegates Assembly, which consists of presidents and executive representatives from the 53 state and territorial societies. Soon thereafter, I attended the annual meeting of the State of Florida Society of Professional Engineers, where I addressed their State Board of Directors Assembly.

At both assemblies, I took the opportunity to promote PEO and educate our US colleagues on our unique system of professional governance. I highlighted that professional engineering is a self-regulated profession in Canada with at least three distinct characteristics, including:

1. democratic self-governance, where members of the profession elect a majority of the members of the governing council, which sets policy, determines the direction of the engineering profession and oversees its operation;
2. peer review, where many members are involved in the day-to-day work of regulating the profession, including admissions, enforcement, professional standards, complaints and discipline; and
3. independence from government, where we provide government and the public with unbiased advice on public policy related to the engineering profession.

In closing, I emphasized that professional engineers in Ontario share with their counterparts in America a commitment to advancing and promoting the engineering profession, to improving productivity and encouraging innovation and, above all, to protecting the health, safety and well-being of the public.

As always, I welcome your suggestions for improvement. Σ