

## INNOVATING PEO's GLP

By Howard Brown and Blake Keidan

We currently find ourselves in an era of change. Quick and wide-reaching, countries need to confidently inspire innovation in order to be globally competitive. Innovation creates a thriving population and opens the country to new economic, social and environmental possibilities.

Since its election in 2015, the Canadian government has put heavy emphasis on the need to innovate. Minister of Innovation, Science and Economic Development of Canada Navdeep Bains, MP (Mississauga-Malton), was tasked in his mandate letter by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, MP (Papineau), to create an innovation agenda.

Provincially, similar steps are being taken to propel the province forward. But innovation does not stop with the government—it must be embraced by all industries.

And what profession is more synonymous with innovation than engineering? No other profession is so focused on the continued improvement of its processes and outputs.

PEO's Government Liaison Program (GLP) is an example of that. For over a decade, PEO has been the leading example of a successful government relations program. Through GLP activities, PEO has built strong relationships with MPPs.

Among the other engineering regulatory associations, PEO's GLP has been unique and innovative. MPPs regularly compliment PEO on its work and say other organizations should look to it as an example.

But innovation means not resting on your laurels. With the 2017 changes to the Ontario fundraising rules, the political landscape has changed (see "A new approach to engagement," *Engineering Dimensions*, March/April 2017, p. 32). Preceding the change in 2016, PEO carried out an audit of the GLP with MPPs, PEO Council and chapters to see if the program was meeting its intended objectives.

The audit found that the program was meeting its intended objectives and suggested 32 recommendations for continued improvement. This presented a perfect opportunity for PEO to once again innovate and develop new ways to do its work.

### GLP 2.0

Over the last six months, a GLP Audit Implementation Plan Subcommittee worked with the PEO Government Liaison Committee (GLC) to develop a new plan, titled GLP 2.0, in direct response to the recommendations. Some highlights of the new plan are to:

- Continue to build awareness of PEO and develop relationships with MPPs through chapter events and by having chapter members attend MPP events;
- Grow the understanding between MPPs and professional engineers;
- Build the influence of PEO with the government;
- Move to a model with one certified representative for each MPP (the person would either live or work in the riding of the MPP) and provide new training for GLP certification; and

- Work with all of its partners to implement the best program for regulatory purposes.

GLC Chair Darla Campbell, P.Eng., attended the Council meeting on June 22 and 23 to present the plan. She explained a number of new initiatives to enhance PEO's work with MPPs and answered questions from Council. At that meeting, PEO Council approved the plan as presented and directed the GLC to begin immediate implementation.

"We are pleased with the feedback we got from PEO Council," says Campbell. "Our goal is to ensure all parts of the regulation of engineering work to the benefit of the public."

To support its efforts, PEO will be developing:

1. An MPP Interaction Database to track meetings with MPPs, which will create a history we can reference;
2. A training program for GLP representatives for certification to ensure consistency in the messaging and techniques when building relationships; and
3. A tracking system of regulatory issues to monitor proposed legislation in order to detect potential incursions on the self-regulating role of PEO.

The essence of the new plan is to build on past successes while making room for new innovation. As well, PEO is committed to continuing its government liaison work. The government needs to hear engineering voices, and we are stronger presenting a united front. **e**

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