

Fostering EDI in Engineering

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Earlier this summer I addressed an International Women in Engineering Day event hosted by Siemens Canada. Upon entering the building, I paused to read the sign on the main entry door—#BelongingTransforms—and a note reminding all of those who enter, be it a guest or an employee, that "You Belong Here." Inside, I spoke to hundreds of women—many of them practising or aspiring engineers—about my engineering journey. Some who attended spoke to me one on one about their engineering careers, including one woman who decided to pursue her engineering licence after attending a 30 by 30 check-in meeting. The 30 by 30 initiative, led by Engineers Canada, brings together all of Canada's engineering regulators, including PEO, to work toward women representing 30 per cent of newly licensed engineers by 2030.

I was equally inspired by a girls' STEM summer camp organized by GE Healthcare. There, I spoke to 30 girls in grades 7 and 8 who participated in a weeklong camp where they built robots and coded computer programs. The girls were inspired to hear about my career in STEM and were equally impressed that I am the first woman to hold the CEO/registrar title at PEO in its 102-year history. Judging by the questions many of the girls asked, I am certain that some of them will one day join us in the engineering profession.

I want to continue the positive momentum from these two events and foster PEO's relationships with groups traditionally underrepresented in engineering.

EDI MUST REMAIN AN ONGOING COMMITMENT THAT INVOLVES CONTINUOUS LISTENING, REFLECTION, LEARNING AND ACTION.

DEVELOPING OUR EDI ACTION PLAN

When Council approved PEO's Anti-Racism and Equity (ARE) Code in 2022, PEO staff began developing an action plan to deliver on the code's eight principles. We hired a full-time equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) manager to develop actionable activities to implement the ARE Code. And that work is paying off: Our EDI Action Plan, together with our EDI Framework, details our commitments over the next two years to promote a profession where everyone feels welcome.

As we were developing our EDI Action Plan, PEO was already busy achieving many EDI milestones, including:

- Removing the Canadian engineering experience requirement from our licensing process in May 2023, allowing for a fairer and more equitable process for internationally trained applicants;
- Initiating, in 2021, an ongoing gender audit of our licensing process that has already shined light on barriers women might face when completing their 48 months of experience;
- Partnering with consulting firm Indigenous and Community Engagement to promote the representation of Indigenous people in engineering; and
- Creating an external relations department, where PEO staff actively foster meaningful relationships with our external stakeholders, including many advocacy-focused groups such as Black Engineers of Canada, the Society of Women Engineers and newcomer and settlement agencies that assist international engineering graduates.

As we roll out our EDI Action Plan, we are not simply checking boxes. Nor are we compromising our regulatory mandate to protect the public interest. However, as Ontario's engineering regulator, EDI must remain an ongoing commitment that involves continuous listening, reflection, learning and action. EDI also means actively collaborating with our stakeholders. This is why a national collaboration like 30 by 30 is incredibly important to ensuring engineering grows as an inclusive profession across Ontario and Canada. As PEO continues its EDI journey, I look forward to sharing our progress with you. We are on a journey to promote a culture of belonging so every engineer and aspiring engineer can see a place for themselves in the profession. [e](#)