

MINUTES OF THE 99TH ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING

SATURDAY, MAY 15, 2021

PRESIDENT AND CHAIR: MARISA STERLING, P.ENG., FEC

The 99th Annual General Meeting of Professional Engineers Ontario was held via videoconference on Saturday May 15, 2021. President Marisa Sterling, P.Eng., FEC, welcomed PEO licence holders with a special welcome to the over 3000 new licensees joining PEO in the past year: engineering interns, students and employers; stakeholders; members of the public; colleagues in the engineering community; PEO staff; distinguished guests; and friends.

To add further meaning to her welcome, President Sterling acknowledged her positionality as a settler on Turtle Island, the name many Indigenous Peoples give to North America. She stated that her family came from Scotland, England and Italy to settle on this land that for thousands of years has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca and the Mississaugas of the Credit. She noted that she was chairing the meeting from a place that is still the home to many Indigenous Peoples and that she was grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

She thanked all the generations of people who have taken care of this land over thousands of years. The truth is that long before today there have been Indigenous Peoples who have been the stewards of our places and have shaped and strengthened community and our province. Acknowledging this truth is her first step towards reconciliation with Métis, Inuit and First Nations peoples, and as an engineer working in the public interest, she is working to improve the nation-to-nation relationship between engineering and Indigenous communities.

In order to promote a more inclusive gathering, President Sterling invited Indigenous engineer Jason Bazylak, P.Eng., and francophone engineer Larisse Nana Kouadjo, P.Eng., PMP, to join in the welcome. Both guests provided pre-recorded welcomes and thanked President Sterling for the opportunity to participate in PEO's annual general meeting.

President Sterling thanked Bazylak and Nana Kouadjo for their welcoming remarks. She then welcomed Ontario's attorney general, The Honourable Doug Downey, LL.M., LL.B., along with his colleagues from the attorney general's office: Patrick Schertzer, JD, senior policy and legal affairs advisor; and Candace Whitney, counsel to the justice service branch of the policy division. Sterling advised that she had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Downey and Mr. Schertzer virtually on October 27 last year, along with PEO Registrar and CEO

Johnny Zuccon, P.Eng., FEC, and Jeannette Chau, P.Eng., manager of PEO's government liaison programs, to discuss the goals of PEO Council to continue to work hard to deliver on its responsibility to protect and serve the public interest. Sterling noted that in her report later in the meeting she would be sharing the steps taken in this regard, including paving the way to implement mandatory continuing professional development on a high priority basis.

The Honourable Doug Downey congratulated President Sterling on a challenging but very successful year. He discussed the work his office and PEO have been doing together and PEO's work on the frontlines to maintain and expand services across Ontario through unprecedented and challenging times.

President Sterling thanked Mr. Downey and, on behalf of PEO and Council, expressed appreciation to Mr. Downey for taking the time to join PEO's annual general meeting to learn more about how PEO has continued to protect the public over the past year, including specific measures in response to the pandemic. President Sterling welcomed special guests from Engineers Canada and its constituent associations as well as invited organizations in Ontario's engineering community and allied professions.

CALL TO ORDER

President Sterling advised that, since proper notice for the meeting had been published in *Engineering Dimensions*, as provided for under section 20(i) of Bylaw No. 1, and a quorum was present, the meeting was officially called to order.

INTRODUCTION OF COUNCIL

President Sterling introduced the members of the 2020–2021 PEO Council: President Marisa Sterling, P.Eng., FEC; President-elect Christian Bellini, P.Eng., FEC; Past President Nancy Hill, P.Eng., LL.B., FEC, FCAE; Vice President (elected) Darla Campbell, P.Eng., CSR-P; Vice President (appointed) and East Central Region Councillor Arthur Sinclair, P.Eng.; Councillors-at-Large Sandra Ausma, PhD, P.Eng., Michael Chan, P.Eng., FEC, and Leila Notash, PhD, P.Eng., FEC; Eastern Region Councillors Randy Walker, P.Eng., FEC, and Chantal Chiddle, P.Eng., FEC; East Central Region Councillor Peter Cushman, P.Eng.; Northern Region Councillors Ramesh Subramanian, PhD, P.Eng., FEC, and Luc Roberge, P.Eng., FEC; Western Region Councillors Wayne Kershaw, P.Eng., FEC, and Peter Broad, P.Eng., FEC; West Central Region Councillors Warren Turnbull, P.Eng., FEC, and Lisa MacCumber, P.Eng., FEC; and Lieutenant Governor-in-Council Appointees Arjan Arenja, P.Eng., Robert Brunet, P.Eng., Todd Bruyere, P.Eng., Lorne Cutler, P.Eng., Andy Dryland, C.E.T., Qadira Jackson Kouakou, LL.B., Scott Schelske, P.Eng., FEC, and Sherlock Sung.

President Sterling thanked PEO's directors to Engineers Canada for 2020–2021: Christian Bellini, Danny Chui, P.Eng., FEC, Nancy Hill, Kelly Reid, P.Eng., and Changiz Sadr, P.Eng., FEC (who resigned March 26, 2021).

President Sterling also introduced PEO staff: Johnny Zuccon, CEO/registrar; Ralph Martin, manager, secretariat; Chetan Mehta, director, finance; Michelle Wehrle, director, IT; as well as Parliamentarian Lori Lukinuk.

IN MEMORIAM

President Sterling asked that all those present observe a moment of silence in remembrance of those PEO members who passed away in 2020. She also included thoughts for the family, friends and colleagues of PEO members and guests who passed away from COVID-19.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

President Sterling reviewed the order of business and housekeeping items. A test of the voting system was conducted.

ADOPTION OF MINUTES

President Sterling referred members to the minutes of the 2020 AGM. It was moved by Warren Turnbull, seconded by Arthur Sinclair, that the minutes of the 2020 AGM, as published in the November/December 2020 issue of *Engineering Dimensions* and as distributed at the meeting, be adopted as presented.

Motion carried

BUSINESS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

President Sterling reviewed the actions taken by Council on submissions discussed at the 2020 AGM. Members made seven submissions to the meeting, three of which were passed. Council discussed these three submissions at its September 2020 meeting.

The first submission dealt with ISO 9001:2015 certification of PEO policies. The staff recommendation to Council was to leave the decision regarding certification to the CEO/registrar. Staff advised to establish a corporate policy stating PEO will eventually obtain the certification so future policies are assessed to ensure they are ISO 9001 compliant.

The second AGM submission suggested that PEO host regional town hall meetings to discuss the future of engineering. Staff reviewed the submission and recommended to Council that doing so is not appropriate at this time because PEO is currently occupied with implementing the action plan resulting from the external regulatory review and with implementing the governance roadmap and restructuring initiatives. President Sterling advised that she started "Ask Marisa" virtual sessions after Council meetings to give committee and chapter chairs the chance to learn and discuss decisions taken. Although not the intent of this member's motion, it was one way to engage with licence holders this year.

The third AGM submission suggested PEO supply digital seals for licence holders. Staff recommended that PEO join the Notarius program, giving licence holders the opportunity to subscribe to the digital certification service on a voluntary basis. Council agreed, and as of January 2021, Notarius digital seals have been available to PEO licence holders.

FINANCIAL REPORT

President Sterling invited Councillor Sherlock Sung, chair of the Audit Committee, to provide a report on PEO's audited financial statements. Sung reviewed the financial information, noting that the 2020 audited financial statements were approved by Council at the March 2021 meeting. He stated that these statements are currently on the PEO AGM webpage and would be published in the May/June issue of *Engineering Dimensions*.

Councillor Sung then provided a brief overview of some of the key highlights and encouraged members to refer to the document entitled "Questions and Answers on PEO's Operations," which is also available on the AGM webpage and includes comprehensive information on PEO's financial position.

A graph was presented that showed a five-year trend of revenues, expenses and net income. He noted that net income consistently fell from 2016 onwards until 2017, at which time there was a deficit of \$26,000. In 2018, PEO had a modest surplus of \$123,000, which was largely due to aggressive cost-cutting measures undertaken by staff, with input from the Finance Committee and Council. In 2019, there was a surplus of \$2.9 million, as the new fee structure kicked in on May 1, 2019.

There was a surplus of \$7.9 million and \$23.3 million in cash and marketable securities on PEO's balance sheet as of the 2020 year-end. Due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, most in-person events and meetings moved online, leading to a substantial reduction in expenditures. Despite increased P.Eng. fees, in 2020, PEO has the lowest dues in Canada while maintaining a lean organization with the highest ratio of members to staff in Canada.

A graph was presented showing the key financial highlights as of December 31, 2020, as follows:

- A surplus or net excess of revenues over expenses of \$7.9 million;
- \$23.3 million in cash and marketable securities;
- Lowest P.Eng. fees in Canada;
- Highest ratio of members to staff in Canada in comparison to other sister provincial associations; and
- Additional details on 2020 operations are available on PEO's website.

Councillor Sung advised that before formally moving on to the appointment of PEO auditor for 2021, Deloitte LLP was recommended to the membership as the 2021 auditor by the Audit Committee in February 2021 and also by Council at the March 2021 meeting. He noted that, for 2021, Deloitte will enter its fifth and final year of the current competitive tender cycle, which it won in July 2016.

The floor was opened for questions and comments from licence holders. A licence holder asked if PEO has considered a reduced fee schedule for engineers billing less than \$30,000 per year as British Columbia does. Councillor Sung responded that the purview of the Audit and Finance Com-

mittee was to look at the financial statements of the organization in 2020 and did not focus on policy questions, but he invited members of staff if they wished to comment on this matter. CEO/Registrar Zuccon noted this is something that could be brought forward to the soon-to-be-composed Audit and Finance Committee, referring to the certificate of authorization (C of A). This will be taken under advisement.

A licence holder stated that he believed there is a reduced fee policy. CEO/Registrar Zuccon confirmed that there is a fee remission policy that exists and currently is available. He asked members to refer to the PEO website or the PEO portal and, if that fails, to please reach out to the finance department.

President Sterling advised that any questions not related to clarifications about the audited financial statements, including finance matters, would be held for the questions-and-answers session later in the meeting.

APPOINTMENT OF AUDITORS

It was moved by Lorne Cutler, seconded by Michael Chan, that the firm of Deloitte LLP be appointed auditors of the association for the 2021 financial year.

Motion carried

There was a five-minute break.

President Sterling recalled the meeting to order.

CEO/REGISTRAR'S REPORT

CEO/Registrar Zuccon extended a warm welcome to everyone who was joining PEO's second virtual AGM. He thanked all those who worked tirelessly to prepare for the meeting, stating that he knew firsthand how much more time and effort is required to accomplish things while operating remotely.

CEO/Registrar Zuccon stated, "It's been an interesting year for sure, and I must confess that the novelty of our two-dimensional Zoom world is wearing on me. Who would have thought this time last year that we'd be holding our meeting like this again in 2021?"

CEO/Registrar Zuccon advised that he first introduced his "old way/new way" slide as part of the action plan presentation to Council in September 2019. He stated that it symbolizes a recognition that the status quo is no longer an option and, more importantly, it suggests a willingness to consider changing from the old way to new way in how we regulate and govern in a modern world.

CEO/Registrar Zuccon went on to say: "If there was ever an external driver to test this, well COVID certainly did, and some. So, while COVID has somewhat slowed our journey to usher in PEO's transformation, my report today will show we have been able to successfully adapt our processes to the obstacles the pandemic has presented while still advancing our enterprise-wide change process.

"And for that, I'm thankful and extremely proud of how our staff and volunteers have responded in these extraordinary times and their dedication and perseverance to maintain our functions and deliver on our operations.

Office Closure

"Since the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic, my primary concern has been the health and well-being of our staff and volunteers who would normally come to the office. On March 17, 2020, in compliance with provincial lockdown measures, PEO closed its office indefinitely and staff transitioned to working remotely.

"And while our office remains closed to visitors and most of our staff, select employees have been permitted to return at times, under controlled conditions, to complete essential work that requires access to our facilities. On average, we've had five to seven employees in our office each day and, thankfully, there has been no reported COVID cases amongst our staff to date.

"And considering the current state, staff were advised last month not to plan any in-person, face-to-face meetings for the remainder of 2021. This includes Council and committee meetings as well as in-person meetings with those seeking licensure.

"PEO will continue to follow both the letter and spirit of public health guidelines regarding the holding of in-person events, and it is expected that any group holding events under PEO's banner will fully comply with the rules in force for their areas.

Virtual Work Environment

"So, with our staff at home, securing the necessary technology last March to equip all 110 employees to continue their work virtually proved to be a globally competitive challenge.

"With many companies all seeking the same resources, laptops quickly became a scarce commodity. Just to put things into perspective, at the time of the office closure approximately 60 per cent of our staff had laptops. By the end of May, 75 per cent of our staff had them, and it was only towards the end of July before we had secured laptops for everyone.

"Concurrently, while working remotely, we had to effectively transition our operations and adjust processes to ensure we could continue to meet our regulatory obligations. Transitioning the work of the Complaints Committee didn't pose too much of a challenge, since we had previously transferred files to an electronic format. Operations of the Tribunals office emulated the courts and shifted to virtual hearings via Zoom videoconferencing, with assistance from the services of Arbitration Place Virtual, an external vendor. The Communications group was able to adapt quickly, as witnessed by the seamless transition to remotely producing *Engineering Dimensions*. Similarly, our professional standards group was also able to resume its work remotely.

“Also noteworthy is that we managed to complete the move-in for our new tenant, the Home Construction Regulatory Authority, who now occupies the fourth floor of our building.

“The most impacted of our groups was Licensing and Registration. The paper-based applications and accompanying file reviews and face-to-face interviews presented significant challenges for remote operations. In addition, some processing functions require access to the original paper file. And printing licence certificates could not be done in a virtual environment.

Licensing Updates

“Given these challenges, I’m pleased with the solutions created by our licensing team, and fellow staff went beyond expectations. While operating remotely, we developed and implemented a system to accept licence applications by email. And by mid-June 2020, we were no longer adding to our existing paper-based inventory. In fact, staff went to the office to ensure any application that arrived by mail was converted to electronic format. It’s worth pointing out that, notwithstanding the pandemic, filed applications in 2020 increased 2 per cent year-over-year.

“Similarly, we transitioned to receiving and approving new C of A applications electronically. To date, we’ve received over 600 C of A applications and over 7000 renewals have been processed directly online through PEO’s portal.

“We also launched a records conversion project to transform our inventory of paper applications into usable digital information that can be accessed remotely. Although our progress on this initiative has been curbed due to pandemic-related restrictions to accessing the office, we have the processes and staff in place to resume work as soon as possible.

“The focus on our licensing process continued with our transition to the National Professional Practice Exam (NPPE), which replaced the PEO-administered Professional Practice Exam. The NPPE is offered online and as of the January 2021 sitting, over 4200 applicants have taken it.

“To support the new electronic licensing process, we developed a new, paperless workflow for academic assessments requiring review by Academic Requirements Committee volunteers so it could be performed remotely. And Experience Requirements Committee (ERC) interviews have begun to be conducted via Zoom. Training of ERC members is ongoing so we can increase the volume and frequency of online interviews.

“Public health restrictions across the province have also impacted our technical examination

programs, which led to many cancellations last year. We have since partnered with our BC counterparts, and, later this month, we’ll be delivering online technical exams to over 1000 registrants.”

2020 Statistics

CEO/Registrar Zuccon provided a slide with some key 2020 statistics which included 84,744 P.Engs; 5820 Cs of A; 13,318 engineering interns and 3112 P.Eng. licences approved. He reminded everyone that more details are published in PEO’s 2020/2021 Annual Review, which is available on our website.

CEO/Registrar Zuccon continued by saying: “I just want to caution the engineer in all of us not to go into a deep analysis, as the numbers represent a snapshot in time and there are numerous intervening factors at play. For example, while the 84,744 P.Engs represent a 1.3 per cent overall net decrease year-over-year, I can report that the Q1 figure is trending up.

“As an aside, when we looked at the number of fee remission requests to see if the pandemic had produced a noticeable impact, the results showed that the actual monthly average was lower in 2020 than in 2019. We saw similar results with the number of resignations.

“Turning to the remaining stats: We recorded a decrease of 41 Cs of A and the number of engineering interns was 9 per cent lower than in 2019, so we will monitor these for the upcoming year. And the total licences approved were 25 per cent lower than 2019 figures, which is understandable. The Q1 figures are 27 per cent higher year-over-year for the same period, so that’s encouraging.

40 Sheppard Ave. West Update

“Now, as owners of an eight-floor building at Yonge and Sheppard in Toronto, PEO has fared well with its tenants, especially considering the extraordinary times. In fact, as mentioned earlier, we were fortunate to have the Home Construction Regulatory Authority move into our building and occupy the entire fourth floor.”

2020 Regulatory Highlights

Moving on to some additional regulatory highlights CEO/Registrar Zuccon continued: “As I stated, the Complaints Committee transition was less challenging and the throughput of 58 files is in line with past years. Similarly, the reported caseload of enforcement files opened is on par with previous years.

“Three practice guidelines have been approved since our last AGM. They include:

- *Providing Reports on Mineral Projects;*
- *Environmental Site Assessment, Remediation and Management;* and
- *Providing Engineering Services Under O.Reg. 1/17 and Part II.2 of the EPA.*

“In addition, we published a practice notice to remind practitioners of their obligations during the pandemic.

“Of the seven discipline hearings in 2020, six were held virtually. These hearings are broadcast live via YouTube. The schedules and links are published on the Discipline Committee’s webpage. Of the 10 pre-hearing conferences, seven were held virtually via Zoom.”

Three Pillars

A slide was shared showing three pillars: operational review; organization review and enhanced governance. CEO/Registrar Zuccon stated: “I included this slide to remind all of us that our transformation work is building on three pillars. Despite all the challenges presented by the pandemic, and the time and effort required to create these workaround solutions and to stabilize our key operations while working remotely, we remained vigilant on conducting and supporting the strategic work related to PEO’s multi-year, enterprise-wide transformation.

“On the regulatory operational front, we have the action plan Council approved in September 2019. It incorporates PEO’s change vision and outlines the key steps that are required to address the recommendations from the Cayton report.

“We are also taking into consideration the structural changes that will be necessary to ensure our organization has the appropriate capacity and agility to achieve our objectives. Council is taking steps to ensure it operates under sound governance practices that are founded on clearly defined roles and corresponding accountabilities.

PEO Vision

“To sum things up, the 2020–2021 term has forced all of us rethink our priorities in many ways.

“From a business perspective, we’ve had to adapt and adjust while trying to advance PEO towards achieving its change vision of becoming a professional, modern regulator that delivers on its statutory mandate and is supported by a governance culture that consistently makes decisions that serve and protect the public interest.

“Although there is much work still to be done, all things considered, I’m very pleased with the progress we’ve made. The pandemic, at least from my vantage point, has certainly reinforced the fact that, where possible, it’s preferable to drive change as opposed to have change drive you. Let’s stay the course with our transformation. I look forward to building on our success in the coming Council term.

“But before I conclude, I want to give a shout out to my longtime colleague and staff member, Bernie Ennis, who has provided exemplary service to PEO for well over 20 years. Bernie is our director of policy and professional affairs, and he has informed us he will be retiring in June. Anyone who knows Bernie or has had dealings with him will attest to his professionalism and high standard of integrity. He’s been a fountain of knowledge for PEO and for me personally. We will miss you dearly. Bernie, on behalf of everyone at PEO,

I wish you the very best for a long and healthy retirement. We toast you virtually.”

CEO/Registrar Zuccon then turned the virtual podium back to President Sterling.

PRESIDENT STERLING’S OUTGOING REPORT

President Sterling thanked CEO/Registrar Zuccon for his outstanding efforts and those of his staff over the past year. She stated that he has demonstrated a growth mindset and innovative thinking to pivot PEO’s processes with the onset of the pandemic and continue to do PEO’s core regulatory work during a very challenging time. Process matters, and when making sustained change, people, partnerships and culture are the anchors. She stated it had been a pleasure working along his team and all to reimagine PEO together. She also thanked Bernard Ennis for his contributions to PEO over his career.

President Sterling began her outgoing president’s report by stating that she wanted to share her thoughts on the business conducted by Council over the 2020–2021 term and reflections as PEO president.

“We may only be a Council for a short time, but what we do while we are here changes the course of the future. It may not at first be obvious, but with each decision, we are laying the stepping stones on a path towards a more responsive and progressive engineering regulator. While elected for three years, the role of president is for only one of those years, and it can pass very quickly, or plans can change when affected by unknown events like the global pandemic. But what made this year especially meaningful was how all councillors, staff and volunteers stepped up and didn’t just do the minimum to get by, but led substantive, positive change. I want to applaud everyone for your resiliency the public depends on as characteristics of engineers.”

President Sterling shared a picture of one of many Council Zoom meetings and went on to say: “Councillors embraced virtual meetings and ambitious goals. We tried to stay connected with virtual coffee chats, sharing favourite pastimes and cheering each other on when someone got vaccinated. Council knew it was going to have to meet much more frequently in a virtual setting to move our transformative change agenda forward. We met formally six times to make decisions; we gathered informally on a monthly basis for dialogue and education at sessions that I named “strategic conversations”; and the Executive Committee met 12 times to steward our governance roadmap.”

People, Partnerships and Culture

“I think what motivated this highly accomplished team—who were also navigating the ways they were personally and professionally impacted by the pandemic—was the vision of a better regulator, a reimagined PEO. And what we did this past year was only possible because we worked together. In the many conversations I’ve had this year, what I continue to hear is an urgent excitement to modernize PEO towards one consistent theme—to ensure PEO is primarily a regulator, for whom protecting the public interest is paramount, and acting swiftly and proactively to the changing ways of the world.

“And how much more can we contribute if we reimagine PEO together? Process matters, and people, partnerships and culture are the anchors. The succession of presidencies from my predecessor,

Nancy Hill, to incoming President Christian Bellini is one example where we have all worked collegially to add more steps towards the same future path. Also, this year Council has tried to be even more transparent, inclusive and outcomes based. Virtual Council meetings have allowed more guests to pop in; diverse thoughts and ideas have been encouraged through our governance dialogues, and Council has tried to keep committees and chapters updated on its reimagined governance at both the Volunteer Leadership and Chapter Leadership conferences. Engineers are taught to question; we look down at our iron rings to remind ourselves that what we know is that we know very little about the natural changing world, and our humility is what helps us see where we can improve and drives us to find new solutions.

Change is Our Only Constant

“Change is our only constant. Whether we are talking about climate change or self-driving cars, global engineering or crowdsourced engineering design, self-regulated or government-controlled professions, PEO needs to not just keep up with societal advances but lead the way to ensure the engineering involved is regulated in the public interest.

“The inertia of large organizations like PEO can be hard to overcome when seeking change, but with the intention to reimagine PEO together this year, along with quickly pivoting to digital operations because of the pandemic, the formula provided the catalyst for progressive and lasting change.

“PEO showed urgency this past year and had many regulatory and governance accomplishments. CEO and Registrar Johnny Zuccon has detailed many of these to you in his report today. Two that I will highlight are the online licensing application and assessment processes and the initiation of virtual discipline hearings. Both of these new approaches provide more public access to PEO’s regulatory work.

“I would like to share the most substantive foundational changes that Council made this year, which forms the groundwork for PEO’s success decades from now as a relevant and agile regulator.

New Council, Governance, Implementing Mandatory CPD and Anti-Racism Work

“The first foundation change is new Council governance. Governance renewal has been a top priority. It is a means to help Council gather sufficient information and take quicker action to protect public interest and manage organizational risks. The regulatory principles adopted are right-touch regulation, meaning regulate only as much as is needed. There are four phases of the

governance project, and two have been completed to date. Phase 1 saw new charters approved for Council, the president and chair and the CEO and registrar to better delineate Council as setting direction and control and staff holding the pen to identify, investigate, advise and execute. An updated orientation program was created to better onboard new councillors. Phase 2 saw four new governance committees of Council created. They will bring to the forefront Council’s primary responsibilities of human resources and compensation, governance and nominations, regulatory policy and legislation and audit and finance. The expectation is that these four new governance committees will be constituted by councillors and will help Council assess risks, evaluate options and set policy more quickly than previously. The final two governance project phases will occur in the upcoming year and will examine Council’s composition and the role of chapters and other external organizations in PEO’s mandate. Opportunities in Phase 3, for example, can include how Council operates to be accessible to early and mid-career professionals and those with caregiving responsibilities in its future composition, and opportunities in Phase 4 can include what mandates for chapters can link to PEO’s purpose, for example, activities such as public awareness, licensure assistance and leadership succession planning.

“The second foundational change is implementing mandatory continuing professional development (CPD) on a high priority. It will likely be implemented by 2025, when national and international mobility agreements, such as the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation, might exclude Ontario engineers if mandatory CPD is not in place by then. This decision by Council prioritized public interest and listened to recommendations from external reports, such as the public inquiries into deaths from the Downsview stage collapse and the Elliot Lake mall collapse. I can share with you that, personally, I stood at a microphone close to 30 years ago, fresh out of university, at a PEO AGM to voice that mandatory CPD was not required and that engineers can be trusted to keep their knowledge up to date. I still believe that likely all engineers already do professional development and that it is necessary to stay current, but today, my position has changed because, if asked, I would not be able to show to the public this happens without having a mandatory CPD program, and that is why I think this is a new and better approach and the right thing to do in the public interest. PEO’s proactive stance will focus on preventing faulty engineering practice rather than relying on a system that punishes licence holders after harm has already come to the public is the priority.

“The third foundational change is anti-racism work. This past year has been even more difficult for Black and Indigenous persons in North America, with vividly broadcast violence and media coverage of wide-reaching systemic racism. And all of this is on top of the already known marginalization of these communities as well as women and LGBTQ2+ persons in the engineering profession. Council appointed an Anti-Racism and Anti-Discrimination Exploratory Working Group last fall, and recommendations are expected later this year. The working group is expected to help PEO proactively identify, study and address any issues of systemic racism and discrimination within the organization and its processes and policies. Some simple first steps might be to start collecting race-based data on licence holders, and evaluations from licence applicants on PEO processes, with the data disaggregated by race and gender. As someone who knows how strongly an inclusive culture is in the

public interest, I am very much looking forward to helping action the recommendations of the working group.

PEO's North Star

"As much as Council accomplished this year, there is still much to do. Council cannot slow down the external pace of change and needs to be resolute to its north star—protecting public well-being in a rapidly changing world. Council's action plan, approved in September 2019, will update many existing regulatory processes such as licensing. The governance roadmap, approved in March 2020, will help Council be better structured to do its regulatory work. As PEO approaches its 100th anniversary and enters its second century of regulation, creating a new strategic plan will be critical next year to support swift completion of the action plan and governance roadmap. And a strong communications plan will be critical to bring everyone together along this journey. In fact, Council received a comprehensive communications strategy in 2019, and hopefully it will consider implementing it in the near term. But Council will need to also start charting a longer-term plan of what it means to be a modern regulator. I encourage PEO to take a more external view and engage more in citizen conversations to better define who and what PEO regulates into the next decade and beyond. What we hear in the media today are public concerns around software errors causing communication network failures and emergency service interruptions, private data like health and banking records being breached and computer vision biased against people with darker skin. Exploring how PEO can work with other organizations to be a part of the solution in the public interest might be one input into defining the modern regulator. I have full confidence in the incoming Council team and staff to continue this journey in a thoughtful and meaningful way.

"Some might ask why an engineer chooses to serve as PEO president. It's a substantial responsibility to make sure the Council of 25 has all the necessary and timely information to make informed decisions, help keep the organization focused to address the tough questions and help ensure the work stays on track and is not avoided because of the discomfort of change or indecisiveness. Most presidents of engineering regulators across Canada report spending at least 900 hours in a year, and for me it amounted closer to 1200 hours with our ambitious agenda during a pandemic. And the pay, well, it's not that good at zero dollars. So, what's my answer? What drives me is to leave the world a better place after I've passed through it? Addressing the hard questions now, while it may not be popular, I am committed to do if it will make meaningful, long-lasting change. I believe in the relevance of PEO, and I always have. I have to admit, at times I felt unwelcome, and I could have moved on. But what kept me committed was knowing that if I didn't try to make things better for others, then I might end up inadvertently hurting someone else who could have the same experiences as mine, or worse.

"If you know my story, you know I was raised with the ideals that one person can make a difference in the world and that community service is a natural part of being an active citizen. My engineering journey started with the encouragement of my parents. Without them, I would never had known that engineering was a separate field of study outside of math and science."

President Sterling shared a photo showing the day she received her P.Eng. licence in chemical engineering with her father, Gordon

Sterling, P.Eng., PEO's 82nd president. She continued by saying: "Although there is sadness in my story, as my father has since passed, I am grateful for this path that led me to serve as the 101st president and chair of Council. And I am grateful to have had the infinite support of my mother and sisters this past year. Notably, I am also the eighth woman in this role in almost a century of presidents. Why my story is important is that today there are approximately 12 per cent women engineers in Ontario. I hope that many youths, students, EITs and engineers will be inspired to follow in my footsteps and those of trailblazers before me.

"In order for PEO to protect the public, it needs to provide Ontarians with engineers who look like them and are representative of all cultures. And that means having closer to 50 per cent women engineers of all intersectional identities. PEO's 30 by 30 program aims to reach 30 per cent newly licensed engineers identifying as women by 2030. And I would suggest that this goal is good but not enough. The 30 by 30 program is working with employers and higher education, helping to remove barriers for women of all identities to get the academic and work experience needed to apply for the P.Eng. licence and is working with PEO to do its part to ensure there are no barriers in the licensing process. My story would not be possible without the active support and opportunities of my employers—my first employer, Procter & Gamble, who provided me with meaningful engineering experience applicable to PEO's licence requirements; and my current employer, the University of Toronto, who accommodated flexibility in my work schedule this year, which allowed me to take on the demands of the PEO president role while working full-time as assistant dean and director of diversity, inclusion and professionalism at the faculty of applied science and engineering. It is because of the visionary leadership of U of T engineering's dean and engineer himself, Chris Yip, and his values of professional development and professional duty, that I am here today. I hope many more employers will follow suit. By acting urgently to actively identify and remove barriers, anyone who has felt marginalized in engineering can start to feel welcomed, find pathways in, and we can become a more inclusive regulatory authority and profession. It has been an honour to serve you and the public. Thank you. Merci. Miigwech."

MEMBER SUBMISSIONS

President Sterling stated that, each year, in accordance with section 17 of By-Law No. 1, submissions from licence holders are invited as a way for them to express their views on matters relating to PEO

affairs. Submissions were due at end of day on Monday, May 3, 2021, and a guidance document to assist licence holders in making submissions was posted on PEO's website.

Five submissions were received, and the complete submissions, which in some cases contain preamble and background information, are available on the PEO website.

President Sterling noted that, given the virtual format of the AGM, members were invited to make pre-recorded introductions to their submissions. She stated that Council reserves the right to consider any submission, even if it does not receive majority support at the AGM. However, Council is not bound to adopt or vote formally on any submission. The proponent of the first submission was invited to introduce their motion.

A pre-recorded message from Roydon Fraser, PhD, P.Eng., was presented. It was stated that this past year, PEO Council rescinded the past Council promise to consult members through non-binding referendum on a mandatory CPD program. This past year, Council decided that CPD is not a matter of licensing but a matter of governance and hence unilaterally decided it did not seek peer review, despite peer review being a previous Council approved necessity for any significant motion before Council. It was stated that the intent of the motion was not to debate CPD or to debate the recent governance changes; the purpose of the motion is to inform Council that members expect members' views to be sought, to be heard, to be listened, to be considered. The purpose of the motion is to inform PEO Council that members need to be informed and need to have the opportunity to be involved in the process of decision making as a self-regulated profession.

The mover referred to transparency and the fact that Council had been conducting highly confidential strategic meetings concerning governance and that Council was making permanent major changes to self-governance without the input of members.

A licence holder noted that it would be helpful to know how many P.Engs and how many public members are participating in the AGM in order to make sense of the polls. President Sterling noted that only members may vote and that the number of how many members were in attendance would be provided later in the meeting. She noted that Council briefing notes, which are available on the PEO website, do include a peer review section.

A licence holder asked if Council will be honest with the members, e.g., stop calling their illegal secret meetings "transparency." President Sterling replied that Council was not doing anything illegal during the last year and if, need be, the senior

counsel of PEO was available to clarify that, but none of PEO's meetings this year have been illegal.

Moved by Roydon Fraser, seconded by Leila Notash

THEREFORE, BE IT SUBMITTED THAT:

Council commit fully to:

- (a) peer review;
- (b) knowledge-based decision making;
- (c) highest levels of transparency;
- (d) effective communication; and
- (e) removal of systemic biases and barriers to hearing and respecting diverse views, and that it halt all current procedures and practices that do not abide by these self-regulating governance principles.

Motion carried

The proponent of the second submission was invited to introduce their motion.

A pre-recorded message from George Comrie, P.Eng., FEC, was presented. It was stated that this motion was an urgent wake-up call and that PEO continuing on its course could lead to the demise of the self-regulating engineering profession in Ontario. While governance matters to PEO, it is not the only important thing or even the most important thing. Governance is a means to an end, not an end in itself and must be subordinate or subservient to the fundamental principles on which PEO's unique Canadian model of self-regulation is based. These fundamental principles include peer review. Council has engaged consultants to distract it and staff from its core business, which has been put on hold pending a major reorganization, and because the consultants do not understand either the nature of engineering practice or the concept of professional self-regulation, their advice cannot be expected to help PEO progress as an engineering regulator. The Cayton report revealed the author's lack of understanding of the concept of a self-regulating profession and how it was intended to work. This is not surprising, since in Cayton's home jurisdiction, the United Kingdom, engineers are not licensed and have no exclusive rights to practice. The irony is the legitimate deficiencies raised in his report were all well known to Council before his engagement. Council's governance consultants seem intent on dismantling all vestiges of the core principles of professional self-regulation. The current approach to governance reform with its concentration on regulatory policy work at the Council level and its absence of knowledge-based and peer-reviewed decision making will not solve any of PEO's problems. It's high time we abandon this misguided foray into governance reform and get back to regulatory basics before it's too late, before PEO evolves into just another government style bureaucracy.

President Sterling advised that she wished to clarify a few things. The first, as noted in her president's report and the CEO/registrar's report, is that PEO is not putting any of its regulatory priorities on hold, and that she is in fact in agreement with part of this motion, that governance work in the organizational re-organization is a means towards the end of better regulation so she feels PEO is better aligned on those points. The principles in this motion are a repeat of the first motion, which has already been passed.

President Sterling referred to a question asked earlier in the meeting regarding the number of eligible voters that were logged on. This number is 619.

Moved by George Comrie, seconded by Thomas Chong, P.Eng.

THEREFORE, BE IT SUBMITTED THAT:

Council place an immediate moratorium on governance and organization changes and instead focus its agenda on the development and implementation of regulatory policies and systems to enable the effective regulation of all professional engineering activity in Ontario in the public interest.

Motion carried

The proponent of the third submission was invited to introduce their motion.

A pre-recorded message from Patrick Quinn, P.Eng., FEC, was presented. It was stated that Council has decided that change is necessary and gone to outside experts for guidance and has essentially adopted what is known as policy governance. Policy governance is not really about policy; rather, it is about how you get policy implemented. Its proponents will agree it is not compatible with self governance, which is democratic. In policy governance you have competency tests for councillors and impositions, such as mandatory PEAK. At a Council meeting at the end of April, after very little debate but apparently after many confidential strategy meetings, it was decided to implement a total reorganization of the governance process. Again, the proponents of policy governance agree it is hugely disruptive and if you want to make that change it can involve push-back and calls for consultation. Not surprisingly, there has not been peer review, chapter involvement, town halls and other deliberative processes with which PEO has evolved over the year. Not debating the merits of the changes, although massive change without peer review is bound to be flawed. Members deserve to be treated with more respect. Engineering is a profession of integrity and ethics, accepted as trusted by the government and the public, has been self-governing for 99 years, and, if throwing the baby out with the bath water, we should at least be consulted. This is governance, not regulation, where there is true urgency. PEO can continue to govern while we consult. In the middle of a pandemic, it is so difficult to get a real sense of perspective. Pausing makes sense.

President Sterling provided some clarification on a couple of items. The first one is that the gov-

ernance experts PEO is working with are based in Canada, and the second fact is that all of Council's motions are recorded. Council has implemented a new system to record its motions and that software records each individual's motion.

Moved by Pat Quinn, seconded by Peter Cushman

THEREFORE, BE IT SUBMITTED THAT:

1. Council does not implement any significant changes to our bylaws or act without significant member and chapter consultation and that it commit to peer review, knowledge-based decision making and transparency.
2. That Council commits to effective, more robust communication and the removal of systemic biases and barriers to hearing and respecting diverse views.

Motion carried

The proponent of the fourth submission to invited to introduce their motion.

A pre-recorded message from Peter DeVita, P.Eng., FEC, was presented. It was noted that change is needed. Ten-hour Council meetings every three months is not sufficient. Council needs to meet every week. Councillors need to be in touch daily. Because this is not going to happen, what can be done? The Emerging Disciplines Task Force presented action motions to Council on March 20, 2020. It was shown that properly licensed engineers, those with exclusive rights to practise, account for only 9 per cent of the people in Ontario with engineering know-how. The task force also noted that only 40 per cent of engineering graduates joined PEO. This is called the uptake rate. For high-tech disciplines such as software engineering, the uptake rate is close to 0 per cent. This declining trend is prevalent even in civil engineering, whose uptakes dropped from about 74 per cent to less than 50 per cent. Less than 25 per cent of PEO members believe their P.Eng. is essential. The Emerging Discipline Task Force proposals were deferred and therefore denied. Many have gathered under the banner of Engineers for the Profession and include many former presidents and councillors of PEO as well as a few current councillors. PEO has had many years to act and has not. PEO began in 1922 with discipline-specific Council of five branches, each with three qualification councillors. This fundamental must be reapplied while accounting for well over 35 disciplines of today. Will creating multiple discipline regulatory bodies solve all our problems? These regulatory bodies are a necessary condition but not magic. This will empower engineers of similar disciplines to associate more effectively. It will permit them to address the street-level issues prevalent in their practices. Over 80 per cent of PEO members are in the newer fields without proper licensing that includes exclusive rights to practice. These disciplines need to create the licensing bodies and the demand legislation to produce and support rights to practise. Established practices such as civil have street-level issues. How is the public interest protected by allowing contractors to change engineering designs? There is a need to rebuild our profession based on this discipline-specific formula. Engineers for the Profession Incorporated has set on the path to make these changes happen and they want to work with PEO to reconstruct the profession.

It was moved by Peter DeVita, seconded by Roger Jones, P.Eng.

THEREFORE, BE IT SUBMITTED THAT:

- (1) This AGM recognize that PEO is no longer capable of preventing the decline of the profession with respect to the proper licensing of new engineering and their exclusive rights to practice, and
- (2) That, PEO work with "Engineers for the Profession Incorporated," to lobby the Ontario government for legislation that will create new discipline-specific regulatory bodies that will properly license and regulate all modern engineering and applied science practices whose works have a significant public interest impact.

Motion carried

The proponent of the fifth submission was invited to introduce their motion.

A pre-recorded message from Gregory Wowchuk, P.Eng., was presented. It spoke to the decline in communications with PEO's members. Communication with stakeholders, including PEO members, traditionally has been very important at PEO. In the past, there was a communications committee, which the mover chaired, as well as a tabloid called *The Link*, which kept members up to date on current affairs at PEO and *Engineering Dimensions*, which addressed all the big issues. Since then, *The Link* and the paper edition of *Dimensions* have been discontinued. Readership of the electronic version has dropped dramatically. The will to keep PEO members and other stakeholders informed and involved sadly has continued to decline. Coverage of Council deliberations in *Dimensions* is cursory at best. More importantly, more and more of Council's activity is being shielded from scrutiny by being held behind closed doors. Controversial topics are being discussed at plenaries or strategic conversations or improperly held in in-camera sessions. This is occurring while great structural change is being implemented at PEO without member approval. The submission's intent is to clarify that it is in the interest of PEO members, government, employers and the public that PEO's activity be maximally open and transparent. This submission does not restrict casual discussions or meetings between individual councillors. That is actually beneficial. What it addresses is the assembly of the whole Council and having a meeting or debate, which is not open and not minuted. That is in clear violation of our own bylaw, which states that all meetings, with very limited exceptions, be open to the public. The submission also affirms that detailed minutes are essential to all meetings, particularly to capture and record the diversity of the debate. Should the situation ever turn litigious,

written minutes are vital to establish what Council did or did not do. Engineers care about their profession and the public they serve. Future Council meetings should be open, documented and in compliance with PEO's bylaw.

President Sterling provided some clarification, noting that Council is not contravening any of its bylaws with how its meetings have been conducted over the past year.

While members voted, President Sterling addressed some of the questions about how voting is interpreted. She stated that submissions that are passed at this AGM will be considered by Council in accordance with the guidelines that were passed in March 2020, which is also on PEO's website. The motions are non-binding and help Council hear what members' thoughts are. The motions are fully researched and brought to Council at the September 2021 meeting of Council with fulsome research and information for Council to decide what it would like to do next.

Moved by Gregory Wowchuk, seconded by Alena Ravens, P.Eng.

THEREFORE, BE IT SUBMITTED THAT:

- (1) Presentations to, debate by and consensus of the assembled Council concerning Council agenda items shall occur only at a regular or special meeting of Council, convened in accordance with By-Law No. 1, sections 10 through 16. Such meetings shall have agendas and be minuted.
- (2) By-Law No. 1, paragraph 15(4) outlines few, very specific circumstances, which warrant convening in closed session. When it is deemed necessary to place an agenda item into an in-camera session, the chair shall cite a description of the topic and the applicable section 15(4) category during the open session. No other matters shall be placed on the agenda of a closed session or debated therein.
- (3) When there is significant minority debate concerning a Council resolution, which is either passed or not passed, the minutes shall note such. The minutes shall note the objection of any Council member who requests that his/her objection be recorded.

Motion carried

President Sterling thanked members for their engagement.

QUESTIONS TO COUNCIL

President Sterling invited members to submit questions to the current Council. It was noted that staff would follow up offline on those questions that could not be answered during the meeting due to time constraints.

A licence holder asked for an estimate on the average time for a new P.Eng. licence application to be approved. CEO/Registrar Zuccon advised that he could not provide specific times because, unfortunately, applications are received with some individuals just having graduated, so there is no typical average time he can report. But he would be happy to receive an email from the member so he can share some statistics that are tracked, noting it is difficult to provide an estimate of actual time. President Sterling added this was discussed at one of the Council meetings wherein the CEO/registrar provided a fulsome evaluation of the time it takes to proceed with applications through the system and is available through the minutes.

A licence holder asked how many applications were not approved in 2020. CEO/Registrar Zuccon replied he did not have this number on hand but again would review the files for this information. President Sterling clarified for those who may not be aware that a licence may take more than a year to go through and that should a licence be denied, there is a registration hearing process for anyone who wishes to appeal that decision.

A licence holder asked if Council considered that the multiple-choice National Professional Practice Exam (NPPE) ethics exam does not measure the same thing as the written Professional Practice Exam (PPE). Specifically, one measures knowledge well, but the PPE can reveal how one thinks well. He understands Council was told they measure the same thing. CEO/Registrar Zuccon replied that PEO was faced with a dilemma during the pandemic regarding the PPE, which were face-to-face but were not available. As a result, there were multiple inquiries from people wanting to move their application forward. PEO sought assistance from its sister association in Alberta. He pointed out that most of the provinces are on the NPPE. PEO is one of the few provinces that ran their own but needed a way to allow the applicants to move their application forward. PEO was looking at what could be done to pivot in the short term during COVID-19. He stated that the Alberta or the NPPE is a psychometrically balanced exam and does meet the rigor of testing.

President Sterling added that what was shared with Council is that, as CEO/Registrar Zuccon mentioned, Alberta is leading the NPPE; and by joining that, Ontario has a seat at the table in the constant evolution of that testing and so has the opportunity to provide feedback in that regard.

A licence holder asked what the related disciplines were for the 485 enforcement files that were opened. President Sterling stated that enforcement files relate to those who are unlicensed and therefore do not go to discipline. The files going to discipline are the complaints files. These statistics are included in the Q&A document in the annual report. She encouraged the member to look at that and if anything is not clear to please follow up, but enforcement files do not go to discipline.

A licence holder said she was informed there has been a 20-percent salary increase for PEO staff, including the one for the CEO. Could you please explain why this is so during a pandemic?

President Sterling replied that she could not comment on staff salaries—that is not what Council is responsible for. What she could comment on is that PEO has a Human Resources & Compensation Committee (HRCC), and that committee is

responsible for the oversight, setting objectives and reviewing the performance and compensation of the CEO/Registrar and that committee continues to do that work. CEO/Registrar Zuccon referred members to the audited financial statements where expenses are captured. He indicated that the approved budgets are followed and he was not aware of the number the member was citing regarding the salary increase.

A licence holder asked what steps PEO is taking to ensure it is becoming more and more net-zero compliant and reducing its carbon footprint year-over-year in all its operations. President Sterling indicated this was an operational question, so she would pass this on to the CEO/Registrar to answer but did note that in the virtual environment there is certainly a lot less movement of individual staff and volunteers and so PEO likely has significantly reduced its carbon footprint this year. CEO/Registrar Zuccon stated that for this year he was certain PEO was doing better than it was, but he took the point being made and it was something PEO needs to look at. Of course, even as owners of a building, PEO has an extended obligation to make sure their premises are as efficient and effective as possible.

A licence holder asked why members are not voting on mandatory CPD. When CPD was first presented, it was mentioned as optional. President Sterling replied that in place right now is the PEAK program, which is a voluntary professional development program, so this is a separate program. We have that in place right now and the CEO/Registrar can share any statistics on the uptake of that. This program has been in place for over three years at this point in time. In 2019, based on an external regulatory review by regulatory experts—who are, in fact, used across Canada by many regulators, and those regulatory experts include Harry Cayton—PEO Council adopted an action plan in 2019. This action plan stated that PEO would implement mandatory continuing professional development, so that decision was taken in 2019 as a Council to do mandatory professional development, which is different than PEAK. The implementation of that is in progress.

CEO/Registrar Zuccon stated it was his understanding that the question was why members weren't allowed to vote, and because it was not an operational matter, he could not answer. President Sterling advised that the decision to implement mandatory CPD was taken in 2019 by Council. During the implementation stage, it was noted that Council had previously adopted a motion before 2019 to go to a members' referendum on how to implement it. The motion to go to a members' referendum took place before receiving the external report that identified this significant CPD gap. This year, Council decided to rescind that motion based on the evolution of knowledge. This report, in addition to the two public reports she mentioned earlier which related to the Downsview stage collapse and the Elliot Lake mall collapse inquiries, provided Council with new information to determine it needed to move forward in the public interest and take responsibility for the implementation.

A licence holder would like to know what process was used to choose Deloitte as auditors and how they are charging PEO. President Sterling reiterated a previous answer and noted that PEO goes through an RFP process every five years to identify its auditor, and that RFP process identified Deloitte. This was last done in 2016, so the next auditor's RFP will be going out in 2021 and will likely influence the recommendations that come to the next AGM in 2022. The president encouraged members who were interested in financial reporting

to review the audited financial statements for this information.

A licence holder asked if calling a motion a “submission,” does Council consider it non-binding? President Sterling replied that, as she had indicated earlier, AGM motions are non-binding, but, at the same time Council takes them seriously. Further, staff takes time to thoroughly examine and research the motions to provide a fulsome report to Council at its September 2021 meeting.

A licence holder asked if the CEO/registrars received pushback/negative feedback with the switch to the NPPE. In other words, was there widespread dissatisfaction by those eligible to sit? Did they indicate that the PPE was preferred?

CEO/Registrar Zuccon stated that in order to provide some context, when the first PPE was cancelled last March, PEO reached out to the over 1800 who were impacted and offered them the alternatives to quickly write the June sitting of the NPPE. Over 72 per cent accepted this offer. In order to make things go smoothly, PEO also provided a final sitting of the former way that PPEs were done, and since then he has heard of very little pushback. Over 4200 applicants have accepted PEO’s offer as of the January sitting and there was another sitting that just took place, so from his vantage point it has been a well-received change. He further noted that, as the pandemic is lingering on, PEO now has no alternative but to look at the technical exam programs that have also been heavily impacted.

President Sterling advised she had received clarifications on some other questions, which she shared. The budget for the annual audit is about \$40,000, which can be found in the AGM documents.

A licence holder stated that at the 98th AGM, there was a motion (page 40 in *Engineering Dimensions*) that the 2019 audited financial statements were received as presented. Why was there no similar motion this year? Should there have been a similar motion this year?

President Sterling responded by noting that with the evolution of PEO’s governance, procedural matters have become clearer. The audited financial statements are approved by Council and are not required to be approved by the members, and, therefore, were brought forward at the AGM for information only.

PRESENTATION TO OUTGOING COUNCILLORS

President Sterling congratulated retiring members of the 2020–2021 Council, who had worked diligently to move the profession forward. President Sterling expressed her personal appreciation to all for their collaboration, support and encourage-

ment throughout the 2020–2021 year. She stated that it has been a pleasure serving as president and chair.

It was noted that certificates of appreciation would typically be presented to each retiring member at this time; however, they have received their certificates via mail. President Sterling then virtually thanked and recognized the following retiring members of Council: Nancy Hill, past president; Darla Campbell, elected vice president; Sandra Ausma, councillor-at-large; Wayne Kershaw, Western Region councillor; Arthur Sinclair, East Central Region councillor and appointed vice president; and Warren Turnbull, West Central Region councillor.

INSTALLATION OF NEW PRESIDENT

Past President Sterling administered the oath of office to Christian Bellini as 102nd president for the 2021–2022 term and presented him with the gavel of office.

PRESENTATION TO PAST PRESIDENT STERLING

President Bellini made a special presentation to acknowledge Sterling’s just-completed term of office as PEO president in an extraordinarily unique year. On behalf of Council, he thanked President Sterling and expressed sincere appreciation for all of her work and efforts to both PEO and the profession. It is recognized that this was not the year she or anyone expected and that her perseverance was appreciated. The loss of experience in events and opportunities normally attended by the president was acknowledged. The past president would normally be presented with tokens of appreciation, such as the ceremonial PEO gavel, a certificate of appreciation, a past president’s lapel pin and the outgoing president’s award at the AGM luncheon that typically follows the in-person AGM. Arrangements for the presentation will be made in person at the earliest and safest opportunity.

CLOSING REMARKS BY PRESIDENT BELLINI

President Bellini provided the following remarks: “Fellow engineers, honoured guests, it is my distinct pleasure to be virtually standing here before you today at the beginning of my term as PEO’s 102nd president.

“Thank you for entrusting me to provide leadership for the upcoming Council term. It is with a deep sense of responsibility to our self-regulated profession, to you, and most importantly, to the people of Ontario, whose interests we are committed to protect, that I take on this task on your behalf. We have a proud and enviable 99-year history of regulating engineering in Ontario. And the transformation work currently being undertaken by Council, which I will speak more about here, will ensure our ability to continue to do that into the future.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank this year’s Council, volunteers and staff for all of the extremely hard work they put in in this challenging year. And, in particular, I would like to pass best wishes on to Bernie Ennis for his upcoming retirement. His extraordinary knowledge and insightful contributions to our regulatory work will be missed. I would also like to thank Ontario’s attorney general, the Honourable Doug Downey, for his kind and supportive words today.

“Taking the reins in the middle of a significant transformation project is challenging. But it also represents an opportunity to take stock of where we are, review our accomplishments and use them to re-energize for what comes next.

“So where are we now? First a little background. As I begin my presidential term, I find myself deeply engaged in PEO’s unprecedented change project, which we have been undertaking for a few Council terms now. As is common with evolutionary change on this scale, different people will point to different events along the way as the catalyst for this work. For me, that event was the 2018 external regulatory performance review initiated by then-President Dave Brown.

“Championed by many, but also critiqued by others, there is little doubt its unfavourable review of PEO’s regulatory structures and processes demanded a response and a commitment to change. This led to the multifaceted change project, which is still ongoing, and which has already made some significant progress. While the report’s focus was on PEO’s regulatory review, it also suggested that some of PEO’s shortcomings might be attributed to an outdated governance structure. This was not a new idea. Talk of a governance review had been around for years and was even discussed as a member submission at the 2017 AGM in Thunder Bay—back when we could actually travel and meet in person.

“During her term, President Hill responded by having Council engage a governance consultant for a year to provide advice and coaching while simultaneously benchmarking PEO’s existing governance processes. That work culminated in a proposed governance renewal roadmap, approved by Council in early 2020, aimed at modernizing PEO’s governance structure.

“Thus, at the start of President Sterling’s term, Council found itself at the beginning of a two-year governance renewal project. Despite the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and thanks to the extremely hard work of President Sterling, a strongly supportive Council made groundbreaking progress in renewing a governance structure, which has remained largely unchanged for decades despite many previous attempts at reform.

“Now that we’re one year into the governance renewal project, what accomplishments can we look back on? Here are some selected advances we have made towards modernization:

- A commitment to be primarily a regulator;
- A commitment to be a governance type Council as opposed to one that is more interventionist or operationally focused;
- Four new board committees to support Council in its leadership role;

- A commitment to review the size and composition of Council; and
- A commitment to formally clarify the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities for Council, committees, staff and volunteers.

“So that is where we are today. I begin my term with the primary job of maintaining the change momentum we have built so far.

“With this background in mind, many who have spoken with me over the last few years will recall that I have been a strong proponent of a full, bottom-up review of the who, what and why of how we regulate engineering in Ontario. We need a fully modernized PEO to address some of the very pressing issues that have been raised over the last decade—issues such as the role of our principal regulatory tool, the licence; the role of academics and accreditation; and the intent behind our experience requirement and how we assess experience. Add to this the broad and rapidly expanding world of emerging engineering disciplines; if and how they should be regulated and what PEO’s role might be in this; and whether our existing regulatory framework and tools are adaptable or even suitable for this work.

“I believe strongly in this critical work. I believe that our very ability to self-regulate, to be an effective protector of the public interest, is contingent on our success in addressing these issues. So why are we not tackling them right now? There is certainly enormous pressure to do so.

“The answer for me comes back to the regulatory review, which identified outdated governance as an obstacle to effective change. I have been continuously involved on the regulatory side of PEO work for over 15 years and during that time I have seen many attempts to change, update or review the regulatory work we do. They were championed by volunteers and other individuals with a depth of experience and knowledge of PEO’s role. And yet few of these attempts resulted in tangible change. Our decentralized policy structure lacks a central clarity of purpose and direction and leads to fragmented change—change, which is not holistic, and which does not gain traction.

“The first-principles review of PEO’s regulatory work is indeed critical. But it had to wait until we began progressing on our governance work. If we had tried tackling it prematurely, before we had an updated governance structure in place, then I strongly feel our fresh attempt would have met the same fate as previous ones. That is why it is so important to prioritize the governance work and see it through.

“That said, with a new Regulatory Policy & Legislation Committee coming online this year, Council will finally be in a position to kick off the work towards significant regulatory reform, culminating perhaps in changes to the regulation and even the act, as well as how we operate. I really believe this will be a turning point for the renewal of our regulatory work.

“Lastly, I would like to address the messages that have come forward at today’s meeting. We have seen at today’s meeting that our governance work is not uniformly supported by all members. Many of the member submissions presented today focused on this work and were critical of how it has been carried out this past term. I respect these opinions. It is clear our members care deeply about our profession and are committed to self-regulation. It is also clear that change is a difficult road and there will always be conflicting views on the best way forward.

“To those who have been critical of our work thus far, I have two main messages:

- I deeply believe the work we have done so far will result in not just protecting but significantly strengthening our self-regulatory model. It will demonstrate exactly why engineers need to be at the table making key decisions on how we evolve the regulation of our profession; and
- We have heard our members messages clearly and will certainly commit to considering this feedback as we move forward in the next phase of this transformation work. We are committed to stakeholder consultation as needed to ensure we do not make significant policy decisions in a vacuum.

“We have a proud 99-year history of regulating engineering to serve and protect the people of Ontario. The work of this new Council term will equip future Councils and volunteers with the essential tools necessary to be a cutting-edge engineering regulator, well respected by the public whose interest we serve and protect. On a personal note, I’d also like to take this opportunity to thank my father, engineer Vittorio Bellini, who is listening here today, for encouraging me to follow an engineering career, and for his tireless promotion of our profession.

“As we approach 100 years of regulating our profession in 2022, I look forward to working with all of you in the coming term as we continue the important and critical work of modernizing PEO. Thank you, Merci, Miigwech.”

INTRODUCTION OF INCOMING MEMBERS OF COUNCIL

President Bellini introduced the 2021–2022 members of Council: Past President Marisa Sterling; President Christian Bellini; President-elect Nick Colucci, P.Eng., FEC; Vice President Marilyn Spink, P.Eng.; Councillors-at-Large Michael Chan, Leila Notash and Pat Quinn; Eastern Region Councillors Chantal Chiddle and Randy Walker; East Central Region Councillors Christopher Chahine, P.Eng., and Peter Cushman; Northern Region Councillors Ramesh Subramanian and Luc Roberge; Western Region Councillors Peter Broad and Susan McFarlane, PhD, P.Eng.; West Central Region Councillors Jim Chisholm, P.Eng., FEC, and Lisa MacCumber; and Lieutenant Governor-in-Council Appointees Arjan Arenja, Robert Brunet, Todd Bruyere, Lorne Cutler, Andy Dryland, Qadira C. Jackson Kouakou, Scott Schelske and Sherlock Sung.

President Bellini also introduced the PEO directors on the board of Engineers Canada: Arjan Arenja, Danny Chui, Nancy Hill, Kelly Reid and

Marisa Sterling. He noted that Arjan Arenja and Marisa Sterling, newly elected PEO directors on the board of Engineers Canada, would formally assume their roles at the Engineers Canada 2021 Annual Meeting of Members later in the month. He asked for a virtual round of applause to welcome the new councillors and directors.

CONCLUSION

President Bellini then declared the 99th AGM of the Association of Professional Engineers Ontario concluded.

Johnny Zuccon, P.Eng., FEC
CEO/Registrar