

1. How to map smart city based on virtual town hall? What are the advantages and disadvantages of going more toward automation by providing the virtual town hall?

-OSPE is striving to provide a “pre-pandemic” level of service to our members during the disruption caused by COVID-19.

-Because of social-distance protocols, it was not practical to hold an in-person Town Hall—not only because of all the adjustments that would have to be made, but because it did not seem reasonable or responsible to ask our members to meet while COVID-19 is still progressing through our communities.

-While we certainly miss the quality of in-person interactions, we felt that the Virtual Town Hall was a reasonable alternative for our members: it allows us to provide answers to questions, communicate directly with our members, and maintain a sense of continuity as we continue our day-to-day operations.

-As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, we will continue to look for alternative arrangements hosted online to provide our members with the same level of engagement they are accustomed to.

2. Why did OSPE request the Ontario Government to put PEO under trusteeship as this request could put a number of engineers at odds with OSPE and discourage engineers from supporting OSPE.

Renewal at Professional Engineers Ontario (PEO) has always been a priority at OSPE. Under delegated authority from the provincial government, PEO protects the public interest through licensing and regulation of the practice of professional engineering. The duty of public interest organizations is to place the welfare of the largest portion of the population (the citizens of Ontario) at the forefront of any debate, activity or service provision.

Throughout OSPE’s 20 years of existence PEO has continued to engage in advocacy and other member service activities, despite the fact that these strictly fall under OSPE’s mandate. This has limited the effectiveness of the regulatory body. OSPE has raised concerns about this with PEO throughout the years, however, little to no action has taken to remediate the issue.

In November 2018, OSPE contacted then Attorney General Caroline Mulroney regarding the non-regulatory activities of PEO, following a letter sent by Consulting Engineers Ontario (CEO). These conversations, and the need for reform, have taken an even more important role due to the recommendations outlined in PEO’s regulatory review released in June 2019.

The report highlighted many ongoing issues at PEO, namely those surrounding professional development, bias in the licensing process (e.g. barriers towards women

and international engineering graduates), and investment in non-regulatory activities through the chapter system.

These issues should be taken seriously by all engineers in Ontario. **Our reason for continuing to advocate for regulatory reform is simple: we believe that it is integral to the reputation and growth of the profession. Without an effective regulator, the engineering profession is at a high reputational and economic risk.**

The impact of inaction is severe. Engineering jobs and businesses are at risk due to escalating costs associated with liability insurance and the negative perception that engineers lack qualifications that are impacting public safety, innovation, and economic growth.

Engineering firms are not required to train and develop their own talent.

OSPE has heard recently from Infrastructure Ontario, Metrolinx, the Infrastructure Bank of Canada and from engineering firms, regarding their concerns about the impact of these regulatory conditions in Ontario.

Small to medium sized engineering companies have acknowledged that the state of the insurance market in Ontario has impacted their ability to submit bids for infrastructure projects. In addition to escalating individual and economic costs, conversations are being had about implementing further deregulation which would allow for others to do work that has been historically reserved for engineering licence holders. **This is a result of key stakeholders losing trust in the engineering profession.**

Given the current COVID-19 pandemic, OSPE knows that the federal and provincial governments will be making historical investments in infrastructure projects as this is the engine to rebuild the economy. Without effective reform, Ontario's engineering companies and engineers will be left out of this economic opportunity. Jobs and projects will be outsourced to firms outside of the province and even the country, and even potentially to other professionals.

At OSPE, we know that engineers and engineering jobs create wealth for the Ontario. We are deeply concerned about how engineers are being impacted and perceived in the province. This directly impacts their reputation, their level of respect, trust, and ultimately, their value and compensation in society.

Change is difficult but it is necessary, and we believe that a strong regulator will enable us to remediate some of these challenges.

- 3. I would appreciate hearing on how OSPE intends to resolve the outstanding issues it has with PEO including how OPSE is going to resolve with the PEO activities that the PEO is doing that OSPE feels is in their mandate.**
- 4. How will OSPE mend relations with PEO and work collaboratively to support engineer? The most recent letter to the AG was egregious and disappointing.**

One of OSPE's core beliefs is that a healthy regulator means a healthy profession. We support the highest standard of industry regulation and in implementing and enforcing regulations that ensure safety, protect the environment, and make Ontario more competitive.

OSPE holds the engineering profession in the highest regard: we believe engineers are a pillar of society, able to guide policy makers towards sound, evidence-based decisions, that consider impacts from all angles.

The foundation of any professional is a strong, stable and focused regulator. WE have been advocating for this since OSPE was formed 20 years ago.

We continue to push for a separation of duties between the regulatory and advocacy body, a separation that PEO has agreed is necessary for the growth of the profession. This was echoed in the Regulatory Review conducted by the Professional Standards Authority that received unanimous consent from PEO Council, and was also identified in PEO's recent governance review.

Despite the evidence, PEO is still moving slowly to disassociate itself of it's non-regulatory activities. The threats to the profession are real, and unfortunately, we really can't wait for this issue to resolve itself.

In an attempt to put more pressure on PEO by "The Profession", we will do a better job of engaging our members to reach out to their local PEO councillors and impress upon them the need for rapid change and a sole focus of regulatory excellence.

5. Has the recent issue with PEO been resolved to both parties satisfaction?

OSPE's relationship with PEO is ongoing. We believe that a healthy, fully functioning regulator, is the key to a successful profession. PEO Executive Council members have also expressed that a strong member/advocacy body is also vitally important for the health of the profession.

Both bodies acknowledge there needs to be a better mechanism for PEO to address concerns brought forward by OSPE as part of the OSPE-PEO Joint Relations Committee process is not currently effective.

We have asked PEO to issue a joint statement to demonstrate that both parties are eager to resolve these issues and find a way forward. WE are awaiting a response to this request.

However, as an advocacy body, we advocate for this on behalf of our members who hold that a strong, effective regulator is a key pillar to a successful profession. It is our role, as an advocacy body, to do what we can to achieve this outcome.

6. How does OSPE intend to move forward, working cooperatively with PEO,

and avoid ineffective, counter-productive actions that are detrimental to both organizations?

OSPE remains optimistic about continuing our fruitful relationship with PEO, to build, better, and protect the engineering profession.

While all relationships have their ups and downs, we believe that as OSPE and PEO are united by a common goal—the betterment of the engineering profession—it is in our best interest to work together, as part of a larger system of “checks and balances.”

OSPE always has open doors for communication and feedback. We strive daily to represent our members in the best fashion possible, while protecting their interests and advocating strongly on their behalf.

We have a mechanism to bring forward our concerns and complaints through the OSPE-PEO JRC. Although the JRC is non-binding committee, at the least we would have expected that concerns we bring up are discussed at the PEO Council meeting. Unfortunately, this has not been the case.

7. Knowing that regulation of the engineering profession is an important aspect, what are some of the steps OSPE is taking to ensure productive collaboration with PEO?

OSPE supports PEO’s decision to call for a regulatory review and the findings released in the report. We continue to support open dialogue between the two organizations.

We are also asking for increased transparency at PEO. Last year, PEO recently conducted a governance self-assessment. We believe that Professional Engineers should be able to see the results of this self-assessment so that licence holders are fully aware of the deficiencies within the regulator.

Key findings in all the reviews conducted by external assessors, including the Operations Review, point to the lack of focus on regulatory activities by PEO due to all the non-regulatory functions PEO currently does. The vast majority of these functions OSPE does or should be doing, as we are best positioned to perform these on behalf of the profession.

We are asking to work with PEO, through a collaborative effort, to transfer these activities and programs to OSPE. We are willing and able to find solutions that allow PEO to focus on it’s regulatory functions and allow OSPE to provide even more benefits on behalf of the Profession.

8. How will OSPE grow?

OSPE continues to grow by pushing for advocacy as guided by our members. All of our

activities, concerns, and priorities are guided by our strong membership base. Our growth means continuing to target the concerns of our members and push for change.

Further, OSPE is proactively launching initiatives that cast a wider net to support the engineering profession.

Last year, we launched our HUBS initiative, which aims to bridge the gap between students, professionals, and all the diverse members of the engineering community. Recently, we have launched the Ontario Engineering Academy with the aim of supporting engineers throughout every stage of their career. And this month we have launched a reinvigorated job board, providing deeper functionality, transparency, and ease-of-use to members and non-members alike. And later this summer we will launch an all-new community module aimed to streamline the communication process and provide a one-of-a-kind discussion board for engineering topics.

Our upcoming events, such as EDI2020 and our first ever engineering conference in 2021, are aimed at the wider engineering profession, while being designed with the concerns of our members in mind.

Our board and our staff are continuously discussing initiatives that we believe will engage OSPE members and attract new members to demonstrate the value of OSPE. If you have any ideas or suggestions, we'd be all ears!! In fact, we have a membership advisory committee that may be looking to attract new members, so if you are interested, please sign up on our website.

9. Would OSPE be able to make membership mandatory? What would be the process?

When OSPE was first founded 20 years ago, membership was indeed mandatory. A portion of your PEO Fees went to OSPE to pay for your membership. However, a few years later, PEO held a referendum to ask if members wanted this to continue. The PEO members voted to discontinue this requirement.

Any move to make OSPE membership mandatory will have to come from the regulatory body. There is precedent, in that medical professionals are all required to be part of their advocacy/membership association.

10. What was the process to consult OSPE members in identifying the economic recovery recommendations? Why were OSPE members not consulted beforehand about the recommendation that the province should revoke PEO power of self-governance?

OSPE formed its COVID-19 Economic Recovery Working Group in mid-April with the purpose of proposing concrete, and actionable recommendations on ways that OSPE

can assist the Ontario and Federal governments to achieve short and long-term economic recovery.

The goals of the working group are to:

- a. Determine key priority areas that the provincial and federal governments need to focus on, in order to achieve economic growth.
- b. Build on the existing 2020 Pre-Budget Submission and 2020 Provincial Strategy with new recommendations that directly align to the realities of the provincial economy.
- c. Analyze Ontario's Economic Recovery Plan and determine how it impacts the engineering community, what engineers can do to contribute to its implementation, and identify areas for improvement. Provide an engineering perspective to Ontario's Economic Recovery Plan.
- d. Ensure all recommendations made have a direct impact on the engineering profession – through industry expansion, innovation, job growth, and by elevating the profile of engineers in the province.
- e. Ensure recommendations have a positive impact on the engineering profession and engineering jobs.
- f. Ensure that recommendations align with OSPE's Strategic Pillars.

The Economic Recovery Working Group is comprised of members from **all our 5 task forces, as well as members from our Board of Directors. All members of this working group are engineers and OSPE members. As the President and Chair of OSPE, I was designated as the Chair of the Task Force.**

As always, all facets of OSPE's recommendations are open for discussion through our website, across our social channels, and through our newsletters. OSPE engaged through these channels asking for input and recommendations before the letters were sent.

If you'd like to take on a role within one of our task forces, please contact us at advocacy@ospe.on.ca with your stated area of interest, and we will put you directly in touch with the appropriate policy professional.

11. What are the OSPE recommendations to Govt of Canada for the recovery of economy after COVID-19 pandemic is over?

OSPE has made a series of immediate and short-term recommendations to both the provincial and federal governments. A full list of our recommendations can be found on our website, under the COVID-19 tab found on our home page, "Government Submissions." <https://ospe.on.ca/covid-19-updates-from-ospe/>

Some of these recommendations include:

- a. Work towards a sustainable transition, by encouraging the use of Distributed Energy Resources (DERs) and emissions free technology.
- b. Invest in talent development, knowledge training, and supports for engineers (upskilling, reskilling and professional development)
- c. Support engineering students and recent engineering graduates (through tax incentives and restructuring of the Canada Student Loans Program)
- d. Drive the transformation of engineering education (moving from an inputs-based to an outcomes-based model). We want to remove any obstacles to developing the best talent possible!
- e. Create a dedicated fund to support Ontario businesses in Research and Development (R&D) activities with a strong focus on local commercialization, including development of and protection of Intellectual Property (IP) for Ontario and Canada's benefit.
- f. Invest in Ontario's Mining Industry to ensure proper clean-up of Ontario orphaned and abandoned sites (similar to what the government did in BC, Alberta and Saskatchewan for abandoned oil rigs)

12. Will the Government of Ontario follow through with OSPE President's letter of May 26, 2020 Ontario's Post COVID-19 Economic Recovery Plan Phase 1 section and invest in Ontario based companies manufacturing and innovating of critical PPE equipment?

In March, the government launched the Ontario Together web portal, appealing to Ontario's manufacturers, entrepreneurs, and innovators to provide essential supplies and equipment to support frontline workers in their fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The fund is comprised of \$50 million to support submissions where the government can act on immediately.

The government is prioritizing submissions that help retool or adopt the technological changes needed to produce supplies and equipment for the health care sector or for other critical public services.

Since launch, the Ontario Together web portal has received more than 26,000 submissions. More than 17,000 emergency supplies leads have been converted into more than \$610 million in purchases of critical supplies and equipment to support staff on the front lines including, more than 21 million gowns, 168 million gloves, 123 million masks and over 4 million face shields. Over 6,600 ideas have been submitted through the portal on how to address the COVID-19 outbreak, including offers to retool their business to make critical supplies or to deliver needed goods or services.

The Ontario Together web portal is now also accepting technology-driven solutions and services to help businesses reopen safely and to strengthen interprovincial trade and supply chains.

OSPE is still advocating for a more robust investment in Ontario based companies that are critical in providing essential PPE.

13. One of the recommendations is to have government screen everything through the lens of diversity. There are a lot of folks that believe quite strongly that regardless of whether is a good idea or not, OSPE should be focusing on engineering expertise rather than gender or other diversity issues, or other social issues, for that matter.

14. Appropriateness of OSPE board to advance social agenda items using OSPE Platform.

If there was one lesson learned from OSPE's Breaking Barriers Project, or from our recent EDI or WEACTION events, is that there have been decision made in the past that discriminated against a person because of their skin colour, gender or sexual orientation, regardless of their engineering expertise. Yes, the impacts of COVID-19 have affected us all, but recent research from stats Canada, and the discussions occurring as part of Engineers Canada 30by30 Initiative has shown that diversity groups have been impacted more greatly than other groups.

As the economic recovery starts to ramp up, and firms start to hire new talent, they need to be aware of the current diversity requirements for federally funded public projects. We want to encourage them to seek out the best talent possible, but do not discount talent based on either their sexual orientation, gender or ethnicity. This is one of OSPE's values that guide this organization, and will continue to do so in the coming years.

15. 5G is approached as a phone service in Canada, when is AI going to be introduced to the society??

5G is a fifth generation of wireless communications, therefore it makes sense that discussion surrounding this technology has focused on ushering a network for future generations with more devices, faster communication, and higher speeds. As we know, 5G will address advances in connectivity, latency, and bandwidth capacity which will impact other technologies such as autonomous vehicles or aircraft for example. OSPE's Research and Innovation Task Force is currently working on a 5G initiative intended to address how regulation and government policies will impact speed of 5G deployment in Ontario/Canada, competitiveness of telecommunication industry, and leadership role in wireless technology development. The Task Force is also discussing the impact and development of AI technologies.

16. In times of COVID 19, please give guidance to young international graduate students who are looking forward to immigrate and build economy of Canada

OSPE believes that a diverse workforce leads to an infusion of diverse, innovative ideas. Unfortunately, it is a reality that COVID-19 has hampered the economy and is causing an economic slowdown that may be felt in Canada for years to come.

Our main priority currently, as outlined in our recommendation letters, is stabilizing the economy. As the COVID-19 situation fluctuates, we believe that many avenues for economic recovery will open. International graduate students have always served as a bedrock for academy and industry, and we hope that this continues to be the case as Canada re-opens its economy.

With the recent decision by the Trump administration to stop issuing HB-1 international visa's for highly skilled immigrants, we see Canada, and Ontario as being a sought out destination for internationally educated engineering grads. We have a place for them at OSPE to help them through the licensing process and educate them on what it means to be a contributing member of the Engineering Profession in Ontario.

The economy will take some time to recover, we acknowledge and understand this, but Canada and specifically, Ontario, is well positioned to recover quickly, given the right investments and stimuli. We strongly believe by investing and supporting engineering growth in the province will accelerate the economic recovery process, which will benefit everyone in society.

17. Does OSPE advocate for better compensation for P.Eng.'s - address 20 years of salary erosion due to the oversupply of engineering grads?

OSPE works to position engineers as leaders, capable of driving Ontario's most strategic industries into the future. As such, we work to ensure that industry and government recognizes the value of engineers and that this is effectively reflected in their compensation.

OSPE also partners with Mercer to provide our members with information regarding engineering compensation, empowering them to advocate for fair pay. Mercer has been reporting on Ontario engineering compensation for over 64 years, partnering with the Ontario Society of Professional Engineers (OSPE) in 2005 and eventually expanding the Mercer | OSPE National Engineering Survey to collect engineer compensation data across Canada for 19 disciplines in all major industries and sectors. During this time engineering compensation has been benchmarked against Professional Engineers Ontario's (PEO) classification guide of engineering responsibilities, which we know as levels A – F.

Throughout the years, these definitions have played a crucial role in defining engineer career paths for OSPE members and Ontario engineers while establishing compensation benchmarks based on responsibility and experience.

Lastly, OSPE has and continues to advocate on equitable pay for men and women in engineering. Although the gap has narrowed, women working in engineering jobs make on average \$11,000.00 less per year than their male counterparts based on equal experience and tenure. We acknowledge much more work needs to be done on this.

Yes, there are an abundance of engineering graduates in Ontario, both domestic and internationally educated. But that's only part of the story. Looking the Consulting Engineers of Ontario Fees guidelines, you can see that Engineering Fees have not been going up substantially. With the increasing costs of insurance, litigation fees, the transferring of project risk to engineers, and other increasing expenses, it is increasingly difficult for engineers to continue making a profitable living.

OSPE has been advocating, with our various partners, to implement a QBS system for procurement, which awards contracts based on best qualified, versus cheapest price. We have long been discussing the 'commoditization of the profession'. We have also offered career courses on negotiation and supported under-represented disadvantaged groups, such as women and minorities, on how to ask for salary increases and shared some tips and best practices at our recent EDI Forum.

As we said, more needs to be done in this area and we have launched a new market research initiative, and have had contact with Stats Canada's Labour Market division on how best to find this data. Stay tuned.

18. Is whistle blower assistance for P.Eng.'s who lose their job or need legal help as advocacy issue or member benefit?

As an OSPE member, you get a free consultation with Corestone Law for any legal issue. There are a number of established safeguards already built into employment law and the occupational health and safety act against reprisals for employees that most people are not aware of. The legal team at Corestone Law, including Harp Kuhk, are well known and respected. They can assist and provide you with some options. Of course, the OSPE team is also here to help and offer support.

Any specific references to whistle-blower protection for Professional Engineers that are enshrined in the P.Eng. Act will need to be implemented by PEO. I understand that in the past, this was asked for by OSPE as part of a OSPE-PEO JRC Committee meetings many years ago (before I was on the OSPE Board), but again, I don't believe it ever made it to the Council agenda for reasons we discussed earlier in the town hall regarding the effectiveness of that committee, and the changes we've requested.

19. For members to request a special meeting it requires 10% of the Professional members members. How many Professional members are there? A quorum

is 25 members. Is it even realistic that members may be able to request a special meeting?

20. How could we, as professional engineers, encourage OSPE to reconsider/repeal the recent election candidate protocol for the Board?

OSPE is currently governed by the Corporations Act. In accordance with section 129 (1)(i) of the Act, OSPE must pass by-laws and make decisions on various rules to regulate its affairs. As such, a quorum of 25 members is set for attending a meeting, which is based on past or average attendance rates. The Act is silent on setting the quorum; However, the Act imposes a procedure for calling meetings. If a member calls a meeting, the Act states that the same must adhere to section 295 (1), which states as follows:

Requisition for meeting

295 (1) Shareholders of a company holding not less than one-tenth of the issued shares of the company that carry the right to vote at the meeting proposed to be held, or not less than one-tenth of the members of a corporation without share capital entitled to vote at the meeting proposed to be held, as the case may be, may request the directors to call a general meeting of the shareholders or members for any purpose connected with the affairs of the corporation that is not inconsistent with this Act.

The section states that not less than 10% of the members must submit the request. We are not aware of any exceptions to this requirement of the Act.

21. Does OSPE consider that anyone expressing an opinion to the effect that OSPE does not have systemic racism or that professional engineering profession in Ontario does not have systemic racism is a racist.

No. We believe that we are individually entitled to our opinions, and we believe that collectively diversity is our strength. The fact is that systemic racism does exist in professional environments however expressing opinions regarding these social issues in a tactful and empathetic manner will serve us all in working together. We would strongly encourage everyone to attend this year's EDI forum where you can hear the stories and learn about the impact of diversity on professional workspaces.