

From The

PRESIDENT

President appoints Engineering Licensure Qualifications Task Force

Our licensure system has historically rested on a three-legged stool—that is, education, experience, and examination. The perception and relevance of these “stool legs” have been debated in many forums. Anecdotal information and recent research indicate that licensure is not well understood by stakeholders, nor is it valued or pursued by many engineers. As a result, I have recently appointed an NCEES task force to assess our present U.S. engineering-licensure model, ascertain the effects of emerging changes in the engineering profession on the licensure process, and consider alternatives to the current model.

A similar task force in Canada recently concluded that the value of engineering licensure has eroded in recent years and is in danger of becoming even less relevant as time goes on. The Canadian task force’s report further indicates that there is a decreasing commitment on the part of engineering graduates to become licensed members of the profession. The same statement may be made in the United States, as data indicate that the majority of both Canadian and U.S. engineering graduates are not licensed and do not pursue licensure. An NSPE task force recently concluded that our current licensure system has been in place for many years and has not adapted to the realities of the current engineering marketplace. The NSPE task force also expressed concern that our system is inadequate for engineers working in emerging fields.

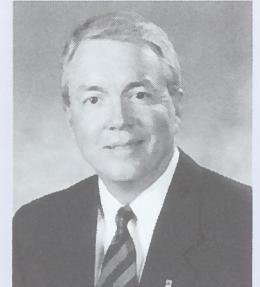
Most of us believe strongly in our three-legged stool. Most of us also feel strongly that our system is the best in the world, and we don’t want to undermine our standards for the sake of international mobility or just to get a higher percentage of U.S. engineers licensed. My hope

is that this task force will identify a licensure model that maintains our current standards of public protection and is more acceptable to industry and the international community. I encourage you to read the article by Tom Talbot included in this edition of *Licensure Exchange* which expresses his view concerning the licensure model.

All licensure systems have stakeholders. In the case of engineering licensure, the primary stakeholder is the public. Protection of the public’s health, safety, and welfare must remain paramount at all times. Other stakeholders include licensure applicants, the employers of applicants, educators, and technical and professional societies. The participation of these stakeholders on our task force is necessary to the building of trust, belief, and confidence in the outcome. Because of this, I have invited NSPE, ASME, ACEC, IEEE, ABET, ASEE, CCPE, ASCE, and others to participate. We have been fortunate to assemble a diverse group of dedicated NCEES members to serve on the task force. As you might imagine when considering the complexity of the charges, the task force is expected to operate for more than one year. I encourage all of you to provide your input to members of this task force.

The Engineering Licensure Qualifications Task Force will assess various licensure models and provide the Council with reports and recommendations at future zone and annual meetings. Our licensure system will remain founded on high standards of education, experience, and examination as we seek to adapt to the current marketplace and emerging professional arenas.

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