TECHNICAL PROGRAM

Panel Discussion: Government Relations Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020

A panel of experts from various industries, with connections to different levels of government. The purpose of the panel is to discuss new ideas and concepts for modification and changes to the Association to make it a more cohesive working business within the government relations area. The past two year's efforts in government relations will be discussed, and input will be sought from the members into future strategic priorities. Discussion on the creation of Government Relations Advisory committees will be brought forth throughout the conversation to compliment the execution of the strategic plan.

From July 1, 2015, to June 30, 2016, the Association continued with its mission of being an active and trusted voice in the community on matters related to engineering and geoscience. We fulfilled our mandate to regulate the professions in these areas and protect the public interest. There was a significant change in the spring 2016 provincial election, with many government officials newly elected and appointed. Several steps of our previous efforts to engage the government needed to be repeated due to the newly elected and appointed personnel. Efforts were successful in connecting with the newly elected and appointed government officials.

The engineering and geoscience professions are extensively relied upon to develop solutions, critical infrastructure, and essential systems for the general public. Many of these projects are among the largest budget expenditures made by the government on behalf of the general public. They represent substantial technological, social, and economic developments. Despite this, the Association finds a lack of awareness by the government and the public regarding the availability of local expertise and innovation from our members. More could be done to position these professions as trusted advisors to the government and that is our goal as we move forward into the coming year. Further efforts will be taken to solidify the relationship with government. A stakeholder analysis was completed over the year bringing together the information for the creation of the government relations strategic plan.

Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba should be seen as an association to regulate the professions and protect the public interest. We have no desire to appear as a lobbying group or political agency. Our objective is to pursue improved government relations.

The overarching goal of the Association's government relations activity is the creation of a relationship where government officials in all areas think "engineering and geoscience means Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba". Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba will be their first call as a reliable source of information, new policy ideas, and as a partner in satisfying the consumer (who is also the voter). Creating this relationship requires the formation and execution of a Government Relations Strategic Plan, a clear and thorough communications strategy, to further engagement of the members with government, to connect with MLAs locally, and to take

action through an active Government Relations Committee. Positive interaction with government will allow Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba to achieve its broader strategic goals and bolster communication and public relations efforts.

The review of this panel will be published through an e-news bulletin and on the website.

Panel: James Blatz, P.Eng. FEC, Michael Gregoire, P.Eng. FEC, Allan Silk, P.Eng. FEC, André Marchildon, Randy Herrmann P.Eng. FEC, and Moderated by C. Scott Sarna.

Dr. James Blatz, P.Eng. FEC, obtained his BSc (1996) and PhD (2000) in Civil Engineering from the University of Manitoba and completed an NSERC Post-Doctoral award at the GeoEngineering Centre at Queen's-RMC. He joined the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Manitoba in 2001 and served as the Associate Head of the Department of Civil Engineering and also served as Associate Dean (Research and Graduate Programs) in the Faculty of Engineering prior to his current appointment as the Associate Vice-President (Partnerships) at the University of Manitoba. His research as a Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering focusses in the areas of risk management for civil engineering infrastructure and technical aspects of temporary and permanent flood protection works. James is also the founding President of TREK Geotechnical, a consulting engineering services firm located in Winnipeg with over 20 employees that provides geotechnical consulting services in Western Canada.

He serves on numerous boards and committee's for technical societies and other organizations; most notably, he served from 2009 to 2014 on the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC). He previously served on NSERC's Executive Council, was Chair of the NSERC National Committee on Grants and Scholarships and was a member of the NSERC Prairies Advisory Council. He was appointed by Engineers Canada from 2011 to 2014 to the Canadian Engineering Accreditation Board that is responsible for accreditation of Engineering programs nationally

Michael Gregoire, P.Eng. FEC, works in the areas of Investigations, Discipline, Enforcement, Legislation, Standards, and the Continuing Competency as the Director of Professional Standards at Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba. Prior to taking on this role in 2008, Michael worked in the world of consulting engineering, where he provided solutions to problem buildings.

C. Scott Sarna is an accomplished leader and experienced consultant, specializing in business and politics. He was born in Winnipeg, Manitoba and has lived in Canada, Australia, and the United States. His political background

started as a co-campaign manager and brought him to his role today as a political lobbyist. In 2010 he ran as a candidate for Member of Parliament. He has been a business consultant and key business leader for his entire career. In addition to being the CEO of Royal Sire Ltd.

Allan Silk, P. Eng. FEC, graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1985 with a Bachelor of Science in Computer Engineering. For most of his career, Allan has specialized in operational planning at Manitoba Hydro. During his career, Allan has participated in and led many inter-utility taskforces and committees investigating transmission capability. Allan also has worked on international projects for Manitoba Hydro International in Guatemala, Saudi Arabia, and Tajikistan.
Allan is a Professional Engineer in the Province of Manitoba. In November 2004 he commenced a one year term as President of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Manitoba. In 2008, Allan was awarded a Fellowship from Engineers Canada. Allan is a member of IEEE.

André Marchildon is a remarkable, energetic, and focused student, completing his fourth year at the University of Manitoba in the Mechanical Engineering Program. As the Senior Stick President, he represents over 1,700 undergraduates working with a council of 90 dedicated student leaders, managing a budget of one quarter million dollars.
Mr. Marchildon has held leadership positions in several organizations including the University of Manitoba Engineering Society and the Congress of the Canadian Federation of Engineering Students, and was a Cabinet Minister in the Manitoba French Youth Parliament. He also gives his time to St. Amant, working with those who have developmental disabilities. As busy as he is, Mr. Marchildon has maintained an outstanding academic record - he is a young man well prepared for an exciting career in the field of engineering.

Randy Herrmann, P.Eng. FEC, is the Director of the Engineering Access Program (ENGAP) at the University of Manitoba. He graduated from the University of Manitoba in 1988 with a Bachelor of Science Degree in Geological Engineering. He is a member of Engineers Geoscientists Manitoba and the Professional Engineers of Ontario.
Over the years, Randy's life and work within Indigenous communities and within the engineering field has shown him the lack of engineers of Indigenous ancestry and the obstacles faced by native students to obtain a degree. His desire to help change these factors and make it easier for Indigenous students to pursue an Engineering Degree led him to become Director of ENGAP, a position he has held since 1998.