



Guelph Engineering Society



Report on PEOSC at Windsor,
Nov. 7-9.

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1. Purpose of Conference

Briefly summarize the purpose of this conference (i.e. AGM, educational purposes, networking, etc.).

The purpose of this conference was to educate engineering students on public policy and how engineers should be more involved. The PEO panel, feel as though engineers are not getting involved enough in the community, and this is causing the government to make less informed decisions especially when it comes to science and engineering matter. Engineers view things much differently than most other professions, and with our great detailed education, it would make sense to have more of us in this type of field. Currently there are only six members in the federal parliament who are engineers, and they wish to increase this number to eleven by 2011.

2. Personal Goals for Conference

Please describe goals that you personally had for this conference. What did you hope to gain from this experience? What types of issues did you hope to gain insight on? What did you aim to bring back to Engineering at the University of Guelph?

My personal goals in attending this conference were to further educate myself on the topic of engineering and public policy as well as informing myself further on how the PEO society can help engineers in getting more involved. I hoped to have gained valuable knowledge on such topics, and hoped that this would help me pave the direction in which path I will eventually pursue. Since I am planning on eventually becoming involved politically with my engineering degree later on, issues such as young politicians, leadership and public policy were really intriguing. In attending such a conference, I wanted to be able to come back to Guelph and elaborate on the issues learned to my peers and show them from what I have learned, on how to get involved, especially for those who are about the "environmental movement".

3. Summary of Events

Briefly summarize each event you attended on the itinerary. Reflect on each one commenting on relevance to you personally and/or Engineering at the University of Guelph, and what you took/learned from the event. Point form is acceptable here.

The first informative session was that of Howard Brown and his panel of young politicians. The politicians included that from the Liberal Party, two from the Conservative Party and one from the NDP. This session made me realize how ignorant and brainwashed some of the young “bright minds” of the future are going to be. It made me ask myself: “these are the leaders of tomorrow?..... wow were screwed”. Not to say that there weren’t any half decent comments made by at least one of the parties, but it just comes to show us that we should not be letting these types of people make public policies if they don’t even have half the mind to answer why they joined that party in the first place. On a second note, I emailed each of these “politicians” individually and asked for a more thorough description of why or why not they truly believe that engineers should be involved in making policies, and to my expectations, no one ever replied.

The next session was that of Sean McCann (M.A.Sc., P.Eng.). He introduced the topic of leadership and how engineers should get out of the stereotype of being bookworms and instead go out and get involved. He managed to fit every little piece of information he could think of under each headings of his powerpoint presentation slides. The fonts were so small at some point that I’m pretty sure Dr. Stiver himself would have slapped him silly. In the end, he though me the new word “volunteerism”, and also that getting involved and doing good in the community is potentially all for self gain since it helps you in the end.

Dr. Tam’s (Ph.D, P.Eng.) session was all about leadership. An interesting and enthusiastic performance on his behalf, showed that this topic does not have to be boring. Demonstrated the three typed of people: Entrepreneur (out front risk taker), Enterpriser (right behind risk calculator) and the follower (self explanatory). He talked about engineers making a difference in society and how we shouldn’t be wasting our skills and knowledge and that sometimes we must be the entrepreneur and sometimes we have to be the follower depending on situations.

Donald Wallace’s (Ph.D) session was one of my favorites. His topic was public policy. He described how engineers impact health and vitality. He said “lack of engineers input results in inadequate recognition of technical requirements in public policy”. He also talked about discussion papers which attract leading professions making it accessible to different audiences. One point that he stressed was that we need to build a relationship to make engineers more visible, for example showing the “stars” of the profession in order for the public to even recognize what we do for society.

Manoj and Noreen, both from the PEO liaison, spoke about engineering licensing. this topic was not interesting to me since I am in no hurry to get licensed therefore plan on getting more informed when the time becomes more relevant. In a nutshell though, to get licensed, you must take a test which is three hours long. Part A of the test is on ethics

and part B of the test is on Law). They also talked about completing experience hours required by internship.

Mark Galvin (B.A.Sc., LL.B., P.Eng., P.T.O.E.), my favorite presenter, holds a degree in Civil Engineering as well as Law along with three professional designations. His lecture was on communication. He emphasized that as engineers we must be able to properly communicate our thoughts and especially our skills. He presented several tips that could be useful to us when communicating in the professional field such as avoiding jargons, bad spelling/grammar, avoiding acronyms, and try to seek face to face communication as much as possible. Word crafting is crucial since it will help convince the audience what you are truly getting them to understand. "Sometimes it's the way you say it that matters the most". A good quote mentioned: "It's not how long, but what is said". For example Lincoln's speech which was two minutes long versus a standard two hours long from most presidents.

4. Evaluation

i) Conference Organizers

Evaluate how the conference was run overall, highlighting strengths and weaknesses, and what could be done to improve the experience.

Overall, the conference was very well run. The majority of the guest speakers were very enjoyable to watch even though some of them didn't have the best presentation. One of the greatest highlights, were Howard's panel of young politicians. It was nice to see other people our age getting involved in other professions even if they were very uninformed. (It motivated me more to become involved politically). Some things that could have been done to be improved were the length of each day's lectures. I feel as though this should have been four day conference rather than three, since the topics discussed were very important and very much related to us and how we affect society. The lectures should have been a bit more spread out with more speakers more directly involved with the main theme, which was "Public Policy".

ii) Delegate

Evaluate your own personal performance at the conference; how did you contribute and represent well as a delegate of the University of Guelph? What did you gain from the experience, and how will this benefit the Engineering experience at Guelph? Did you attain all of the goals you had for yourself going into the conference (from Response #2)? If you were to get another chance to attend a conference, how would you improve on your performance?

I feel as though my personal performance at this conference was good. My intentions were not to simply party and meet new people as are the goals for

most people attending these conferences. My goals were to educate myself on the topic presented and to further my skills and understanding of what is an engineer. I was very much engaged in the group discussions and as presenter's questions when I felt needed clarifications. One of the most memorable moments was when I asked one of the young politicians a question on engineering and public policy, and the guy could not answer the question directly but rather diverted the question with some babbling. This conference helped me pave the path to my future and helped realize what I want to do, therefore pushing me to try harder academically back at the University. My goals were mostly attained and for the next conference I would like to interact even more with the presenters and see how I could be more involved with their field of work.