

ENGINEERING ACCESS

*Integrating Internationally Educated Engineers into the Ontario
Professional Workforce*

A project of

CAPE

THE COUNCIL FOR ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERING

PROCEEDINGS

*LEADERSHIP TRAINING FOR PARTNERSHIP WITH THE
CHINESE PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CANADA (CPAC)
AND STREAMLINING OF OBJECTIVES FOR SERVING
INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED ENGINEERING GRADUATES*

25TH JULY , 2004
SUITE PH 30, 4168 FINCH AVE. E, TORONTO, ONTARIO.

INTRODUCTION

This leadership training session, which brought together 21 members of CPAC, had a twofold purpose:

1. To identify:
 - Obstacles to Employment facing CPAC engineering graduates
 - Support available to them from the Canadian System
 - Expectation of support/changes from the system
 - Commonality of issues with other Internationally trained engineering graduates (ITEGs)
2. To bring together CAPE and -CPAC to build synergy towards the common goal of integrating ITEGs into the Ontario professional workforce.

These proceedings aim to record and capture the discussions and outcome of this group meeting which has opened up several windows of opportunity to work together in the future.

PRESENTATION TWO: RESEARCH PRESENTATION

By Gurmeet Bambrah, Project Coordinator, CAPE

Dr Gurmeet Bambrah, in her introductory presentation, explained the origins of CAPE and how it started out in 1990 when a number of independent associations serving internationally trained engineers got together and guided the participants through the website, www.capeinfo.ca detailing the history of CAPE . She also introduced the content of the website and its relevancy to the ITEG's.

She informed of CAPE 's Current undertaking, the Engineering Access Project funded jointly by Canadian Heritage and Human Resources Development, Canada under the trusteeship of the Council of Agencies serving South Asians (CASSA). Gurmeet explained that Engineering Access is a three year, Ontario wide project that will seek to:

- Build a collective voice for IEs
- Engage employers in increasing IE access to the engineering workplace
- Facilitate multi-stakeholder consultation through a Roundtable
- Create an extensive searchable database of IEs, employers and relevant labour market trends.

Mr Homer presented a comprehensive view of Dr Gurmeet Bambrah's research on the Canadian Economic "Experiment" in diversity, traced the trends in immigration to the origins of migration to the present day and its relationship to the Engineering Profession. He explained how CAPE had held a focus group of ethno-cultural organizations similar to CPAC in October 2003, which led to this research. The focus group identified two distinct clusters of such organizations - the Pre 1960 and the Post 1990 clusters having the characteristics shown in Table 1 below.

PRE 1960 Cluster	POST 1990 Cluster
Place of Origin, Culture, Religion connect	Place of Origin, Culture, Religion disconnect
High technical skills	High technological skills
Total Language disconnect	Partial language disconnect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacked newcomer assistance • Worked with PEO to establish an accreditation process to integrate diversity • Community-based language learning • Economic Boom times • Experience requirements unknown 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newcomer assistance including Credential assessment, Employment Preparation and language training • Uncertain economic and development paradigms • Canadian Experience requirements • High technological skills perceived to be required for shift to service/knowledge based economy.

Based on the hypothesis of inter-connection between Ethnicity, Economic Development, Regulation and Integration of ITEGs and other Professionals (IEPs) into the Ontario workforce, a research was carried out. This revealed that at present ITEGs and IEPs are facing:

- Higher unemployment rates
- Less the 25% work in exact field of specialization
- 46.8% doing something irrelevant to their field
- More likely to have University Education
- Lack of Canadian experience as the most common barrier to employment
- Assessment of language skills rather than language learning.

In conclusion the research findings were:

- Immigration tends to be based on economics/displacement factors
- Rate of diversity has increased rapidly after the Second World War leading to serious questions about the Canadian system's capacity to absorb this diversity.
- Diversity has three clearly identifiable ethnicity components - place of origin, race or visibility and religion which need further investigation
- Immigrant links to mainstream are very important for integration
- The perceived shift to service and knowledge-based economies was inadequately defined - was this perception realistically developed given that the system is unable to assimilate the knowledge base of the ITEGs.
- Regulation of engineers has been amended regularly -however there is insufficient information at present to analyze completely:
- The accreditation capacity
- The basis upon which experience requirements are set - when for instance was Canadian Experience introduced into these requirements and how and what are the skills/knowledge acquired through this Canadian experience?

Based on this research, CAPE has set out the following as its objectives:

- To mobilize funding and resources based on ITEGs population ratio, for training opportunities focussing on bridging the cultural disconnect between ITEGs and the mainstream engineering fraternity;
- To facilitate effective dialogue between all stakeholders of the engineering community, including employers, educational institutions, professional associations, advocacy groups and ITEGs to create a process and methodology for better recognition of international engineering experience.
- To become a collective voice and the premium engineering resource organization for ITEGs and the engineering industry in Ontario.

SESSION TWO

The session two was devoted to building partnership through group discussion in identifying obstacles, self-help, and support available/required in respect of Qualification, Language, Work Experience, Information and other barriers which have already been identified. Breaking into four groups did this and each group presented their views at which time the commonalities of issues were tabulated. The groups and the issues they discussed were:

- Group 1 - Obstacles to employment
- Group 2 - What have the ITEGs done to overcome the obstacles
- Group 3 - What support the Canadian System provided
- Group 4 - What Support/Changes ITEGs expect from the system

Group 1

Group one in its presentation of obstacles to employment, expressed that there was:

- The group felt the need for improvement in employment policy and procedures of accreditation of qualification
- The group identified the lack of language skills were in the process of upgrading their language and communication skills through English (ESL) and Link classes
- The group was of the opinion that the international experience be considered so as to give equal chances in competition for employment

Group 2

Group 2 in its presentation on "What ITEGs have done to overcome Obstacles" stated that

- They informed that they were in the process of upgrading their language skills through ESL, Link and High school classes
- The information they had on arrival had no practical use to finding Jobs
- They are working as volunteers or in survival jobs felt that the government should help with their Job Search
- They had not heard of CAPE

Group 3

Group 3 in its presentation on "What support the Canadian System provided" said:

- There was pre-immigration evaluation of qualification
- They felt underutilized and felt totally disconnected with the mainstream
- The group felt there was good language support by the Canadian system
- The necessity for more information on technical jobs as survival jobs was voiced by the group
- The group felt that CAPE should work towards encouraging employers to hire new immigrants in order to give them the opportunity to gain Canadian experience. This may be through government assistance to employers

Group 4

Group 4 in its presentation on "What Support/Changes ITEGs expect from the system" stated:

- There needs to be more accurate and precise description of desirable qualification and experience from employers
- The Government to provide incentives to employers through tax credits and other modes to hire ITEG's
- The ITEGs felt that CPAC should organize social events to help networking and to understand what employers thinking are
- They requested the help of CAPE in assistance to removal of barriers, coordination with federal, provincial and other stakeholders on the subject of employment, accreditation and licensing.
- They also requested CAPE to lobby the government for more direct involvement of employers both on pre-immigration process to have employer interaction with the government as regards requirement and employability and on employers hiring new immigrants

PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

- CPAC Identified well with the objectives and aims of CAPE as regards addressing of the recognition of international experience and building a collective voice for ITEGs
- Both CPAC-and CAPE agreed that it is a good idea to partner to build a collective voice for ITEGs
- CPAC Agreed to an information exchange as well as linking of databases with CAPE initially CPAC agreed to e-mail all their members to join them (estimated around 10,000) and failing a response to this CPAC agreed to share its database with CAPE
- CPAC requested support from CAPE in specialized resume writing workshop, networking through engineering societies and employer lobby
- CPAC and CAPE agreed to work together on mentoring program and CAPE to help select mentors for CPAC

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS OF

	First Name	Last Name
3.	MICHAEL	ZHANG
4.	NICK	YUAN
5.	TINA	TIAN
6.	MAOKUN (BRADY)	GONG
7.	HONG	CHEN
8.	PENG	PENG
9.	SHAOXIONG	LAO
10.	JACK	FAN
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12.	CHARLES	WANG
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15.	BAOYONG	WANG
16.	DEKUAN	YAN
17.	HUBERT	WU
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