



Council for Access to the Profession of Engineering

STRATEGIC LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MEETING

Room# 307, Metro Hall, Toronto, Ontario

10th December, 2005

PROCEEDINGS

14th December, 2005

Available from

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OVERVIEW PRESENTED BY G.K. BAMBRAH

BACKGROUND

In June 2003, CAPE initiated the 'Engineering Access Project', the initial focus of which was to document systemic barriers facing internationally trained engineering graduates. Following this, the first leadership development session under this project was held on 7th February, 2004. Members of CAPE and other Internationally Trained Engineering Graduates (ITEGs) were invited to this and resented with the findings of the research on systemic barriers facing this fraternity. The objective of the group was to develop a vision and define elements of the vision and mission statement that would help ITEGs to:

- Develop into a collective voice
- Bring out available ITEG skills
- Find out Employer needs
- Build an information support system for ITEGs

ORIGINAL MISSION AND VISION – FIRST LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT SESSION

The participants agreed that CAPE should be strengthened to represent the voice of ITEGs. The following mission statement was consequently adopted for CAPE:

Mission:

- CAPE is an independent membership-based association of Internationally Trained Engineering Graduates (ITEGs) to support their integration into the Ontario engineering workforce.

Aims:

- To mobilize proportionate resources for training opportunities focusing on bridging the cultural disconnect between ITEGs and the mainstream engineering fraternity.
- To constructively engage all stakeholders of engineering community, including employers, government leaders 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 premium engineering information and resource organization for both ITEGs and the engineering industry in Ontario.

Website:

The CAPE website was set up by its members before the 'Engineering Access' Project was initiated. The participants at the meeting agreed that the website needed to be developed to accommodate the database of ITEGs proposed under the 'Engineering Access' Project. However no funds were available for the website development. Consequently volunteers were recruited to help redesign and adapt the website for interaction

between the website and the database. The volunteers were then invited to a second leadership development meeting held on 6th March, 2004 at which a mock-up of the website was presented by two volunteers and accepted by the participants.

ITEG DATABASE

Accordingly, the second stage of the 'Engineering Access' project focused on a systematic, integrated and strategic approach to outreaching and developing a database of ITEGs. An online survey of ITEGs was subsequently initiated in May 2004 and an early analysis of this showed that over 80% of the ITEGs were not employed in the engineering field while over 50% were unemployed. Through this research effort CAPE has been considerably strengthened. At present CAPE has a database of some 1000 ITEGs and has actively partnered with about twenty community engineering associations holding a combined membership estimated at over ten thousand ITEGs. In addition it is actively working with nearly ten service agencies throughout Ontario to spatially extend its ITEG outreach.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER CONFERENCE

On October 16th, 2004 CAPE was launched through the first Multi-Stakeholder forum on '*Globalization, International Mobility and Canada in the 21st Century*' held under its Engineering Access project. This forum was held on October 16th, 2004 at the North York Civic Center and was attended by nearly a 180 participants. The following organizations were invited to present addresses at this forum:

<i>ABEO</i>	- <i>Association of Bangladeshi Engineers of Ontario</i>
<i>CALAPTE</i>	- <i>Canadian Association of Latin American professionals, Technicians and Entrepreneurs</i>
<i>CASSA</i>	- <i>Council of Agencies Serving South Asians</i>
<i>CCPE</i>	- <i>Canadian Council of Professional Engineers</i>
<i>CPAC</i>	- <i>Chinese Professional Association of Canada</i>
<i>HRSDC</i>	- <i>Human Resources Skills Development Canada</i>
<i>LGA</i>	- <i>Lieutenant General Appointee to PEO</i>
<i>MOHANDES</i>	- <i>Canadian Society of Iranian Engineers and Architects</i>
<i>MTCU</i>	- <i>Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities</i>
<i>PEO</i>	- <i>Professional Engineers of Ontario</i>
<i>OSPE</i>	- <i>Ontario Society of Professional Engineers</i>
<i>OACETT</i>	- <i>Ontario Association of Certified Engineering Technicians and Technologists</i>
<i>PROMPT</i>	- <i>Policy Roundtable for Access to Professions and Trades</i>
<i>SFC</i>	- <i>Skills for Change</i>

Through this Launch, CAPE initiated a constructive engagement exercise to involve ITEGs, employers, professional associations, regulatory bodies, educational institutions and service providers in its proposed multi-stakeholder roundtable on developing strategies to integrate immigrants with engineering backgrounds into the Ontario workforce.

MID TERM EVALUATION – ENGINEERING ACCESS

An exhaustive mid-term evaluation of the 'Engineering Access' project at a meeting of the CAPE steering committee held on 5th February 2005 concluded that among other on-going actions:

- While the rate of membership of the database has been good, it now needs to be up-scaled faster

- Honesty and integrity as regards information made available to ITEGs should be a key principle in CAPE outputs – licensing and media should be the main targets,
- The Focus should now be on engineering employment in all its forms consulting, contracting, manufacturing, procurement, management and investment
- Participatory Research findings should now move into the direction of action research – employer engagement, constructive stakeholder engagement, analysis of legal implications and issues
- Greater focus needs to be given to training programs, particularly program content and outcome evaluations and the ‘value add’ that CAPE can contribute to these. and;
- CAPE should adopt and promote the ‘Change is inevitable’ mindset in which the ITEGs are key players in moving Canada forward into globalization

It was also agreed that the term immigrants with engineering backgrounds (IEBs) would be used to describe the membership of CAPE.

FOLLOW-UP

Coalition Of Community Associations (Up-Scaling Database)

On 25th February 2005, ethno-cultural engineering associations were invited to a strategic leadership meeting with the objective of up-scaling the database of immigrants with engineering backgrounds being surveyed under the ‘Engineering Access’ Project. This coalition meeting resulted in an action plan which led to the formation of a coalition of community engineering association which has held two subsequent meetings to implement the action plan. At the request of this coalition, a submission was made by CAPE to CIC to reduce the number of immigrants with engineering backgrounds.

Cape Website (information support)

Through the in-kind contributions of the CAPE members and volunteers, the CAPE website has been transformed into comprehensive information source inclusive of an advisory and decision information support system for immigrants with engineering backgrounds. This includes information on engineering practice and regulation in Canada and Ontario, a resume builder, introduction to mentoring and a comprehensive analysis of employers of professional engineers in Ontario linked to a GIS system. A demonstration of the final mock-up of this system was set up as a demonstration for the participants of leadership development meeting of 11th December, 2005.

Employer Engagement

Several attempts were made to engage employers in surveys under the ‘Engineering Access’ project with the objective of establishing the ‘skills gap’ between immigrants with engineering backgrounds and the mainstream engineering fraternity. These attempts were futile due to employer resistance. This resulted in several submissions:

- PEO on provisional License
- George Thompson Commission on appeals review
- MTCU on bridging Programmes.

Multi-stakeholder Employment Strategy (Employment)

Based on the employer and employment research under the ‘Engineering Access’ project a multi-stakeholder roundtable on employment strategies for immigrants with engineering backgrounds was set up. Three roundtables have been held so far beginning with a roundtable held on 6th April 2005. The participants in

these roundtables include all three levels of Government, PEO, OACETT, OSPE, CCPE, Employers, universities, community associations, service providers, advocacy groups, community coalitions, trade unions and IEBs among others.

Legal Issues and Pro Bono lawyers

CAPE has been able to partner with a legal firm which is providing assistance on a Pro bono basis to look into legal issues facing immigrants with engineering backgrounds.

Training Programs and Employment Support

Under the ‘Engineering Access’ project, research on ‘Best Practices’ promoting the access of immigrants to engineering employment have been elusive and an outcome analysis of the programs being offered shows that these have highly unfavorable outcomes for immigrants with engineering backgrounds.

Change is Inevitable

Staff working paper number 41, recently published by CERIS (Center for Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement) authored by the CAPE and ‘Engineering Access’ Coordinator, entitled Canadian ‘Experiments’ in Diversity: The Case of Immigrants with Engineering Backgrounds Settling in Ontario lays out the case for globalization and integration of IEBs

SESSION 1: VISIONING SESSION – MODERATED BY SAEED ZIAEE

The participants agreed that with the evolution of CAPE into a legitimate and collective voice of immigrants with engineering backgrounds, a new vision needs to be developed for CAPE: it was agreed that the following questions and answers should form the framework from which to derive the new CAPE vision:

Question	Answer
1. Why do immigrants with engineering background come to Ontario or Canada?	To improve the quality of their life.
2. What do they bring with them?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education and experience • Money • Families and young children • New Cultural Capital
3. Why are employers not willing to employ immigrants with engineering backgrounds?	Employers are Risk adverse even though IEBs are more educated than the host population. They are inward looking and not open to change.
4. Why is accreditation and language testing important?	?
5. What makes PEO and OACETT the only regulatory bodies?	?
6. What are the solutions currently offered to ensure employment of IEBs?	Resume writing, sector terminology, cold-calling, networking and lately mentoring
7. How do we address these issues in a more effective way?	Employment-based programs, cross-cultural mentoring, effective information systems and technical language incorporating codes and standards
8. What kind of employment are we looking for?	Our goal is to work as engineers in licensed or skills commensurate jobs. We do not want to be under-employed or unemployed.

Based on this framework it was agreed that the new CAPE vision statement should be to:

- Immigrants with engineering backgrounds wish to ‘Improve the quality of our lives by participating in the practice of engineering in Ontario to reach our maximum potential to contribute to our:
 - Local communities
 - Province
 - Country
 - Planet
- By
 - Maximizing utilization of our engineering potential
 - Upgrading our knowledge and skills in keeping with evolving trends in engineering and sustainable human development.

SESSION 2: REVIEW AND NEW DIRECTIONS– MODERATED BY MANO PHILLIPS

Introduction

Mano started off this session by reviewing the achievements over the past year. He then moved the session into discussions on what new directions CAPE needs to take. The participants raised the following questions:

- How should CAPE up-scale its membership?
- How can CAPE strengthen employer engagement?
- How can employers be educated on the range of skills and experience that CAPE members bring to Canada?
- Given that the market for conventional engineering services is shrinking, how does CAPE gear itself to this?
- What is CAPE’s position on the regulatory and accreditation process?

Positions

The participants agreed that the first step was to clarify that the following are positions that it stands by at present:

- IEBs will not promote the under-employment or under-utilization of its members
- CAPE will focus on the employment and not licensing of its members
- CAPE will continue to adopt the positions outlined in its various submissions namely:
 - The reserved title locks IEBs out of the practice of engineering and is unjustifiable
 - In the absence of a definition of the constituent elements of the one year experience under a professionally licensed engineer, the limitation period attached to the provisional license, lack of criteria to appeal against licensing decisions, legal issues exist in the regulatory process and must be addressed
 - In the absence of the definition of the ‘skills gap’ between IEBs and mainstream engineers, and non –recognition of these by PEO, bridging programs to address the ‘Canadian experience’ needs of employers and regulators for immigrants with engineering backgrounds cannot be justified.
 - While CAPE will look into the possibility of skills commensurate employment, this stand will not condone the locking out of IEBs from the practice of professional engineering

- CAPE supports the stand that Ontario must meet the obligations signed to under NAFTA and GATS.

New Directions

The participants set out the following as the new directions that CAPE needs to take to achieve its new vision:

- Shift its total focus on employment for IEBs.
- Investigate what skills commensurate opportunities exist for IEBs without comprising their ability to participate actively in the practice of professional engineering
- Provide effective information, employment and decision support to CAPE members
- Focus on the opportunities arising out of the emerging trends in engineering practice
- Shift its focus to developing and promoting pilot employment based programs for IEBs
- Develop discipline specific information centering on the technical vocabulary, codes and standards of practice in the various disciplines.
- Develop a cross-cultural mentoring system for CAPE and its coalition partners.

SESSION 3: NEXT STEPS – MODERATED BY GURMEET BAMBRAH

Gurmeet started off this session by reviewing the current organizational status of CAPE. Briefly this is as follows:

- CAPE has built up a membership database of 998 IEBs
- CAPE has partnered with community engineering associations to form a coalition
- CAPE has developed a draft terms of reference for its steering committee on the understanding that this will evolve into the first interim Board of CAPE when it decides to incorporate
- CAPE is undertaking the 'Engineering Access' project under the trusteeship of CASSA
- CAPE has initiated dialogue with AIPSO (Association of International Physicians and Surgeons of Ontario) to explore the possibility and potential of forming a coalition of immigrants with professional backgrounds.

Against this background, the participants agreed that CAPE should:

- Move to establish the first interim Board for CAPE by April 2004
- Continue to up-scale its membership using its coalition partners and the media
- Create an even more effective communication and information system for its members by:
 - Starting a newsletter
 - Providing feed-back mechanisms to member inquiries
 - Distributing promotional materials to HRDC offices and others
 - Making its home-page multi-lingual
 - Introducing log-in and password for members only sessions of the website
- Develop and introduce a cross-cultural mentoring program for CAPE and its coalition partners
- Initiate activities that may usefully draw in IEBs into emerging engineering trends and practices under globalization.
- Continue to expand and acknowledge the major role played by CAPE volunteers.

WRAP-UP

The participants concluded by expressing their appreciation for the transparent way in which the participants had been invited to participate in this strategic leadership session. They also gave personal stories and experiences of how CAPE had assisted them in various ways and why they felt they wanted to be a part of CAPE. Several participants expressed an interest in volunteering for CAPE.

CAPE volunteers were acknowledged with particular mention being given to Mojgan, Murlidharan and Ali.

The meeting ended at 2.30 p.m.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS	
First Name	Last Name
1. A.	Bashar
2. Abrol	Kakharov
3. Ali	Mirzaee
4. Bipin	Chauhan
5. Florin	Mocanu
6. Gurmeet	Bambrah
7. Harshit	Shah
8. Maryna	Masarik
9. Manu	Phillips
10. Mojgan	Nemati
11. Murlidharan	Aiyer
12. Priscilla	Solis Arce
13. Saeed	Ziaee

