

COUNCIL FOR ACCESS TO THE PROFESSION OF ENGINEERING (CAPE)

LEADERSHIP TRAINING SESSION 1
255 Duncan Mills Road, Suite 510, Toronto Ontario

7th February 2004

INTRODUCTION

This leadership training session, brought together members of CAPE and other Internationally Trained Engineering Graduates (ITEGs). The objective of the group was to develop a vision for CAPE and to define elements of its mission statement in the light of recent research carried out under the Engineering Access Project. The session was held against the understanding that CAPE would be helping ITEGs to:

- Build a Collective voice
- Bring out available ITEG skills
- Find out Employer needs
- Building an information support system for ITEGs

The Moderator for this training session was Mr Mohan Doss, the Engineering Career Officer, for the University of Toronto Career Office. He adopted the MADS and GLADS approach to derive the vision and mission statement for CAPE

MADS AND GLADS METHODOLOGY

This methodology followed four stages:

1. Defining the rules of discussion
2. Defining systemic issues that make ITEGs mad
3. Defining systemic changes ITEGs would be glad to see effected.
4. Defining ways in which CAPE can help to achieve these changes
5. Setting out a CAPE mission statement to capture this.

RULES OF DISCUSSION

In order to make the participants feel comfortable about speaking openly the following rules were adopted:

- No titles or detailed names needed to be mentioned and no list of participants would be included in the proceedings of this session although it would be kept in CAPE records for information purposes.
- Participants were encouraged to speak openly and frankly
- Participants were given a maximum limit of ten minutes for each contribution they wished to make and;
- Participants were encouraged to focus on positive dissatisfaction i.e appreciating that change can come at any time.

WHAT MAKES ITEGS MAD.

In this session the participants were encouraged divided into four groups and each group was asked to identify three things that made them most mad about the regulation and employment issues they faced in Canada. These were then produced as a consolidated list and included the following issues:

- Cultural disconnect with the mainstream engineering fraternity and population in Ontario
- Federal and Provincial disconnects between immigration and regulation
- Waste of immigrant engineering skills, knowledge and experience
- Non recognition of international experience
- Recruitment practices and ethics
- Inability to access engineering employment

Each participant was asked to give between 1 and 3 points to any three issues from the total list. Three issues were then prioritized and modified to suit the participant requirements on the basis of the total number of points so that highest priority was given to the issue that had the highest points.

The three highest priority issues that emerged from this session were:

- The need to address the cultural disconnect with mainstream engineering fraternity and population
- Non recognition of international experience
- Accessing employment through a collective agenda

WHAT CHANGES THE ITEGS LIKE TO SEE

Participants were encouraged to focus on positive dissatisfaction i.e appreciating that change can come at any time and to identify what they would like to see incorporated/changed to make it easier for them to integrate into the Ontario engineering workforce. The participants identified the following 'needs':

- More focused training to bridge the gap between international and Canadian engineering experience requirements.
- Funding and resources proportional to the ITEG ratio to the mainstream engineering fraternity for training programs geared to close up the cultural disconnect between them and the mainstream. The ITEGs illustrated the nature of this disconnect through the following examples:
 - Newcomer services offered to ITEGs in the area of employment preparation tended to limit their contact during the initial settlement period to other immigrants or their own communities. Having little in common with the mainstream population socially, they rarely developed a relationship or link with the mainstream engineering fraternity in this period and therefore are unable to network effectively to access the hidden job market.
 - Very few if any of the employment officers or counselors in these newcomer service agencies were engineers or understood the engineering profession or what it entailed.
 - Many of the immigrants tended to lose their sense of identity by trying to change their names and by changing the nature of their previous experience so as not to

- appear overqualified, to reflect perceived employer needs and sector terminology or to find acceptance in Canada.
 - As the demoralization set in because of the lack of response to online applications, cold calling etc, and as their resources declined the ITEGs began to view contingency and survival jobs as their only option and lost sight of the professional qualifications and experience they had brought to Canada.
- Creating dialogue/fora to establish a better understanding and recognition of international engineering experience.
- Advocate for a code of ethics among recruiters to facilitate a communication and recruiter accessibility process that is more fair to ITEGs.
- Sound source of information relevant to ITEGs.

MISSION AND VISION

The participants concluded that the vision for the council for Access to the Profession of Engineering should incorporate the following elements:

- CAPE should become the single point of first contact for ITEGs considering immigration to Canada or those landing in Canada for the first time
- CAPE should act as a warm and welcoming reception organization for ITEGs
- CAPE should make it easier for ITEGs to understand the engineering profession and practice in Canada
- CAPE should facilitate links between ITEGs and mentoring/bridging programs
- CAPE should create a comprehensive database of ITEGs, develop tools to assist ITEGs to market their skills and function to showcase the skills and experience ITEGs are bringing to Canada to employers.

Finally the participants identified the following as elements that should constitute the mission of CAPE:

- Addressing the barriers due to the cultural and professional disconnect with the mainstream engineering fraternity.
- Promoting recognition of international engineering experience
- Providing a premium information resource for ITEGs and showcasing their skills and experience
- Assisting ITEGs to voice their concerns collectively.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

First Name	Last Name
1. Gurmeet	Bambrah
2. Mike	Branch
3. Bipin	Chauhan
4. Mike	Dang
5. Parikh	Dilip
6. Mohan	Doss
7. Sue	Gio
8. Manu	Phillips
9. Darshak	Viashnav
10. Saeed	Ziaee
11. Suresh	