

TO: NSPE Board of Directors

cc: NSPE Committee, Task Force, Council and Interest Group Chairs
State Society Presidents and Presidents-Elect
State Society Executives Council
NSPE Past Presidents

FROM: Mark J. Golden, FASAE, CAE 
Executive Director & CEO

DATE: February 3, 2020

RE: Board Update: January 15–31, 2020

I hope the board is recovering from its intense two days of meetings in Alexandria last week. Great progress was made in further translating strategic plan aspirations into impact felt by every member and potential member. As our training coach Stephanie Buckingham reminded us during the half-day workshop, **what** and **how** are important, but they won't get the job done without starting by keeping our **why** in mind (those all-important vision and mission statements quoted above). That's the key to winning hearts and minds, and that is the secret ingredient to achieving growth.

As the board discussed, we are already doing a lot to make the plan a reality, but rather than patting ourselves on the back, I was impressed by the new thinking, new ideas, and new energy the meeting created.

Staff has been realigned to get the job done, and we were excited to introduce our new Chief Engagement Officer, Development and State Support, Erik Schonher. This new position, and the restructured staff he leads, brings new focus and resources to making the promise of the integrated membership model a reality for our state society partners. He has hit the ground running in his first week, and we look forward to introducing him to state leaders in the weeks ahead. His first job is to listen and understand what state partners are experiencing; his background is translating and implementing those wants and needs into concrete support that will empower and support the states to achieve them.

As always, the discussion around threats to licensure was significant. I have a long list of to-do's from the meeting, to help support activating states to use materials, such as those we are creating through [ARPL](#), to present a unified, powerful concentration of voices at

NSPE encourages states to use the information in this report in newsletters or other updates to their membership to inform members on the activities of NSPE. As a suggestion, it may be most useful to take the bullets of most interest from the transmittal email. The full report (and past reports) can always be found [online](#).

all levels (national, state, local, and individual) to advance and promote professional licensure.

You all worked hard and did good work. And the best is yet to come.

Champion

There is public recognition and support for licensing of advanced professions. As the board discussed last week, a major contribution to the debate over licensure is yet another product of NSPE and its partners' formation of the [Alliance for Responsible Professional Licensing](#) (ARPL). The alliance released a recent national survey of likely voters, conducted to understand public opinion toward professional licensing standards. [You can click here to download an executive summary of the research findings.](#) While the public is not entirely opposed to loosening regulations on trades and occupations that lack public health, safety, and welfare sensitivities, *it overwhelmingly (75%) supports licensing regulations for complex, highly technical professions (like engineering) with impact on their safety and welfare.*

For such professions, licensing standards are the public's preferred default position: 71% of likely voters believe licensing should be required *unless it can be proven that eliminating them will not have a negative impact on public health, safety, and welfare.* They are wary of the opposite approach, promoted by groups like the American Legislative Exchange Council and the Institute for Justice, which is showing up in legislative proposals across the country. These proposals promote an assumption that licensure is unnecessary unless proven necessary on a case-by-case basis.

More than two-thirds viewed professional licensing boards as critical regulatory entities. A majority believe that it is "very important" that the boards oversee qualifications for professional practice, continuing professional development, and professional standards.

Rigorous for a reason. As Florida continues to aggressively pursue licensure reform, an ARPL [op-ed](#) in the widely read FloridaPolitics.com cautioned that "any conversation around licensing reform would be well-served to acknowledge that for some professions, rigorous licensing is not only desirable, but appropriate and necessary.... The public rightly expects a baseline level of expertise and accountability when it comes to these professions, in which so much trust is required."

A primary goal of the alliance is to make sure the ARPL message is reflected in the ongoing conversation. Placing op-eds like these in publications that are read by state legislators is a key piece of that.

The value in powerful alliances was further demonstrated at a recent hearing in the Indiana House on a licensing reform bill. As reported in the *Indianapolis Business Journal* on January 17, House Bill 1008, which would honor professional licenses from other states in Indiana, "faced some push back this week *from the very professionals lawmakers believed they would be helping* with the measure." The bill would apply to all professions regulated by the Indiana Professional Licensing Agency, which includes

architects, engineers, and nurses, to name a few. But architects, engineers, realtors, and dentists all testified against the legislation before the House Employment, Pensions and Labor Committee, pointing out that while the intentions were good, and increasing the ease of license mobility is a goal to be pursued, the proposed solutions created more problems than it solved, including to whom and how out-of-state licensees would be held accountable for the public health, safety, and welfare. The hearing provided an opportunity to inform legislators of the ease and speed of processes already in place for expedited licensure of licensed professionals from other states. To be sure, those processes can always be improved, and we will never stop working to do so, but this well-intentioned “fix” would actually make comity work less well than it does today, for licensees *and* the public.

Both of these successes provide more examples of the impact of NSPE’s participation in ARPL beginning to be felt in the field.

Taking it to the states. To make its tools more easily accessible to our state societies, ARPL has created a [public Dropbox link](#) where all of the state tools will be housed.

We hope state societies find the tools useful. But be prudent! Ease of access makes things useful—it also makes them vulnerable to leaks to the opposition!

West Virginia’s “consumer beware” bill is dead, at least for now, with the legislative sponsor removing his name from the bill. Commonly referred to as a “consumer choice” bill, it would allow anyone to perform professional services without a license, as long as they provided some notice that they are not licensed. NSPE calls these bills “consumer beware” or “qualifications optional” because they more accurately describe that they put the onus on consumers to determine who is qualified to practice highly technical professions like engineering. NSPE (national and our state partner, the West Virginia Society of Professional Engineers) will continue to monitor this area for further activity.

Virginia pursues removal of PE exemption. Legislation introduced in the Virginia Senate would remove a licensure exemption for gas pipeline work. The bill (S.B. [385](#)) amends state law to exclude engineering services rendered in connection with gas pipeline facilities from licensure exemption.

Guide

The American Society of Association Executives recently published a list of the “[three ethics resources](#) every association should provide its members:

1. Use your ethics committee to provide peer-to-peer counseling.
2. Invest in ethics education.
3. Promote ethics research.

It was gratifying to note that NSPE has long provided all three.

1. Through its online database of [Board of Ethical Review cases](#), publication of “You Be the Judge” case summaries in *PE* magazine, and the ethics hotline (888-384-4295 or email legal@nspe.org).
2. Through webinars and face-to-face programs at national and state meetings (watch the [PE Institute](#) for offerings).
3. Through the development of case studies, applying ethics concepts to real-world situations.

Speaking of ethics education, members can register now for the Spring Ethics Series:

- [Engineering Ethics – Disclosure, Payment, Expert Testimony and Conflicts of Interest](#). **March 18** at 2 pm Eastern.
- [Engineering Ethics – Conflicts of Interest, Licensure, Confidentiality and Public Criticism](#). **April 15** at 2 pm Eastern.
- [Engineering Ethics – Objectivity and Truthfulness, Public Health and Safety, Signing and Sealing of Engineering Drawings and Misrepresentation](#). **May 13** at 2 pm Eastern.
- [Bundle \(Parts 1, 2, & 3\)](#). Discounted price expires **March 17**.

Advance

But wait, there’s more. You can also register now for these webinars:

- [Licensing for Profitability, Agility and Growth for Small and Mid-Sized Engineering Firms](#). **February 5** at 2 pm Eastern.
- [Emotional Intelligence at Work](#). **March 25** at 2 pm Eastern.

NICET prepares underground utilities certification program. The National Institute for Certification in Engineering Technologies, a division of NSPE, is the global leader in providing certifications for the “hands-on” members of the engineering team. NICET is in the process of relaunching an underground utilities certification program that will initially focus on three levels: inspection of water, stormwater, and sanitary systems. NICET aims to launch the certification in the third quarter of 2020. [Read more](#) in the January/February issue of *PE*.

Unite

Breaking: The Pennsylvania Society of Professional Engineers adopts brand logo. That’s great news in the run-up to

our joint national/state conference in Philadelphia (August 12–16). Now 43 out of 47 integrated state affiliates have adopted the unified brand, which communicates to members that they are receiving a single, integrated membership supported by seamless services provided through state and national societies. Additionally, PSPE’s communication of this change to members was impressive. The personalization of the news flash (see last page;



note the use of the first name of the member recipient in the first line) was a nice touch. Great job PA!

NSPE has announced the Top 10 finalists for the 2020 Federal Engineer of the Year Award. The [finalists](#) all hold top positions at the Naval Facilities Engineering Command, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Air Force Civil Engineer Center, the 823d Red Horse Squadron, the US Food and Drug Administration, the National Institutes of Health, the US Coast Guard, the US Army Europe, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the Veterans Health Administration, the Bureau of Reclamation, and Johnson Space Center. The winner will be announced on February 14 at an awards luncheon from 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. at the National Press Club in Washington, DC.

The newly updated and revised [NSPE Strategic Plan](#) represents *both* continuity *and* change: continuity with the society’s unchanging goal of protecting public health, safety and welfare; and a recognition that we needed change in order to achieve more impact, through strategies backed by resources that will deliver real-world results.

It starts from a simple premise, something that has been NSPE’s reason for being since it was founded 85 years ago. It is a premise that should resonate with any man or woman on the street, regardless of their familiarity (or lack thereof) with NSPE, engineering or licensure, namely that *we all deserve to live in a world where we can be confident that the engineering decisions affecting our lives are made by qualified and ethically accountable professionals.*

NSPE’s unique role in bringing this vision to reality follows in a mission statement of just nine words: *to foster licensed professional engineers in service to society.*

That will be achieved by engaging in activities governed by the organization’s values: *ethics and accountability; qualifications; professional advancement; and unity.*

That is the all-important *why* and *how* of NSPE. We can never afford to take our eyes off these statements. They need to guide and inform every decision we make as an organization.

And remember, you always have access to numerous NSPE leadership resources in the [Leadership Toolbox](#). This includes [talking point](#) scripts and presentations for use by NSPE officers, board members, and other leaders during state visits, chapter meetings, or other venues to promote NSPE and its activities, updated on an at least quarterly basis.

The [State and National Leaders](#) community page is not only a direct means of engaging, sharing ideas, and asking for advice from your peers in leadership across the country, it is

your link to data, reports, and analysis on membership, programs and activities to better inform and support your leadership duties at the national, state and chapter level.

Current board members can access an online library of board meeting materials (past, current and future) through the online board book site, ([BoardBookIt](#)).



Pennsylvania News

Eva, PSPE and NSPE have long supported each other's endeavors, always maintaining the belief we are one organization working to advance our mission at the national, state, and local levels. In 2018 we signed an agreement legally defining that relationship.

Adopting the NSPE brand logo seems a logical step. After a great discussion at the PSPE Board of Directors meeting on Saturday, January 25, the board voted to adopt the NSPE family brand logo as shown below. Use of the NSPE brand establishes a consistent look across the organization and makes clear that even though we are a federation of different organizations, we're all on the same team.

While not mandated, PSPE chapters are strongly encouraged to begin using family brand chapter logos as well. NSPE has designed electronic files for the chapters, student chapters, state, and the Pennsylvania Engineering Foundation.