

The Engineering Institute of Canada? Its continued relevance to the future of engineering in Canada

1.0 History and Mandate



nce the largest engineering association in Canada, the Engineering Institute of Canada (EIC) still plays an important role in the affairs of a diverse Canadian engineering community.

Founded by Royal Charter in Montreal in 1887 as the Canadian Society of Civil Engineers, its objective was the dissemination of technical information and experience. Twenty-five years later, membership had grown to 3000 and embraced other disciplines such as mechanical, electrical, and mining. To better reflect this multi-disciplinary nature, the Society's Charter was amended by Parliament in April 1918, to The Engineering Institute of Canada.

The EIC continued to grow and, by the early 1960s, membership exceeded 22,000 throughout Canada. Like many big organizations, the provision of services to a diverse membership became a challenging task. More profile was given to the EIC technical divisions by renaming them 'societies' and these eventually gained autonomy through incorporation. The EIC now represents a federation of these societies.

Chronologically, the first among these was the Canadian Society for Mechanical Engineering (CSME), incorporated in 1970, followed by the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering (CSCE) and the Canadian Geotechnical Society (CGS) in 1972 and the Canadian Society for Electrical Engineering (CSEE) in 1973, now known as IEEE Canada through a merger with Region 7 of IEEE. Other EIC members joined a General Members' Group, later re-formed as the Canadian Society for Engineering Management (CSEM).

New societies have since joined the EIC federation: the Canadian Society for Chemical Engineering (CSChE) in 1998, the Canadian Nuclear Society (CNS) in 2001, and more recently, the Canadian Maritime Section of the Marine Technology Society (MTS) and the Life Member's Organization (LMO). Total membership within the nine member societies exceeds 20,000 and the Institute remains open to the inclusion of additional engineering-related societies.

2.0 EIC Services

The fundamental mandate of the EIC is to serve its member societies by providing shared services that enhance the value of individual membership in those societies. The EIC fosters the development of all engineering professions by promoting quality standards for continuing education and professional development activities.

Here is a glimpse of EIC's services that come as additional benefits through your CSCE membership. Please visit EIC's website for further details (www.eic-ici.ca).

A real forum is provided for the exchange of experience and information between member societies. A Council comprised of presidents of each member society and a small executive governs the Institute. Meetings of this Council and workshops provide opportunities for societies to share best practices and discuss issues facing the profession.

A virtual forum is provided through EIC's website. It hosts a new "Engineers Business Centre", used for posting and reviewing opportunities, events, offers, jobs, news releases, queries to Dun & Bradstreet and questions answered by resource persons.

Director's Insurance is purchased as a group for all member societies, significantly decreasing the cost to each society.

Representation of member societies at meetings with other national engineering bodies such as the Canadian Council of Professional Engineers (CCPE), the Canadian Academy of Engineering (CAE), the Association of Consulting Engineers of Canada (ACEC), the Partnership Group on Science and Engineering (PAGSE) and Registered Engineers for Disaster Relief (RedR) Canada.

Recognized standards for the delivery of continuing education and training have been adapted by the EIC to meet Canadian engineering

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needs and agreements are maintained with **Quality Providers** that award the EIC Continuing Education Unit (**EIC CEUTM**) to participants in their programs.

A CEU Registry is maintained by the EIC, which engineering practitioners can use to record their high quality professional development experiences. Simply signify to the EIC-recognized training provider that you want your CEU award recorded with EIC, and the Registry will be updated accordingly. The advantage to you is the ability to maintain a readily retrievable, safe and complete record of your recognized continuing education activities with a credible third-party organization.

A Professional Development Registry is also maintained on EIC's website so engineering practitioners can record their Professional Development Hours (PDH). Many licensing bodies recognize the PDH as a valid measure of professional development activity that cannot be awarded CEUs. You can use the Registry freely and in confidence (password-protected) to keep your own record of professional development activities, and you can print your records from your computer.

The **Honours, Awards and Fellowships Program** of the EIC represents the highest of the recognition programs of its member societies. Each year, 20 society members are recognized as Fellows and up to six prestigious medals are awarded at a well-attended banquet.

The **History and Archives Committee** serves the Canadian engineering community by collecting information, publishing papers, lobbying for public recognition of great Canadian engineers and ensuring that historical plaques are installed at sites appropriate to the engineering history of Canada. The CSCE History Committee Chair sits on this EIC Committee.

3.0 Conclusion

The EIC has gone through many changes over its 116-year history, but one aspect has remained constant: its dedication to the advancement of the engineering profession. Today, its mission is focussed on:

- Promoting cooperation between its member societies to ensure high quality standards and a national registry for continuing education and professional development.
- Assisting in promoting the good image of the profession
- Recognizing Canadian engineering excellence through EIC Honours and Awards
- Promoting the awareness of Canadian engineering history

About the author

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Mr. Gosselin is a Past-President of the Society of Fire Protection Engineers' Ottawa Chapter and a former Treasurer of both the Engineering Institute of Canada and the Canadian Society for Civil Engineering. Mr. Gosselin is currently serving as President of the Engineering Institute of Canada. He is also Vice-Chair of RedR Canada, a non-profit organization training engineers for disaster relief work.