NSPE Board of Directors
Strategic Dialogues

August 14-15, 2015
Minneapolis, Minnesota

Rough, contemporaneous notes: not an official record.
Caveat

The following are rough notes that capture the sense of discussions that were broad in scope and general in nature.

- The output from these discussions will inform future, more formal and structured debate but they do not represent final conclusions, commitments to action, or statements of position or policy.

- In free form, open discussions, sometimes vivid or even provocative language emerges that becomes a kind of shorthand, immediately recognized and understandable to those who were present for the discussions. In the moment, such phrases have a very specific and narrow meaning. That intended meaning may not be obvious to someone not present for the discussions. Accordingly, please be sensitive to the potential for content to be misconstrued or misunderstood if taken out of its specific context.
NSPE = national *plus* the state societies.

What happens *anywhere* in the system impacts *everyone* in the system.
Representative *for* or Representative *of*?

- The director’s role is to ensure that the views, beliefs, values, and self interests of the constituencies s/he knows best are on the table and part of the conversation.

- The director’s obligation is to:
  - *Voice* the interests and opinions of those s/he knows best; and
  - *Vote* on behalf of what is in the best overall interests of the organization as a whole.
From Strategic Plan to Planning Strategically

- From a plan set in stone.
- To constant and ongoing strategic assessment and adjustment.
  - Driven by the vision and mission.
  - Responsive to the external environment.
  - Creating alignment of programs and activities.
  - Creating accountability.
Dialogue before Decision

- Traditional, parliamentary decision making is *binary*:
  - Yes / No
  - Either / Or

- It should come *after*, not before the Board has had an opportunity to:
  - Establish a shared understanding of the issue.
  - Identify all relevant perspectives.
  - Identify all options worth considering.

- Dialogue before decision:
  - Looking forward, not backwards.
  - Identifying options.
  - Making choices.
The Four Knowledge Bases

- What do we know about our stakeholders’ needs, wants, and preferences that are relevant to this decision?

- What do we know about the current realities and evolving dynamics of our environment that is relevant to this decision?
  - Current conditions: What is going on now?
  - Trends: A change in the progress or direction in this area.
  - Assumptions about the future: Anything foreseeable that could happen that would make a big difference.

- What do we know about the “capacity” and “strategic position” of our organization that is relevant to this decision?
  - Capacity: Tangible and intangible assets of the organization
  - Strategic position: Factors in the external environment, including competitors and dynamics beyond our control.

- What are the ethical/value implications?
Strategic Dialogue:

MEMBERSHIP
Issue Statement

Membership is a shared accountability for NSPE at all structural levels (national, state, chapter) and all individuals. It needs to be the highest priority at each of these levels.

- How can NSPE (in concerted partnership with its state and territorial partners) increase the total number of three-tier members in the most productive, effective and cost-effective manner?
- How can NSPE establish a membership relationship with new graduates and new engineers and sustain that relationship over time?
  - Strengthen working relationship with Order of the Engineer
- Can a new pricing and structural model of membership be crafted that simplifies the offering for the consumer and meets the financial needs of the organization at all three tiers?
Membership Readout

- Strategic focus, not tweaks around the edges.
  - **Board & committee:** Revisiting the membership business model and engineering a breakthrough in three-tiered membership.
  - **Staff & sub-committee:** Tactical sales & marketing.

- **Urgency:** Later is not soon enough.

- **Membership is everyone’s job.**

- **Retention, not just acquisition.**
  - Particularly young and early career-stage engineers.

- **Focus on value, not form/structure.**
  - “Three-tiered” is a business model, not a selling point.
Membership (continued)

- Focus on value delivered, both:
  - To the individual (appeal to individual self interest); and
  - To the public (appeal to higher interests).

- **Engagement:** Each individual member, not the society, gets to decide what being engaged means to them.
  - Increase the value delivered to those not actively engaged in the traditional sense (e.g.; not interested in service on boards or committees).

- Need to retain existing members who are committed to existing membership structures while introducing new structures to penetrate new markets.
  - Existing benefits in new packages tailored to segments.

- The price of membership/value delivered varies widely from state to state.
Draft Membership Committee Charges

1. Institute an integrated, collaborative **Marketing Plan** for member recruitment that coordinates and integrates marketing efforts at the National level and with each of the State member organizations.

2. Establish an integrated **Retention and Reclamation Program** for delinquent or dropped members. The Plan will involve shared responsibilities and accountability among National and State personnel.

3. Develop a **Communication Structure** between state leaders and the Membership Committee for marketing, retention, and reclamation programs (see charges above) that will allow for the flow of information and verification of progress on action items / accountability.

4. Work with other NSPE committees and task forces in establishing and developing a relationship with the **Order of the Engineer** with the specific goal of instituting a plan to track and maintain contact with OoE inductees as they transition from education institutions and into the work force.

5. Establish a program for **Licensure Recognition Ceremonies** where they currently do not exist to help strengthen the image of PEs in the community and promote membership in NSPE to newly minted PEs.
Reaction to Draft Membership Committee Charges

- New Charge: Urgent and fundamental change in membership business model to eliminate barriers to three-tiered membership acquisition and retention.
  - Contrary View: This is a business planning challenge for professional staff, not a volunteer committee accountability.

- Bridge the gap between graduation/FE and PE.
  - Establish loyalty and maintain connection.
  - Capture and track graduates.
    - NCEES and licensing boards.
    - Order of the Engineer.
Reaction to Draft Membership Committee Charges

- **Order of the Engineer**
  - Establish connection to new graduates.
  - Track them as future PE prospects.
  - Tied to university not to typical state or metropolitan boundaries.
  - Address distinction between the license and the ring.

- **Focus on student chapters, not just Order of Engineer.**
Strategic Dialogue:

COMMUNICATIONS
Issue Statement

NSPE has taken great strides in defining its purpose and focus, and aligning/modifying existing communication vehicles and platforms and the volume of communications used to promote this content. How can NSPE take it to the next level?

- What new modalities and approaches to communication can better reach and engage audiences we have not effectively connected with so far? (e.g.; YEs)
- How can we better coordinate with both internal partners (e.g.; state societies) and external partners (e.g.; NCEES, ABET, Order of the Engineer, Strategic Alliance Partners) to get more impact for messages and goals we share in common?
- How can NSPE increase its "pull" communications (attracting members to come to NSPE/state societies for the content they value) in addition to its menu of "push" communications (content actively distributed by NSPE to target audiences)?
Communications Readout

- User Perspective: “Content that I need, when I decide I need it,” not pushing content we think they will find interesting to them, at the time we create it.
- Segment markets.
  - Data-based.
- Targeted content / targeted media.
  - Get consistent content to everyone, tailored to their preferred modality.
  - Mobile versus print & desktop.
- Capture techniques that have worked elsewhere and share with states.
Communications (continued)

- Virtual chapters/virtual engagement.
- Raising the digital profile.
  - TED Talk-like presentations.
- Connect people who are facing the same issues, don’t just set content, in pre-defined formats, targeted to fixed market segments.
- E-newsletter template and content for state societies.
- “If content is king, then context is queen.”
Draft Communications Committee Charges

1. Ensure consistency with the NSPE Strategic Plan in all communications across the Society and its member groups.
2. Build consistency in how the NSPE brand is perceived outside the Society, to its affiliate organizations and to the general public in order to build relationships and attract and retain talent.
3. Enhance coalitions with various internal and external partners, i.e. state societies, NCEES, Order of the Engineer, ABET, etc., to get more impact for messaging on shared common goals.
4. Work with NSPE Staff to develop a new logo and tag line to enhance and strengthen the PE brand.
5. Organize and host, in partnership with TED, a minimum of one TEDx event for this year on the ethics of emerging technologies.
Reaction to Draft Communications Committee Charges

- Make last charge more generic:
  - Outreach in digital form, not just TED-like talks.
  - Exercise caution not to infringe on TED-brand.
- Add Reddit to social media mix
- Experiment with different platforms and assess data-analytics before committing to a plan.
Strategic Dialogue:

COLLABORATION
Issue Statement

What is the best operating model and delivery system to increase opportunities for members to engage and collaborate in order to meet their specific professional and technical needs?

- **Legacy Models**
  - Interest Group
  - Affinity Group (e.g.; NABIE & NAFE)
  - Business Unit within NSPE (e.g.; NICET)
  - Business Unit with external partners (e.g.; EJCDC)

- **Potential Models**
  - Online Community of Practice

- How can NSPE become more nimble and dynamic in enabling the formation and meaningful support of new collaboration/common interest groups (formal or informal) while avoiding creation of rigid structures and administrative burden?
Collaboration Readout

- Current definitions of Interest Group are too rigid and too broad.
- Online Communities.
  - Dynamic formation, growth, sunset.
  - “Set the table to enable new groups to do what they want to do --- grow if they need to, stay small and simple if that is enough.”
  - Scale and customize not one size fits all.
- From silos to interconnected networks.
Collaboration (continued)

- Can we create value without adding structure or hierarchy?
  - Value not structure is the objective.
  - Structure creates cost.
- Contrary View: Structure enables:
  - Continuity.
  - Succession planning.
  - Alignment.
  - Oversight.
- Danger of splintering into too many/too narrowly defined segments --- loss of focus.
Collaboration (continued)

- Customized portals as gateway to content.
- Municipal Engineers as test case.
- How does what national does in this area impact and coordinate with states?
- What is the future of Legacy Interest Groups?
  - Add resources.

--- OR ---

- Free to do whatever they wish as long as it does not consume resources.
Draft Collaboration Task Force Charges

1. Thoroughly evaluate and recommend to the NSPE Board of Directors the best business model and delivery system to increase additional collaboration groups and/or collaboration opportunities to meet a member set’s professional and/or technical needs. The evaluation shall include but not be limited to a review of the NICET model, the Interest Group model, the Affinity Group model and any combination or derivative thereof (perhaps Academy?); whether or not the new groups should fall within the existing Legacy Interest Groups or if the collaboration group should be stand alone; whether an online collaboration community is sufficient to meet the needs; and a review of other associations such as ASCE and SME collaboration areas.

2. Survey municipal engineers, both members and non-members, to determine, among other things, the level of interest in creating a collaboration group unique to municipal engineers; to identify areas of collaboration interests; identify specialized needs unique to municipal engineers; identify advocacy needs; identify potential strategic partners, etc.

3. Develop a robust annual conference program with continuing education targeting the unique or specialized needs of municipal engineers as part of the NSPE Annual conference starting with the 2017 Annual conference.

4. Develop and identify the step by step process and timeline and potential financial impacts to launch a new collaboration group that focuses on the unique needs of municipal engineers, subject to Board approval. This work will include mission and vision statements, group name, and the defining of the metrics of success.
Reaction to Draft Collaboration Task Force Charges

- Make the role/use of online community (Higher Logic platform), more explicit in charge one.
- Charges two-four are relevant to municipal engineers as test case, but are not limited to just municipal engineers.
- Need to address path forward of Legacy Interest Groups.
- Need to explore other and all forms of collaboration, particularly as a vehicle for product/service delivery and non-dues revenue.
- Director of Membership charged with re-working draft.
Strategic Dialogue

POLICY DEVELOPMENT & ADVOCACY
Issue Statement

How can the new Committee on Policy and Advocacy (formed from the LQPC and L&GA) further the mission of NSPE through:

1. Development of public policy that affects engineering licensure and the practice of engineering as it affects public health, safety and welfare; and

2. Advocacy of these policies in such a way that:
   a. Promotes and protects the licensed PE;
   b. Protects the public health, safety and welfare; and
   c. Enhances the awareness and appreciation of the licensed professional engineer?
Policy Development & Advocacy Readout

- Positions should not be negotiated in isolation.
  - “Cross-pollination” on committee itself versus formal liaisons to other committees.
- Develop policies that enhance the NSPE brand.
- Proactive and future-focused.
- Engage subject matter experts to expand the pool of engaged members.
Policy Development & Advocacy (continued)

- Become a recognized authority to public and decision-makers.
  - Research grants.

- Protection.
  - “What has been legislated can be legislated away.”

- Protection, but not protectionism.
  - Awareness and appreciation of the how meaningful licensure is in the public interest.
  - Loss of credibility if we appear more concerned with what’s good for engineers than we are with what’s good for public.

- Transparency and openness, not direct input/vote or micro-management on every issue.
Draft Committee on Policy & Advocacy Charges

1. Prioritization of Issues Based on Board Feedback – August through September 2015
2. Development of Committee Structure to Support Priorities – October through November 2015
3. Development of Committee Processes and Procedures – November through December 2015
4. Preparation and Submission of Committee Report to Board – February 2016
5. Preparation and Submission of Budget to Board – April 2016
Reaction to Draft Committee on Policy & Advocacy Charges

- Keep the eye on the prize:
  - Policy for a purpose:
    - Provide the clarity NSPE needs in order to be effective and engaged in issues of the day.
  - Bias towards action:
    - What are the priority areas for action and the outcomes NSPE wishes to achieve this year?
    - What are policies and supporting data we need to be effective advocating on those issues today?
  - Policy that reinforces NSPE’s brand.
Strategic Dialogue

“GRAND CHALLENGE”
Building on July's House of Delegates caucus discussion, how can NSPE establish a leadership role, both within the engineering community and as the recognized leader of public discourse on the ethical pursuit of innovation and technology?

- How can NSPE engage the public in recognizing the role and importance of licensed engineers in advancing and protecting the public interest in areas beyond the traditional built environment (e.g.; cyber-security, artificial intelligence, bio-medical engineering and devices, etc.)?

- How can NSPE engage engineers and the public in a discussion of the ethical implications of autonomous devices (e.g.; driver-less cars).
“Grand Challenge” Readout

- Leadership in the public eye on the ethical implications of innovation and technology.
  - Risk assessment and risk management.
- Public purpose: not self-interest driven.
- Not an area for dabblers: Get in in a serious way, or not at all.
- Find one area of focus and run with it.
  - Where is the nexus between NSPE and cyber-security or artificial intelligence?
  - Autonomous Vehicles.
“Grand Challenge” (continued)

- **Environmental Scan:**
  - What is already being done in this area?
  - Where is the opportunity for NSPE?

- **Possible partners:**
  - IEEE-USA.
  - Vehicle design, *not* just traffic systems.

- **Grant opportunities?**
Strategic Dialogue

BUSINESS PLAN
Issue Statement

How can NSPE develop a three-year strategic Business Plan that would take a more comprehensive and holistic look at NSPE activities, rather than completing this evaluation only on a yearly basis within the necessarily more operational and time-limited focus of the annual budgeting process?

- How can NSPE plan for the resources and set forth the principles and strategies to create or maintain a strong financial position for NSPE in order to ensure that adequate resources are available and invested where they will have the maximum value for the membership?
- How can NSPE develop a framework or structure of the organization’s efforts for the upcoming operational year?
- How can NSPE connect the dots between all the strategic discussions conducted at the present meeting?
Business Plan Read Out

- Resource limitations should not limit thinking
  - If we have a big idea that needs doing, we will find the resources to do it.
- AMS conversion needs to be completed successfully: don’t distract or interfere with getting the basic engine in place and working right.
- Finance Committee priorities:
  - Increased clarity and transparency in financial reporting.
  - Clean audit.
  - Plan for managing the building as an asset in Third Quarter.
    - Keep the door open to all opportunities: The fair market value of the building is an asset to be leveraged.
- Current draft framework is “stream of consciousness” – needs to be fleshed out.
  - Develop priorities.
  - Understand consequences.
  - Exercise discipline.
Transactional versus Stakeholder Value:

- **Transactional:**
  - “What’s in it for me?”
  - If I don’t pay I don’t get the benefit.

- **Stakeholder:**
  - For the good of the profession and society.
  - I benefit from NSPE success whether I support it financially or not.

**NSPE value is predominantly stakeholder value.**

**New sources of non-dues revenue could both:**

- Create resources to invest in stakeholder value.
- Increase transactional value.
Business Plan (continued)

- Wish List (unfunded programs) include:
  - Leadership Institute
  - Increased advocacy
  - Collaboration/communities
  - Increased membership marketing
  - Logo and Branding
  - Reserves
  - Building

- Potential efficiencies/productivity gains through better allocation of volunteer, staff, financial resources include:
  - Legal Fund solicitations
  - Board and officer travel
  - Mailings
  - MATHCOUNTS
  - Charge for part of membership billing and administrative expenses now borne entirely by national
  - Print edition of PE magazine
  - Building

**Brainstormed List:** None of these options were discussed in detailed or designated for specific action.
Unofficial Record

NSPE Board of Directors
August 14-15, 2015
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