Discipline Specific or Generic Licensure?

NSPE Leadership Webinar
March 31, 2011

Licensure and Qualifications for Practice Committee

Full and Partial Practice Act Jurisdictions:
Must have an SE license to design all or certain structures

Title Act Jurisdictions:
Must have met specified qualifications requirements to call yourself a Structural Engineer

Generic Licensure Jurisdictions:
PE Must practice within area of competence

Licensure of Structural Engineers

How are Structural Engineers Licensed Currently in the US?

- Practice Act Jurisdictions (SE for all structures)
  - Illinois, Hawaii
- Partial Practice Act Jurisdictions (SE for all significant structures)
  - Washington, California, Oregon, Nevada, Utah
- Title Act Jurisdictions (Title only)
  - Arizona, Idaho, Nebraska
- Hybrid
  - Louisiana, Rhode Island
- Generic Licensure Jurisdictions

Trends in SE Licensing

- Illinois – 1915
- California – 1931
- Hawaii – 1933 (?)
- Washington – 1963
- Nevada – 1974
- Oregon – 1974
- Idaho – 1989
- Arizona – 1990
- Nebraska – 1994
- Utah - 1994

2011 NSPE Separate Licensing for Structural Engineers
Existing Policies
Engineering Organizations

- **NSPE** – supports generic licensure.
- **NCSEA** – supports establishment of discipline specific Practice Acts for structural engineers in all 55 jurisdictions.
- **ASCE** – supports licensure as a PE, with post-licensure specialty credentialing.
- **NCEES** – supports, and is facilitating, uniformity in structural engineering examinations and comity in structural engineering licensure. NCEES has no position on generic or discipline specific licensure.

NSPE Policy

NSPE endorses and supports the concept of licensure of engineers only as a “Professional Engineer” and opposes licensure status by designated branches or specialties.

NCSEA Goals

- Establishment of uniform structural engineering practice-act licensing in all 55 U.S. jurisdictions
  - Basic education
  - Continuing education / professional development
  - Experience and currency of practice
  - Examination

Why?

- If structures are not properly designed (and constructed) they can collapse
- When structures collapse people die
- The generic civil engineering education does not provide an engineer the knowledge or skills needed to practice structural engineering in today’s complex world
- Generic PE or CE registration also does not provide adequate protection of the public
States Reported by NCSEA to be Considering Discipline Specific Licensure in 2011

- Florida
- Georgia
- Ohio
- Minnesota
- Arkansas
- Kentucky
- Texas
- Maine
- Missouri
- New York
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Wisconsin
- Oklahoma

ASCE Policy

- The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) supports licensure as a Professional Engineer (PE) that recognizes the traditional breadth of the civil engineering practice. ASCE also supports post-PE credentialing that attests to a Professional Engineer’s expertise in a civil engineering specialty area. Obtaining a PE license or post-PE credential shall require the engineer to demonstrate attainment of an appropriate body of knowledge.

- Credentialing is a generic term defining the granting of a credential; for example diplomas, licenses, and/or certifications.

Examples of Evolving Specialization:

- Civil Engineering
  - Transportation
  - Structural
  - Geotechnical
  - Environmental
  - Water Resources
- Environmental Engineering
  - Surface Water / Groundwater / Air
  - Water / Wastewater
  - Solid Waste
  - Hazardous Waste
  - Air Pollution Control

Specialization is Accelerating
Cross-Discipline Practice is Decreasing

Long Term Trends In Engineering:

- Increasing complexity
- Increasing specialization
- Affects ALL Disciplines
Is there a Problem in Structural Engineering?

- As cross-discipline practice decreases,
- And as structural engineering practice becomes more complex, further decreasing cross discipline practice,
- Is there a compelling public health, safety and welfare need to move to discipline specific licensure for structural engineers in currently generic jurisdictions?

Licensure Analogy - Medicine

- States License Physicians as Medical Doctors – M.D.
- Sufficient to regulate their practice to protect public health and safety
- Neurosurgeons (and all specialists) are not licensed other than as M.D.’s, and do not need to be licensed from a regulatory and legal perspective.
- Post Licensure Specialty Certification is used in Medicine in the US

Is there a viable alternate course of action?

- Maybe

Generic Licensure Alternatives

- PE Board Roster Designations
- Specialty Certification, P.E., SECB
- Oklahoma Approach, P.E., S.E.
Discipline Roster Designations in Generic Licensure Jurisdictions

- Can be equivalent to a Title Act
- Applicable to many disciplines
- Successful in Louisiana and other jurisdictions
- Can be accomplished by Rule change rather than by Law change in some jurisdictions

Rigorous Roster Designation Criteria:

Education: appropriate number of courses in discipline

Experience: at least 3 or 4 years experience in discipline

Examination: 16 Hour Structural Exam or earlier equivalents

What is a Roster Designation?

Excerpt from New Hampshire Roster:

- JEFFREY S MURRAY
  - City/Zip: PORTSMOUTH 03801
  - Discipline: CE License #: 10139
  - Licensed: 01/21/00 Expires: 08/31/07
- Name: RONALD P MURRO
  - City/Zip: LITTLETON 03561-4438
  - Discipline: IND MECH License #: 03724 RETIRED
  - Licensed: 01/29/76 Expires: 09/30/08
- Name: CRAIG N MUSSELMAN
  - City/Zip: PORTSMOUTH 03801
  - Discipline: CE SAN ENV License #: 04255
  - Licensed: 07/19/78 Expires: 11/30/08

Post-Licensure Certification P.E., SECB

- Provides the opportunity to identify structural engineering advanced qualifications
  - Education
  - Experience
  - Examinations
  - Continuing Professional Development
To Receive Credit

• To receive credit for this course each participant should use this link www.nspe.org/quiz/genvsspecific.aspx to take the quiz.


Proposed S.E. Designation Statutory Language
O.S. Title 59, 475.1 et seq.

2. A professional engineer duly licensed in Oklahoma, shall only use the designation “S.E.” if one or more of the following conditions apply:
   1. The person is currently licensed in good standing in another state or jurisdiction as an “E.” by further examination beyond the examination(s) required for licensure as a professional engineer;
   2. The person has passed the Principles and Practice of Engineering examination and additionally has passed the eight hour NCEES Structural I examination.
   3. The person has passed the NCEES Principles and Practice of Engineering eight hour Structural I and eight hour Structural II examination; or
   4. The person has passed the 14 hour NCEES Structural examination.

It shall be a violation of this Act for any person to use the designation “S.E.” who does not meet one or more of the above listed conditions. However, any Oklahoma duly licensed professional engineer may practice within the discipline of structural engineering or refer to themselves as a “structural engineer” if structural engineering is within their area of competence and they have indicated as such in the records of the Board.
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