


**TO:** NSPE Board of Directors

**cc:** House of Delegates  
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:** December 4, 2017

**RE:** Board Update: November 15-30, 2017

This is a reminder that the NSPE Candidate Screening Committee will be screening for the position of 2018-19 NSPE Vice President (to serve as NSPE president in 2020-21). **All nomination packages for this position are to be submitted to the NSPE Secretary by January 1, 2018.** Full information on submitting nominations can be found [here](#).

## Championing the PE License

**PE Requirement Threatened:** NSPE continues to fight efforts to stop an important final rule addressing oil and natural gas emissions; the current rule requires a professional engineer to perform key functions to meet performance standards, but the agency has proposed eliminating that requirement. On November 17, NSPE President Tom Roberts, P.E., F.NSPE, submitted a [public comment](#) to the Environmental Protection Agency regarding its reconsideration of the requirements for a professional engineer to certify the closed vent system design and capacity assessment. In the public comment, Roberts writes, “NSPE is concerned by the proposed stay and its rationale.... [T]he EPA, in its careful consideration and determination of the final 2016 rule, recognized the unique qualifications, expertise, and the legal and ethical duty of professional engineers to hold paramount the public health, safety, and welfare in their designs, construction, and observations.... With hundreds of thousands of PEs across the country, NSPE strongly believes that the existing requirements can be met.”

NSPE urges the EPA to enforce the current requirements immediately. If a new rule is finalized, it should retain the requirement for a licensed professional engineer to be in responsible charge of all engineering projects. NSPE and the professional engineers it represents share a common purpose with the EPA in ensuring that the United States exemplifies the best engineering standards in the world.

**Worrisome Tax Provision:** NSPE joined with the American Institute of Architects and the American Society of Landscape Architects in sending a letter to legislators on a worrisome provision in the tax legislation currently being considered by Congress. Both the House and Senate versions of the legislation would raise taxes for engineering firms organized as pass-through businesses, including S corporations, partnerships, and LLCs. In the letter, NSPE urges

*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](#).*

Congress to amend the legislation to allow these firms to qualify for the new tax rate. The House and Senate have passed their own versions of the legislation. The House legislation excludes engineering and other professional services. The Senate legislation's 23% tax deduction is available only to professional services firm owners whose taxable income is below \$500,000 (married filing jointly)/\$250,000 (individual). These bills will now be brought to a joint House-Senate conference committee. NSPE will provide an update on the final resolution of the legislation.

**Where Can You Take the PE Exam Early?** NSPE has created a state-by-state [summary report](#) of jurisdictions that allow PE candidates to take the PE exam prior to fulfilling their experience requirements<sup>1</sup>.

**COPA Seeks Input on Proposed Professional Policies:** At the end of the 2016-17 NSPE program year, NSPE's leadership team charged the NSPE Committee on Policy and Advocacy to fully articulate guiding principles governing NSPE's advocacy activities to regulate the activities and positions of NSPE, its business entities, and its volunteers. In keeping with the principles of *Race for Relevance* and the NSPE Business Plan, these umbrella policies should be concise statements of principles, values, and direction from the House of Delegates to NSPE's leadership team and board of directors. From these foundational umbrella policies would flow a coherent set of position statements, procedures, and activities. The House of Delegates was presented with and provided input into COPA's proposed framework for these policies in July. Taking its direction from the HoD, COPA has prepared each of the proposed umbrella policies addressing nine broad areas:

1. [Education](#)
2. [Emerging Technologies](#)
3. [Energy](#)
4. [Environment](#)
5. [Ethics](#)
6. [Government](#)
7. [Infrastructure](#)
8. [Professional Practice](#)
9. [Licensure](#)

NSPE has now opened a period of public comment on each of the nine proposed professional policies by creating a thread for each in the State and National Leader Community<sup>2</sup>. Please post any comments on a given professional policy to the professional policy's specific thread. Please focus comments and any edits on the substance of the professional policies, rather than on grammatical or spelling edits. The public comment period is open through December 29, 2017.

At the end of the comment period, COPA will review all comments received and (if warranted) edit the proposed professional policies accordingly. COPA will then submit the revised final draft proposed professional policy language, which will be considered and acted on at the House of Delegates General Assembly in Las Vegas, on July 21, 2018.

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<sup>1</sup> All states that allow "early taking" still require completion of the experience requirements before a license is awarded.

<sup>2</sup> You can access each proposed PP in the links in the numbered list above.

In addition to these broad statements of governing policy, each professional policy is supported by a larger body of more specific [position statements](#)<sup>3</sup>. COPA is continuing its work to reorganize, update, and clarify existing position statements within the new professional policies framework. As the House of Delegates discussed in Atlanta, once this process is complete, these umbrella policies and position statements will replace all current NSPE [professional policies](#) and [position statements](#). In approaching this charge, it has been and remains COPA's intention to preserve and recast the entire *substance* of all existing positions and policies into a comprehensive and aligned body of professional policies (PPs) and position statements (PSs). The committee is on track to have this entire process completed by conclusion of Las Vegas annual meeting next July.

**Licensure Debate Continues:** The role of licensure in society continues to arise in the general press, characterized in both a positive and negative manner.

In an [op-ed for \*The Hill\*](#), Santa Clarita mayor pro tem Laurene Weste and Association of State Dam Safety Officials executive director Lori Cannon Spragens discuss the Saint Francis Dam Disaster National Memorial Act, explaining how the rupture of the St. Francis Dam in 1928 “brought about a new era of engineering oversight and methods for dam building across the nation.” Written in support of legislation to create a memorial on the 90th anniversary of the disaster, they remind us of “the compelling account of the dam’s failure and how that fundamentally changed the amount of oversight guiding the construction of dams in the United States.” Missing is any specific reference to professional licensure, but still a useful public reminder of the important role of regulation (including professional licensure) in protecting public health, safety, and welfare.

On the negative side, a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed on November 25, 2017 (“[Licenses to Kill Opportunity](#)”), continues an alarming trend in this and other publications that fails to draw any distinction between occupational and professional licensure, characterizing all forms of state licensure as drags on the economy that block employment opportunities and upward mobility.

Both serve as a reminder of the importance of the on-going, coordinated, and comprehensive efforts by all 53 of the partners (state and national) who make up NSPE to [champion the PE license](#) through legislative, regulatory, and public awareness-raising efforts.

### Ethical Guide to the Profession

There's more to ethical culture than checking a box. It's important that engineering firms have effective ethics and compliance programs with the proper codes of conduct, training, and reporting systems. However, new research recommends that firms look for the presence or absence of ethical behaviors to measure the success of their programs instead of tallying up how many program elements are in place. You can read about it in the latest [PE Scope](#) electronic newsletter.

In discussions about infrastructure resiliency, design is often top of mind. But another aspect that can't be ignored, pre- or post-disaster, is policy. Engineers may be reluctant to get involved in this area, preferring to keep to the technical arenas where they feel most

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<sup>3</sup> Position statement must tie their existence and authority directly to a House of Delegates-established professional policy(s).

confident. But some PEs point to the need for engineers to contribute their technical knowledge to policy discussions, seeing such actions as part of the ethical responsibilities inherent in their roles. A feature article in the current *PE* magazine (“[Imagining the Impossible](#)”) explores this important topic.

**Diversity in Engineering:** New research could help fix the “leaky pipeline” of female professional engineers. As engineering attempts to diversify the profession, it faces challenges of both recruitment and retention. For example, it’s not enough to just attract more women; the profession must also take a close look at factors that cause them to leave. A 2014 study found that about 40% of women who study engineering ultimately exit the profession. In a [presentation on her work](#), psychologist Nadya Fouad pointed to climate issues—i.e., “old-boys club” workplaces.

Fouad’s work has been highlighted in the *PE* magazine articles “[Heading for the Exit](#)” and “[Experts Discuss How to Grow and Keep US Engineering Workforce](#).”

More recently, a sociology professor at the University of Massachusetts Lowell has won a National Science Foundation grant to study gender in engineering workplaces, and ways to create a more diverse and inclusive workforce. The study will compare the experiences of women and men as they begin their careers in civil engineering.

You can learn more about the study, “Characterizing Gendered Socialization of Newcomer Engineers to Promote Inclusive Practices and Retention of a Diverse Workforce,” from [UMass](#) and [NSF](#). Read the NSPE [feature package](#) on diversity and sexual harassment in engineering. Access NSPE’s [webpage on diversity in engineering](#).

**Responding to Climate Change:** A [report](#) issued in November by federal agencies pointed directly at human actions that contribute to climate change. Addressing these challenges requires educating workers in a variety of fields. Recently, an Ocala, Florida, [news article](#) highlighted ways that climate change and sea-level rise are now being incorporated into higher education curriculum. Such studies are going beyond earth and environmental sciences to reach other sciences, social sciences, and arts and humanities. The Association of American Colleges and Universities reports that more of its members are incorporating climate change into curricula.

## Powering Professional Advancement

**Props to Award Winners:** Thanks again to all the state societies who responded to our request for details about the 2017 Engineer of the Year and Young Engineer of the Year award winners from their states. You’ll now find them highlighted in the first slide on the NSPE homepage.

There might be a crucial element missing from the current engineering curriculum: management. Many engineers in the real world end up in roles where they must manage other engineers. The traditional undergraduate engineering setting, however, provides limited opportunities to develop management skills. The November/December issue of *PE* magazine offered a [list of resources](#) that can help PEs improve their managerial skills from professional engineers with experience as managers. The article also sparked a [healthy exchange](#) in the Open Forum of NSPE’s Communities.

**Nominate Top Achievers:** NSPE Honor Awards promote the professional engineer's contributions to society and recognize the achievements of the profession's very best. Nominations are due January 21, 2017.

- [NSPE Award](#)
- [Young Engineer of the Year Award](#)
- [Distinguished Service Award](#)

## Uniting the PE Community

**Membership Model Update:** Progress continues on implementation of the new NSPE membership model, mandated by the NSPE House of Delegates. To date, 35 state societies (covering approximately 65% of current membership) have formally elected Integrated Affiliation status. Three state societies (covering approximately 20% of current membership) have formally elected Non-Integrated affiliation status. The deadline for the 14 states who have not formally declared is December 31, 2017. Intensive and serious discussions within those 14 states and between national and state leaders continue.

Revisions to the [National/State Partnership Agreement](#) (which legally records the charter between national and each state society) necessary to implement the HoD action have been provided to all state leaders and includes important protections for state societies during the transitional period. A [working draft](#) of necessary amendments to the NSPE Bylaws has also been circulated as well. Based on input received, necessary tweaks and improvements will be made before the proposal is formally presented to the House of Delegates in January, for electronic consideration and action in the early spring.

Study Group II continues to actively support national staff in translating these concepts into implementation, including marketing and [messaging to members](#) and rolling out some of the state society services promised under the model. This includes the California Society [website](#) and [electronic newsletter](#) plus seven other state websites that are being developed and reviewed by state leaders. Fully functional, [direct access](#) for state society staff (and any volunteers, such as membership chairs, authorized by the state) to member records and billing information is up and running, and additional improvements (long in the works) are on schedule to go live in the new year, and well before the first renewal billing (April 2018) or new member acquisition (July 1, 2018) under the model occurs. The Technical Integration Task Force is making breakthroughs in assessment and development of a possible direct, database-to-database integration between national and the YourMembership database systems used by a handful of our (particularly) larger state society partners. The Texas society has also shared with state leaders information on how it currently keeps its [YourMembership database in sync](#) with national's, without the full integration that is still under development.

**Fellow Nomination Deadline:** This is a reminder that 2018 NSPE Fellow member nominations are due in the NSPE headquarters office by February 1, 2018. All state societies are encouraged to participate in the NSPE Fellow member program by submitting applications for qualified NSPE members. Full information on submitting nominations can be found [here](#).

Finally, two notes of farewell.

**We'll Miss You, Nancy!** A mainstay of the NSPE family, NSPE Executive Office Manager Nancy Oswald has announced her retirement at the end of this month, following 22 years of faithful service. She is in the process of relocating to the Richmond, Virginia, area to be nearer to her family. In addition to being my own principal support system at NSPE, she has been the tireless, patient, efficient, and deeply caring point of support for national volunteer leadership, House of Delegates representatives, state societies, and too many important committees to list.

She came to the executive offices of NSPE in 1995 and has managed that office since 2005. That means she has “survived” five different executive directors and more than 22 elected presidents. And as testimony to her effectiveness in this role, every single one of those president’s and CEOs, to this day, will tell you that they are sure they were Nancy’s favorite and that no one else ever got the support and dedication from Nancy that they did. But no matter who came to her with a problem or concern, whether it was a national or state president, someone else on staff, a member or a potential member whose name you wouldn’t recognize, their concern became her concern. No problem was too large or too small to get her full attention, and she never let it go until their need was met. She will be absolutely impossible to replace, but we have taken steps to support activities until the position can be permanently refilled. She will be sorely missed.

**NCEES CEO Set To Retire:** NCEES Chief Executive Officer Jerry Carter has informed the NCEES Board of his intentions to retire at the end of 2018. Jerry has been a member of the NCEES staff since 2001, initially serving as the director of corporate affairs and, since 2007, as CEO and a great partner and friend to NSPE.

I know you all join me in wishing them both well as they enter a new chapter in their lives.

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

If you want to review NSPE’s history and how that has been translated into current plans with a future-focus, NSPE’s purpose, mission, vision and a history of the *Race for Relevance* and the resulting Strategic Plan is summarized in a section called “[Who We Are and What We Do](#).”