

March 2004

Testing Core Knowledge

As an examinee for the SE II exam, I am disappointed by the article published March 2004 titled "Testing Core Knowledge". It is the author's position that the exams are for us to "demonstrate engineering knowledge, ability, and judgment." Agreed, but then, as an examinee, I should be able to expect that the examination questions will be reasonable and without error (both PE and SE).

The article does not discuss the test security measures or the new policy to void any partial credit already earned: The April 2004 examination bans calculators that have been the standard in scientific calculators for the last twenty years, yet the exam is open book and proctors do not perform their function during the exams; and examinees were informed that they would lose their credits for passing part of the SE II exam just 3 months in advance of the last opportunity to pass under the old system. This decision sets back nearly two-thirds of the current examinees. A more reasonable solution could have been achieved.

Furthermore, NCEES should be communicating directly with all examinees and in a timely fashion. The NCEES "Testing Core Knowledge" article is available on your website, but why only there, if these discussions are to be interpreted as the official dialogue and position of NCEES?

If NCEES truly wishes to improve volunteer participation in the examination process, it has to improve the quality and fairness of the examination process by treating examinees with professionalism.

*Sincerely,
Dionysios J. Pantazis, PE (IL, FL)
Chicago, Illinois*



Structural Drawings

(RE: "Structural Drawings: Why Some Drawings are Down-Right Unacceptable" in March 04)

Being a structural steel detailer for the past 45 years (the last 21 on my own), I must say that Clifford Schwinger, in my opinion, has hit the nail on the head.

For the last few years I have steadily seen a decline in the quality of structural design drawings. This seems to have happened as the computer has become more popular. Many times the structural drawings don't match up with the architectural, and more and more pertinent dimensions along with details are missing.

If something is not done in the near future, and with a lot of us "graybeards" retiring, the structural steel industry is going to go through some pretty bad times.

I challenge the engineering profession to clean up their act.
Dan Wierzbicki

This was an interesting problem, which we had fun with in our weekly meeting. We are a room full of Structural and Civil activity, so all involved had some comment!

Steve Tugwell

The response to the "Structural Drawings" article was phenomenal! We have posted Mr. Schwinger's version of the solution on the STRUCTURE website at <http://www.structuremag.org/readers.htm>

Formation of New Liability Loss Prevention Program

(Colorado Springs) Approximately forty-five (45) representatives from the structural engineering profession met on May 11th to discuss the formation of a new Liability Loss Prevention Program for structural engineers. Attendees included leadership representatives CASE, NCSEA and SEI, as well as numerous structural engineering firms.

John Magnusson (Magnusson Klemencic) provided an overview of potential organizational models. Possibilities ranged from a new SE organization to making the new program part of CASE. Doug Elliott (Elliott, LeBeouff & Associates) presented detail on program content. Mike Matsumoto (SSFm) presented an estimated operating budget of \$400,000 to \$600,000.

The group unanimously agreed that a new program should be initiated, and be based on firm membership rather than individual structural engineers. The group also agreed that the new program should be run through CASE. Dave Raymond, ACEC President (American Council of Engineering Companies), under which CASE is a special interest committee, said that ACEC fully

supports this effort and will make its staff and resources available to CASE for the operation of the program. He also indicated that provisions should be made so that firms who do not wish to join CASE or ACEC will still be permitted to participate in the new program.

*"The group of ex-SERMC members that have been working to create a new loss prevention and risk management program have done a yeoman's job of getting people involved." Ray Messer
(Walter P. Moore)*

For further information, or to assist in this effort, please contact Val Ericson (DiSalvo Ericson Group) at 203-438-9581, ext. 226.