



editorial

Grass Roots and You

From the Desk of Sanjeev N. Shah, P.E., NCSEA President

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NCSEA is a unique organization... it provides the only truly autonomous national voice for the structural engineering profession in the United States. Eleven years ago, NCSEA was formed to fight the disease of apathy that had afflicted our profession, and to unite the many successful state associations into one cohesive voice.

Grass-roots involvement is what defines NCSEA. It is at the grass-roots level that issues pertaining to the profession are first identified and translated into action, through motions made and passed by the NCSEA Delegates.

An example of our grass-roots involvement (and passion) is the establishment of the Professional Certification Committee by action of the Delegates at the 2000 Annual Meeting in San Antonio, TX. There, Delegates charged the Committee with developing a Certification Model. The Certification Committee presented their consensus Model to the Delegates during the 2002 Annual Meeting in Chicago. The Delegates voted overwhelmingly to accept the Certification Committee's Consensus Model, and have required that the logistics for establishing a Certification Program be addressed. I, with the support of the NCSEA Board of Directors, appointed an *ad hoc* Committee and charged them with addressing the issues related to implementation of a Certification Program – specifically, to develop a “prospectus” that would assist our membership in making an informed decision regarding the implementation of the Certification Program.

Their report was completed and has been sent out to NCSEA Delegates in preparation for the discussion to be held during the Annual Meeting in Denver (October 24 and 25, 2003). NCSEA will only sponsor the Certification Program. Its success (or failure) will depend on an autonomous board and the profession. A yes vote only means that NCSEA Member Organizations believe that this is the first step in our journey – the beginning of the change process necessary to establish the standards of practice of our profession and better protect the public. This is an important vote. As such, NCSEA's Board of Directors determined

that it should be subject to a letter ballot, as opposed to a voice vote at the Annual Meeting.

The Certification Program, if implemented, is viewed as only the first step towards obtaining uniform SE licensure in the United States. We will certainly continue our on-going efforts to help establish separate SE licensing (with uniform requirements) in the various US jurisdictions. To this end, NCSEA has joined NCEES as a member of the Participating Organizations Liaison Council (POLC). We look forward to presenting our viewpoints at the POLC meeting in February 2004. NCSEA has already provided a letter of support to the Structural Engineering Examination/Recognition Task Force (SEERTF) of NCEES with respect to their development of a definition of a Model Law – Structural Engineer, including identifying areas where we believe more work is necessary and offering our cooperation/collaboration to help in its adoption by different jurisdictions.

NCSEA's Board of Directors has a very simple, but important, responsibility – to listen to its members and to manage NCSEA's limited resources effectively, so that we keep making progress in achieving NCSEA's goals. The Annual Meeting is the venue for NCSEA members to participate and communicate with fellow NCSEA members and with the NCSEA Board of Directors. NCSEA has developed an excellent program, with the help of the host Member Organization, SEA of Colorado, for the 2004 Annual Meeting in Denver. I trust that those who attend will use the opportunity to network with each other, and to form and nurture the strong bonds that will help NCSEA achieve its goals.

It has been a year since NCSEA entrusted me with the office of the President. I have strived, with the support of the Board of Directors, to stay true to our grass-roots, passion-driven culture. If I have failed in some manner to meet expectations, please forgive me and please, continue to participate with the same passion that you have shown in the past.

See you in Denver!