



**Ontario Association of Certified Engineering
Technicians and Technologists**

Strategic Plan for 2019 – 2023

The Strategic Planning Process

The current Strategic Plan runs from 2014 – 2019. Council requested a new plan to be developed for adoption by the Council in the Fall of 2018. This allows for sufficient time to develop the necessary plans to implement the new plan and get the operational plans and budget reviewed and approved as appropriate.

A Strategic Planning Task Force was struck and consultants were selected to work with the Task Force and Council. Initial consultations were conducted in January and February. Interviewed were a cross-section of Council members, Senior staff, and external stakeholders / key informants from including Colleges and other associations. A workshop with Council members and senior staff on initial findings and themes was held in March.

Consultations on themes were held at eight Chapter meetings during March and April.

After discussions with the Task Force, a presentation of findings and proposed Priorities was made to the Council in May with discussion. The following day a presentation of the same was made to those attending the AGM June with discussion for input. Overall, the Strategic Priorities were well received.

Consultation using an electronic “focus group” technology was conducted. Results of that consultation is not appended (as the report is over 60 pages long) but is available from the Corporate office. The information was integrated into all the prior analysis for the development of the plan.

Throughout the initiative, there was a review of relevant documents and publicly available information. This included a review of related OACETT activities for information that informs the process including the findings of the Young Professionals Task Force and survey.

Regular meetings were held with senior staff and with the Task Force.

Overall, the planning process was thorough, consultative and the information gathered was surprisingly consistent in terms of priorities, challenges and opportunities available to OACETT.

The Context within which OACETT operates

There are many studies and reports outlining the challenges and **opportunities** that face not-for-profit associations in general, and OACETT is no exception. Some of the major factors that represent both **opportunities** and **threats** to which OACETT must be prepared to respond include the following:

Political

The political world is experiencing a great deal of upheaval. Ontario has a new government along with a federal election next year that will bring changes to Ontario and the country. The relaxation of regulations and taxes in the U.S. and the pressure this puts on Canada's competitive environment will only focus greater attention to enhancing Ontario's competitiveness and productivity.

And while health and safety of the public remains a tenet of public policy, the Ontario government is focused on job creation, economic growth and removing obstacles to business; for example, the recent decision to wind down the Ontario College of Trades. Further, the BC government has made the decision to create a quasi-government agency to provide oversight with self-regulation be granted to foresters, botanists, agrologists and engineering technicians and technologists.

In Ontario, there has been some desire among members to look at self-regulation. The current and economic climate would suggest advancing arguments to support the case for licensing would not be well received, nor necessarily would it be desirable given the very significant technology driven changes remaking the economy and the labour force. However, through leadership initiatives at the national level OACETT does have the ability to stay apprised of developments that could help shape an approach to potential self-regulation in the future.

Economic

As of this moment, the economy in Ontario appears robust (better than other provinces according to the Conference Board of Canada in a May 2018 study). Overall Canada has been generating new jobs. However, we are in the tenth straight year of a growing economy and many are predicting it cannot last. At the point of writing the NAFTA agreement has been reconstituted as USMCA, but has not passed any of the bodies who must sign off. Therefore, the possibility of no deal still remains and the impact of that cannot be accurately predicted. Significant public debt, both provincially and federally will certainly limit governments' ability to manage a downturn.

Social

Demographics in Ontario are changing in ways that affect membership. Baby boomers are retiring in great numbers and OACETT faces a loss of members in this age group. Ontario has the highest rate of immigration in Canada and foreign born / trained students and professionals are the category with potential for growth in OACETT membership.

The growth of the millennial and “Gen Z” age group in the workforce has been widely cited. Many associations are finding that it is difficult to discern why younger professionals join an association. The reasons remain elusive even though there are lots of theories about it. Is it networking? Noblesse oblige? Educational opportunities? The impact of the millennial generation was the focus of a study by the Young Professionals Task Force this year.

Another trend that has been cited is the increase in “career anxiety.” Job uncertainty and whether a career path will be maintainable is a fact of life at this point.

Technological

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the evolution of other computer-based technologies is challenging the ability of organizations and individuals to keep up. Workers are finding their skills becoming obsolete in ways not imagined a few years ago.

Putting it all together in the OACETT context

The Social, Economic and Technological aspects come together in a way that significantly affect OACETT's members and the strategic direction for the Association. There have been a number of studies focused on the job situation for both younger people and all workers. Full-time, steady work is becoming the exception. This is highlighted in reports from the Royal Bank of Canada and from an address by the President of IBM Canada, Ayman Antoun who put it like this:

“A recent skills report by Royal Bank of Canada found that, in the next decade, about 25 per cent of Canadian jobs will be disrupted by change and advancements in technology, and more than half will require a skills overhaul. ... the role of the individual worker has begun to shift ... creating what have become the ‘new-collar’ jobs. While these positions are highly technical, many of them do not require a four-year postsecondary degree.

“New-collar competencies can be achieved through modern vocational training – competency-based programs that measure learning rather than time spent in an educational setting.

“New -collar work could lead to thousands of jobs in Canada, provided large-scale training initiatives using public-private partnerships that are established to close the competency gap. These partnerships will better connect young people and current workers to the education and training they require to obtain meaningful employment or to move forward in their careers.”¹

¹ *Canada needs a Skills Overhaul to Address Job Disruption from Emerging Technologies.*
Ayman Antoun (President, IBM) in the Globe and Mail, Sept 5, 2018

Moving Forward

Our consultations with members, the council and with others in the field reinforce these insights from Mr. Antoun. The opportunity for the Association is that members and potential members are keenly interested in having OACETT provide educational opportunities to help them maintain their employability over time. They also wish to use vehicles such as chapter meetings, mentoring and electronic means to gain the skills they require. In addition, they encouraged OACETT to pursue relationships on which these can be built as well.

OACETT has the responsibility to help members understand how challenging the future of the profession is. It must continue to forcefully communicate information of the trends that affect members and provide support to them in navigating this path.

The last plan laid out a number of Trends and Issues. Many of these (bulleted here) remain relevant.

- Ongoing emphasis on the need for continuous learning / work-integrated learning within the labour force.
- Increased presence of third-party and / or independent certification.
- Continued impact of e-learning as a source of credentials and professional development.
- Rise of social media and its increasing importance in member communication and information dissemination.
- Increasing need among the membership for non-technical training and development.
- Demographic shifts and related changing expectation (aging, millennials, foreign trained, Gen Z)

Thus, the plan going forward represents an on-going focus on these issues with the concomitant need to use resources wisely.

A critical challenge for (and **threat** to) professional associations is providing a compelling value proposition to address perceptions held by some of their members that associations do not deliver enough value. Responding to this threat requires listening closely to current and potential members to a degree that they may not have in the past.

One aspect that emerged very strongly in the consultation that was not particularly highlighted in the last plan is the importance of **Chapters** in engaging the members and attracting new members. The Chapter structure is a strength of the Association to build on going forward. This plan puts a strong emphasis on Chapters as a source of success.

Strategic Plan – 2019 – 2023

The following pages present the plan for OACETT. The components are:

- Vision
- Mission
- Strategic Priorities
- Strategies to Achieve the Priorities
- Strengths and Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
- Key Performance Indicators

VISION – what we aspire to

Recognized leader in certification and member experience, enabling engineering technology professionals to successfully navigate their careers.

Mission – why we are here

OACETT is Ontario's independent certifying body for engineering and applied science technicians and technologists. The Association provides member certification, career-long educational opportunities, professional support for the benefit of the economy and safe and secure communities.

Strategic Priorities and Strategies to Achieve Them

Strategic Priority One: Careers

Focus on the career journey of individuals working in the engineering technology sector, providing support at each stage of their career.

Make sure certification and standards remain rigorous and adaptive, ensuring members become and remain ready for professional service as the work environment transforms.

Strategies to Achieve:

1. Continue to regularly review and update standards and certification response to changes in the profession.
2. Enhance employment support services for members.
3. Increase access to continuing professional development opportunities.

Strategic Priority Two: Chapters

Support the Chapters to provide a meaningful arena for members and potential members to gather, engage, support and learn from each other.

Strategies to Achieve:

4. Increase support in terms of how they operate, how they share information and how they provide opportunities to mentor and grow their members' capabilities.
5. Each year, identify 3 – 4 chapters on which to focus specific development attention.
6. Increase focus on and support for networking, mentoring and learning opportunities between and among chapters, including recognition of contribution.

Strategic Priority Three: Community

Actively engage with the community of stakeholders who influence members' careers.

Strategies to Achieve:

For each community (government, employers, educational institutions, related professional associations, community groups, and the public):

7. Identify the most relevant way to connect and set specific objectives to achieve.
8. Identify the right profile (brand) and develop appropriate communication vehicles to use.
9. Create and share the targeted messages, positions, and opportunities with chapters, members and others.

Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

SWOT analysis aims to identify the key internal and external factors seen as important to achieving an objective. SWOT analysis groups key pieces of information into two main categories:

- Internal factors — the strengths and weaknesses internal to the organization
- External factors — the opportunities and threats presented by the environment external to the organization

The table below summarizes the identified external factors and internal aspects that affect OACETT moving forward. No doubt there are others and some will emerge as time passes. But this list helps assess the challenges facing the implementation of the plan.

Opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition in the employment world of the need for continuing education and certification • Focus on STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) is growing • High interest in chapters to be involved. (This may be a strength rather than an opportunity – we will discuss) • STEM jobs are in high demand • Advancing women and new Canadians in professions is widely supported • Micro-learning is increasing and consistent with short course and on-going learning • Focus on infrastructure development supports employment in many fields of OACETT members
Threats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncertain economic and political environment • Expectations of Millennials and Gen Z significantly different from earlier generation – what is the impact? • Difficulty identifying which areas to certify • Difficulty sustaining membership levels • Independent industry certification • Weakness in math at the high school and college levels • Disruption in colleges – traditional learning vs “micro-learning”
Strengths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experienced staff and new staff with new ideas • Stable membership • Sound balance sheet • Designation has value in the marketplace • Strong partnerships with other related associations • Chapter framework is established and can be built on • Excellent, validated certification program • Civil, electrical and mechanical areas are strong parts of certification • Continuing Professional Development program is strong and well supported • Proactive, responding to challenges

Weaknesses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff capacity / spread thin • Have added new people who need to be brought up to speed • Few committed volunteers with the skills to take chapters to the new level • Limited outreach capacity • Little government acknowledgement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Not in legislation nor in presence at the table • Low public or employer presence. Weak brand / profile • 15 disciplines are covered – but not well-represented in many of them and face competition • A significant portion of the membership is lethargic; not engaged
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Key Performance Indicators for 2019 – 2023 (How success will be measured)

To focus on achieving the outcomes sought, OACETT will track and regularly report on several key areas.

1. Improve member participation in and satisfaction with chapter events and activities as measured by benchmark surveys.
2. Maintain a minimum of 72% of membership certified.
3. Arrest the decline and grow the membership above 25,200, including increased college applications.
4. Provide leadership at the national level to advance accreditation and standards development, and to support initiatives that advance a common national agenda.
5. Achieve 30% gender/ethnic representation in the organization's governance structure.
6. Improve brand awareness of OACETT amongst key community stakeholders including government, employers and colleges as measured by regular reports on outreach and follow-up assessment of results.