

STRUCTURAL ENGINEERING CERTIFICATION BOARD

A message sent to counter the de-emphasis of structural engineering in universities.

Your plea for assistance was forwarded to me by one of your colleagues. For your information, for the past several years I have served as chair of the Structural Engineering Certification Board (SECB) a national, autonomous, non-profit certification body for structural engineers. I also am a past President of the National Council of Structural Engineering Associations. I am pleased to tell you that any rumors of the demise or even decline of structural engineering as a practice are far from correct. Quite to the contrary, over the past 10 years, structural engineering has strengthened in its recognition as a separate and important engineering discipline. Testament to this resurgence in structural engineering are the following facts:

- Prior to 1994, most structural engineers viewed themselves as civil engineers with specialty practice in structural engineering. In 1994, representatives of long-established Structural Engineers Associations in California, Illinois, Washington, and a few other states, joined together to form the National Council of Structural Engineers Associations (NCSEA). Since then, professional associations representing Structural Engineers have bloomed and grown in nearly all states. Currently, only North Dakota, South Dakota, West Virginia and Wyoming do not have active professional structural engineering associations.
- Also in 1994, in recognition of the importance of Structural Engineering as a vital and important engineering practice, the American Society of Civil Engineers established the Structural Engineering Institute, which organization published key standards referenced by the building code.
- Together, NCSEA, SEI and CASE (a third national organization representing structural engineers) publish a monthly magazine *Structure*, that is distributed to more than 30,000 engineers nationwide. Its focus is strictly on structural engineering.
- In 2005, the SECB was established to recognize engineers who had demonstrated competence in structural engineering with a discipline –specific certification.
- In 2006, the National Council of Engineering Examiners established a Model Law Structural Engineer – to serve as a model for states to use in licensing Structural Engineers as a separate practice. Last year, NCEES put in place a new, stand-alone, 16-hour examination to qualify structural engineers for licensure.
- Increasingly, states are adopting legislation that prohibits the practice of structural engineering or the use of the title “structural engineer” to those who have valid Structural (not Civil or Professional) licenses. States that have adopted such legislation include Arizona, California, Hawaii, Illinois, Louisiana, Nevada, Massachusetts, Oregon, and Washington. Alaska, Texas and Florida are actively considering such legislation.

If you would like, I can provide this information on official letterhead of the SECB. You may also wish to contact Mr. James Malley, SE, current President of NCSEA for similar correspondence.

Regards,

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