



CSCE 2018 - Building Tomorrow's Society

Interactive Panel Discussion - “What Lies Ahead?”

Within the theme of the 2018 Conference, this panel addressed several serious, urgent and growing issues for the profession, and for society: **a)** Sustainability and Innovation; **b)** Inclusivity and Social Justice; and **c)** Accessibility & Universal Design of the Built Environment. The intent was to build awareness and motivation within the CSCE to address these issues, identify where the profession may be “missing the boat”, and what may lie ahead if not addressed. Marty Janowitz, of Stantec in Halifax talked about *Sustainability, Resilience & Avoidance*. One of his key messages was that human society is teetering on infrastructure systems that does not meet the breadth and diversity of human needs in an holistic, integrated manner. Dr. Anna Robak of WSP promoted a shift of our engineering approach from designing *for* people to designing *with* people, as our problems shift from big and centralized to smaller and distributed. She argued for injecting behavioural science into our practice as the critical connective tissue between infrastructure and the people they serve. Dr. Katy Haralampides, of UNB spoke on *Inclusivity, Diversity, and Social Justice*. Her message included the need to increase the diversity of engineering students and incorporate principles of equity and social justice throughout the core of the engineering curriculum in order to change the profession to one that works positively and meaningfully. Sometimes the simple, low-tech solutions have the best outcomes in every way, she pointed out. Dr. Janice Gillis from the PEI Council of People With Disabilities, speaking on “*Infrastructure from a Wheelchair*”, provided insight and perspective on daily life and challenges faced by persons using wheelchairs. She advocated for going “beyond the codes” when it comes to civil infrastructure design, and for adoption of 7 Universal Design Principles to meet the needs of all members of society. Alan Perks P.Eng., the Panel Moderator, noted that the CSCE Presidents since 1994 have been increasingly issuing a “call to action” to the profession on these critical issues, the most recent development being this panel at an Annual CSCE Convention, and the recently struck *CSCE President's Task Force on Accessibility* is one initiative. The panel discussion represented a renewed “call to action” for the profession to address all these issues. The audience engagement was enthusiastic and positive, and feedback forms are being processed for a report to the CSCE Directors on the results of the panel discussion. Many reported this as a highlight of the conference, that there were provocative and emotionally charged questions about benefit cost decisions, and that this was truly eye-opening for everyone. The Mayor of Fredericton, Mike O'Brien, in a thoughtful response to the panel, mentioned the extent to which the discussion opened his eyes to things he will look to change in infrastructure development in his city.