

October 29, 2021

Message from the PGO Council President

Paul Hubley, P.Geo., FGC

As we begin to crawl out from under the grips of the pandemic, let us take stock for a moment. First, it was a tremendously difficult year for the vulnerable, for those facing challenges, for front-line workers, for indigenous people, and for many many others in Ontario and across the world. So as we slog through this, if you find that you have capacity to lend your support in some way to someone in need I encourage you to do so, and I thank you in advance for your efforts.

Over the past year our staff, like many, continued their satellite operations from their homes, juggling children and family pets while continuing to process applications, host webcasts, conduct the business of PGO, and continuing to move the organization forward – this is due to the high degree of professionalism, integrity and diligence of the staff.

PGO continues to experience positive growth, with a total of 3501 registrants by September 2021, including an increase of full-time registrants of about 5% over last year as students enter our field faster than retirees leave. This is good news and speaks to the healthy growth of our profession to their highest ever – this, despite the challenging environment, or perhaps in part because of it, as our registrants realize the benefits of obtaining, keeping and proudly displaying their PGO license to practice geoscience.

Through its volunteers and small but mighty staff, PGO continued to support the professional growth of its registrants this past year. In our virtual symposium we had 271 registrants through four half-days in June, and in other virtual learning events hosted by PGO nearly 400 individuals have participated. The content of all events was

well received and some participants provided excellent suggestions for future topics. The virtual format had an upside - that we reached more registrants and from a more diverse geographical area than in-person meetings have thus far achieved, which has been an objective of our strategic plan.

This year PGO launched its Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) Initiatives, which included a survey of registrants and students to better inform the work of the D&I committee, development of D&I online page to house D&I resources for registrants, and D&I training of PGO's volunteer and staff - we're on a steep learning curve, looking across the organization for opportunities for improvement while taking steps to move the goalposts toward positive change. Also, this year PGO launched its Sustainability and Climate Change Risk committee, which has been very actively responding to the new initiatives of the Ontario government related to flooding, natural capital and climate risk identification.

Over the past year PGO has made strides toward adopting evolving practices in self-governing organizations to stay aligned with industry expectations. PGO's ongoing commitment to providing continuing professional development opportunities for its staff and volunteers strengthens its capacity to effectively serve the public by ensuring sound governance of PGO and continuous improvement of its regulatory performance.

PGO's government relations activities continue from the hard work of the past few years to be focused on pushing for legislative amendments to modernize the Professional Geoscientists Act (PGA) (2000), to better strengthen PGO's role in protecting the public. In addition to modernizing the PGA, PGO actively engages with the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) and the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry (MNDMNRF) on issues of regulation affecting PGO registrants. Among the significant work of PGO this year was the development of guidance document related to Ontario Regulation 153/04 (Records of Site Condition) under the Environmental Protection Act (EPA), on the use of professional judgement when seeking exemption from sampling ground water at Record of Site Condition properties.

Among the perennial challenges faced by PGO is volunteerism and volunteer management. While steps have been taken to better manage volunteer utilization and professional growth, there is a long way to go. The necessary first step of identifying volunteers for active committee and council work continues to be a challenge. I encourage you to capitalize on the numerous opportunities for personal growth through

volunteering. PGO also equally welcomes non-registrants to provide their valuable perspective on Council, and increasingly on committees. Spread the word.

On a personal note, I am deeply troubled by the accounts of residential schools and wonder what lessons we can learn. The builders of these schools would not have known that their work product would be used for harm. As professionals we also do not have complete control over how our professional work product is ultimately used, so we have developed various ways to limit our exposures. However, sometimes that is not enough. Recently, during a report review I encountered a report containing ambiguous conclusions that could be easily misinterpreted if so chosen – the report was in fact used by others to support attempts to cause harm to a vulnerable group. It reminded me that we can minimize potential harm by being clear in our messages and boldly state the limitations of our work in our discussions. Above all, when our convictions become uncomfortable to some, and they will, it is especially important as professionals to be guided by our core duty to protect the public.

I appreciate the opportunity to represent you as the PGO Council Chair and President this year. I welcome a host of new councillors and committee Chairs, new volunteers and new staff, which has created a fresh landscape for the organization. I am proud to be part of the initiatives undertaken at PGO to embrace change, diversity and resilience in our profession. I look forward to sharing in your inspiring and diverse contributions to the geoscience profession and to redefining our evolving role in the society we serve and build together.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Hubley', with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Paul Hubley, P.Geo., FGC
PGO Council President

"The soul is dyed the color of its thoughts. Think only on those things that are in line with your principles and can bear the light of day. The content of your character is your choice. Day by day, what you choose, what you think, and what you do is who you become. Your integrity is your destiny ... it is the light that guides your way." ~ Heraclitus (reportedly)