

BOARD CANDIDATE (3 to be elected)



Bijan Pourkarimi, P.Eng. | Vancouver, BC

I am honoured to be selected by the Engineers and Geoscientists BC Nominating Committee as a candidate to the Board of Directors of Engineers and Geoscientists BC. I have been a registered P.Eng. in BC since 1990 and am excited about the opportunity to give back to the profession that has been good to me and my family by serving Engineers and Geoscientists BC as it fulfills its mandate to protect the public under the Professional Governance Act and transitions its advocacy role to a new independent body.

As a first generation Canadian, the engineering profession has been good to me; I have been able to build a successful business on my engineering education and career. I believe as a director on Engineers and Geoscientists BC's board I can give back to the profession as it embarks on becoming a modern and progressive regulator.

As a leader, I have extensive governance and management experience. I have over 35 years of experience in various senior management and executive positions with small, medium, and large companies. I have acted in various capacities on several boards of directors. My responsibilities included financial and fiduciary oversight and strategic planning.

I have worked in regulated industries for over 30 years and am currently a member of the board of CPABC, the regulatory body for professional accountants in BC. In addition to my extensive regulatory experience, I have a collaborative, consensus-building approach to leadership, which is critical as Engineers and Geoscientists BC renews its focus on its core mandate of protecting the public and strengthening its regulatory processes.

EDUCATION

BSc (Mechanical Engineering), University of British Columbia, 1986

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

President – Energitix Management & Consulting, 2003–present

VP, Project Development, Palmet International, 2016–2023

VP, Operations & Director, Encor International, 2006–2015

RELATED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

Member, Environmental Appeals Board, 2023–present

Member, Forest Appeals Commission, 2023–present

Member, Oil & Gas Appeal Tribunal, 2023–present

Co-authored Fundamentals of Energy Efficiency, BC Case Study Chapter, 2022

Instructor, Building Energy Resource Management program, Douglas College, 2009–2016

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Member of the Board of Directors, Greater Vancouver Community Services Society, 2021–present (Chair, 2023–present, Vice-chair, 2022–2023)

Independent member of the Board of Directors, Deh Tai LP (the economic development corporation for the Fort Nelson First Nations), 2022–present

Public Representative to the Board of Directors of Chartered Professional Accountants of BC, 2022–present

Member, Environmental Advisory Committee, Vancouver International Airport, 2022–present

Member of the Board of Directors, South Granville Seniors Centre, 2021–2022

Mentor, Futurpreneur Canada, 2016–2021

Q&A WITH CANDIDATES

Engineers and Geoscientists BC is the regulatory authority charged with protecting the public interest with respect to the practice of engineering and geoscience in the province of BC. What is the key challenge facing the organization?

With the transition from the Engineers and Geoscientists Act to the Professional Governance Act in February 2021, our profession has been privileged to continue to be a self-regulated profession. As a self-regulated professional body, we need to maintain this privilege by ensuring we protect the public interest with the appropriate level of regulation by balancing the regulatory requirements with the regulatory processes and costs to registrants and companies.

The key challenge facing Engineers and Geoscientists BC is to balance the regulatory requirements of the profession without introducing too much regulation. We need to ensure that registrants understand the regulatory requirements of the profession and have the tools to comply with them. As we have seen in other professions, if the regulation becomes too much of a burden, it may result in a higher number of unregulated, non-registrants, which will not be in the public or the profession's best interest.

We must continue to consult with registrants, public representatives, and the government to seek input on how to continue to regulate the profession efficiently and effectively as we face new challenges.

What are the key issues facing the engineering and/or geoscience professions?

The engineering and geoscientist professions face several key issues in the coming years. These include attracting new and retaining existing talent, new technologies and artificial intelligence, and addressing climate change.

According to the 2022 BC Labour Market Outlook, we will have over 23,000 job openings in architectural, engineering, and related services between 2022 and 2032. We need to attract more talent, from young people, women, and indigenous people to internationally accredited professionals to the profession to fill these jobs, which are essential to the sustainable growth of the province. We need to develop more streamlined processes to recognize international credentials without jeopardizing our standards and public safety.

With the rapid development of new technologies such as AI, we need to better understand how these tools affect the profession and the regulation. As the use of AI becomes more prevalent, it may be used to perform some of the work performed by professional engineers and geoscientists. It will impact how the profession is regulated. We must develop regulations to protect the public from the use of AI by unregulated entities.

Another major issue facing the profession is how we develop sustainable solutions to address climate change. We have all seen the increasing and devastating impact of climate change on our province and our lives over the past few years. Professional engineers and geoscientists can play a major role in developing sustainable solutions to address this major problem. We need to ensure that we incorporate sustainability in our work.

Looking five years ahead, what is your vision for Engineers and Geoscientists BC as a professional regulatory body in BC?

I envision Engineers and Geoscientists BC to continue to be a leading self-regulated body of a diverse group of professionals. As we transition the current advocacy role of Engineers and Geoscientists BC to a new independent body, I see Engineers and Geoscientists BC being more focused on its core mandate of protecting the public and strengthening its regulatory processes in a changing environment. As a regulator body, I envision Engineers and Geoscientists BC addressing the challenges I mentioned earlier.

Canada's GDP growth has been primarily driven by population growth, which has been driven by immigration. According to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, international immigration accounts for almost 100% of the growth in Canada's labour force. Recognising international credentials and streamlining integration of internationally trained individuals into the profession are key to meeting BC's demand for professional engineers and geoscientists. We will continue to streamline our processes for recognizing international credentials without jeopardizing our standards. We will ensure the regulatory framework does not prevent women, members of indigenous and other diverse communities from having equal opportunities to pursue careers in the profession.

New technologies and AI provide new areas of opportunity for the profession. If they are not regulated and used properly, they pose potential threats and risks. An effective regulatory framework will be key in protecting the public and ensuring registrants can use these technologies effectively. I see us engaging registrants, the government, and other stakeholders in addressing the required processes and regulatory framework.

For the Board to achieve its goals and meet its fiduciary responsibilities, the Board has identified the need for diverse voices on the Board, with a blend of the following skills and competences: leadership, financial literacy, risk management, human resources, strategy, regulatory understanding, governance and technical proficiency. Please highlight the areas of strength you bring to the role.

During my over 35-year career, I have worked with many professionals from diverse backgrounds. If elected to the board of Engineers and Geoscientists BC, one of the key strengths I bring with me is my diverse experience, from my engineering and project management roles to management and board roles.

I have held several leadership positions with small, medium, and large companies, both domestically and internationally. I have acted in various capacities on several boards of directors, where I have chaired the strategic planning committee, chaired the nominating committee, and been a member of the finance and audit committee. My responsibilities included financial and fiduciary oversight, governance, providing strategic direction, working with management teams to develop strategic plans, sustainability plans, budgets, and policies. I am currently the chair of the board of directors and CEO review committee at GVCSS.

I have extensive regulatory experience. I have worked in regulated industries for over 30 years and am currently a member of the board of CPABC, the regulatory body for professional accountants in BC. This experience allows me to bring the perspectives of another self-regulated professional body to the board of Engineers and Geoscientists BC.

My diverse experience has helped me develop my leadership, strategic planning, and communications skills as well as competencies in financial literacy, regulatory, and governance. I believe I will be able to work effectively with the Engineers and Geoscientists BC board and management to ensure Engineers and Geoscientists BC continues to be a modern and progressive regulator by providing balanced regulatory framework for the profession.