

Minutes of the Human Resources Committee meeting
 November 24, 2022 | Noon- 1:30pm ET | TEAMS meeting

Committee members in attendance	
Mike Wrinch, BC (Chair) Janet Bradshaw, CEO Group member, NFLD	Geoff Connolly, PEI Nancy Hill, President-Elect, ON
Regrets	
Kathy Baig, President, QC	Danny Chui, Past President, ON
Staff and support	
Juliet Chou, Governance Coordinator Christina Mash, Interim Manager, Governance & Board Services	Gerard McDonald, CEO Evelyn Spence, Corporate Secretary

1. Call to order and approval of agenda

The meeting was called to order at 12:03pm ET and committee members were welcomed.

It was moved and seconded

THAT the agenda be approved, and the chair be authorized to modify the order of discussion.

Carried

2. Review of last meeting

2.1 Approval of minutes

No comments or questions were received on the pre-circulated minutes.

It was moved and seconded

THAT the minutes of the September 8, 2022 meeting be approved.

Carried

2.2 Review of action table

The action table was noted as complete, with agenda item 4 noted as addressing most of the listed items.

3. Employee engagement survey results

G. McDonald provided a verbal overview of the preliminary results, which to date are only accessible online by the CEO and Director, HR. The executive report is expected late this year or early in the New Year, once the senior leadership team (SLT) has met with the consultants (TalentMap) to review the results.

In general, the results are positive:

- The overall engagement score for the organization has increased by 9 percentage points. This increase puts Engineers Canada in the top quartile of good employers based on TalentMap’s benchmark data.
- 90% of Engineers Canada employees would recommend the organization to a friend and are satisfied with their employment.
- Preliminary areas for improvement include work life balance and workplace mental health. Both scores have unsurprisingly decreased due to the pandemic.

The following discussion was captured:

- A committee member commended the positive results.
- Given that oversight of the employee engagement survey is one of the committee’s primary responsibilities, it was agreed to include this topic on the HR Committee’s next meeting agenda once the executive report is available, so that committee feedback can be considered before it is provided to the Board.
- Since annual reporting indicated some objectives were delayed due to staffing changes and gaps, and there has been significant change in workforce and employee retention, a committee member wanted to better understand the retention measurement against other organizations and whether these factors were considered.

- G. McDonald explained that Engineers Canada will be benchmarked in two areas: 1) self-comparison to the 2019 engagement survey results, and 2) industry comparison to TalentMap’s benchmark database. Since the reporting will not specifically include staff retention, G. McDonald noted that information on employee turnover, including a general comparison to other organizations, will be made available separately for review. Committee members hoped that these metrics would provide a fresh outlook on retention and recruitment challenges, but also recognized that the insights may be limited given that there is currently an employee-fluidity issue prevalent in all industries and organizations.
- G. McDonald explained that Engineers Canada does not generally have a fluidity problem; the current year’s turnover was abnormally high compared to previous years since he joined Engineers Canada in 2018. Engineers Canada is a small organization with limited upward mobility in terms of career advancement, so employees who intend to advance professionally may have to pursue outside opportunities. Generally, retention is strong, and employees are willing to commit long-term. However, G. McDonald also noted that the organization is making efforts to adapt to the workforce and make it as appealing as possible to potential recruits. In terms of reasoning behind objectives not being met, one unique issue for Engineers Canada is that employees are not immediately transferable from one job to another. It takes at least three months to fill the vacancy if an employee leaves the position, which significantly impacts annual achievements. Although re-staffing was difficult in the first half of this year, which affected Engineers Canada’s capacity to meet objectives, the second half of the year improved with strong candidates secured.

ACTION: Staff to include the “Employee engagement survey results” (TalentMap executive report) for discussion on the March meeting agenda.

ACTION: Staff to prepare a report on how many employees have departed, and how it compares in general to other organizations.

4. Confirmation of Board and Director assessment questionnaires

The committee reviewed the pre-circulated assessments, that now include industry standards from tng. J. Bradshaw noted a loyalty conflict that could arise when serving as a director for both Engineers Canada and a provincial Regulator (Member) simultaneously. A statement such as “Directors understand that in this role their unconflicted duty is to Engineers Canada” was suggested for addition to the assessment questionnaires. E. Spence confirmed that a statement carrying the equivalent meaning will be added and the updated questionnaire will be circulated via email for committee confirmation.

The delivery of the assessment results is the responsibility of the President-Elect. N. Hill confirmed her willingness to deliver the individual reports.

ACTION: Staff to make the additions reflecting “Directors’ unconflicted duty to Engineers Canada” to the assessment questionnaire and to circulate the updated questionnaire to the committee via email by the end of day. The meeting participants in return will commit to responding promptly.

It was moved and seconded

THAT the HR Committee confirm the structure and content of the Board and Director assessment surveys, as amended, for recommendation to the Board.

Carried

5. Confirmation of 2023 CEO objectives

G. McDonald presented the proposed CEO objectives for 2023 and responded to committee member questions. The following discussion was captured:

- Reference to “National research strategy” stated in the Strategic Priority 2.1 will be revised to “Develop national research strategy”.
- In response to a question about how these objectives consider the regular operational work already underway, G. McDonald highlighted that although some areas may seem light on content, the activities listed require significant resources and already consider ongoing work. The objectives document is designed to be succinct, and to not overwhelm with detail.
- Clarification was provided that “desktop simulation” is a virtual simulation of an accreditation visit performed outside the university setting. No modifications will be made to this term.

- Strategic Priority 1.1's deliverables consider the change to scope that was supported by the Board in September.
- G. McDonald confirmed that the employee engagement survey results will be leveraged to undertake initiatives for retention efforts, and to make improvements to the environment for the employees. This work is captured within the organizational stability objective.

It was moved and seconded

THAT the committee recommend the 2023 CEO objectives for Board approval.

Carried

6. Update on short-term disability policy

G. McDonald noted that Engineers Canada's current short-term disability (STD) policy allows for up to 120 days of leave at full compensation, which exceeds industry standards. The policy applies to all employees following the conclusion of their 3-month probation. It has been in place since at least 2018 and has, at times, resulted in operational constraints. Engineers Canada is responsible for compensation during STD leave while insurance is accessed for long-term disability (LTD) costs.

The SLT is considering the following changes to be implemented in January:

- reduce the number of days from 120 to 75, and
- decrease compensation received during these days from 100% to 60%.

Such changes will enable employees to take advantage of employment insurance benefits if they wish. Moreover, the organization will better align with industry standards for STD. While some employees may be disappointed by the policy adjustments, it is considered the right course of action for the organization.

In addition to the STD policy changes, it was confirmed that mental health benefits available to each employee are being increased from the current \$500 to the maximum amount allowed of between \$2,000-\$2,500 per year. The support available through these benefits includes a broad range of professionals who meet certain certification requirements and are eligible to provide different levels of services.

The following questions were addressed:

- LTD begins as soon as an employee decides to access it, or automatically after the 75 days of STD provided by Engineers Canada.
- Under the current policy, all staff have access to 120 days of STD, regardless of the number of sick days they have available.
- Mental health benefits should consider a range of criteria for service providers, and G. McDonald confirmed that Engineers Canada has already ensured that staff have access to a broader selection of service providers.

7. Work plan review

A question was raised about talent fluidity and whether the HR Committee should be considering the organization's recruitment plan. G. McDonald confirmed that while recruitment strategy is open for discussion, Engineers Canada is not currently experiencing issues in acquiring talent.

8. Next committee meetings

Meetings take place from 12-1:30pm ET:

- Thursday, December 15, 2022 in-camera, committee members only
- Thursday, February 23, 2023 immediately following the Board meeting - 3 Presidents (3Ps) and the committee chair to meet with CEO
- Thursday, March 30, 2023

Meeting moves in-camera

9. CEO assessment (informal process year)

The CEO assessment plan was discussed.

10. Other business

No other business was brought forward.

11. Meeting evaluation

No comments were made.

12. Closing

With no further business to discuss, the meeting closed at 1:30pm ET.