



## The IEM Secretariat

Most members would have in one way or the other dealt with a Secretariat staff of the Institution. In serving the members, each IEM Secretariat staff would need to be multi-tasking and to perform parallel-processing. The reason for this is obvious because there are so many stations within our setup that a new staff would be totally lost when not guided properly. For a start, they need to answer to so many queries from potential "future bosses" amongst the membership, some of whom are truly demanding. My general observation is that our Secretariat staff are truly exhausted at the end of the day attending to queries without much work done in their own department. However, I must say that one learns fast to accommodate requests without rejecting them and the art of prioritising one's work quickly comes into the picture. The IEM staffs are not superhuman but most of the time they will accommodate to any request which they can solve based on a set of guidelines drawn up by the Standing Committees. What they cannot do is to touch upon policy matters in which decisions are forthcoming. Hence any member, who requests staff to waive certain requirements, please remember that these requests are outside the jurisdiction of the staff to decide. Somehow they don't have the luxury to do just that and hence would also expect volunteer Committee Members not to make such requests, going by his/her code of conduct. Sometimes conflicting demanding requests are made from Council Members and this inadvertently stressed the staff who had to handle the conflicting needs imposed upon them without any clear solution in sight. Entertaining one request means drawing anger from the other not forgetting that both of whom can possibly be his/her boss one day. It is also the inability to deal with such issues, which led to a number of staff resigning from their posts. (I put the blame squarely on our unreasonable volunteers here!)

Headed by a Chief Administrative Officer, reporting directly to the Honorary Secretary, it would appear that all

instructions to staff must be via the Hon. Sec. constitutionally. However in practice, this is most of the time not the case, although important letters going out of IEM are vetted by the Hon. Sec. or the President. A huge amount of inter-personal skills is needed to survive in such a working environment. Members who are not getting through to IEM should inform the Hon. Sec. about their predicament and not to directly tell off the staff. There are 16,000 of us out there and no wonder our staff turnover rate is so high! I believe those staff who left IEM would do very well outside after undergoing such tough apprenticeship here.

For the future, I am looking at the day when we don't need a permanent building but the secretariat exists within a virtual environment yet being able to serve the membership effectively. The permanent building would be used to conduct courses and learned society functions for members who shall meet up from time to time. We seem to be training new staff all the time at IEM!

The recent conclusion of the Conference of the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisations (CAFEO 24) hosted by IEM saw the presentation of AFEO Honorary Awards to several distinguished engineers from other countries and from Malaysia. Nearly 700 participants took part in the event; the largest contingent being from IEM numbering 400 odd participants from all over the country. The three-day event was filled to the brim with Young Engineers (YEAFEO) events running in parallel as well. The President of Engineers Australia, Prof. Rolfe Hartley and his contingent, which included fourteen young engineers, delegates from Canada, Hong Kong, Tunisia, Laos, Thailand, Brunei, Indonesia, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, South Korea, Japan, Singapore and Philippines also took part in the Conference. The Secretary General of ASEAN, H. E. Mr. Ong Keng Yong and the President of the World Federation of Engineering Organisations (WFEO), Professor Kamel Ayadi from Tunisia were also present to deliver a keynote address and

special lecture, respectively. The Conference was officiated by Y. B. Dato' Seri S. Samy Vellu, our Honourable Minister of Works and witnessed by Y.B. Dato' Ir. Donald Lim Siang Chai (MIEM), Deputy Minister of Tourism Malaysia, Y. B. Dato' Ir. Mohd Zin bin Mohamad (MIEM), Deputy Minister of Works, Y. B. Dato' Engr. Ong Tee Keat, Deputy Minister of Higher Education and many more excellencies from abroad. My sincere thanks go to the Organising Chairman, Engr. Yim Hon Wa (FIEM) and his committee, the sponsors and the hardworking IEM Secretariat who even put up a dance performance at the banquet and farewell dinner!! AFEO Chairmanship now goes to The Philippine Technological Council with IEM still retained as Secretariat of AFEO while the Secretary General of AFEO is to be named by IEM. At the closing dinner, I can see that the ASEAN Federation of Engineering Organisations is well on target in harmonising the codes of ethics, codes of practices, educational benchmarks and cross-border practices. As every good meeting has to come to an end, I could only reminisce the parting statement "don't feel sad because it is over, smile because it happened" at those SUKMA swimming meets involving my daughters. Yes it certainly had been a good meeting and the next time IEM shall be hosting this event again will be in the year 2016, ten years from now.

It is that time of the year again when we introduce new leadership to the Institution via our election process when a third of our council has to retire (including me of course!) My request to members is to vote the candidate whom you feel the post seeks him/her out and nothing more. Many good volunteers have passed by IEM's corridors of time, they are duly recognised and many more shall come to receive the baton so that we move on as one Institution which represents all engineering disciplines in the country. ■

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