

## **Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of New Brunswick (ACEC-NB) Releases Report Highlighting Need for More Gender Diversity in Consulting Engineering Sector**

**FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, October 19, 2020** - The Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of New Brunswick (ACEC-NB), today released important research highlighting the need to attract more women to the consulting engineering sector, and retain those that are currently working in the profession.

The report, *Women in Consulting Engineering in New Brunswick: Career Satisfaction & Workplace Experiences*, was developed by the ACEC-NB's Diversity & Inclusion Committee based on research and surveys conducted throughout 2019. The report focuses on the types of benefits that are most meaningful to women in consulting engineering, drivers of career satisfaction, perception of career advancement opportunities, and work culture.

"Diversity is more than a word - it's a mindset. Being inclusive means bringing more voices to the boardroom table or the worksite. In the end, it pays dividends, and not just financial," said Christy Cunningham, Executive Director, ACEC-NB. "Member organizations in New Brunswick are at risk of losing significant investment if trends continue, and highly skilled female employees choose other engineering career paths or to leave the consulting profession all together. Recruitment costs go up, training and orientation costs go up, and productivity is lost, not to mention the loss of different viewpoints for competitiveness on sales, marketing and innovation."

Some of the report's key research findings include:

- Men currently outnumber women in the field by 4:1
- Only 35% of companies surveyed track labour statistics. Even fewer, 17%, track the number of women promoted
- None of the employers surveyed track the number of women interviewed as part of the hiring process
- Mentorship is a key influencer to a positive work culture for women, with 86% of respondents indicating that it supports their professional growth and they would like to see more of it

More importantly, the surveys conducted with women currently working in the consulting engineering field clearly show that employers need to offer more flexible working arrangements, implement more effective onboarding strategies for employees who are returning to work after taking parental leave, and create more transparent career tracks for recruitment, retention and advancement opportunities.

One of the most encouraging aspects of the report was that new female engineers and engineers in training have a strong appetite for leadership - they are ambitious, highly skilled and determined. When asked if they are motivated to work in management or executive roles within their organization, 67% of survey respondents said yes. However, over 30% of early career starters were unsure of their path, pointing to a potential for employers to cultivate this talent by demonstrating clearer paths to advancement and investing in mentorship to prepare women for succession and the management ranks.

The report was sponsored by the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of New Brunswick, the Government of New Brunswick, CBCL, Dillon Consulting, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and the Association of Professional Engineers & Geoscientists of New Brunswick.

“We are proud to be a partner in this report. It is our belief that the barriers identified are present throughout the entire engineering profession, and guidance is necessary to help companies address the retention and recruitment of women in the STEM career fields,” said Marlo Rose, President of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of New Brunswick. “The insights presented within this report will provide excellent first steps for organizations to increase their awareness of these obstacles and create solutions moving forward.”

Minister of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour, Trevor Holder said the report offers greater understanding and insight. “The Government of New Brunswick is pleased to support the efforts of the Association of Consulting Engineering Companies of New Brunswick in their research to gain a better understanding of the challenges women face that impact their decisions to remain long-term in the profession of engineering consulting,” said Minister Holder. “Understanding the challenges is the first step in leading to the creation of workplaces that support diversity, inclusion and flexibility”.

Based on these results and the looming labour shortage the province is facing, ACEC-NB has developed a series of actionable and measurable recommendations to help its members attract and retain more women consulting engineers. This includes direction on how to create effective diversity & inclusion strategies that address the key

challenges outlined in the report, and the specific steps ACEC-NB will take to support its member companies and their employees over the coming year.

“I would like to applaud ACEC-NB for releasing the “Women in Consulting Engineering Report,” said John Flewelling, President and CEO, CBCL “The report addressed Diversity and Inclusion strategies, flexibility in the workplace, and transparent career advancement opportunities. The report heightened awareness and reinforced the need for our firms to commit to values that promote diversity and inclusion. When we commit to building diverse teams with unique backgrounds, we will boost innovation, retain top talent, and provide exceptional services to our clients.”

For a full list of the recommendations and to view the full report, please follow this link: <https://www.acec-nb.ca/best-business-practices/diversity-inclusion/>

The Association of Consulting Engineering Companies-New Brunswick (ACEC-NB) is a not-for-profit organization representing the New Brunswick consulting engineering industry.

ACEC-NB represents the commercial interests of businesses that provide professional engineering services, to both the public and the private sector. Members are involved in the planning, designing and implementing of all types of engineering projects, and provide independent advice and expertise in a wide range of engineering-related fields.

For more information about ACEC, please visit <https://www.acec-nb.ca/>