The thesis of this presentation is that continuing education has come of age. A broad national approach is being developed to bring to maturity the disorganized elements of continuing education programs. The engineering profession, in coping with the problems of rapid technological change, has made efforts to establish updating programs. To illustrate the timeliness of this concept, 28 professional and educational organizations and government agencies are cited, and their individual efforts in setting up their own continuing education certification programs described. The National University Extension Association's National Task Force Statement regarding the Continuing Education Unit (CEU) is included. The statement presents guidelines, standards, and criteria, and suggests action to be taken in utilizing the CEU. (MW)
Continuing Education Comes of Age

Report of a Conference
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AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR ENGINEERING EDUCATION

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Interest in continuing engineering studies as a specialized kind of continuing education has been growing space coincident with the organization of the CES Division in ASEE some three years ago. Support of the entire engineering community is now strong. This ground swell of support may also be found among a host of educational institutions, industrial organizations, professional associations, and governmental agencies. Of particular significance is the National Planning Conference of July 1968, which authorized a National Task Force to define a unit of continuing education that can be applied to all organized learning experiences, albeit noncredit, and thereafter become a permanent, transferable, and accumulative individual record. Broad acceptance of the fundamental work of the National Task Force is yet to be obtained. But this effort, building on much excellent work by numerous predecessor activities, is now given a good chance of success.

As I prepared in December of 1967 to leave my two-year assignment in Washington, I naturally began to give thought to my future program of action. The University of Wisconsin suggested that I begin to work on a program of certification for continuing education. This seemed to be a medium- to long-range goal rather than one of immediate potential or concern because I knew firsthand of the great difficulties involved. It was clearly held that the effort should be low key, conducted with tact if not with outright diplomacy, and carried out over a long period of time in which two steps forward very well could be expected to be followed by one step back.

Nevertheless, I was surprised immediately thereafter to learn that the National University Extension Association (NUEA), now with more than 140 member institutions, was actively considering the appointment of an ad hoc committee to study essentially the same problem. I was well aware of the significant contributions of the CES Division of ASEE over its brief two-year history, and I was both surprised and pleased by the ECPD position stated last year in the "Report of the Committee on Recognition of Continuing Engineering Studies." But the reception that report received at the CES Conference in New Orleans seemed to indicate that no common ground existed as of that time within the engineering fraternity for the establishment of any formalized concepts in the certification of continuing education.

Therefore, there is great importance in NUEA's interest and particularly in its selection of Dr. William L. Turner to head its ad hoc committee, since he was the chairman of a task group on a similar mission appointed under the sponsorship of the Office of State Technical Services (OSTS).

I have been using alternately, and often interchangeably, "continuing engineering studies" and "continuing education." Although the former concept is both the title and the province of this ASEE Division, I think it is the latter concept, continuing education, that will prevail. Certainly any national programs or norms that are to be established should be in the generalized context of continuing education and not limited to continuing engineering studies.

One can see, therefore, what potential influence NUEA has in the continuing education effort, since it is representative of all professions, vocations, and avocations to the same degree that its many and diversified institutional members identify with virtually all interest groups. Any effort to define, categorize, and trade on a unit of informal education cannot exist in splendid isolation in the engineering profession alone. If so, how does one treat a software course such as "Statistical Inferences for Managers" or a humanistic course such as "Creative Influences in the Advance of Western Civilization"? Moreover, this stylized question tends to ignore many useful learning experiences that are or should be available to the 97% of the population that has little identification with engineering and its immediately allied fields.

The concept of continuing engineering studies also is vertically limited. Does the engineer turned scientist or manager still pursue continuing engineering studies or has his objective changed? It is true that the question may be answered affirmatively for the doctoral level engineer seeking further refinement of his skills. The same holds for the refresher, updating, or broadening of the typical practicing professional at the bachelor's or master's level. But the question becomes moot when applied to the near professional whose competence has been obtained almost entirely by practical experience, through noncredit learning in a variety of formats and circumstances, and under a host of sponsorships, and, finally, by sheer individual and personal effort. In addition, there are the burgeoning fields of the paraprofessionals and the entire array of preprofessionals, including competent technologists, engineering aides, and technicians, for whom the concept of continuing engineering studies seems inappropriate.

We conceive of continuing education as a large, intricate, and detailed fabric with a conventional warp and woof at its basic structure. One vertical strand of this great tapestry represents your individual career, along which career you encounter a never-ending succession of opposing strands representing the educational content, the changing state-of-the-art, and other utilitarian aspects of your chosen line of work. Vertical segments of the broad expanse of the fabric represent the numbers of practitioners in the various disciplines. One can imagine electrical engineering, perhaps closely adjacent to physics on one side and mechanical engineering on the other. As that segment of the fabric is studied in more detail, the concept of electrical engineering becomes considerably blurred as we look at either the upper or the lower reaches of the material. Electrical engineering disappears altogether into science and abstract thought as we study the upper expanse of material and into practical applications and individual skills or techniques as we look down the cloth. The thread of your life...
is there intertwined with others, having a beginning and participation in the profession just as it has a corporeal beginning. Newton used the analogy of standing on the shoulders of giants to see further than others. In a more prosaic sense, the thread of our lives is strengthened, and the body of knowledge is both preserved and advanced through our sharing of experiences in all manner of formats, but particularly through our lifelong involvement in continuing education whether as students or teachers.

### Continuing Education on Many Fronts

All of us have felt the discomfort for some time of "the monkey on our backs" with respect to engineering obsolescence. A corresponding commentary is not often heard about the obsolescence of physicists or business managers. There is little doubt, however, but that the condition is chronic and widespread. The totality of continuing education is not limited to continuing engineering studies. It could be that the hue and cry we hear concerning engineering obsolescence stems from the efforts of the profession to be immediately aware of the change brought about through the application of science and technology and of the double time we must do to keep ourselves reasonably abreast of this change in the general area of the great tapestry in which our lives are involved.

There are many signs that point to the great interest and determination in coping with the problem of continuing education. The following random examples indicate the breadth and scope of this trend but are not confined to engineering.

1. In the 35th Annual Report of the Engineers' Council for Professional Development, the Committee on the Recognition of Continuing Engineering Studies reported the need for a mechanism to evaluate and record continuing engineering studies and for the establishment of a system for the accumulation and recognition of credit at suitable intervals on the basis of significant individual accomplishments. This effort has been essentially dormant since its rather stormy reception before this audience a year ago, but it represents a pioneering step taken by a major engineering society to launch a program of recognition for continuing education. This idealized effort by the Committee on the Recognition of CES should not become lost. As shall be pointed out later, perhaps the opportunity will arise to combine the recommendations of the committee with a similar national prototype program now being born.

2. Recent labor union contract negotiations with major manufacturers have included efforts to establish employer responsibility of the support for the continuing education needs of skilled workers and technicians to help maintain themselves abreast of advancing technology. This issue has its parallel in the engineering profession where corporate policy on both tuition refund and released time are often at issue for the participation of professional employers in programs of continuing education. Such allowances have become a standard part of government contracts in the aerospace and defense industries.

3. The American Institute of Chemists launched an experimental program three years ago for accrediting the continuing technical competence of chemists practicing as consultants in the field.

4. NUEA and the Association of the University Evening Colleges (AUEC) jointly over a period of ten years have gathered data on continuing education activities in institutions of higher education and have attempted to develop criteria for the uniform reporting of more meaningful data on participation by institutions and individuals. These reports often show that the larger publicly supported institutions of higher education serve from one to several times as many students in their informal programs as they reach through their degree-oriented programs.

5. The Report of a Joint Advisory Committee of four national engineering societies (ECPD, EJC, ASEE, NSPE), with which all of you are familiar, encouraged the development of a scale of professional credit, applicable as part of the qualification for various grades of membership in technical and professional societies. This concept was not immediately accepted. One of the more encouraging aspects of that recommendation was its forthwith adoption by Northeastern University. My own attitude in this respect has been modified or broadened somewhat since professional credit equates to continuing engineering studies, whereas a broader base of "postsecondary education" is essential to society and equates to continuing education. This does not preclude the possibility of the former pair of concepts existing as a subset within the larger framework. Indeed, anyone working specifically in the field of continuing engineering education would naturally expect to adopt the former terminologies. The system of nomenclature, definitions, measurement, and recognition that we sooner or later adopt for general use by the engineering profession should be compatible with the companion effort in continuing education per se so that there is one additional system to take its place in the hierarchy of primary, secondary, and higher education now virtually uniform, level by level, throughout the country today. With the growth of graduate education in recent years and the greater emphasis being placed on vocational-technical education and continuing education, the new hierarchy of education becomes: primary, secondary, vocational-technical, undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education, with the last overlapping the three previous fields.


> "It is clear that now, and in the future, basic engineering education cannot presume to teach students 'all they need to know.' Accordingly, the profession and academic institutions which serve it must look forward to a growing activity in continuing engineering studies as a distinct educational function, outside of advanced-degree programs."

7. ASEE organized this Continuing Engineering Studies Division in 1965. This division has been active in encouraging the recognition of activities in its field, and now has convened three successive annual meetings of national significance on the subject.

8. The U.S. Office of Education (USOE) has been working with various national educational organizations to develop and publish standard terminology for instruction in state and local school systems with a particular interest and concern where informal learning experiences in the nature of adult, continuing, and professional education take place. Surveys conducted by USOE indicate that approximately 25 million persons, exclusive of the military, participate in a significant continuing education experience each year. This number is nominally four times larger than the college population, although large fractions of so-called continuing education are conducted by church-related and civic organizations. A particular shortcoming of these data is that no directly accumulated record of total student effort or the actual amount of educational transfer that takes place may be inferred from the numbers gathered because of the absence of a uniform unit by which educational content and the extent of student participation is measured.
concentrated in and time on preparation for careers in engineering by as the minimum course content development at high school and undergraduate levels. The commission has now set as one of its goals the development of continuing education courses in engineering and mathematics, physics, and chemical engineering. A number of continuing education activities have been undertaken in these fields, including: 

1. The Kansas Industrial Extension Service has designed a complete system of programs for continuing education. These programs include: continuing education courses, maintenance, professional development, and study for continuing education at high school and undergraduate levels.

2. The Johns Hopkins University announced on March 1, 1968, the launch of a new program of postgraduate studies for professionals. This program complements the award of a certificate of continuing education in engineering. It also includes the concept of transferrable student transcripts covering course work undertaken in continuing education.

3. The EJC has recently announced a new subscription service known as the EJC Learning Resources Information Center. This service provides information about continuing education opportunities in engineering and related fields on a national basis, catalogued and indexed according to a number of principal parameters.

4. The American Psychological Association is considering similar updating requirements as a basis for continued certification in the profession. A three-year period's current being discussed by the national society. One state, Oregon, is reported to be considering this as a condition for continued participation in training. A list of courses for the recognition thereof by NSPE to its individual participating members.

5. The American Institute of Chemical Engineers has been conducting various educational programs. These programs include: seminars to introduce the engineer to some of the newer mathematical and management concepts that are becoming the common tools of the profession. This program has been considered a substantial success for the first time in the management area. The lecturer furnishes detailed course notes to the enrollee well in advance of the meeting, which are also available in reprint form to the general membership of the society.

6. The American Medical Association (AMA) has developed an extensive program of continuing education. The AMA has assigned professional credits to a large number of its extension offerings, particularly those in engineering and allied fields. The AMA's Office of Continuing Education has been certified by the University of Wisconsin over a period of years in a certificate program conducted through the correspondence instruction medium and bearing on the licensing of stationary engineers in many states.

7. The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges is organizing a Commission of Education for the Engineering Profession some three years ago to establish itself as the ultimate means to study the design of a national program of continuing education for its members. This solicitation of a national membership of several thousand persons has participated with the University of Delaware in the Project GAP program of continuing education for graduates of engineering programs approved by the Engineering Council of America. This program has been considered a substantial success for the early accomplishment of such a task.

8. The American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) is giving active consideration to a certification program for its 40,000 members. Some months ago a representative from ASEE began a study of the design of such a program. A number of committees have been formed to study the design of a uniform program to address itself to the breadth and depth of continuing education in engineering.

9. The National Association of Civil Engineers (ASCE) is giving active consideration to a certification program for its 30,000 members. Some months ago a representative from ASCE began a study of the design of a uniform program to address itself to the breadth and depth of continuing education in civil engineering.

10. The National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges is organizing a Commission of Education for the Engineering Profession some three years ago to establish itself as the ultimate means to study the design of a national program of continuing education for its members. This solicitation of a national membership of several thousand persons has participated with the University of Delaware in the Project GAP program of continuing education for graduates of engineering programs approved by the Engineering Council of America. This program has been considered a substantial success for the early accomplishment of such a task.

11. The National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) is participating in the development of a national program of continuing education for its membership. This program has been considered a substantial success for the early accomplishment of such a task.

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NOW, THEREFORE: BE IT RESOLVED that an eight-man task group, representative of the organizations and associations present at the conference, be appointed to study the feasibility of a uniform system for measurement of noncredit continuing education programs, which could serve the national planning group in its effort to meet current needs and to present such a proposal to the national planning group for review and recommendation at a suitable later time.
statistics by state, region, and nation, whether in gross terms, by age or particular discipline served. Such information would be particularly valuable at the national level for both budgetary purposes and the meeting of needs, but also may be used at state and local levels for requesting funds for individual extension departments or training units. This unit of continuing education effort could also become the basis for setting levels of effort in determining the allocation of federal funds in various programs permitting the support of continuing education.

A unit may be used by occupational or professional groups to set standards for training or updating in specific areas.

The effectiveness of continuing education programs of all kinds can be more readily assessed if a uniform measure of output were available to permit the input in terms of readily classifiable nomenclature.

Definition and recognition of such a unit allows a visible accumulation of educational experiences for adults who participate in organized educational activities, leading to companion systems of measurement and recognition.

Developing the Continuing Education Unit

A continuing education unit should be a simple, integral unit for measuring effort, which people will come to respect and on which they will be able to build. As nearly as possible the unit should be applicable to any planned and learning experience of postsecondary educational level, including undergraduate and postdoctoral education, as in the examples of the latest information or newly required management skills. The key word may well be "organized." Evenly, the continuing education unit could be equal to 10 clock class hours of learning experience. Since these methods of are of equal duration, use of one or the other would depend merely on the mat and conduct of the learning experience. This module would serve the decimal system to the accounting of educational effort, thereby the problems of one-third unit, one-quarter unit, etc., and the of making conversions between a two-day conference and an evening class, or between a two-week short course and 24 is in independent study.

A continuing education unit should reflect equal effort and provide results when applied to a variety of program formats and learning. It should provide a meaningful measure of personal and professional development.

A name continuing education unit became the tentative recommend of the task force with the deliberate and consistent use of lowercase to avoid confusing connotations with civil engineering or Combustion Inc. This may well be shortened in time to c.e. unit, to ceu, or,
4. There should be incentive for self-policing and self-improvement of effort among sponsors of continuing education programs in the initial stages of quantifying continuing education programs, by virtue of the comparisons that might be drawn among parallel institutional or organizational efforts. The clearinghouse concept described earlier will play an important role in encouraging the sponsors of continuing education programs to make their offerings competitive.

5. Education program sponsors will bear the responsibility for setting the unit value for each of their offerings by using the criteria and standards set forth under this effort. Use of advisory boards or committees also may help to establish the content and value to be assigned to each learning experience based on a well-informed judgment of the specific continuing education need and how well the proposed program satisfies that need.

6. It is not unreasonable to expect that a mechanism for the accreditation of continuing education, strictly for what it is, continuing education, will be proposed by others in time, growing out of the sense of responsibility of the participating organizations to elevate, police, and maintain standards. This concern for quality assurance of continuing education offerings no doubt will be more easily applied to the conventional learning formats.

7. The consumer will interpret the value of the continuing education unit to himself on the basis of the personnel involved, the institution or organization responsible for the programs, and the text material or course outline used to the extent that this level of detail is known about the offering.

8. Each organization will assign its own set of values or standards to the continuing education unit in relation to its particular requirements on frequency, scope, and intensity of the necessary updating experiences.

9. When recognition is to be conferred, the institutional norms may be applied to the individual by relating to both the nature and number of continuing educational background and the time frame in which the continuing education has been accomplished.

Suggested Actions To Be Taken by the National Task Force

1. A proposal should be initiated to obtain financial support for the staff and consultant time necessary to develop the concept and criteria of the continuing education unit and the establishment of the minimum operational procedures necessary to make it functional.

2. Subcommittees or other groups internally related to the National Task Force should be appointed to:
   a. Define the continuing education unit.
   b. Develop a statement of course content criteria and operational guidelines for the administration of a program of continuing education under this general plan and arrangement, including definitions of all common terms encountered in continuing education activity.
   c. Develop standard recording information, analyze where and by whom permanent records are to be maintained, and how individuals can obtain their records. For example, the social security number was suggested as a positive and permanent means of identification for students throughout their career in continuing education.

3. The details of the entire concept of measuring and recognizing participation in continuing education must be thoroughly studied before its
The broad national approach we have been using to develop an ad hoc effort in continuing education will meet with success. Perhaps the biological metaphor is wrong when we refer to a program yet to be born as simultaneously "coming of age." The underlying idea was that all the elements of a highly successful program of continuing education for all interested adults are now extant in our country, although highly disorganized. What we propose by these efforts is to bring maturity to all these programs, truly a coming of age, rather than going through the pains and long period of nonproductive adolescence associated with the "birth" of a new entity.

Those already committed to substantial programs of continuing education will feel no threat in a national system that confers majority on their programs. If what is being done can be measured, it fits the system evolving out of this national effort. For others entering the field or seeking broader avenues of service through continuing education, there should be a clear-cut opportunity to participate under the nationally acceptable standards we now seek to promulgate.

I can think of no more exciting prospect for the next several months. I am not concerned that the first year of majority for continuing education might fail to be productive. To the contrary, we do appear to be safely committed to a course of constructive action under the framework of the National Task Force and its sponsoring National Planning Conference in settling on the fundamental requirements that truly and surely will permit continuing education to come of age.

APPENDIX 1


List of Organizations Represented

- Adult Education Association of the U.S.A.
- American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers, sponsor
- American Association of Junior Colleges
- American Association of State Colleges and Universities
- American Council on Education
- American Society for Personnel Administration
- AFL-CIO
- American Hospital Association
- American Medical Association
- American Society for Engineering Education
- American Society for Public Administration
- Association of University Evening Colleges
- Cambridge Institute for Management Education
- Commission on Engineering Education
- Du Pont de Nemours and Company, Inc.
- Engineers' Council for Professional Development
- Engineers Joint Council
- General Learning Corporation
- National Academy of Engineering
- National Home Study Council
- National Society of Professional Engineers
- National University Extension Association, Science Research Associates
- United Auto Workers
- U.S. Armed Forces Institute
- J.S. Civil Service Commission
- U.S. Department of Commerce
- U.S. Department of Defense
- U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
- U.S. Department of the Air Force
- U.S. Office of Education, sponsor
- U.S. Office of Emergency Planning

Summary

The thesis in this presentation is that continuing education is coming of age. Numerous examples have been given of the individual determined efforts many organizations are taking to bring order and dignity into this important and growing field so as to alert you to the dangers of there being 30-odd or more systems of accounting for and recognizing continuing education. Two recent efforts have been mentioned, both largely unheard of, that propose to evolve a uniform system for such purposes. In several more months, the National Planning Conference of 40 representative organizations and the task force it authorized will have an opportunity to test fully on one another and their respective constituencies the ideas that have been presented here.

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