

"We also need to increase the number of female engineers. We should work to make the industry appealing for female candidates for engineering jobs"

# Welcome from SOE president Howard Seymour



**H**aving introduced the Society of Operations Engineers' 2025 Vision a year ago, I can report that we are well on the way to delivering it.

Starting in no particular order, then, one of the themes of the Vision is gearing up for Brexit, and more importantly getting ready for what comes after it. We have to prepare for a no-deal Brexit. So, to have a mechanism for engaging with this issue, a Brexit committee has been set up, and there is a dedicated SOE trustee leading that. The committee links to the Royal Academy of Engineering, which is representing all of the professional engineering institutions to the government.

With an increased emphasis on global trade after Brexit, the focus on Asia-Pacific will increase. Our Hong Kong chapter has just celebrated its 15th birthday, having amassed about 1,800 members. Building on that, our continued international growth has seen the formation of an Asia-Pacific region with, again, a dedicated trustee board member to drive activities, particularly in Sri Lanka, Singapore and mainland China. We aim to increase regional membership to 2,250 members in the near term, as well as a target of 200 irtec technicians and 25 Workshop Accreditation awards. We will continue to accredit academic institutions to award both EngTech and

Incorporated Engineer registrations in the medium term, with ambitions to achieve Chartered Engineer accreditation in the future.

Returning to the present, 2018 is the year of engineering, so it is the right time to remind people of the skills gap that engineering is currently facing. To respond to that, we as a society need to promote the irtec qualification, and promote the trailblazer apprenticeship standards that we have participated in developing.

We also need to increase the number of female engineers. We should work to make the industry appealing for female candidates for engineering jobs. To help take action on these issues, we have partnered with the Women's Engineering Society. And in July, we appointed an SOE trustee to lead on this issue, IRTE fellow Amanda Foster; a strategy document is due to be developed by the end of the year.

Also, we are working to establish a young members' committee to advise the society on specific matters and issues. SOE aims to acquire more than 1,000 apprentice and student members.

All of this underpins our diversity and inclusivity aspirations. And it should not be forgotten that there is evidence to suggest that

the most diverse organisations prosper and grow at an accelerated rate.

We want to reach an overarching goal of 20,000 members in the next two years. We plan to offer a streamlined joining service to further encourage new members. We also want to see a year-on-year improvement in the annual member satisfaction survey.

Promoting registration is another key function of the organisation; as we increase membership, we also want to continue moving up the Engineering Council's registration league tables. We wish to act as a prominent ambassador for increased professionalism within our sectors.

To do that, we need to continue to engage with volunteers. Our strategic plan will not happen without their help.

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