



The Impact of the College Challenge

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National Engineering Month Ontario 2017

An overview of the impact of the OACETT College Challenge

The idea

In November 2013, upon noting that engineering technology College students were not involved in any NEM events, unlike engineering university students, Michelle Malcolm-Francis from OACETT proposed that we develop a Challenge that would incent College students to run NEM events. Since the engagement of OACETT chapters in NEM was at the time stalled at 10, we decided that we would require the local OACETT chapter to support the students. The College Challenge was born!

Instant impact

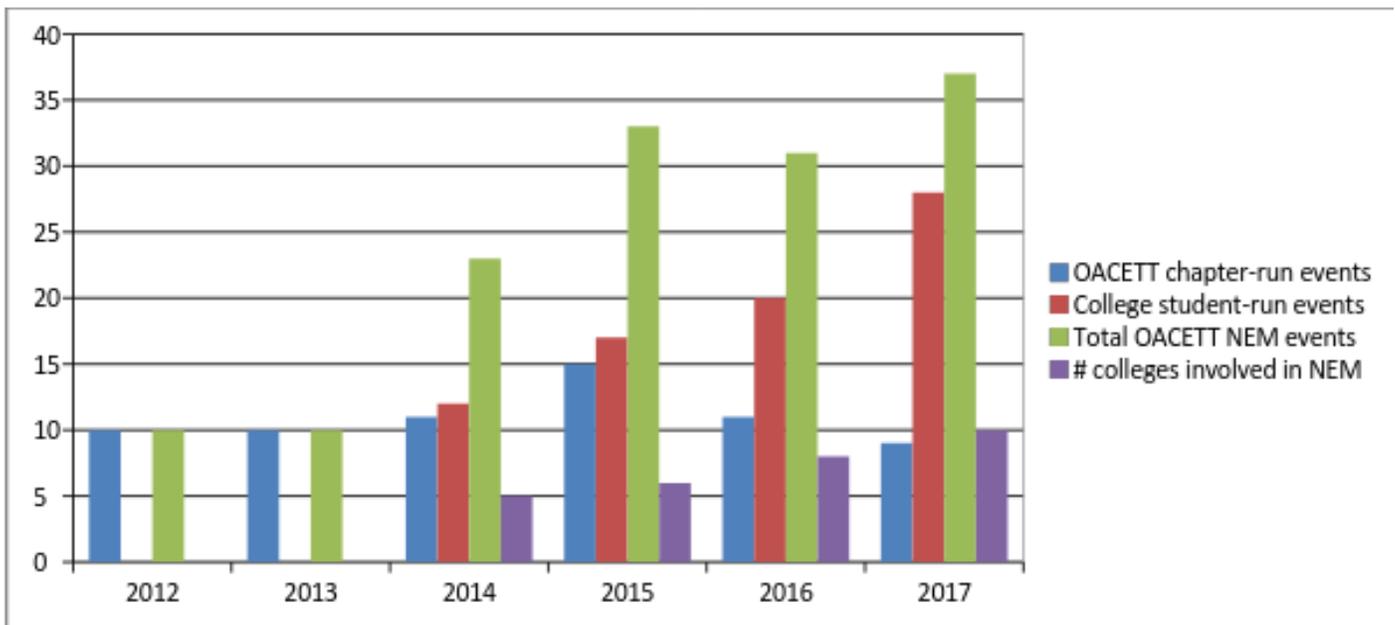
The College Challenge made its debut during NEM 2014. The student-run events quickly outpaced the number of OACETT chapter-run events. The total number of OACETT events jumped to more than double (10 in 2013 to 21 in 2014), and the number of OACETT chapters active during NEM improved from 10 to 16.

Further growth

The initially positive response in 2014 continued to build in NEM 2015, 2016, and 2017. The Challenge has sparked significant participation -- total 15 Chapters and 11 Colleges and at its peak in 2017 28 distinct student-run events. A complete list of participants follows.

Chapters: Durham, Georgian Bay, Sault Ste Marie, Kingston, Toronto Central, Quinte, Grand Valley, Toronto West, Peel, Niagara, Toronto East, Peterborough, Thunder Bay, London, Hamilton.

Colleges: Centennial, Niagara, Seneca, Sheridan, Humber, Conestoga, Loyalist, George Brown, St Lawrence, Mohawk, and Confederation.



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An important conversation, at scale

Those student-run events that would not have existed but for the College Challenge, have now touched thousands of students, professionals and members of the general public. They have provided a spark for conversation, a starting point for a student to see the potential that their career path holds. They have also shaped the trajectory and the professional confidence of the dozens of college students who had the opportunity to discover their voice and hone their project management, teamwork, and communication skills throughout the course of organizing their events. The strategy of the overall NEM campaign to promote the engineering technology profession as fundamentally about making the world better shone through the actions of each of the OACETT-chapter-led and College-student-led events.

Creating connections

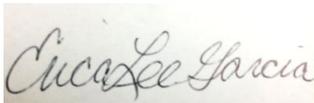
More than just a formality requiring a signature or the relaying of funds for outreach events, the relationships between the OACETT chapters and the Colleges have now been solidified. The students graduating now enter the workforce with a deeper network and a greater awareness of the realities of their chosen profession. Some even get involved with OACETT (for example Vanessa and Hargurdeep, from Sheridan College, both former College Challenge participants).

The courage to innovate

I would like to thank OACETT leaders, especially Michelle Malcolm-Francis and David Thomson, for weathering the resistance to change and enduring the bumps in the road as we made the College Challenge a reality in its early years. It takes vision and commitment to see through an innovation to the stage of early success. I hope that you are proud of the results.

On a larger scale, we are practicing the innovation skills that we speak about so often as paramount to success in the 21st century. so pleased to partner with you all on our mission to promote our profession at the cutting edge of solving today's problems and forming tomorrow's world.

With warm regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Erica Lee Garcia". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Erica Lee Garcia, P.Eng.
on behalf of Engineers of Tomorrow, a venture of Engineers Without Borders Canada,
co-ordinators of National Engineering Month Ontario since 2012