



Utah Council of Land Surveyors

May 14, 2012

National Council of Examiners for Engineering and Surveying
NCEES
P.O. Box 1686
280 Seneca Creek Rd.
Clemson, SC 29633

Attn: Jerry Carter, Executive Director

RE: RISPLS Petition for Removal of "Engineering Surveys" from the NCEES Model Law

Dear Mr. Carter:

As the governing board of the Utah Council of Land Surveyors (UCLS) we have received and reviewed the RISPLS petition to remove the term and definition of "Engineering Surveys" from the NCEES model law. Their petition accurately states the position, and their concerns are also our concerns. The UCLS Executive Board unanimously voted on March 24, 2012, to support the RISPLS in their request to remove the term and definition from the NCEES model law. The following specifics related to Utah might help express some of our concerns:

There are three universities in Utah that offer Civil Engineering Degrees, and one of them also offers a Mining Engineering Degree. Of these three universities only two require a single surveying course in the civil engineering curriculum, during the sophomore year. Only two surveying courses are required in the mining engineering program. The third university apparently does not even offer surveying courses, according to the latest catalog. This lends credence to the statements in the ASCE Policy Statement 333, where it indicates that "...there are a reduced number of surveying courses within the civil engineering curricula..."

We have a new Bachelor of Science Degree in Geomatics at the Utah Valley University. This program began this last fall, and we are hoping that it will be accredited in the next few years. This is evidence of yet another of the trends mentioned in the ASCE Policy Statement 333 "...the development of separate curricula and degrees at certain universities in support of land surveying as a separate profession sometimes designated as geomatics engineering..." I can think of several other programs across the country that fit this bill: Cal Poly Pomona has a Geospatial Engineering Option in the BS program, Cal State Fresno has a Geometrics Engineering program, Ohio State and Ferris State also have similar degrees, and I am sure there are more.

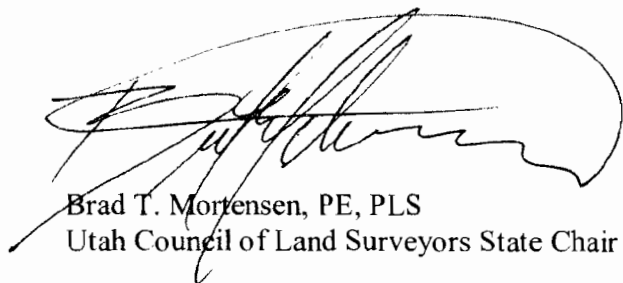
Increasingly, it is recognized that surveying is a separate and distinct profession from engineering in Utah as well as other parts of the nation. Surveying is evolving into an increasingly complex body of knowledge the application of which requires ever increasing levels of education and experience. Surveying curriculums at many, if not most educational institutions offering associate, bachelors, and advanced degrees are designed to address this increasing complexity not only in boundary considerations, but also in “non-boundary” definitions of surveying, including geodetic and plane surveying, topographic map preparation, project control and other components for construction layout surveying. Just this last year we had a problem in Utah where State Geological Survey personnel performed work outside of their expertise using geodetic control that caused great concerns for the public in the Cedar City area.

The term “engineering surveys” is part of the definition relating to engineering in the Utah Code. In my experience most civil engineers recognize that they do not have expertise in the surveying realm and hire professional land surveyors to do this work. However, I fear while it remains on the books, there will always be a few that will take advantage of this definition and perform functions which they are clearly unqualified to do. This can potentially cause conflict, disharmony, and damage to the public.

The UCLS agrees with the RISPLS when it states that “...the engineering surveyor needs to be recognized as a specialty requiring specific education, experience, and examination. Simply claiming to be able to perform such activities by virtue of being a civil engineer does not recognize the reality of the situation...”

Therefore the Utah Council of Land Surveyors (UCLS) supports the RISPLS by endorsing the petition: “RISPLS Petition for Removal of Engineering Surveys from the NCEES Model Law”, dated August 22, 2011.

Respectfully,



Brad T. Mortensen, PE, PLS
Utah Council of Land Surveyors State Chair

cc: Rhode Island Society of Professional Land Surveyors (RISPLS)
Rich Oborn Bureau Manager, Utah DOPL