ACEC

American Council of Engineering Companies
of North Dakota

Professional Development Series

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2024 - 2026

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Professional Development Series:

ACEC/ND and the larger consulting industry have prospered over the years as a result of strong leadership among professional engineers. To ensure that we enjoy an equally successful future, we must invest in our engineering firm's leaders.

The Professional Development Series has been developed as a high impact program that fosters leaders by imparting skills and competencies identified by top ACEC/ND CEOs as critical for leadership success. Our curriculum and nationally recognized faculty have been carefully crafted and chosen to meet the needs of North Dakota's engineering firms.

Format:

This is a 2-year course consisting of 4 sessions per year (February, May, August and October) all sessions will be held at the Radisson Hotel in Bismarck. The May and October sessions will immediately precede our annual Spring and Fall Conferences. Although the sessions don't have any formal networking events included, we may have some spontaneous pre or post session opportunities to get to know participants better. Each session will be one-day in length and will include the cost of the Fall and Spring ACEC/ND Conferences. If a participant completes all 8 sessions, they will have completed the entire program and will be considered a "graduate" of the program. If you miss one of the sessions you can make it up the next time it's offered. Graduates of the program will be acknowledged at the Spring Conference of the year in which you completed the program.

Curriculum & Faculty:

Faculty members are national experts in each of the course areas. Course design has incorporated both the 'hard' and 'soft' skills necessary for long-term leadership success in the AE industry. Topics will include:

- Personal Leadership: Part 1
- Strategy and Market Trends
- Leading Others and Leading Change
- Everyone has a story to tell. Lets talk about how to tell it.
- Risk Management/Contracts/Professional Ethics
- Cradle to Grave HR Strategy
- Financial Management of the Business
- Advocacy and Understanding the Legislative Process
- Personal Leadership: Part 2

2024-2026 Session Dates:
August 20. 2024
October 29, 2024
February 19, 2025
May 6, 2025
August 19, 2025
October 28, 2025
February 17, 2026
May 5, 2026

The full list of courses and presenters are listed on the following pages of this packet. We encourage you to take a look at the information and please reach out to the Executive Director team if you have any questions about the program.

Application Procedure and Course Tuition:

To ensure high quality learning and networking experience the 2024 – 2026 Program's enrollment is limited to 21 participants—one participant per firm (see note below for information on including an alternate.) The class is likely to fill quickly, so mail as soon as possible the application for one of your firm's applicants. The application is on the last page of this document and must be mailed along with your check for the program's tuition. the check will be returned if the applicant is not accepted. The tuition for the full 8 session program is $5,500 (member rate) per participant and includes breakfasts and lunch of each session as well as the Fall and Spring Conference fees. We ask that you mail the tuition with your application.

Note: A second applicant from your firm may be placed on the alternate list and will be considered if the class is not filled. The alternate's application must be clearly marked "Alternate" and a separate check must be enclosed which will be returned if the applicant is not accepted. Most of the time alternates are accepted!

CURRICULUM

Personal Leadership: What am I doing here?

with Jon Hauser

You are created and hard-wired for greatness. You are not average. You were placed on this planet at this specific place and time to make a positive difference; a positive impact on this world. So, let's make every day count! Let's maximize our life and leave a lasting legacy. During our time together I would love to intrigue, inspire and help you increase your positive life impact! The formula we will begin with is Life Impact = Competence X Character X Leadership Level. You will learn relatable principles and practical tools on personal leadership and connecting with others you can immediately put into practice.

Strategy and Market Trends

with Vernae Jones-Seals

How does the market define your firm's success? How well aligned are your business strategies with current market trends? What do you need to grow your business? Don't forget the back office, Marketing, Accounting/Finance, IT, HR, etc. are all part of the equation for success. During the program we will have discussion, interactive exercises to assist you in the following:

- Evaluating Industry Trends as a Strategic Thinker
- Leveraging Market Trends in developing Strategic Goals
- Developing a framework for your firm's sustainability plan

We will explore a few industry trends to better understand how they influence your business decisions. Join us to learn more about being strategic and effective at every stage of your business lifecycle, applying design and system thinking.

Leading Others and Leading Change

with Dan Oblinger

How might we learn to listen and negotiate in order to lead our culture and resolve conflict? This one day workshop focuses on active listening strategies as practiced by hostage negotiators. It is a guided tour of powerful communications techniques that can be used for business development, managing employee performance, resolving conflict, and leading cultures through transitions and challenges. Participants will:

- Discover the relationship of listening, empathy, trust, and influence in the context of leading a modern consulting engineering firm.
- Re-engineer the concepts of conflict and change to see them as opportunities using listening strategies.
- Identify their own bad listening habits.
- Encounter the 8 active listening techniques used in crisis negotiations.
- Apply them to their daily leadership opportunities through dynamic role-play scenarios.
- Each of the lessons is told through actual hostage and crisis negotiation stories and then brought to life with interactive exercises. Come ready to play!

Everyone has a story to tell. Lets talk about how to tell it.

with Jill Helsel Gingrich

The success of being able to tell your company's story depends, to a great extent, on how well people understand the company's vision, projects and community impact. This session will assist participants in becoming a resource through well-thought out messaging to the media, legislators, community leaders and current and future customers. The team from La Torre Communications will help participants effectively communicate their message regardless of the medium (print, radio, television, social media or testimony) with a group discussion and hands-on practice.

CURRICULUM

Risk Management/Contracts /Professional Ethics
with Karen Erger and Kevin Holland

In a fast-paced world, it's easy to assume that the most significant challenges for design professionals are the ones just emerging on the horizon. New tools, techniques, and protocols like alternative project delivery, BIM/digital delivery, and sustainability command much attention from design professionals and their lawyers and risk managers. But in reality, the project and practice management issues that give rise to most client relationship breakdowns and professional liability claims are not the emerging issues, but the enduring challenges of communicating effectively, documenting appropriately, managing contracts with clients and subcontractors, and setting and maintaining appropriate client expectations. In fact, mastering these "enduring" challenges will enable design professionals to meet the "emerging" challenges of the future. In this interactive workshop, we'll discuss and analyze several case studies drawn from real-life practice, identifying the "enduring" causes of risk that often lie at the heart of claims arising from "emerging" areas of practice. We'll identify and apply tools and tactics effective not only for ethically managing today's practice risks, but the risks that will emerge tomorrow, next year, and long into the future.

Cradle to Grave HR Strategy
with Laurie Dreyer

The need to find, grow and keep talent has never been greater, and with 4 generations in the work place during rapid industry change, it has never been more complex. Come participate and engage in some current HR thinking! We will cover every aspect of HR in a firm, and discuss options for keeping HR skills in the firm versus options to outsource. We will discuss how our firms are viewed in a world of social media, and how we recruit – because they are intertwined. We will discuss benefits, payroll, compensation, policies and compliance knowledge needed to keep the business running. In order to attract, grow and keep the talent we have - we will also cover learning very broadly as an over-arching strategy: including onboarding, professional development, performance management and coaching/mentoring. We will shift into conflicts, feedback that works and. if necessary, how to manage effective terminations. This session will be highly interactive and contain exercises.

Financial Management of the Business
with David Cohen

Through exercises, we will analyze and work towards understanding financial statements and the resulting key financial ratios and the impact they have on building shareholder value. This carries through to thinking like a businessperson and making decisions that correspond to running your engineering firm like a business. It is imperative to understand the connection between project management and performance to shareholder value as this is the overriding concept to running a business.

We will develop a macro-level understanding of business finance as it relates to the project-centered engineering firm. This will include developing a basic level of accounting knowledge, relating this to project performance, and beginning to connect it all with driving value and understanding the investment nature of your engineering firms. We will continue connecting the dots between what happens at the firm everyday and shareholder value. As we create a firmer grasp of the connection, we will discuss basic valuation concepts and how these relate to the various exit strategies, including internal ownership transition planning and mergers and acquisitions. General Topics will include:

- Accounting 101
- Financial Statements
- Financial Analysis
- Key Financial Ratios
- Building Shareholder Value
- Valuation and Valuation Formulas
- Internal Ownership Transition Planning
- Mergers and Acquisitions

SPEAKERS

Jon Hauser grew up in Williston, ND; graduating in 1989 from North Dakota State University with a degree in Electrical Engineering and 1994 from Nazarene Theological Seminary with a Master's in religious education. He worked as a high voltage substation engineer for 20 years for Burns and McDonnell and Ulteig Engineers, serving as department manager for a season. In 2000, he dove into an entrepreneurial project, as he and his wife, Teri, started a new church called Prairie Heights in Fargo, ND. Jon served as co-founder and senior pastor as Prairie Heights grew from a few friends to a dynamic church of over 4,500 people and 20 full-time staff members.

He writes a weekly newspaper column on faith, family, and leadership that is published in the Fargo Forum, Minot Daily News, Dickinson Press, Jamestown Sun, and Grand Forks Herald. In 2011 Jon completed training as a founding member of the John Maxwell Team. He has provided leadership training and speaking for sales and team leader meetings, technical conferences, and corporate management retreats along with coaching executive leaders. His passion is to help people maximize their life impact using the formula "Character" times "Competence" times "Leadership Level" equals your "Life Impact". Jon and Teri have been married 30 years and have 2 children.

Vernae Jones-Seals, a strategic advisor with over 20 years of combined business, financial and technical management experience assisting Boards of Directors, CEOs, Senior Executives, and Entrepreneurs with developing succession, strategic and tactical plans. In 2002, Vernae launched One Source Consulting, LLC (OneSource) to provide consulting services and solutions to the AEC industry. For She has collaborated with privately held companies in developing strategic plans for sustainable growth. She and her team are committed to: Managing Accounting, Finance, IT and HR teams with thought leadership and innovative strategies; and Leading Digital Transformation, primarily (ERP) Systems Consulting, and Robotic Process Automation to improve collaboration and efficiency.

Vernae is a University of Maryland Robert H. Smith School of Business, with an MBA and a degree in Finance & Accounting. She is a certified Change Management Professional and an Economic Development Finance Professional. As a member of the BDO Alliance, She serves on the Advisory Council and as a Board of Directors for the Construction Accounting Network. Vernae is driven by empowering others with access to sound and reliable business resources. She has demonstrated her passion and commitment to the design and business community as a guest lecture for University of Virginia, School of Architecture, Design Entrepreneurship course; and through her alliances with several law firms, CPA firms, universities other organizations with a commitment to the AEC community.

Laurie Dreyer is a graduate of UC Berkeley, Laurie has a background in key HR leadership for The Ratcliff Architects, Gensler, Psomas, Anshen+Allen/Stantec, and now Taylor Design! A frequent speaker and teacher Laurie has presented for the AIA, ACEC's Senior Executives Institute, Knowledge Architecture, AE advisors CEO Roundtables, Matheson Financial conferences and other events.

Laurie was raised in the AEC industry and has spent most of her career in it. She also maintains connections to The Future of Engineering and other industry organizations. The future is changing fast.

SPEAKERS

Jill Helsel Gingrich brings over 20 years of experience in communications and public relations in the private and public sector. Her sharp eye for detail, high energy and professionalism allow her clients to achieve the results they need, including multiple accolades from the Public Relations Society of America, Keystone Chapter.

Prior to joining La Torre Communications, Jill spent seven years at the PA Bankers Association, where she handled the association's public relations and communications needs, including serving as the managing editor of PA Banker Magazine. During her tenure, she guided the association through a rebranding campaign, website redesign and social media launch. She also handled the association's extensive marketing of programs, events and annual meeting.

Jill started her career at the United Way of the Capital Region, where she gained valuable media relations and event planning experience before joining the Office of Rural Development under Govs. Ridge and Schweiker, and later the Pennsylvania Public Utility Commission's Office of Communications.

Jill's past client work has awarded her multiple accolades from the Public Relations Society of America, Keystone Chapter. She graduated from Lebanon Valley College with a bachelor's degree in English/communications with a minor in business. She is a United Way of the Capital Region public relations/social media committee member and chair of the Girls on the Run – Capital Area board.

Kevin Holland is the Vice President and Producer at Lockton Global Solutions. Kevin's role is a client advocate for global firms with complex service, risk, and insurance requirements. His focus is helping clients create cost-effective and administratively efficient programs that make full use of the global insurance market and risk service sector.

Kevin's professional background is implementing and managing risk and insurance programs for multinational fi rms with a variety of parent domiciles. He led the Lockton Founders Series Global Solutions Practice prior to beginning his current role.

He holds a master's in education from the University of Missouri; Kansas City, Missouri and a B.A. in Latin American studies and Spanish from the University of Missouri; Columbia, Missouri.

Karen Erger is the Senior Vice President and Director of Practice Risk Management at Lockton. In her role she provides risk management education and resources to Lockton's architecture, engineering, and construction clients. Drawing upon her background as a construction lawyer in private practice and as a Claim Supervisor for a major professional liability insurance carrier, Karen develops and delivers risk management workshops and seminars that help Lockton's clients manage the risk inherent in professional practice. She is a popular speaker on topics related to practice management, risk assessment and mitigation, and professional ethics, and is a prolific author of white papers and articles on risk management.

Karen received an A.B. in politics, economics, rhetoric and law, Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Chicago; Chicago, Illinois and a J.D. from University of Chicago Law School; Chicago, Illinois.

SPEAKERS

David Cohen specializes in business valuations, ownership transition and succession planning, and mergers and acquisitions as part of exit strategies and strategic plans. David has completed appraisal assignments for purposes of mergers and acquisitions, internal ownership transition and succession planning, Employee Stock Ownership Plans (ESOPs), and various litigation support engagements. David has assisted clients with all facets of ownership transition planning including analyzing the financial makeup of the company, designing stock valuation formulae, testing the financial feasibility of various stock transition options, and making recommendations for the shareholder's agreement. He has also assisted clients through the mergers and acquisitions process—helping them identify potential buyers or sellers, conducting due diligence, negotiating, structuring and closing the deal, and integrating the firms.

As an expert in financial advisory services, David conducts seminars on the topics of financial management, valuation, ownership transition planning, and mergers and acquisitions for the design industry, as well as leading in-house educational presentations for firms nationwide and speaking at ACEC and AIA National and State conferences and seminars. In addition, he is an instructor for the ACEC Business of Design Consulting program as well as for multiple ACEC State Emerging Leaders' Programs.

By night, **Dan Oblinger** is a 20-year veteran of law enforcement and a hostage negotiation commander. By day, he is a consulting negotiator and communications consultant for consulting engineering firms. Dan is a father, husband, philosopher, and lawman. He has been successful in his professional life as a public speaker, author, hostage negotiator, undercover human trafficking investigator, human resources consultant, chicken rancher, drug recognition expert, ditch digger, grocery bagger, onion ring maker, landlord, and beat cop. Oblinger has used his exotic blend of experiences and high energy humor to serve audiences since 2008.

Oblinger is the current provider of communications and leadership training for emerging leaders in ACEC chapters in Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, Michigan, Ohio, North Dakota, New Jersey, Iowa, and Georgia. He specializes in creating internal negotiation specialists programs in consulting engineering practices for enhanced business development, project delivery, strategic decision-making, and talent management.

Dan is the author of three books: "The 28 Laws of Listening", "Life or Death Listening: A Hostage Negotiator's How-to Guide to Mastering the Essential Communication Skill", and "Negotiation Mythbusters: Rethinking Everything You Know About Building Strong Agreements". He is a 2018 graduate of the FBI National Crisis Negotiator Course in Quantico, VA. Dan's passion is sharing his listening, negotiating, and leadership skills so everyone can become more authentic leaders and lovers. Oblinger lives in the heart of the Kansas prairie with his wife; together, they have six children.

APPLICATION

Instructions: Mail (by USPS only) the completed form along with a $5,500 check payable to ACEC/ND by July 1st to: ACEC North Dakota, Attn: Stacy Krumwiede, PO Box 7370, Bismarck, ND 58507. Applications sent using a carrier requiring a physical address will be returned as undeliverable. Credit cards and/or electronic transmittal will not be accepted.

Applicants will be notified by July 15th if they have been accepted into the Professional Development Series.

Applicant Name: ____

Title: ____ ND Reg. # ___________

Firm: ____

North Dakota Address: ____

Telephone: __________________________________ Email: ____

Investment and 2024 - 2026 Tuition:

The 2024-2026 investment for this extensive training is $5,500 per ACEC/ND member and $6,750 per non-member tuition. It includes registration for all 2024-2026 sessions of the Series and all meals/breaks at each session. In addition, the tuition includes the spring and fall conferences. Additional costs associated with the sessions (i.e.: overnight stays and optional activities not covered by tuition) are the responsibility of the individual/firm.

Circle One: ACEC/ND Member Rate: $5,500 Non - Member Rate: $6,750

Once you have signed up and paid for the Professional Development Series, there will not be any refunds. However, you can make up the course (s) you miss in a subsequent year.

☐ I agree to the aforementioned refund policy.

Signature: ____Date: _____________________