

Champion of Engineering Education

Ximena Muñoz



Ms. Ximena Muñoz, herself an immigrant professional, came to Canada from Chile and has spent over 20 years demonstrating her commitment to the improvement of qualifications recognition practices for internationally educated professionals in Manitoba. As director of the Settlement and Labour Market Services Branch of Manitoba Labour & Immigration, she set new directions for Manitoba to develop services and supports that meet the needs of increasing immigration to the province. In 2001, she organized Manitoba's first think-tank meeting bringing together immigrants, regulators, employers, policy-makers and other stakeholders which led to the development a Qualifications Recognition Strategy that was the first of its kind in Canada. On the basis of this strategy, Muñoz and her provincial colleagues worked in collaboration with regulators, employers and educational partners to establish a series of ground-breaking demonstration projects. One of these was the Internationally Educated Engineers Qualifications Recognition Program, or IEEQ Program at the University of Manitoba.

Throughout the five-year pilot phase of the IEEQ Program (2003-2008), Ms. Muñoz was an unwavering champion of the program. Although the most visible contribution was the project funding contributed to the IEEQ project over the pilot phase, Ms. Muñoz' contributions far exceeded monetary support. She demonstrated a tremendous amount of advocacy and eventually assisting the program in securing permanent, sustainable funding for an expanded program.

Ms. Muñoz extended a great deal of flexibility to the IEEQ program to fine-tune its mandate, objectives, and delivery as the program developed. In doing so, she demonstrated sensitivity to the unique challenges of the program model, which delivers a regulatory function within a post-secondary education setting. Ms. Muñoz and the project officers she assigned to the program demonstrated an active interest in the program not only from an administrative perspective, but for the individual participants as well.

Ms. Muñoz has also served the engineering profession nationally, by serving on the steering committees of Engineers Canada's *From Consideration to Integration* (FC2I) project (2003-2005) and the *engineering Qualifications Recognition model* (eQRm) project (2005-2008). The FC2I project focused on understanding and improving the integration processes for international engineering graduates nationally, while the eQRm project provided information and training to other Canadian jurisdictions interested in setting up an IEEQ-style program, in whole or in part. In both projects, Ms. Muñoz was an invaluable resource to interested stakeholders in other jurisdictions, sharing information of our Manitoba experience.

Since 2008, Ms. Muñoz serves as the province's first fairness commissioner, responsible for implementing the Fair Registration Practices in Regulated Professions Act. The Association, along with the faculty of Engineering, is pleased to honour Ms. Ximena Muñoz with the inaugural Champion of Engineering Education award.