



RESIGNATIONS AND RE-ELECTIONS

NEWEST BENCHER:

Jonathan Rosenthal, previously elected in 2015 and having achieved the next highest number of votes in Toronto last May, has returned to Convocation upon the resignation of Orlando Da Silva which was necessitated by the requirements of his new day job.

FINANCES:

The majority of Benchers elected in May ran on platforms of fiscal restraint and responsibility. It is very difficult to achieve dramatic change in a short period of time particularly when there is a steep learning curve. Perhaps more will be accomplished by next year. For now, you decide how you feel about what Benchers have agreed upon in their first budget, the details of which can be found in the comprehensive Audit & Finance Committee Report to Convocation, October 24, 2019 ([Report](#)).

2020 BUDGET:

The Budget is a complex document considering core operations to serve the public, the professions and licensing candidates. Our current CEO has been in place for only a year. She will continue to have a positive effect in coming years on operations and budget management.

GOOD NEWS:

LibraryCo.:

In 2020 Lawyers will contribute \$182 each (down from \$191 in 2019).
Library funding will be increased by 2% for services and legal information across Ontario.

Law Society:

In 2020 Lawyers annual fees will drop about 6% to \$2,066. (a decrease of \$135 per lawyer).

- The number of full fee lawyers will increase by 1,400 to 44,000.
- Paralegals fees will drop 9.75% to \$1,006. (a decrease of \$109 per paralegal).
- The number of full fee paralegals will increase by 100 to 6,400.
- The 2020 budget has been reduced by about \$2.8m from 2019.
- Employee salary merit increases will be capped at 2% which is below the CPI.

THE FINE PRINT:

LibraryCo.:

It costs lawyers \$8.1m to fund county and district law libraries. Paralegals do not contribute to the Libraries Fund.

Law Society:

- The Licensing fee process will cost \$4710 per lawyer candidate which has been unchanged for 6 years.
- Full time employees have only been dropped from 615 to 608.5 and as with many organizations, salaries and benefits amount to 60% of annual expense.
- Licensing fees account for about 75% of total LSO revenue. It is lucky we have more lawyers and paralegals paying dues each year.
- The approved budget projects revenue of \$130.7m.
- Anticipated expenses are \$139.4m.
- YES expenses EXCEED revenue by \$8.7m (the same as 2019).
- As in years past, those that claim to know at the LSO do not consider this to be deficit financing. The required extra funding is allowed to be taken from Law Society Fund Balances and E & O Surplus Investment Income since those balances exceed Convocation approved minimum levels.
- The fact is our expenses exceed revenue by \$8.7m. How would that work at home?
- The question deserving attention is whether budgeted expenses should be allowed to exceed revenue even though the funding allocations are all within a Bencher made policy. Maybe that policy should be reconsidered.

SIDNEY B. LINDEN AWARD:

In honour of this illustrious jurist involved with legal aid for over 35 years, Legal Aid Ontario created an award to honour other exceptional individuals who have demonstrated a long-standing commitment to helping low-income people, and given their time, expertise, and/or service to ensuring access to justice in Ontario. The deadline for submission of nominations is November 15, 2019.

ACCESS TO JUSTICE WEEK:

October 28 to November 1, 2019: it can not be easier to participate in Ontario's 4th Annual stimulating and thought provoking week long event wherever you may be in the province. All programmes will be live webcast.

To learn more go to [Access to Justice Week](#).

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