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IT'S YOUR MONEY

In October, Convocation approved, again without change, the 2022 budget proposed by the Budget and Finance Committee. By using \$16.2 million in fund balances for operations and to mitigate annual fees there will be a reduction in levies for the third year in a row. For next year, lawyers will see a decrease of \$60, for an annual fee of \$1,813, while paralegals will see a decrease of \$9, for an annual fee of \$955. Conducting online licensing examinations has reduced costs so that licensing fees for lawyer and paralegal candidates will be reduced by \$300 and \$100 respectively. A significant allocation in the budget of \$8.5 million (\$183 per lawyer with no contribution by paralegals) supports LiRN Inc. and the operation of 48 county law libraries. An important contribution by the Law Society jointly with the Law Foundation of Ontario supports the continued excellent work of the Law Commission of Ontario. As well, funding is provided for a Compensation Fund which provides for payments to be made to members of the public who have lost money because of the dishonesty of a member, and responding to strategic issues like [anti-money laundering and terrorist financing](#) and delivering programs such as the [Practice Management Helpline](#), the [Member Assistance Program](#) and launching projects like [Access to Innovation](#) (A2I). The report to Convocation on the 2022 budget is [available online](#).

BROOHAHA

Once again at October Convocation, emotions and anger overwhelmed rational discussion concerning equity issues and the Equity Advisory Group itself. To get a sense of the issues read the attached [June report](#). This is not just an issue of political correctness but is a matter of important substance that requires the Law Society's leadership. The professions require mature discussion of these significant issues. We need productive and informed examination of policy alternatives, not blinkered by ill formed perceptions and partisan political views.

Another example of internal struggle was a defeated motion seeking to defer the budget consideration until staff could present a budget with a 10% reduction to substantially be achieved by a reduction of total staff positions. The motion was defeated (18 for, 31 against and 1 abstain). The vote tally has become awfully predictable.

The normal level of restrained, respectful and collegial debate sometimes achieved before COVID has changed in meetings conducted on the ZOOM platform. Debate has been debased perhaps because some, speaking from the comfort of their own homes, offices or bedrooms have created an unconstrained belief that anything can be said remotely. Civility is being lost. The Treasurer had to surprisingly intervene to curtail discussion last month. I respectfully ask Benchers to be a positive influence of improvement and change, so they will have proud achievements to highlight to voters in 2023.

CONVOCATION COST - A COLLATERAL BENEFIT

We all eagerly anticipate current COVID restrictions becoming an image in our rear-view mirrors. There has been a significant cost saving for Convocation meeting virtually on the Zoom platform. However, Convocation routinely only sits half-day. Perhaps the COVID savings can be matched by Convocation meeting for full days, less often. It is always open to the Treasurer to convene a Special Convocation for any urgent matters. Convocation next meets, hopefully, in person in February 2022.

LAW SOCIETY AWARDS

The deadline for nominations is December 17, 2021. These are for the Law Society Medal, the Laura Legge Award, the Lincoln Alexander Award, the William J. Simpson Distinguished Paralegal Award, and the J. Shirley Denison Award.

Details can be found at www.lso.on.ca.

CERTIFIED SPECIALISTS

The Law Society program setting standards of experience and knowledge in identified areas of the law has created exemplary standards of professional practice. The program has a new chair: May Cheng, herself a Certified Specialist since 2005.

COMPETENCE

The Law Society has been asking to hear from the professions about how it is regulating the career-long competency of its members. However, time is now short. The call for comment on the Competence Task Force Report closes Nov. 30. I urge you to review its work and comment quickly: "[Renewing the Law Society's Continuing Competence Framework](#)" A copy of the Competence Task Force's June 2021 request for feedback can be found [here](#). We know now that the original hope that continuing legal education ("CLE") would reduce insurance claims has proven unfounded. Perhaps it is time to expand CLE to focus on other means to measure and enhance competency. The Law Society has to come up with more effective and less costly alternatives to allow the professions to achieve and maintain competence, throughout our careers in our selected areas of practice.

ARTICLING

Convocation has again renewed the reduced, eight-month minimum articling term for the 2022-2023 licensing cycle. The ongoing term reduction and COVID induced remote articling experience will inevitably force us to recognize that in-office articling may be replaced by experiential training alternatives like Lincoln Alexander's Law Practice Program and the two law schools' Integrated Practice Curriculum. Ongoing efforts to enhance these alternatives are a means of addressing what is genuinely understood to be "an articling crisis" related to the historic concept of mentoring and training by senior lawyers of those aspiring to be called to the Bar. Significant challenges remain due to the shortage of articling placements as well as unpaid or under-paid placements. Convocation has deferred

consideration of requiring compensation for articling which had been approved in 2018, but implementation was derailed by COVID. There will be further heated debate about the consequence of requiring compensation, contrasted with the negative effect of having some work for free simply in order to become licensed.

THE HONOURABLE JOHN I. LASKIN

The Law Society has presented a degree of Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa*, to Justice Laskin. He is a renowned expert in advocacy and a leader in judicial education. His profound career has been dedicated to the law. He is cracker jack smart, professional and humble. He has been an outstanding advocate, leader, mentor and educator, receiving the same degree as his father The Honourable Bora Laskin in March 1971, at the call to the bar of Justice John I. Laskin. May he have many more happy and healthy years to share with us his wisdom and humour.

IN MEMORIAM – ABE FEINSTEIN

Abe was an outstanding solicitor, an important pillar of the Ottawa community and a cornerstone of Law Society Convocation for years. He received numerous commendations and awards from almost every organization he joined, including the Law Society Medal. Best of all Abe was a nice guy: even in the most confrontational and tense situations Abe was able to lead and calm the air to allow reasoned consideration of all options that permitted solutions to be recognized and implemented. Abe was a smart, inspired leader in every arena he entered, to the benefit of all. Abe's work was never about or for himself. Abe's efforts were always for others, many of whom came to admire and even love him for his outstanding characteristics. Abe was a member of the Solway Wright law firm family for 55 years. Please see this for their elegant expression of admiration for Abe: <https://solowaywright.com/>

IN MEMORIAM – GLEN HAINEY

The Bench and Bar were all saddened by the passing of Mr. Justice Glenn A. Hainey in October. Glen was a superlative litigator and leader of the profession. Following a significant senior role within his firm and at the Law Society as an elected Bencher, Glen was appointed to the Ontario Superior Court of Justice. His talents were quickly recognized among dozens of exemplary Judges evidenced by his appointment as Head of the Court's Commercial List. Many of us were so fortunate to know Glen as a friend, mentor and colleague. His humour, twinkle in the eye and jovial perspective on life always left you feeling happy to merely be in his presence. He was a "terrific guy".

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