

**X****2015****BENCHER ELECTION****QUESTIONS FROM THE JANUARY 19, 2015 BENCHER ELECTION WEBCAST****(NOT PREVIOUSLY ANSWERED)**

**Q: Should there be a quota for solicitor and barrister members? What about setting a minimum number of benchers who are sole practitioners or in firms containing no more than three member firms?**

A: The current governance structure for Convocation does not include quotas for any groups with the profession. Any change in the structure, including designated seats at Convocation for specific members, would be a policy decision for Convocation and if pursued, would require legislative amendment.

**Q: How can candidates without large firm budgets compete to get elected? How much can a bencher candidate expect it will cost her or him to run? What is the approximate cost to campaign?**

A: Questions about campaign spending were answered during the webcast. The views expressed, among others, were that there were various campaign methods that did not involve large financial outlays. The expenditure on campaigning is a decision for each candidate. There is no identifiable “cost to campaign” that the Law Society can provide as it does not receive this information.

Of interest may be the information in the [June 2013 Bencher Election Working Group Report](#). The Report stated that based on a survey on the subject of campaign spending in 2007 following that year’s election, the data does not lead to the conclusion that there is a correlation between campaign spending and success or failure as a candidate.

**Q: Does LSUC play an advocacy role in promoting the allocation of state resources towards administration of justice issues including legal aid matters?**

A: The Law Society fosters important relationships with many stakeholders in the justice system, including the Attorney General for Ontario, who is an *ex officio* bencher. The Law Society appoints members to the board of Legal Aid Ontario and is a member of the Alliance for Sustainable Legal Aid. In these and other ways, the Law Society actively participates to fulfill principles by which it must govern in the public interest, which include a duty to maintain and advance the cause of justice and the rule of law and a duty to act so as to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario.

**Q: How many votes does a candidate generally need to receive to be successfully elected? (Any estimate or range would be helpful.) Thank you.**

A: This issue was addressed during the webcast, but the short answer is that it is unknown prior to an election. The number of votes required to be elected depends on several factors, including the number of candidates, the number of voters, the pattern of voting by individual voters and the effect of the regional vote. [The results of the 2011 Bencher Election](#) will provide some of idea of the number of votes required for election.

**Q: With ranked voting (voting for up to 20 candidates), can you please explain to the audience how the count works and is there any data on previous elections that is available to determine how many votes were cast and how many votes, at a minimum, were needed to win.**

A: The [results of the 2011 Bencher Election](#) provide this information and shows the various voting reports produced by Computershare, who provides the online voting facility.

**Q: Can members use services like Constant Contact or MailChimp to communicate with members? Can we use social media? Are there any restrictions on what media is used and how often?**

A: Candidates can use campaign methods of their choice. The method and frequency of communications and the communication platform are at the discretion of the candidate. Campaign communications must comply with the rules of conduct dealing with professional communications.

**Q: What is the average age of benchers?**

A: This information is not available, although a range of ages for elected benchers can be offered: two are under 50, 24 are between 50 and 65, and 14 are over 65. The most recent detailed information of this type was prepared for the [2009 Governance Task Force Report](#) and may found in the appendices to the report.

As the complement of Convocation changes with each election, the average age of a bencher will fluctuate.