



Tab 8

**Report to Convocation
October 29, 2015**

Priority Planning Committee

Committee Members:

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Christopher Bredt
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Ross Earnshaw
Julian Falconer
Howard Goldblatt
Michelle Haigh
Carol Hartman
Jacqueline Horvat
Janet Leiper
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Paul Schabas
Peter Wardle

Purpose of Report: Information

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FOR INFORMATION

CONVOCATION'S PRIORITY PLANNING

Introduction

1. In keeping with Convocation's process for prioritizing and planning its policy agenda for a benchers term, benchers engaged in a strategic planning exercise following the 2015 benchers election at a Strategic Planning Session held on October 14 and 15 in Niagara-on-the Lake.
2. Through the Strategic Planning Steering Group of the Priority Planning Committee, a process was developed to obtain the input of benchers and senior staff on strategic priorities for the Law Society to prepare for the Session.
3. For approximately six months in advance of the Session, benchers and senior staff completed a series of surveys and attended meetings, facilitated by a consultant, that resulted in the information that was used to prepare a draft strategic plan for 2015 to 2019, including prioritized goals, for consideration by the benchers at the Session.

The Law Society's Strategic Plan for 2015-2019

4. At the Session, following discussions, benchers confirmed a Strategic Plan, which was built on the Law Society mission, mandate and principles for governance found in the *Law Society Act*.¹ The Plan covers a number of areas that include professional

¹ Function of the Society

4.1 It is a function of the Society to ensure that,

- (a) all persons who practise law in Ontario or provide legal services in Ontario meet standards of learning, professional competence and professional conduct that are appropriate for the legal services they provide; and
- (b) the standards of learning, professional competence and professional conduct for the provision of a particular legal service in a particular area of law apply equally to persons who practise law in Ontario and persons who provide legal services in Ontario. 2006, c. 21, Sched. C, s. 7.

Principles to be applied by the Society

4.2 In carrying out its functions, duties and powers under this Act, the Society shall have regard to the following principles:

1. The Society has a duty to maintain and advance the cause of justice and the rule of law.
2. The Society has a duty to act so as to facilitate access to justice for the people of Ontario.
3. The Society has a duty to protect the public interest.

competence, professional conduct, access to justice initiatives, Law Society communication and outreach initiatives and governance.

5. The Plan was formulated in the knowledge that a number of initiatives that relate to areas described above will continue in the new bench term. They include:
 - a. the Pathways Pilot Project on transitional training;
 - b. the work of the Mentoring and Advisory Services Proposal Task Force, the Task Force to Create a Strategy to Promote Wellness and Address Mental Health and Addictions Issues and the Compliance-Based Entity Regulation Task Force,
 - c. the work of the Challenges Faced by Racialized Licensees Working Group and the Alternative Business Structures Working Group;
 - d. the Tribunal Three Year Review project; and
 - e. the project to renew the Law Society's Aboriginal Initiatives Strategy.

6. The following were chosen by benchers as the priority areas for the 2015-2019 bench term:
 - a. Evaluation and enhancement of the current licensing standards and requirements for lawyer and paralegal licensees;
 - b. Guided by the duty to protect the public interest, a review and revision as appropriate of the Law Society's policy-making process;
 - c. An exploration of ways to:
 - i. improve and increase practice supports for lawyers and paralegals; and
 - ii. provide better mentoring for licensees;
 - d. Improvements and adjustments to the Law Society's regulatory process, with a particular focus on developing mental health initiatives and equity-based principles in the regulatory process;
 - e. In continuing the Law Society's focus on access to justice:
 - i. improved planning and assignment of Law Society resources, and establishing a leadership role for the Law Society with a concrete action plan to achieve access to justice goals;
 - ii. increased collaboration outside the Law Society with stakeholders to promote better access to justice;
 - f. With respect to Law Society communications:
 - i. enhancing communication to the public through Law Society outreach and other efforts, to enhance public perception of and education on the role of the Law Society, with a focus on key messages;

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4. The Society has a duty to act in a timely, open and efficient manner.
 5. Standards of learning, professional competence and professional conduct for licensees and restrictions on who may provide particular legal services should be proportionate to the significance of the regulatory objectives sought to be realized. 2006, c. 21, Sched. C, s. 7.

- ii. enhancing communication to lawyers and paralegals as a matter of accountability, transparency, and better enabling input from and engagement with the professions;
- g. Improvements to the efficiency of the Law Society, with a focus on improved measurements and more robust assessment of current and proposed activities;
- h. Improvements to the governance of the Law Society, including better education for members of Convocation.

Next Steps

7. The Priority Planning Committee will provide a more detailed report on the Plan for the December 4, 2015 Convocation, including discussion of work anticipated to be done to implement it, as appropriate.
8. As the Plan is implemented, pursuant to its mandate, the Priority Planning Committee will
 - a. periodically review the priorities established by Convocation through the Plan,
 - b. consider any new policy issues that may arise that may be added to the Plan, and
 - c. recommend appropriate action to Convocation on an ongoing basis to achieve the goals under the Plan.
9. The Committee will also report annually to Convocation on the status of Convocation's priorities.