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FOLA SPRING 2022 POST PLENARY REPORT

THURSDAY MAY 12, 2022

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SPRING 2022 PLENARY REPORT

FOLA's Spring 2022 began with our Board Chair, Douglas Judson, reminding us that we all practice on lands that have been, and continue to be, cared for by Indigenous peoples. Douglas noted that he resides in the Rainy River District, which forms part of Treaty #3 - the territory of Anishinaabe, and in which the Metis share history. After Roll Call, Douglas provided his Report from the Chair, which you can watch [here](#).

Law Society of Ontario Treasurer, Teresa Donnelly, then provided what was her final report as Treasurer to FOLA (her term as Treasurer comes to an end at the end of June 2022). The Treasurer took care to highlight the many initiatives of particular importance to her and drew our attention to some accompanying resources on the LSO's website. On mental health, the Treasurer promoted the LSO's [Well-being Resource Centre](#) and a recent blog post by [Chief Justice Strathy](#). A strong advocate for Access to Justice, Teresa Donnelly highlighted the work the LSO has been doing to combat systemic racism, ongoing work related to the Truth & Reconciliation Commission and Canada's Indigenous populations and the promotion of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion. The Treasurer reminded FOLA members about the historical significance of the [Great Library](#) and the resources it continues to offer lawyers. She noted that there is currently a plan for the large expansion of the Osgoode Subway station as a result of the [MetroLinx expansion](#), which will greatly impact the grounds of the Law Society. She closed by highlighting the strong working relationship she has enjoyed with FOLA over her years as Treasurer. You can view her video [here](#).

Next up was FOLA's Executive Director, Katie Robinette, who provided an update of FOLA's work over the past six months. Her presentation can be found on our [Plenary page](#). It should be noted that her Report includes hyperlinks to all FOLA Submissions since our November Plenary as well as highlighting all [Member Rewards](#) which are available to all Law Association members and library staff! Katie also used her time to remind members about the new Not-for-Profit Act and some resources FOLA has to help Associations bring their Bylaws in line with the new Act. She also reviewed our Lobby Day 2022, and encouraged Presidents and members to participate in next year's event (learn more about our Lobby Day [here](#)). Katie's video clip can be found [here](#).

Following FOLA Treasurer Jane Robertson's report and a vote on the FOLA 2021 Financial Statements, we heard from our Regional Representatives. Common themes include issues with the presumptive return to in-person Court appearances (members would like to see the right to retain remote options), Court services delays (mostly due to a shortage of staff); two-year delays for Civil matters, and efforts to address backlogs. In Ontario's Northwest Region, fly-in Courts are still not up and running but Drive-in Courts are expected to all be up and running by June. These Courts are all in-person only due to limited internet. The Toronto Lawyers Association provided an update on some of the recent Submissions their Association has made and highlighted their work related to next year's Benchers Elections. Note that our Central South Regional Report can be found on our [Plenary Page](#) as Allen Wynperle, our Central South Regional Representative, was unable to join the meeting during this time slot.

Regional Reports were followed by Reports from our Committee Chairs. Terry Brandon, FOLA's Legal Aid Chair, warned all members to continue to lobby for increased funding for Legal Aid and encouraged all members practicing in Legal Aid to email her with concerns to help her advocate on their behalf. FOLA's Legal Aid page can be found [here](#). Sam Misheal, FOLA's Family Law Chair (and now 1st Vice Chair), spoke about FOLA's ongoing work related to the Family Legal Services Provider Licence report. You can learn more on our Family Law page [here](#). We closed out our Committee Reports with highlights from our Real Estate Co-Chairs, Eldon Horner and Mark Giavedoni. They noted that they continue to work with government staff on issues raised during our Lobby Day (including those around Positive Covenants and use of funds generated by Land Transfer Tax Revenues) and offered a summary of the Submissions FOLA has sent since our last Plenary. Eldon reminded

Presidents that he is planning to step down from his role as Real Estate Co-Chair and called on all those interested in the position to reach out to him to discuss. Please visit our [Real Estate Page](#) for all our recent updates. To watch the recording of our Regional and Committee Reports, click [here](#).

After a quick break, we were treated to an update from Diana Miles, CEO of the Law Society. Diana provided an operational update, highlighted some of the LSO's key policy initiatives, and drew our attention to the LSO's licensee resources. She also provided an update on the Ontario Line development, which will greatly impact the Law Society grounds with the planned subway station proposed for construction on their front lawn.

Diana shared her time with Fay Faraday who provided an overview of the [LSO's Discrimination & Harassment Counsel](#). Fay told members about how the DHC supports the LSO's core regulatory function by supporting compliance with anti-discrimination and anti-harassment provisions in lawyers' and paralegals' rules of compliance; supports accountability of the self-governing legal professions; and helps restore trust in the legal profession where trust has been eroded by abuses of power through discriminatory or harassing behaviour by professionals. You can watch Diana and Fay's recording [here](#) and both presentations are on our [Plenary Page](#).

Next up was Will Morrison, Manager, Access to Innovation at the LSO, who gave us an update on the Law Society's Sandbox Project, a new approach to regulating direct-to-public legal technologies. While not the first jurisdiction to bring in a Sandbox style approach to technology in the legal space, the LSO is certainly one of the few in North America using this model (which is quite common in other sectors such as medical and agriculture). You can watch the recording [here](#) (it has been accredited for 20 minutes of professional CPD) and his presentation is on our [Plenary Page](#).

Following Will's presentation, we heard from Dan Pinnington, President & CEO, LawPRO (our Title Sponsor!), who provided a 30-minute LSO Accredited overview on claims, resources, and their Title Plus program. You can view his recording [here](#) and his presentation is also on our [Plenary Page](#).

The last presentation before lunch was a report by Theresa Leitch, Managing Director, LiRN and LiRN's Board Chair, Neil Guthrie. Participants heard about some new resources that LiRN has been pursuing with service providers and how LiRN has been leveraging bulk purchasing power to lower fees. We also heard about upcoming job description guidelines that will form the basis of a series of consultations with Library staff and Law Associations during the month of June. You can watch their presentation [here](#).

After breaking for lunch, we then moved into longer discussions around the future of our Law Libraries and Law Associations -specifically around access to Law Libraires, membership in Law Associations, and the roles and responsibilities of Law Associations and Law Library staff. To help frame our discussions, which took place in virtual breakout rooms, we first heard from Caroline Nevin, CEO of BC Courthouse Libraries who spoke about public access to Law Libraries. Caroline has spent 25 years finding ways to support lawyers who need help in the practice of law and has a personal, passionate focus on solo and small firm lawyers who do not have the resources and benefits that their colleagues in larger firms have. She noted that the creation of the Law Library was the first act of the BC Law Society 150 years ago. Originally, they received \$10 out of \$50 that each practitioner paid annually. And while it's no longer as high as 20% of the license fee, with inflation it's actually a lower cost per lawyer today for significantly more extensive and better service. Caroline noted two main reasons they've been able to do that: first, they centralized a lot of the collective costs that individual law associations had in running the libraries; and secondly, about 50 years ago, they started attracting new dollars from the Law Foundation, which meant opening up their services to the public. Today, their funding model is about 50:50 Law Society and Law Foundation. When it comes to security, they do not provide public access in any of their BC Courthouse Libraries that require passage through private spaces (like Lawyers' Lounges or areas where there is restricted access for Crown Attorneys or Judges). Instead, access is restricted to remote

services to those locations. Further, they invest in practical training for Library staff related to dealing with difficult people, which increases their confidence, and have installed sheriff 'panic buttons' in all Libraries which are responded to immediately if there is a security concern. If anyone is interested in discussing their model, you can contact Caroline directly at cnevin@courthouselibrary.ca.

Next, we heard from two representatives from Law Associations who discussed their respective approaches to Law Library access and Paralegals. Karen Hulan, President of the Middlesex Law Association shared how her Association is currently in the middle of consulting with their members about the possibility of granting full access to Paralegals and Rosalind Conway, Past President of the County of Carleton Law Association shared their reasoning for allowing full access to Paralegals to Law Librarians and membership in their Association. While Paralegals still cannot serve as President or on the Executive, they are on the Board and are a very active and thriving group within their Association (note that the CCLA charges a lower fee for Paralegals than for their Lawyer members, reflective of their different membership standing). It was noted that the CCLA's experiences have been positive with respect to including paralegals and that their parallel CPD programming has "raised the bar" and made them better advocates, thus helping to address competency concerns.

Both noted that it is important that Paralegals start paying into the Law Library levy through the LSO if they are going to benefit from Law Library services and the CCLA volunteered that there is support amongst them, at least locally, to pay a levy.

Finally, we heard from Allen Wynperle who provided an update on the pending changes in the roles/functions the Law Library staff will be able to play in assisting Law Associations. Notably, new accounting policies will see monies from the LiRN grant being restricted to Law Library support. What is still unclear is whether work done by Law Library staff to support Board Governance (including helping with board meetings, executive meetings, library committee meetings, nomination committee meetings, and the AGM) and education (including CPD the fact that LiRN is responsible for "modernizing the delivery of legal information"). We are expecting consultations to begin in June and this Breakout room was designed to gather feedback from Associations and start getting members to think about what they need from their staff to run a fully functioning Law Library. It is critical that these concerns are addressed by LiRN. This Breakout Room was moderated by both Allen and Rebecca Bentham, Executive Director of the Hamilton Law Association and if you have any comments for FOLA regarding the role of Law Librarians play in your Association, please feel free to send them to Katie at katie.robinette@fola.ca and we will discuss those during our LiRN meetings and raise them with LiRN.

You can watch our recording of the introductions framing the Breakout Room discussions [here](#), but the Breakout Rooms were not recorded.

Following our Law Library session, we heard from Rio Peterson (or "Rio from Clio" as she is commonly known). Clio was our Speaker Sponsor and Rio provided yet another informative talk about Getting Back to the "New Normal", highlighting tech trends that are here to stay. Her presentation is on our [Plenary Page](#) and you can watch her recording [here](#). Rio's session has been accredited for 30 minutes of CPD.

After our final break of the day, we heard from Lorna M. Yates, who walked us through a case study on CaseLines. Basically, this was CaseLines training by a lawyer, for lawyers! You can watch her recording [here](#). It qualifies for 45 minutes of Professional CPD. We should note that even members who have taken training before have emailed FOLA to let us know how helpful her presentation was. If you're looking for a refresher to "up your game", take a moment to watch!

Our final session of the day was hosted by "Voices for Mental Health" and was generously sponsored by [Lawyers Financial](#). Past FOLA speaker (and a 2022 LSO Award recipient), Beth Beattie arranged for four

members of her group to host Breakout Rooms where people could hear about the following topics: Peer Mentoring (with Myra Hewitt and Stephen Lockwood); Imposter Syndrome (with Jason Balgopal); and Addiction (with Imran Kamal). While this session counted for one hour of Professional CPD, it was not recorded, however, we do have a recording of their introductions [here](#). If you would like to learn more about Voices for Mental Health and the work they do, please feel free to reach out to us them at VoicesForMentalHealth@ontario.ca. We also have information about their Peer Support program on our website [here](#).

All of our Spring 2022 Plenary videos can be found in one handy playlist [here](#). And if you want to view all of our accredited content, you can visit that handy playlist [here](#).

And with that, FOLA's Chair, Douglas Judson thanked everyone for joining and concluded the event. Fingers crossed our Fall 2022 Plenary will be held in person!

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