

2017

ANNUAL REPORT



Law Society of Saskatchewan
In the Public Interest

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE LAW SOCIETY

The Legal Profession Act, 1990, a statute of the Province of Saskatchewan, has delegated to the Law Society of Saskatchewan the responsibility to govern the legal profession. The Law Society is not funded by or affiliated with the government and must exercise its responsibility to govern the profession in the public interest.

The Law Society, governed by a Board of lawyers and non-lawyers, sets and enforces standards for admissions, professional conduct and quality of service. Enforcement may mean that sanctions are imposed or discipline proceedings are conducted against lawyers who violate those standards.

It is necessary to preserve the independence of the legal profession from interference by the state. This independence is for the benefit of the client and the public who may rely on a lawyer to represent, protect and defend their interests even as against the state.

VISION

The Law Society of Saskatchewan is a leader in fostering public confidence through effective and innovative regulation of legal services.

MISSION

Acting in the public interest, the Law Society of Saskatchewan:

- i. protects the public by regulating competence and integrity in legal services;
- ii. promotes access to legal services;
- iii. ensures the independence of the legal profession; and
- iv. advances the administration of justice and the rule of law.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

- Improving **confidence** in the Law Society of Saskatchewan among all stakeholders;
- Improving **capacity**, competence and knowledge of the membership;
- Improving **access** to legal services.

VALUES

- **Integrity**
We act honestly and ethically.
- **Accountability**
We are responsible for our actions and ensure transparent communication and process.
- **Fairness**
We treat all people fairly, respectfully and consistently through impartial application of policies, procedures and practices.
- **Independence**
We are an independent and autonomous regulator.
- **Inclusivity**
We support inclusion, equity and diversity.
- **Access**
We promote access to appropriate legal services.

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Membership Statistics as of February 8, 2018

STATUS	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
Active Practicing Members residing IN and OUT of Saskatchewan	1180	714	1894
Active Practicing Members residing IN Saskatchewan	1084	677	1761
Regina Practicing Lawyers	406	256	662
Saskatoon Practicing Lawyers	431	290	721
Saskatchewan Practicing Lawyers Outside of Regina and Saskatoon	247	131	378
Inactive Members IN and OUT of Saskatchewan	274	233	507
Inactive Members IN Saskatchewan	99	119	218

CHANGES IN STATUS SINCE JANUARY 1, 2017	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
New Enrolled Lawyers (admitted from student-at-law status)	43	34	77
Transfer Lawyers	14	19	33
Deaths	11	-	11
Judges Appointed	4	4	8

Allocation of Practitioners in Saskatchewan By Type of Practice

TYPE OF PRACTICE	NUMBER OF PRACTITIONERS (not including students-at-law)
Courts	6
Federal Government	36
Federal Prosecution	15
In-House Corporate Counsel	157
Legal Aid	86
Private Practice	1122
Pro Bono	11
Provincial Crown Corporation	43
Provincial Government	117
Provincial Prosecution	130
University	18
Unclassified in Law Society Database	20
TOTAL:	1761

Law Firms in Saskatchewan by Number of Practitioners

NUMBER OF PRACTITIONERS PER FIRM (Private Practice Only)	NUMBER OF FIRMS	NUMBER OF PRACTITIONERS (including students-at-law)
1	179	179
2	62	124
3	26	78
4	17	68
5	13	65
6	9	54
7	3	21
8	2	16
9	3	27
10	1	10
11	1	11
12	1	12
13	1	13
15	1	15
16	1	16
17	2	34
19	1	19
21	3	63
26	1	26
30	1	30
31	1	31
38	1	38
74	1	74
86	1	86
87	1	87
TOTAL:	333	1197

NOTE: These numbers include students-at-law who are working in private firms, which accounts for the discrepancy between the total number of private practitioners in this table (1197) and the total number of private practitioners in the "Type of Practice" Table (1122).

Practicing Lawyers in Saskatchewan by Age (not including students-at-law)

BETWEEN AGES:	24 to 30	31 to 40	41 to 50	51 to 60	60 & UP	TOTALS
Male	99	250	191	248	296	1084
Female	92	220	182	123	60	677
TOTAL:	191	470	373	371	356	1761

The statistics were prepared from the Law Society database and represent a reasonable representation of the demographics. Statisticians should be cautioned that the final numbers are not always in agreement.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

“Without change, there is no innovation, creativity or incentive for improvement. Those who initiate change will have a better opportunity to manage the change that is inevitable.”

— William Pollard

It is my privilege to present the 2017 Annual Report of the Law Society of Saskatchewan.

2017 was a year of change and continued transformation at the Law Society of Saskatchewan. Under the able stewardship of our new Executive Director, Tim Brown, Q.C., the Society reconfirmed its commitment to its strategic directions, and governing the legal profession in the public interest. To that end, in 2017:

- The Law Society implemented a pilot project (along with the Alberta and Manitoba law societies) within the Innovating Regulation project, which is exploring proactive, competency-based regulation. The management principles and assessment tool were utilized by participating firms and practitioners, and the detailed feedback is now being reviewed by the Access to Legal Services Committee.
- The Legal Services Task Team (a joint project of the Law Society and the Ministry of Justice) was appointed and conducted widespread consultation with the public, the courts, lawyers, and other legal service providers. Its report, and recommendations about the appropriate role, if any, of non-lawyers in the provision of legal services, will assist the Law Society in exploring solutions to enhance access to legal services to the public.
- The Benchers re-established the Equity and Diversity Committee, which has met with individuals representing diverse perspectives and backgrounds, in an effort to understand the challenges they face within the legal profession. This committee is also continuing the work of the Justicia Project, and is looking at ways of implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action within Saskatchewan.
- CPLED (the Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education), a partnership between the Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba law societies, is examining and developing improvements to the “bar admission” program. A new CEO was hired in 2017, who will provide enhanced strategic direction to this program.
- The Benchers and staff engaged in a risk management assessment of the Law Society and governance training directed at professional regulators. That work is the foundation for the new strategic planning cycle that will begin in 2018.

These initiatives were, of course, in addition to the “day-to-day” business of the Law Society and the Benchers Committees (including Admissions and Education, Conduct Investigation, Discipline, Ethics, Professional Standards, Insurance and Trust Safety). Many of the committees met by conference call and video-conference in between convocations, in order to deal with their workload and advance the various initiatives on their respective agendas. Special thanks to the Chairs of the committees for leading the work of each committee (including the hours spent between convocations advancing committee work, developing agendas and work plans, and liaising with the executive and staff).

I'd like to acknowledge and thank my Executive Committee cohorts, Perry Erhardt, Q.C. (Past-President), Craig Zawada, Q.C. (Vice President), and Tim Brown, Q.C., for their dedication, good humour, and hard work. Thanks as well to Greg Walen, Q.C., who sits as the Law Society's member of Council on the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, as well as being a member of the Conduct Investigation Committee and attending each Benchers Convocation.

Fulfilling the Law Society's mandate and responsibility as an independent, self-governing regulator requires the support and commitment of many. Thank you to the dedicated and talented professional and support staff at the Law Society for their efforts in supporting the Benchers and carrying out the work of the Law Society. Thanks to all of the individuals who have volunteered their time and expertise to serve as Law Society representatives with other organizations, with CPLED, in organizing and presenting continuing professional development (CPD) activities, and as members of Law Society conduct, complaints and discipline committees.

Much was accomplished in 2017, and I look forward to continued engagement and progress on our ongoing initiatives, and the challenges facing legal regulators in the upcoming year. It has been a pleasure, and a privilege, to serve as your President.

Erin Kleisinger, Q.C.



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

2017 was a year of renewal at the Law Society of Saskatchewan. On January 3, I was installed as the new Executive Director, succeeding Tom Schonhoffer, Q.C., following his tenure of almost a decade. Tom led with vision both at home and nationally.

At home, Tom grew and mentored a more fulsome professional staff which led to an important shift in society governance. With the operations of the Society well in hand, the Benchers could devote more focus to the fundamental policy issues facing both the profession and the public we serve in an increasingly complex and rapidly shifting regulatory environment.

This has positioned us well as we continue the journey, along with other regulators here in Canada, and across the world, to confront the challenges posed by the continual advancement of technology, globalization and emerging preferences of consumers in every sector of the market, including law. It is a daunting, exciting and ultimately important time to be part of this process in the regulation of a profession which has never had to read and react on this scale in the 110 years of its existence.

2017 was a busy year evidencing much progress toward the strategic aims of the Law Society. The important work done by our committees and the steps taken in relation to several of our significant projects have been well chronicled within this report. I will touch on a few specific operational matters to provide a brief introduction to the year ahead.

Early in 2017 we experienced some significant technical difficulties which resulted in a complete rebuild of our IT infrastructure. While this caused many sleepless nights, as with any hardship, this experience came with a silver lining, in fact, many. It reaffirmed a sense of “team” among our group and provided us with a much greater understanding of the importance of IT issues, including threats, not only within our organization, but also within the profession generally.

This has resulted in our resolve to increase related education for the membership. If you consult our revised CPD policy on the website, you will note that such education is also now available for ethics credits. The rebuild has also led to our recognition of the relative lack of IT guidance for not only our membership, but lawyers across Canada as well. In 2018 we will also be working to develop guidelines to assist practitioners in such areas as cloud computing.

We also renewed our leased space to 2027 and underwent renovations to meet our needs now and into the future. With a new IT system and renovations complete, the staff is ready for the year ahead, a year which promises to be even busier than the last. At an operational level, communications will be a key priority for the organization. In December of 2017, the staff conducted a strategic communications planning session to address improvements in our outreach to all stakeholders and to improve member services in every area. This will include a refresh of our website, updating our visual identity and making sure we listen to the communication needs of our members and the public.

Going forward, we need to increase opportunities to receive feedback in other forms and on a more continual basis and to improve our capacity for both qualitative and quantitative research. Your input is valuable. This was demonstrated by the survey that was conducted in 2017 in relation to member satisfaction with the delivery of CPD offerings, which, overall, was very high. We also received some very good ideas for improvement and have incorporated many of the suggested changes to respond to members’ needs and preferences. For the many who took the time to respond to this survey and others that we presented throughout the year, we thank you.

In terms of thanks, I can’t express enough appreciation for the commitment of the staff, our practice advisors, our Trustees, farm-out counsel and consultants. I am truly blessed to work with the best colleagues one could hope for. Their dogged commitment to supporting the organization, the membership and, ultimately, the public we serve is a constant source of pride and inspiration.

There are so many to thank, as the “workforce” in any self-regulating is comprised of both paid staff and a long list of volunteers and other pro bono contributors who help with nearly every aspect of what we do. Without them, our work would not be possible and our appreciation for your commitment to the profession cannot be understated.

We also cannot express enough gratitude to our Benchers, who have been so committed to the strategic course and who have been so diligent in preparing themselves for the many important discussions which take place at both on committees and around the bigger Bencher table at each of our meetings. It has been our pleasure to work with you. Your commitment to excellence as a group has been exceptional. Special thanks to our many outgoing Benchers who have continually brought so much energy, insight and leadership during their time.

2018 is an election year for the Law Society. The departure of key contributors around our Bencher table will create a significant void, but we are equally excited to work with the next group, as Board-renewal brings new voices, energy and ultimately fresh perspectives to our work. For those of you who may be thinking of running in the election, we encourage you to watch our future communications which will attempt to provide information and insight into what the important and rewarding experience of being a Bencher entails.

Finally, my deep appreciation to those responsible for giving me the opportunity to play my part in this fascinating and important work. Special thanks to my colleague Donna Sigmeth, Q.C. for her faithful partnership, mentoring and friendship through the process of bringing me online. Not enough can be said about the efforts of Erin Kleisinger, Q.C. who tirelessly set the pace for us all and provided great insight and inspiration.

We welcome our new President, Craig Zawada, Q.C. Craig will continue the legacy of excellent leadership in the organization and we are excited to work with him as our vision for the future unfolds.

Timothy Brown, Q.C.

GOVERNANCE

2017 Benchers



Perry Erhardt, Q.C.
Past-President



Erin Kleisinger, Q.C.
President



Craig Zawada, Q.C.
Vice President



Jeffrey Baldwin



Leslie Belloc-Pinder



David Bishop



David Chow



Monte Gorchinski



Glenn Hepp



Brenda Hildebrandt, Q.C.



Heather Hodgson



Foluke Laosebikan, Ph.D.



Judy McCuskee



John McIntosh, Q.C.



Scott Moffat



Ronni Nordal



Ronald Parchomchuk



Martin Phillipson



David Rusnak, Q.C.



Sean Sinclair



Gerald Tegart, Q.C.



Ian Wagner



Jay Watson

Professional Staff



Timothy Brown, Q.C.
Executive Director



Donna Sigmeth, Q.C.
Deputy Director



John Allen, CPA, CA
Auditor/Inspector



Barbra Bailey
Policy Counsel



Ken Fox
Reference Librarian



Pamela Harmon, CPA, CA
Senior Auditor



Timothy Huber
Counsel



Brad D. Hunter, Q.C.
Director of
Insurance SLIA



Andrea Johnston
Director of
Admissions & Education



Christine Johnston
CPLED Program Director



Kara-Dawn Jordan
Policy Counsel



Stephanie Kievits, CPA, CA
Senior Auditor



Alan Kilpatrick
Reference Librarian



Jenna Kraushaar
Complaints Counsel



Kiran Mand*
Acting Deputy Director
of Admissions & Education



Jody Martin*
Deputy Director of
Admissions & Education



David McCashin
SLIA Counsel



Stacey McPeck
Complaints Counsel



Melanie Hodges Neufeld
Director of Legal Resources



Valerie Payne*
Complaints Counsel



Sarah Rider*
CPD Program Coordinator



Ingrid Wakefield
Acting CPD Program
Coordinator

*On leave for part of 2017

Council of the Federation



Gregory Walen, Q.C.

Practice Advisors



Brent Gough, Q.C.



Jeffrey Scott, Q.C.



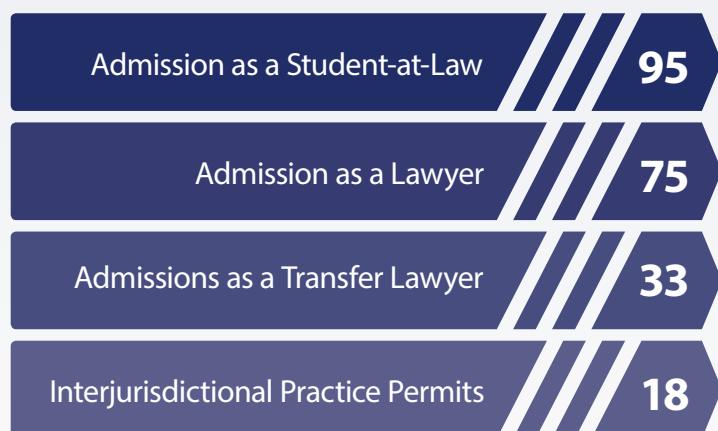
Sheila Denysiuk, Q.C.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Goal 1: Improving **confidence** in the LSS among all stakeholders

The **Access to Legal Services Committee** continued its participation in the Innovating Regulation initiative, a joint project with the Law Societies of Manitoba and Alberta, which is considering a framework for the regulation of law firms rather than focusing exclusively on individual lawyers within firms. The committee implemented a pilot project from August to November to review a more proactive approach for regulating law firms. The Prairie Law Societies are now considering feedback from this project to determine the best approach. The overall goal of this initiative is to provide appropriate supports of all kinds for lawyers in the organization where they work, including measures that increase capacity, competence and knowledge.

Applications in 2017



The **Discipline Executive Committee (DEC)** provides oversight of the National Discipline Standards, which assess each law society's efficiency, transparency, and sufficiency of communications with its discipline-related stakeholders (complainants, members, etc.). The committee examines any failure to meet the standards, which are meant to be aspirational in nature, and determines whether policy changes are required in order to assist LSS with meeting the standards. This year the DEC directed changes to the *Rules* of the LSS to allow for greater ability to report to police any suspected criminal activity committed by a member.

The **Ethics Committee** is responsible for overseeing the *Code of Professional Conduct* and examining any amendments that should be made to ensure the *Code* continues to guide the profession in such a manner as to protect the public interest. The committee renders ethics decisions which improve public confidence in how the LSS governs the legal profession. This year the committee rendered five decision including one from a complaint made to the LSS and four from requests for rulings by the membership or from Law Society Committees.

The Ethics Committee's Model Code Subcommittee reviewed and approved proposed amendments to the *Model Code*, which were approved by the Benchers in September 2017. This subcommittee also reviewed and suggested that the LSS remove certain redundancies in the *Code of Professional Conduct*, which changes were approved by the

The **Admissions and Education (A&E) Committee** assessed and ruled on applications from individuals seeking Rule waivers to reduce or eliminate the requirement to complete 12 months of articles, as well as an application for a waiver of the requirement to repeat the Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education (CPLED) program. The committee also reviewed and updated the *Rules* and the CPLED Handbook provisions regarding re-reads, supplemental evaluations, and repeating CPLED program modules.

The A&E Department developed and delivered 25 Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activities in 2017. Since mandatory CPD was implemented in 2010, it has approved 11,577 CPD activities delivered by 838 different providers.

The **Conduct Investigation Committee (CIC)**'s past and ongoing purpose is to act as the "discipline" arm of the complaints department. The CIC ensures that matters of potential member misconduct are sufficiently investigated and, where appropriate, referred for appropriate disciplinary action. The interim suspension ability available to the CIC is an important safeguard to ensure that the public interest is protected in instances where it appears that a member's conduct may endanger his or her clients' interests.

Conduct Investigation Committee Matters

- 4 Matters Directed to Conduct Review Committee
- 4 Matters Referred to a Hearing Committee for Conduct Unbecoming a Lawyer
- 9 Matters are Ongoing
- 3 Matters Dismissed as Requiring No Further Action
- 2 Matters Referred to the Professional Standards Committee
- 9 Conduct Unbecoming Hearings were Completed

Benchers in September 2017. The subcommittee consulted on potential upcoming changes to the *Code* regarding technology competence, former judges returning to practice, and encouraging respect for the administration of justice. As well, the subcommittee consulted on a discussion paper relating to fee sharing.

The **Equity and Diversity Committee** was re-established in January, 2017, and much of its work focused on becoming better informed about the makeup of the membership and the issues affecting equity and diversity in the legal profession and general society. Its work will inform the development of initiatives to reduce barriers to entering, practicing and remaining in the legal profession as well as the development of ongoing training to increase awareness of equity and diversity issues and competency in the membership and to better understand the public we serve.

This year the committee enhanced the demographic data collected from the membership and began a consultation process with various individuals regarding their personal experiences and knowledge of barriers faced by members of equity-seeking groups in the legal profession and the rest of society. It also developed a webpage that contained resources and information on educational opportunities focused on the subjects contained in the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada’s Call to Action Number 27.

The **Governance Committee** continued to oversee the self-evaluation process of the Benchers and all Bencher committees as well as the orientation of new Benchers. It continued to provide education to all Benchers to ensure they are functioning effectively and are striving for continual improvement as the governors of the LSS.

In February, the Governance Committee held a “blue-sky” session to discuss governance reforms that have been taking place in law societies across the country, and to consider whether changes to the LSS’s governance structure could improve its effectiveness and efficiency. In September a jointly-facilitated session with senior staff and Benchers focused on “Effective Practices of Successful Boards”. Due to these sessions, the LSS has implemented new strategies to improve effectiveness and the committee will continue to review the governance structure to determine what further improvements can be made.

The committee also held risk management sessions with senior staff and Benchers in June and a joint session was held to review priorities. The committee is now working on a risk management plan to allow the Benchers to monitor and mitigate risk to the organization.

As well, the committee is also responsible for monitoring performance of the LSS strategic plan and a strategic planning session will be held this year to help guide the association. There will also be a Benchers election in November and the Governance Committee will be developing materials for the membership about serving as a Bencher.

The **Legal Resources Department** expanded its scope to include a greater communications function including maintaining the website. A website redevelopment process began in 2017 and will be completed in 2018 to provide a more user-friendly experience. The department also maintains the award-winning blog, *Legal Sourcery*, which has become the main portal for legal information in the province with 285 posts and 66,770 hits in 2017.

Legal Resources Statistics



Professional Standards Referral

47 Referrals

23 Practitioners/Firms Referred to the New Solo/Small Firm Program

24 Complaint-based Reviews of Lawyer's Practice

The **Professional Standards Committee (PSC)** manages the Practice Advisor Program, which provides proactive assistance to members to improve their practice and prevent more serious problems. The program has been very well-received by the membership, especially in relation to the New Solo/Small Firm practice review.

The **Trust Safety Committee (TSC)** reviewed and updated Parts 13-16 of the *Rules*, which came into effect on January 1, 2018. The committee also began to review the Special Fund administration, which will continue into this year. Auditors initiated 60 audits in 2017 of which 20 audits are still underway in 2018. There are 40 new audits planned for 2018.

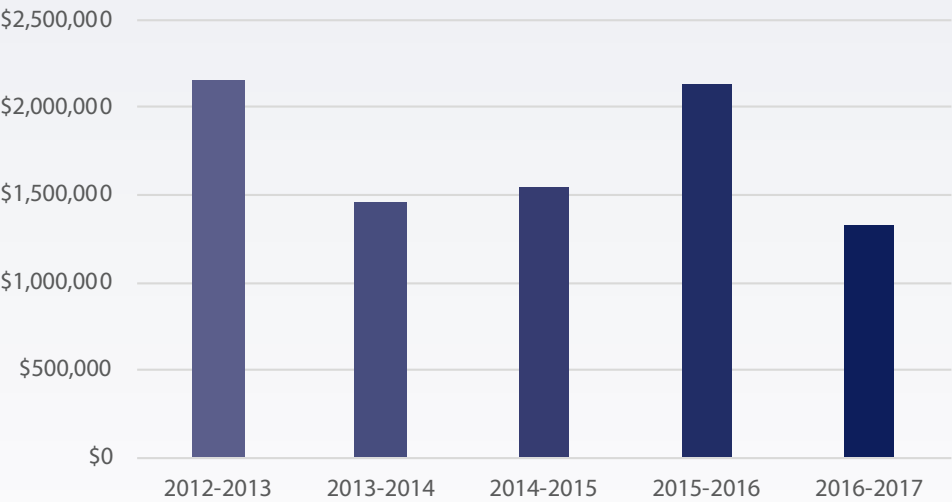
The Auditors also reviewed three complaints that resulted from year-end reviews and compliance audits that were opened in 2017 compared to six the previous year. Half of the firms with trust accounts were required to file an Accountant’s Report in 2017 compared with 47% in 2016. There were also no Special Fund claims paid out in 2017 compared to three claims totaling \$9,148 in 2016.

Private Practice Status

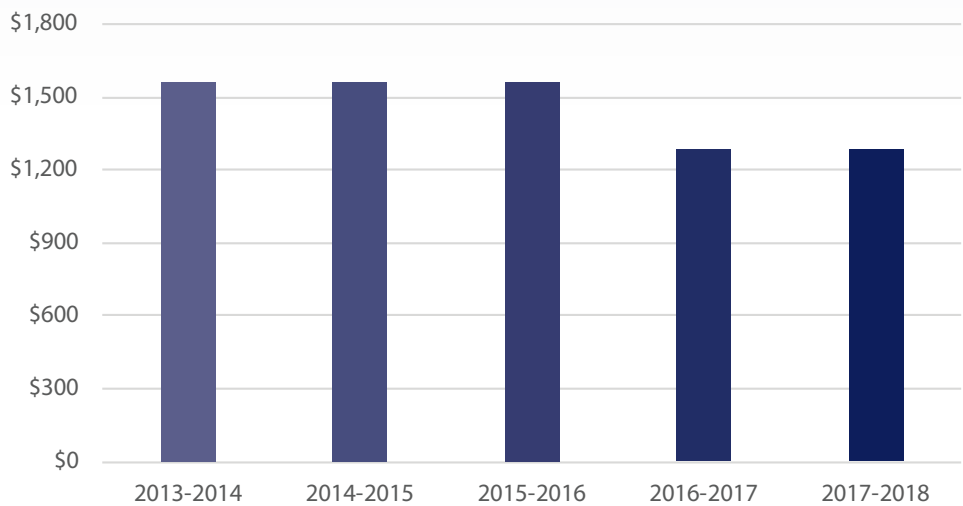


The **Saskatchewan Lawyers' Insurance Association (SLIA)** re-evaluated its investment portfolio to maximize returns. SLIA also created and approved a Surplus and Risk Management Policy to ensure that its risks are soundly managed. In the 2017-18 policy year approximately \$1.3 million of the surplus was utilized to benefit its members through levy credits which maintained levy stability and resulted in one of the lowest insurance levies in Canada.

Claims Paid Out



SLIA Levy – 5 Year Comparison



Goal 2: Improving capacity, **competence** and knowledge of the membership

The **Access to Legal Services Committee** has been working on initiatives that are rooted in the LSS’s responsibility to administer a regulatory system aimed at ensuring Saskatchewan consumers of legal services have access to a reliable supply of services from qualified professionals. The committee has consulted with stakeholders in developing appropriate approaches for its Innovating Regulation and Alternative Service Providers initiatives.

The **Admissions & Education Department** commenced a full review of the Continued Professional Development (CPD) policy and identified numerous items for consideration. The **A&E Committee** reviewed information gathered through a member survey and a recent scan of other Canadian jurisdictions, and engaged in an analysis of each item. It approved various revisions to the policy effective January 1, 2018, which completed the first stage of the CPD review. The **A&E Department** also developed and delivered numerous CPD seminars/webinars in furtherance of the Calls to Action contained within the report of Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission. As well, it developed further resource materials for articling principals, including a training webinar.

The **A&E Committee** also approved revisions to the CPLED Program Accommodation Policy to allow for accommodation requests based on the enumerated grounds in the *Saskatchewan Human Rights Code*, and continued to support the CPLED program redevelopment initiative.

The **Conduct Investigation Committee** Conduct Review Committee works with a member to examine why certain conduct concerns and undesirable behaviours may have arisen, and assists the member to examine how behaviours and practices can be changed to prevent similar circumstances from arising in the future.

The **Discipline Executive Committee** directed supplemental training sessions for the Conduct Investigation Committee and for all potential Hearing Committee members (both Benchers and Non-Benchers volunteers). This initiative helped ensure the competence of the members of these groups in the discipline process as well as ensuring the satisfaction of the National Discipline Standards related to ongoing training.

The **Ethics Committee** considers complaint matters and Requests for Ruling from the membership, wherein ethical “grey areas” have arisen. The committee considers and discusses the ethical issues at play and determines how to apply the provisions of the *Code of Professional Conduct* to provide guidance to the members involved in that specific matter. The committee then creates an anonymized ruling that contains a summary of the factual information and analysis of the applicable *Code* section(s) for providing education and guidance to members should they encounter similar issues.

The Ethics Committee’s Real Estate Sub-Committee continued to examine the language used in the Law Society’s Uniform Trust Conditions (UTC) letter. The UTC letter is used by lawyers in nearly every real estate transaction that takes place in the province and had not been examined or updated for some time. After encountering several issues through complaints and Request for Ruling considerations, the committee determined that it was in the interest of both the public and the membership to have a group of real estate practitioners examine the terms of the UTC letter and determine what revisions were needed to ensure they remain up-to-date, relevant and clear for the membership in efficiently and safely facilitating real estate transactions.

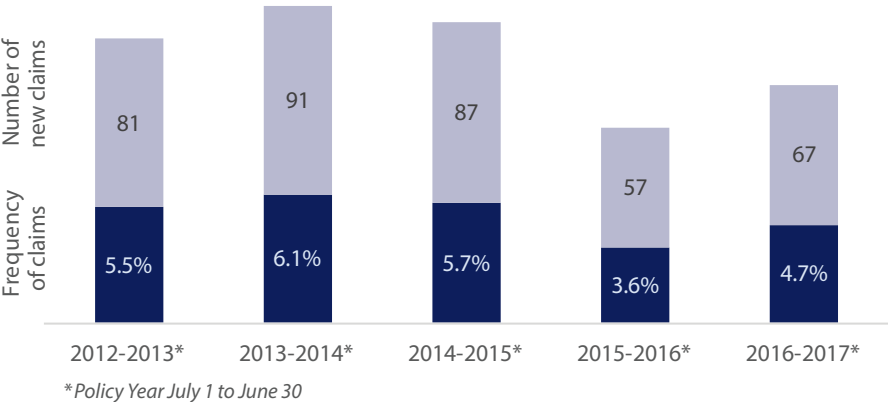
The **Legal Resources Department** conducted a review and in-person consultations with members to determine if the legal resource needs of members were being met. The department also launched the Primo cataloguing system to allow members and the public to better search its extensive resource collection. As well, the department provided numerous training opportunities to members including webinars, in-person presentations, and Lunch and Learn personalized training.

The **Professional Standards Committee’s** primary focus is on ensuring and assisting in the improvement of competence among the membership with an overarching goal of addressing competence and practice-related issues early, to protect the members’ clients, and prevent more serious issues in the future. The Information Technology Working Group, established by PSC, issued its paper *Digital Law Practice – Practice Tips* for the guidance of the membership in the implementation of a “paperless” or digital law practices. A follow-up webinar was scheduled for the new year.

The **Auditors** sent nine fraud alerts to members this year compared to four in 2016.

SLIA provided regular communications to the members regarding notice of potential fraud issues, mental health resources, practice tips and availability of the free and confidential assistance program offered through Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers. The group also targeted a loss prevention initiative to focus on areas of law which result in the majority of claims being made. Practice resources were regularly provided to the members related to the areas of missed limitation periods and real estate law. Through these and other loss prevention initiatives, SLIA strives to reduce the frequency of claims.

Frequency of Insurance Reports
Number of new claims divided by number of insured lawyers



Goal 3: Improving **access** to legal services

The **Access to Legal Services Committee** and the Ministry of Justice are examining allowing alternative service providers to supply certain legal services. In addition to considerations about consumer choice and effective legal regulation, this initiative is being driven by an interest in providing greater access to legal services for the public. A Legal Services Task Team consisting of lawyers, public members, and individuals working in or alongside the justice system was created to provide recommendations to the Ministry and the LSS. The Task Team has been considering different ways for expanding the way legal services are provided and its recommendations are expected this summer. These recommendations will be reviewed by the Benchers and the Minister.

The **Legal Resources Department** is one of the founding partners of the Saskatchewan Access to Legal Information Project (SALI) along with PLEA, the University of Saskatchewan, and the various public library systems throughout the province. The SALI project made progress this year on creating a plan to increase access to legal information for Saskatchewan residents. Legal Resources staff also participated in several public outreach/education events including free Legal Resource Fairs that took place in Regina and Saskatoon.

The **Ethics Committee** provided guidance to the membership on using technology to provide legal advice and to allow, in certain specific circumstances, signatures via technology. This use of technology may assist clients who live in remote areas to have greater access to legal services and can support the ability of members to continue to practice in more remote areas.

The **Professional Standards Committee** continues to oversee the Locum Registry program, which was established with a focus on assisting members in smaller practices and rural areas to sustain their practices and continue to service locations in the province with more limited access to legal services.

STANDING COMMITTEES

ADMISSIONS AND EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Admissions and Education Committee assists the Benchers in upholding the standards for admission to the Society by ensuring that only those individuals who are qualified are admitted and continue as members of the Society.

Committee Members

Sean Sinclair, Chair
Jay Watson, Vice-Chair
Jeffrey Baldwin
Monte Gorchinski
Heather Hodgson
Ronald Parchomchuk
Gerald Tegart, Q.C.

Non-Bencher Members

Andrea Johnston
Christine Johnston
Kiran Mand

CONDUCT INVESTIGATION COMMITTEE

Conduct Investigation Committee (CIC) members, generally in groups of two, consider complaint matters referred to them by Complaints Counsel, and investigate any conduct of a member that may constitute conduct unbecoming. In the course of their investigation, CIC members may make or authorize whatever inquiries and investigations it considers desirable, and may investigate any other matter that comes to its attention that could potentially constitute conduct unbecoming. At the conclusion of their investigation, the committee may invite the member to meet with a Conduct Review Committee to discuss their conduct, or it may direct the Chair of the Discipline Committee to appoint a Hearing Committee to hear and determine charges of conduct unbecoming. The CIC also has the option of referring the matter to the Ethics Committee or the Professional Standards Committee, or it can determine that no further action is required.

A CIC may order an interim suspension, with or without notice to the member, if it deems it to be in the public interest to do so. In these instances, the CIC may appoint a trustee to assume responsibility for a suspended member's practice, to ensure protection of the clients' interests, and continuation of their legal matters.

Committee Members

Jeffrey Baldwin, Chair
Leslie Belloc-Pinder
David Bishop
Glenn Hepp
Foluke Laosebikan, Ph.D.
John McIntosh, Q.C.
Ronni Nordal
Ian Wagner
Jay Watson

Non-Bencher Members

Evert Van Olst, Q.C.
Gregory Walen, Q.C.

DISCIPLINE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Discipline Executive Committee (DEC) develops policies to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and fairness of LSS's investigation and disciplinary proceedings, and recommends amendments to the *Rules*, *Code*, and the *Act* which pertain to disciplinary proceedings of the LSS. The DEC is also responsible for overseeing initial and ongoing training for Benchers and Non-Benchers members of the CIC and Hearing Committee.

Committee Members

Brenda Hildebrandt, Q.C., Chair
Jeffrey Baldwin, Vice-Chair
Monte Gorchinski, Vice-Chair
Martin Phillipson, Vice-Chair
Sean Sinclair, Vice-Chair
Gerald Tegart, Q.C., Vice-Chair
Jay Watson, Vice-Chair

Non-Benchers Members

Timothy Huber
Jenna Kraushaar
Stacey McPeck
Valerie Payne
Donna Sigmeth, Q.C.

ETHICS COMMITTEE

The Ethics Committee meets several times during the year to review matters of ethical concern which originate through either a complaint or a voluntary Request for Ruling by members. The committee applies the provisions of the *Code of Professional Conduct* to the facts at hand and provides helpful interpretation of specific *Code* sections. Following its consideration of the issues in each matter, the committee issues Ethics Rulings ("Lawyer X" Rulings) to help guide members. The committee is also responsible for making recommendations to the Benchers respecting professional ethics and the development of, and revisions to, the *Code of Professional Conduct*.

Committee Members

Ronald Parchomchuk, Chair
Leslie Belloc-Pinder, Vice-Chair
Judy McCuskee
John McIntosh, Q.C.
Scott Moffat
David Rusnak, Q.C.

Non-Benchers Members

Jenna Kraushaar
Stacey McPeck
Valerie Payne
Donna Sigmeth, Q.C.

EQUITY AND DIVERSITY COMMITTEE

The Equity and Diversity Committee was re-established in 2017 to assist the Benchers by:

- Monitoring developments and providing advice on issues affecting equity and diversity in the legal profession;
- Exploring and recommending actions and/or initiatives to be taken with respect to equity and diversity within the legal profession; and
- Making recommendations for and supporting ongoing education and awareness training for members of the legal profession relating to equity and diversity.

Committee Members

Ronni Nordal, Chair
Heather Hodgson, Vice-Chair
David Bishop
David Chow
Brenda Hildebrandt, Q.C.

Non-Benchers Members

Barbra Bailey
Andrea Johnston
Kara-Dawn Jordan

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee provides direction and oversight for the strategic and operational planning of the Law Society and develops agendas for Benchers meetings to ensure that the Benchers exercise their oversight, regulatory and policy development responsibilities.

Committee Members

Erin Kleisinger, Q.C. President
Craig Zawada, Q.C. Vice President
Perry Erhardt, Q.C. Past-President

GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Governance Committee oversees the overall governance and management of policy of the LSS to ensure that the Benchers fulfill their legal, ethical and functional responsibilities. This includes:

- Developing, reviewing and implementing governance policies and procedures, and monitoring compliance;
- Overseeing Bencher elections and appointments;
- Directing Bencher orientation and ongoing training; and
- Conducting Bencher performance evaluations.

Committee Members

David Chow, Chair
David Bishop, Vice-Chair
Perry Erhardt, Q.C.
Glenn Hepp
Heather Hodgson
Ronald Parchomchuk

Non-Bencher Members

Barbra Bailey
Timothy Brown, Q.C.

LEGAL RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The Legal Resources Committee assists the Benchers of the Law Society of Saskatchewan to create a plan and strategic direction for the delivery of legal information in Saskatchewan.

Committee Members

Scott Moffat, Chair
Leslie Belloc-Pinder
Martin Phillipson
Ian Wagner

Non-Bencher Members

Melanie Hodges Neufeld

PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE

The Professional Standards Committee (PSC) reviews practice-related trends and issues which arise as a result of complaints and practice advisor reviews. PSC creates policies and best practices to proactively assist the membership to prevent complaints and insurance claims. One of the objectives in undertaking these activities is to fulfill the Law Society's goal of protecting clients and the public. PSC implements proactive initiatives to help members maintain good practice management and competence standards. It recommends necessary amendments to the rules relating to professional standards for practice management and competency, for approval by the Benchers.

Individually or in small groups, members of PSC consider complaint matters referred to them by Complaints Counsel, and decide whether to appoint a practice advisor to meet with the member and review his or her practice. The PSC member/member(s) assigned to the file reviews/approves the practice advisor's report and recommendations. They may also impose practice conditions or other remedial action on members following an investigation of a complaint, where appropriate.

PSC is also responsible for overseeing the New Solo/Small Firm Program, which offers, free of charge, the assistance of the practice advisors to members who are in the early stages of a new solo or small firm practice. The goal is to assist these members with establishing best practices and appropriate systems in their practices, to assist them with growing their practices, and preventing future problems.

Committee Members

David Rusnak, Q.C., Chair
Glenn Hepp, Vice-Chair
Foluke Laosebikan, Ph.D., Vice-Chair
Judy McCuskee, Vice-Chair
Scott Moffat, Vice-Chair
Ronni Nordal, Vice-Chair

Non-Bencher Members

Jenna Kraushaar
Stacey McPeck
Valerie Payne
Donna Sigmeth, Q.C.

SLIA/INSURANCE COMMITTEE

Saskatchewan Lawyers' Insurance Association Inc. (SLIA) is a non-profit corporation and a wholly-owned subsidiary of the LSS. SLIA provides mandatory errors and omissions insurance to the members of the Law Society of Saskatchewan pursuant to *The Legal Professions Act, 1990*.

SLIA is a member of the Canadian Lawyers Insurance Association (CLIA). CLIA is a reciprocal insurance exchange, which offers mandatory liability insurance to lawyers licenced by a law society and a voluntary excess insurance program. The program is run by in-house counsel and a claims coordinator, who report to a Board of directors composed of both Benchers and Non-Benchers members.

By establishing local control of files within the limits of the group deductible, lawyers insured through SLIA are assured that:

- Their files are being both adjudicated and litigated by local counsel;
- Their interests are being represented as stakeholders on the advisory Board of their insurer; and
- Profits following any given claims years are retained locally for their benefit.

Committee Members

Perry Erhardt, Q.C., Chair
Judy McCuskee, Vice-Chair
Sean Sinclair

Non-Benchers Members

Brad D. Hunter, Q.C.
Patrick Kelly, Q.C.
David McCashin
Michael Milani, Q.C.
Thomas Schonhoffer, Q.C.

PROJECT COMMITTEES

ACCESS TO LEGAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

The Access to Legal Services Committee considers ways to enhance access to legal services for Saskatchewan consumers.

Committee Members

Gerald Tegart, Q.C., Chair
Brenda Hildebrandt, Q.C., Vice-Chair
David Chow
Heather Hodgson
Foluke Laosebikan, Ph.D
Martin Phillipson
Ian Wagner

Non-Bencher Members

Barbra Bailey
Timothy Brown, Q.C.
Kara-Dawn Jordan

TRUST SAFETY COMMITTEE

The Trust Safety Committee was established as an ad hoc committee to review and make recommendations regarding rules and practices governing trust accounts, the Special Fund and related matters.

Committee Members

Monte Gorchinski, Chair
John McIntosh, Q.C., Vice-Chair
Ronni Nordal
Craig Zawada, Q.C.

Non-Bencher Members

John Allen, CPA, CA
Pamela Harmon, CPA, CA
Stephanie Kievits, CPA, CA

SPECIAL THANKS

Special thanks for all of our volunteers who donated their time and skills this year to assist the people of Saskatchewan.

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