

# 2020 ANNUAL REPORT





### Core Purpose

The Law Society of Saskatchewan regulates the practice of law in the public interest.

### Mission Statement

The Law Society serves the public interest and advances the administration of justice by regulating the competence and integrity of the practice of law in a flexible and innovative manner, ensuring the independence of the legal profession, and promoting access to justice.

### Values

- **Integrity** – the Law Society acts honestly and ethically.
- **Transparency** – the Law Society provides open and timely communication and process and makes informed decisions.
- **Fairness** – the Law Society treats all people fairly, respectfully and consistently through impartial application of policies, procedures and practices.
- **Independence** – the Law Society is an autonomous regulator, maintaining independence from government, which is fundamental to upholding the rule of law
- **Inclusivity** – the Law Society promotes and supports inclusion, equity and diversity within its leadership and staff, and amongst Saskatchewan firms, lawyers, other legal service providers and the public.
- **Access** – the Law Society promotes access to legal services through proportionate regulation and collaboration with stakeholders
- **Effectiveness** – the Law Society is innovative, proactive and flexible in its approach to regulation, in order to achieve efficient and appropriate outcomes.
- **Innovation** – the Law Society is aware of significant shifts and changes in the society in which it operates and is open to lead and respond to such changes to maintain relevance in the regulation of the practice of law.

# President's Message

2020 certainly wasn't the year we expected. The pandemic caused upheaval in our personal and work lives and in our families and communities. We spent a good part of the year finding ways to cope with the changes COVID-19 required us to make and, of course, we're still coping. We persevered, nonetheless, and I think most of us found some lasting good came out of this unwelcome experience....

- Gerald Tegart, Q.C.



## **2020 Annual Report – President’s Message**

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Along the way, we discovered a level of resilience, creativity and capacity to adapt that surprised many of us. The Benchers and other volunteers, and particularly the Law Society staff, made early adjustments in March and April to ensure the work of the Law Society proceeded without interruption.

From the Benchers’ perspective, the most significant change was our inability to gather in-person for Convocations and committee meetings. However, with the tremendous support we count on from the staff, we were able to quickly develop the skills and marshal the technology required to conduct our business virtually. While this presented challenges at times, we learned we could not just survive, but could create efficiencies and improve board governance. We got better at this as we did it more, and it seems unlikely we’ll ever return entirely to our old way of doing board business.

A quick mention of a couple of the Law Society’s initiatives that we advanced in 2020. We continue to work towards the implementation of the recommendations of the Legal Services Task Team that would see persons other than lawyers provide limited legal services to a greater extent than currently allowed. This initiative is largely in the hands of the Law Society staff at this stage, but with the participation and oversight of the Future of Legal Services Committee and the additional periodic oversight of the Benchers as a whole.

Equity and diversity continue to be values of importance to the Law Society. One example of this is the ongoing work of the Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Group, which was formed in 2019 as a means to gain advice from Indigenous members of the legal community on the Law Society’s response to Call to Action 27 from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which indirectly calls on law societies to ensure lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training. The advisory group also provides advice generally on issues within the mandate of the Law Society affecting Indigenous people in Saskatchewan.



Benchers devote a great deal of volunteer time to the work of the Law Society, but one meaningful compensation for this is the opportunity to work with a lot of wonderful people. I am grateful to all of these people for their commitment and their many contributions.

I'm grateful to Tim Brown and the staff at the Law Society for all of the support they gave me in my role as president. The past year demonstrated in a new way that we have an exceptionally dedicated and talented administration.

I also want to thank the many members of the legal community who support the work of the Law Society as volunteers.

Finally, I am grateful to my fellow Benchers, past and present. The work of the Benchers is often complex and challenging. Like all good boards, we bring a diversity of perspectives to the board table along with a commitment to work together to carry out the Law Society's mandate, always in the public interest. It's been a privilege to work with such fine individuals and I'm proud to have served as the Law Society president.

Gerald Tegart, Q.C.

# Executive Director's Message

2020 was a year of immense change for the Law Society, the profession and the institutions within society which serve the public and the administration of justice.

Following the Government's declaration of a state of emergency on March 18, we began the grand, unprecedented and collective experiment of working, meeting and delivering services remotely in a system designed, built and, in many cases, required to occur in-person. At the risk of potentially stating the obvious, finding new ways forward given the imperatives of social distancing was no insignificant challenge for the Law Society...

- Tim Brown, Q.C.



## Law Society of Saskatchewan

### **2020 Annual Report – Executive Director’s Message**

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Like virtually every other organization, the Society’s initial aspirations in the first days of the pandemic were modest. We sought to gather our resources, determine what still functioned and put the remaining pieces together in new ways to deliver core services and programming without interruption and hopefully without unreasonable delay.

Once our basic functions were confidently in hand, our focus very quickly shifted to tackling barriers to the remote delivery of legal services. We provided free resources and education to the profession about how to transition to remote practice. Our Practice Advisors, who are always available on a free and confidential basis to our members, assisted greatly in these efforts. So did the Firms’ Designated Representatives (DR’s) who became the conduit for sharing communications and resources from the Law Society with their colleagues. The DR’s were also instrumental in providing valuable insights back, which was (and continues to be) of immense assistance to us in determining priorities.

By March 20, we had established an arrangement with the Registrar of Titles and the Ministry of Justice to enact temporary emergency regulations for the remote signing of most documents, including Land titles transactions and Powers of Attorney, but excluding Wills. These regulations referenced “Practice Directives” issued by the Law Society intended to specify the procedure to be followed. Without having the power yet to issue such directives, the Benchers met on Sunday, March 22 at an emergency meeting, to enact Rule 1143 allowing the Executive Committee a limited capacity to do so.

The first of these directives, Practice Directive #1, was ultimately issued on March 26 making Saskatchewan the first province in the country to provide through legislation the remote signing of documents. Practice Directive #3 completed the remote signing suite by enabling the remote signing of Wills as an emergency measure. Both of those regulations were made permanent on August 7, 2020, increasing access to justice and greatly increasing the efficiency of many legal processes for lawyers and the public. Practice Directive #2, which permitted lawyers to complete wire transfers through their financial institution’s online wire payment services, was enacted on April 16.



Placed in historical context, for these changes to have occurred in such a short timeframe is simply astonishing. It is a testament to the solid and nimble working relationship that we share with the Government, but also the fact that positive changes, which in the “before times” would have taken years, were now occurring within weeks.

As hard as it has been for individuals, businesses and institutions, the pandemic has been an accelerant for progress, not only for the Law Society, but for many, if not most other organizations and institutions. Some potential reasons for this might include:

- Necessity drove invention;
- Urgency forced us to focus on things of value;
- The removal of traditional barriers between justice stakeholders (business cycles, differences in mandate, leadership of the day, strategic differences) quickly gave way to recognition of our interdependence and our collective responsibility for affecting innovation and change;
- The true honour and commitment of the rank and file within organizations to the greater good - in short, the wholesale commitment to mission and professionalism of staff across the justice sector; and
- Need humbled us into accepting imperfect solutions and the potential for mistakes, so long as things were moving in the right direction.

Understanding the many future challenges we may face in the regulation of the profession, my hope is that we will remember these lessons in the “after times” as well.

By the end of 2020, an accounting of what was achieved throughout the organization demonstrated that as a Society we far surpassed the cautious “essentials-only” goals identified at the beginning of the pandemic and perhaps even what we might have achieved during a normal year. The snapshot of our progress and accomplishments as an organization in 2020 are proudly presented in this Annual Report.

I owe a very significant debt of gratitude to my colleagues on the Staff and the Board for their ingenuity, commitment, and hard work. A special word of thanks goes to Gerald Tegart, Q.C., Foluke Laosebikan, Ph.D and Leslie Belloc-Pinder, Q.C. for their steady hands, their collective wisdom and their friendship throughout. If individuals can ever be the absolute right people for a given time, my colleagues on the Executive Committee were those people for us.

Though we are not entirely “out of the woods” at the time of writing, optimism abounds. Vaccination efforts are rolling out and I think we can all see some light at the end of what has been a very long and, at times, a very dark tunnel. So, with utmost sincerity, I hope this finds you well.

Thank you, as always, for your time. And thank you for everything you have done and overcome through these challenging times.

Timothy J. Brown, Q.C.

## Strategic Directions



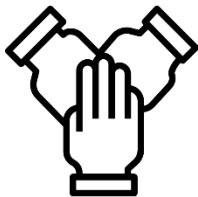
Expanded Approach to **Competency**



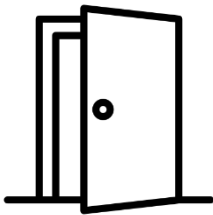
Trusted and Transparent **Regulation**



**Innovative and Flexible Leader** of an Engaged and Forward-Thinking Membership



Increased **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion** in the Law Society and Legal Service Provision



Increased **Access** to Legal Services



Increased Focus on Member **Wellness**

## Expanded Approach to Competency

The Law Society applies a broad and evolving concept of competency and supports Saskatchewan firms, lawyers and legal service providers in acquiring and maintaining those competencies to provide innovative, efficient, quality legal services.



1. Increase interest in and support for the new competencies members will require to deliver innovative, efficient and effective legal services.
2. Increase the support (both proactive and reactive) given to members and other legal service providers to ensure competent and ethical legal services in an evolving legal landscape.
3. Increase the cultural competency of the Law Society and its membership.
4. Modernize the models and strategies used to deliver effective competency programming.

## Trusted and Transparent Regulation

The Law Society of Saskatchewan is a trusted regulator of the practice of law because:

- a) it makes timely, fair and informed decisions by consistent application of policy; and
- b) its stakeholders have a clear understanding of its mandate, core functions and strategic plan.



1. Increase awareness of the role the Law Society plays in society and key issues relevant to the delivery of legal services in Saskatchewan, thereby increasing confidence in and positive perception of the Law Society amongst all stakeholders.
2. Increase and diversify communication from the Law Society to the membership and dialogue with the membership about initiatives, regulatory developments and other relevant information, including the basis for decisions affecting regulation.
3. Increase timeliness of all processes, decisions and communications.
4. Increase the dialogue between the Law Society and its stakeholders and between the Law Society and the media.
5. Increase reliance on data to improve defensibility of processes and decisions.

## Innovative and Flexible Leader of an Engaged and Forward-Thinking Membership

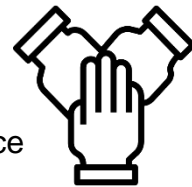
Through innovative and flexible regulation, the Law Society of Saskatchewan leads an engaged membership that is adaptive to change and provides innovative and effective legal services to the public.



1. Increase the Law Society's ability to effectively and efficiently adapt to changes relevant to the delivery of legal services in Saskatchewan and to effectively communicate those changes to stakeholders.
2. Increase the profession's readiness and openness to evolve according to developments in globalization, technology and regulation.
3. Increase proactive measures taken to prevent legal service issues and improve legal service delivery by Saskatchewan firms, lawyers and legal service providers.
4. Reduce barriers to experimentation and allocate resources for pilot projects to test new regulatory and practice initiatives.
5. Enhance the relationship between the Law Society and Saskatchewan firms, lawyers and legal service providers.

## Increased Equity, Diversity and Inclusion in the Law Society and Legal Service Provision

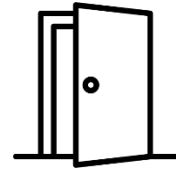
The Law Society of Saskatchewan is led by a diverse staff and Board who promote and support diversity, inclusiveness and cultural competence amongst all Saskatchewan firms, lawyers and legal service providers.



1. Evolve the composition of the Law Society Board and staff to reflect the diversity of experience and perspective of the public we serve.
2. Increase the cultural competency of the Law Society Board and staff, as well as lawyers and other legal service providers.
3. Reduce barriers to entry, advancement and retention in the legal profession faced by equity seeking groups.
4. Increase the commitment to equity, diversity and inclusion in Law Society policies and procedures.

## Increased Access to Legal Services

The Law Society demonstrates a commitment to improving access to legal services in its regulatory structure, policies and initiatives and supports the provision of accessible legal services by Saskatchewan firms, lawyers, legal service providers and other legal organizations.



1. Reduce barriers to access to legal services caused by the Law Society's regulatory framework.
2. Increase support to Saskatchewan firms, legal organizations, lawyers and legal service providers to diversify the service delivery methods used to provide legal services to underserved segments of the public.
3. Increase collaboration with stakeholders to develop novel ways to address unmet legal needs.

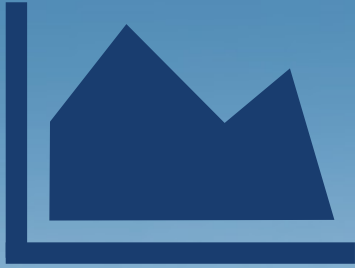
## Increased Focus on Member Wellness

The Law Society protects the public by promoting a culture of wellness in the profession through appropriate education, member resources and regulation.

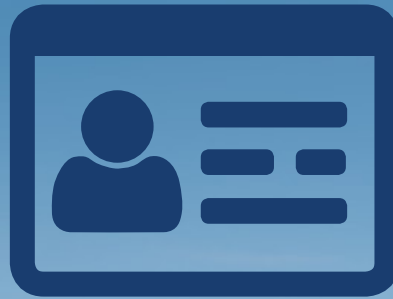


1. Increase awareness and understanding of mental health illnesses, addictions, and other health issues with a view to mitigating risk to the public the profession serves.
2. Reduce the stigma associated with mental health illnesses, addictions, and other health issues to encourage lawyers to seek appropriate supports.
3. Provide regulatory options to address mental health illnesses, addictions, and other health issues experienced by the members in a manner that mitigates risk a but avoids unduly stigmatizing or punishing members for health-related issues.

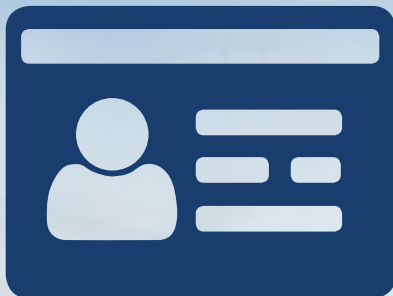
# Year In Review



Website Page Views  
**1 million+**



Active Lawyers  
**1,982**



Inactive Lawyers  
**464**



Reference Questions  
**1,180**



Law Society  
of Saskatchewan

# 2020 Annual Report

**Year in Review**

## Benchers and Staff

### Executive

- Gerald Tegart, Q.C., **President**
- Foluke Laosebikan, Ph.D, **Vice-President**
- Leslie Belloc-Pinder, Q.C., **Past President**
- Tim Brown, Q.C., **Executive Director**

### Benchers

Andrea Argue

Jeff Baldwin

Jill Drennan

Monte Gorchinski

Cara Haaf (appointed to the Queen's Bench Court November 19, 2000)

Glenn Hepp

Suzanne Jeanson

Nolan Kondratoff

James Korpan, Q.C.

Lynda Kushnir Pekar

William Lane

Kaitlynn McArthur

Scott Moffat

John Morrall

James Morrison, Q.C.

Barbara Mysko

Crystal Norbeck

Martin Phillipson

Ian Wagner

Craig Zawada, Q.C.

### Professional Staff

Tim Brown, Q.C.

**Executive Director**

Ken Fox

**Reference Librarian**

**Co-Director of Legal Resources (from Aug 2020)**

Jakaeden Frizzell

**CPD Program Coordinator (to Sept 2020)**

**Business Development Specialist (from Oct 2020)**

Don Hansen, FCPA, FCA

**Acting Senior Auditor**

Pamela Harmon, CPA, CA  
**Co-Director, Trust Safety & Finance**

Timothy Huber  
**Deputy Executive Director - General Counsel**

Laurie Johnson  
**Director of Human Resources**

Andrea Johnston  
**Director of Admissions & Education**

Christine Johnston  
**Admissions & Education Counsel (from May 2020)**

Kara-Dawn Jordan  
**Director of Strategy & Governance**

Stephanie Kievits, CPA, CA  
**Co-Director of Trust Safety**

Alan Kilpatrick  
**Reference Librarian**  
**Co-Director of Legal Resources (from Aug 2020)**

Pam Kovacs  
**Senior Policy Counsel (from Dec 2020)**

Jenna Bailey  
**Professional Responsibility Counsel**

Jackie Lane  
**Professional Responsibility Counsel (from October 2020)**

Kiran Mand  
**Admissions & Education Counsel**

Jody Martin  
**Director of Regulation**

Stacey McPeck  
**Professional Responsibility Counsel**

Melanie Hodges Neufeld  
**Director of Legal Resources, Access & Outreach (to July 2020)**

Valerie Payne  
**Director of Professional Responsibility**

Julie Sobowale  
**Director of Communications**

Paul Westgate  
**Project Director**

Mary Ellen Wellsch, Q.C.  
**Legislative Policy Consultant (to January 2020)**

# At A Glance



Newly Enrolled Lawyers  
**85**



Total Lawyers  
**2,446**



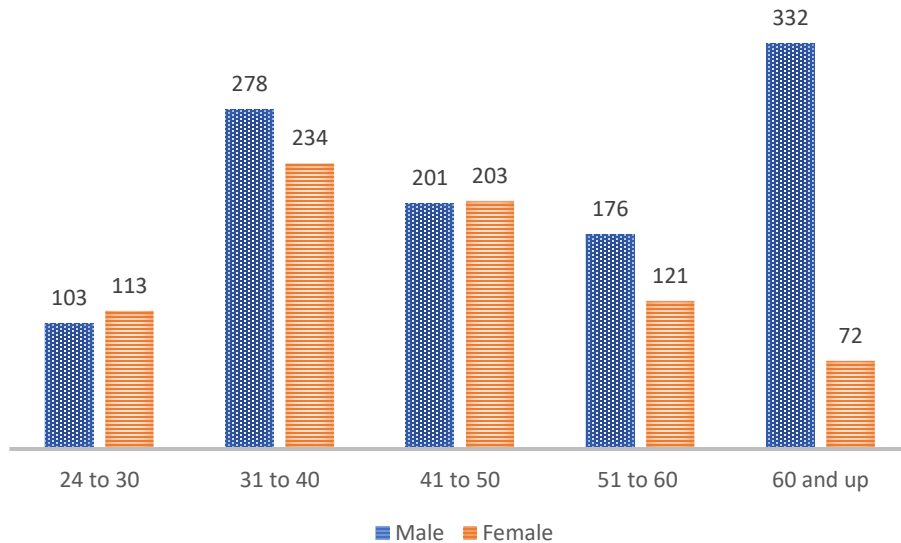
Complaints Referred to CIC\*  
**21**

# Membership

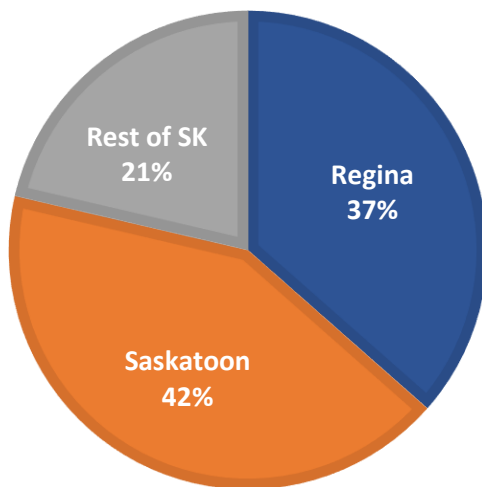
In 2020, the Law Society of Saskatchewan was the regulator of **1,982** active practicing lawyers and **464** inactive members in Saskatchewan and across the country. For more information on our membership categories, please see our [Membership Services Index](#).

## Practicing Lawyers Living in Saskatchewan by Age and Gender

*Note: Data does not include students-at-law*



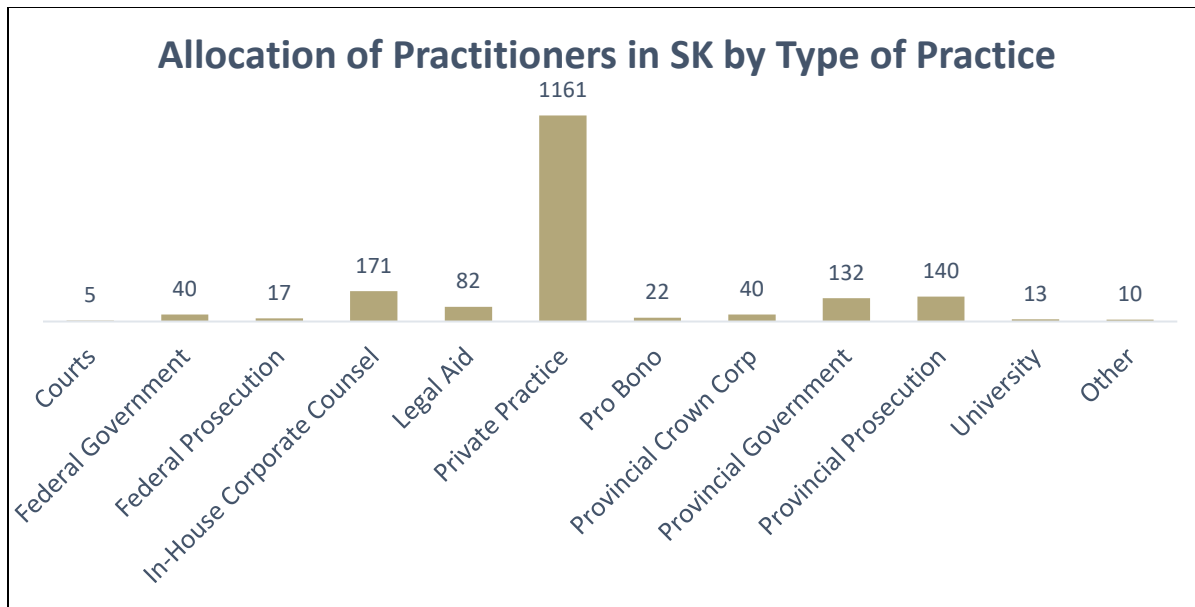
## Geographic Location of Practicing Lawyers



## Change in Status

	Male	Female
Admitted from student-at-law status	40	45
Transfer Lawyers	16	17
Deaths	7	0
Judicial Appointments	2	5

*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.*



Number of Practitioners Per Firm (Private Practice Only)	Number of Firms	Number of Practitioners
1	182	182
2	57	114
3	34	102
4	16	64
5	13	65
6	6	36
7	4	28
9	2	18
10	4	40
11	2	22
13	1	13
14	1	14
15	1	15
16	1	16
17	1	17
19	1	19
20	1	20
21	1	21
22	1	22
26	1	26
28	1	28
31	1	31
37	1	37
77	1	77
88	1	88
89	1	89
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>336</b>	<b>1204</b>

*2020 demographic data information based on responses from 1,641 Active Members (84%) and 342 Active Members (74%)*

**Gender**

- 52.45% identified as male
- 40.85% identified as female
- 0.15% indicated that they identify in another way
- 6.65% replied by indicating their choice not to answer the question

**Aboriginal/Indigenous**

- 7.06% identified as Aboriginal/Indigenous (including Inuit, Metis, First Nations)
- 10.99% replied by indicating their choice not to answer the question

**Visible/Ethnic Minority**

- 7.82% self-identified as being a visible/ethnic minority
- 10.89% replied by indicating their choice not to answer the question

**LGBT**

- 3.68% identified as being lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender
- 11.85% replied by indicating their choice not to answer the question

**Disability**

- 1.97% identified as having a physical disability
- 4.59% identified as having a mental health disability
- 1.51% identified as having a disability of another kind
- 14.83% replied by choosing not to answer the question

**Language**

- 89.44% indicated that English is their first language
- 0.61% indicated that French is their first language
- 0.91% identified both English and French as first languages
- 2.02% identified a language other than English and French as their first language
- 7.01% indicated their choice not to answer the question.

## Complaints and Discipline

544 contacts to  
Professional  
Responsibility

- 3 member requests for Ruling from the Ethics Committee
- 5 reports of potential unauthorized practice
- 34 New Solo/Small Firm Practice Reviews
- 113 Complaints filed by the public, courts, and/or members
- 204 Informal Ethics Opinions requested by members
- 183 contacts remained as potential complaint matters

113 Complaints  
Filed

- 2 were referred to Ethics Committee
- 11 were referred to Conduct Investigation Committee (CIC)
- 6 were dealt with by Formal Caution
- 47 were dismissed as requiring “no further action” by Professional Responsibility Counsel
- 47 remain under investigation

21 Complaints  
considered by  
Conduct  
Investigation  
Committee

(10 files carried over  
from 2019)

- 13 matters were directed to a Conduct Review Committee
- 5 matters were referred to a Hearing Panel to hear charges of “conduct unbecoming a lawyer”
- 1 matter was addressed by Formal Caution
- 1 matter resulted in the voluntary practice cessation by the member
- 1 matter was sent back for further investigation and remains under consideration

## Legal Resources

Our innovative information services and resources advance the Law Society's Strategic Plan, support our members and their competency, and increase access to legal information for all throughout the province.



Case Digests authored/sent to CanLII: **498**

[Case Mail](#) views on website: **2,727**

## Reference Questions



Total reference questions answered: **1,180**  
(Academic, Courts, Rural members, Inmates, Libraries, Out of province, Public, Regina members, Saskatoon members, Law Society staff)

Members questions: **735** (Law Society staff, Regina, Rural, Saskatoon)

Public questions: **268** *Low due to the Covid-19 closure of our physical spaces.*

### **Questions Answered by Area of Law**

<i>Litigation - General</i>	234
<i>No Category Listed</i>	234
<i>Criminal Law</i>	166
<i>Family - Divorce/Custody/Access</i>	72
<i>Administrative/Boards/Tribunals</i>	36
<i>Employment/Labour Law</i>	32
<i>Litigation - Personal Injury</i>	31
<i>Wills &amp; Estates - Estate Admin</i>	31
<i>Wills &amp; Estates - Wills Preparation</i>	28
<i>Corporate - Contracts/Leases</i>	20

### **Questions Answered by Type of Question**

<i>Textbook</i>	371
<i>Quick reference</i>	216
<i>Case locate/note-up</i>	134
<i>Referral</i>	122
<i>Research</i>	110
<i>Instruction</i>	68
<i>Legislation (historical)</i>	53
<i>Form/precedent</i>	33
<i>Legislation (quick)</i>	32
<i>Article</i>	26

### **Questions Answered by Initial Mode of Contact**

<i>Email</i>	678
<i>Phone</i>	387
<i>In person (low due to Covid-19)</i>	110
<i>Chat</i>	32
<i>Fax</i>	2

## Communications

Last year we surpassed more than **1 million** [page views](#) for our website for the first time. The increased traffic is likely due to our new website design and improved functionality.

Top 10 Pages on Law Society Website		Page Views
1	<a href="#">Member Resource Section</a>	135,193
2	<a href="#">Career and Volunteer Opportunities</a>	77,926
3	<a href="#">Queen's Bench Forms</a>	39,288
4	<a href="#">Finding a Lawyer</a>	20,209
5	<a href="#">Legal Resources Library</a>	15,432
6	<a href="#">Discipline Decisions</a>	12,822
7	<a href="#">My account (LSS Shop)</a>	10,557
8	<a href="#">Search bar</a>	10,455
9	<a href="#">Contact Us</a>	10,040
10	<a href="#">Continuing Professional Development homepage</a>	9,456



Saskatchewan Lawyers' Insurance Association Inc. (SLIA) is a non-profit corporation and a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Law Society of Saskatchewan. SLIA provides mandatory errors and omissions insurance to the members of the Law Society of Saskatchewan pursuant to *The Legal Profession 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 law societies in 9 Canadian jurisdictions and a voluntary excess insurance program. The SLIA program is run by in-house counsel and a claims coordinator, who report to a board of directors composed of both Bencher and non-Bencher members.

## SLIA/Insurance Committee

### Committee Members

- Perry Erhardt, Q.C. (Chair)
- James Morrison, Q.C. (Vice-chair)
- Andrea Argue
- Monte Gorchinski
- Patrick Kelly, Q.C.
- Michael Milani, Q.C.
- Tom Schonhoffer, Q.C.

### Staff

- Brad Hunter, Q.C. (Director of Insurance, SLIA)
- Dave McCashin (SLIA Counsel)

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

- a) their files are being both assessed and litigated by local counsel;
- b) their interests are being represented as stakeholders on the advisory board of their insurer;
- c) profits following any given claims years are retained locally for their benefit.

SLIA has continued to maintain one of the lowest insurance levies across all Canadian jurisdictions. The 2020-2021 policy period maintained the amount of the insurance levy from the previous policy period.

The 2019-2020 policy period saw both an increase in the number of claims opened and an increase in the severity of the claims to an average of \$51,000 per claim. As the frequency and severity of claims directly impact the levy amount, SLIA continues to stress the importance of loss prevention and continues to work to support its members to avoid or reduce claims.

SLIA, together with the Law Society of Saskatchewan, fund the [Practice Advisor Program](#), which manages complaint reviews and recommendations to members. Through the program advisors meet with each new solo practitioner and new small firm to provide assistance and recommendations to assist members in developing a low-risk practice. The Practice Advisor Program has been made available to any members who need help working through practice management issues. Members are encouraged to contact practice advisors with questions or concerns about practice standards or management issues. Under this confidential program, the practice advisor and member will work together to address the issue at no cost to the member, and no formal report will be provided to the Law Society of Saskatchewan or SLIA.

Weekly SLIA News is provided to members via the Law Society ReSource, which highlights current loss prevention topics, fraud warnings, and practice resources.

Access to mental health resources and assistance continues to be a priority for SLIA. Members are encouraged to make use of the free confidential assistance offered through [Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers](#) for personal counselling and online learning and resources through [HomeWeb](#). Highlights of resources available are provided to members bi-monthly through SLIA News.

SLIA manages the Law Society Outside Directorship Liability Insurance Policy for members involved as a Director or Officer of an outside organization. This Policy covers various types of claims made by reason of such services.

Stats from the 2019-2020 Policy Period include:

- a) New claims: 128
- b) Insurance Assessment: \$926.00

# Committees

1. Audit

2. Competency

3. Conduct Investigation

4. Discipline Policy

5. Equity and Access

6. Ethics

7. Executive

8. Firm Regulation

9. Future of Legal Services

10. Governance

11. SLIA/Insurance

12. Trust Safety

13. Truth & Reconciliation



Law Society  
of Saskatchewan

# 2020 Annual Report

**Committee Reports**

## Audit Committee

The Audit Committee monitors the financial affairs of the Law Society including oversight of the audit of the annual financial statements.

### Committee Members

- Monte Gorchinski (Chair)
- Glenn Hepp (Vice-Chair)
- Craig Zawada, Q.C.
- Crystal Norbeck

### Staff

- Tim Brown, Q.C.



## Competency Committee

The Competency Committee assists the Benchers in upholding the standards for admission to the Law Society by ensuring that only those individuals who are qualified are admitted and continue as members of the Law Society. The Committee is responsible for overseeing and developing policy related to admissions, membership, and education (including both continuing professional development and the Bar admission program), and as appropriate, recommending amendments to the Rules, *Code* and *Act*. The Committee also considers and determines applications, and conducts hearings and appeals, referred to the Committee or required by the Law Society Rules to be determined by the Committee, which relate to admissions or education matters.

The Competency Committee reviews practice-related trends and issues that arise as a result of complaints, practice advisor reviews, and concerns raised by the membership, from which it creates policies and best practices to help members maintain good practice management and competence standards. Members of the Committee also consider complaint matters referred to them by Professional Responsibility Counsel. As well, the Committee also oversees the [Practice Advisor Program](#), including the New Solo/Small Firm Program and the Expanded Practice Advisor Program.

### Committee Members

- Glenn Hepp (Chair)
- Jill Drennan (Vice-chair)
- Cara Haaf (Vice-chair)
- Suzanne Jeanson (Vice-chair)
- James Korpan, Q.C. (Vice-chair)
- Will Lane (Vice-chair)
- Martin Phillipson (Vice-chair)

### Staff

- Andrea Johnston
- Stacey McPeck
- Kiran Mand
- Christine Johnston

## Highlights from 2020

### a) Response to [COVID-19](#)

The Competency Committee and relevant staff reviewed a variety of issues triggered by [COVID-19](#), and responded as follows:

- Granted a temporary reduction in the [articling term](#) from 12 months to a minimum of 8 months, which was [extended to March 31, 2021](#) (and will be revisited to determine if a further extension is appropriate).



- Granted a [temporary waiver](#) of Rule 707 to permit a waiver of the secondment requirement for students articling at the Courts.
- Granted a temporary waiver of Rule 715(1)(b)(i) to permit applicants to be admitted as a lawyer and permitted to practice law, prior to signing the Law Society Roll. A modified admission process was developed and implemented.
- Granted a temporary waiver of Rule 703(b) to remove the obligation on student-at-law applicants to provide a notarized copy of proof of identification documentation (a regular copy is acceptable due to difficulty for students to get the document notarized in light of COVID).
- Encouraged and supported the CPLED Board decision to untether PREP from articles.
- Redeveloped CPLED Module 9 (the last module of the legacy CPLED Bar Admission Course) to transition from in-person to online delivery.
- Following a referral from the Privacy Commissioner, the Committee circulated a reminder to the membership that their privacy obligations continue when working outside their offices.

b) [CPD OnDemand](#)

The Competency Committee reviewed and supported the development and implementation of CPD OnDemand, the Law Society's CPD streaming service, which has received a positive response from members. The Law Society will continue to populate this service with CPD programs and solicit feedback to evaluate and improve the service. There were approximately 325 subscribers in 2020.

## Strategic Goals Accomplished

### Expanded Approach to Competency

a) [Expanded Practice Advisor Program](#)

The program allows any member to obtain practice management advice directly from a practice advisor. The program is confidential, with only non-identifying information provided to the Law Society.

b) [PREP](#)

The Law Society received updates and engaged in discussion related to the development and implementation of PREP (the new CPLED Bar Admissions Course). The Committee also reviewed and recommended amendments to the Rules to facilitate the transition to PREP.

c) [Online Store](#)

The Law Society launched the online store as part of the new website implementation. Members are now able to purchase recorded versions online and register and pay online for upcoming CPD events. Advanced search functionality is also built into the online store which further simplifies the process for members.

d) The Cloud Computing Working Group

Provided guidance to members on issues related to electronic practice, technology and cloud computing.

## Trusted and Transparent Regulation

a) Rule Amendments

Reviewed and recommended amendments to the Rules to eliminate the requirement for applicants to submit Certificates of Character as part of their application, as there are more reliable ways to assess character.

## Innovative and Flexible Leader of an Engaged and Forward-Thinking Membership

a) The Cloud Computing Working Group

The group surveyed the membership about their current use of technology to inform their review of the materials and training currently available from the Law Society and make changes and/or recommendations.

b) [CPD Programming](#)

The Law Society increased programming related to innovation and technology, including COVID-related topics such as [business continuity](#) in a remote work setting.

## Increased Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the Law Society and Legal Service Provision

a) CPD Programming

The Law Society worked to encourage/incentivize members to participate in education related to EDI and TRC topics, including offering such programs for free or at a reduced fee.

b) Mental Health First Aid

Law Society Staff and Practice Advisors completed Mental Health First Aid training.

## Increased Access to Legal Services

### a) Locum Registry

The Locum Registry continues to be active and accessible on our [website](#).

## Conduct Investigation Committee

The Conduct Investigation Committee is made up of a panel of Benchers who review and investigate each complaint referred by Professional Responsibility Counsel. These referrals are matters which raise issues of member conduct that appear to be “conduct unbecoming”. The Committee considers the information available and determines the appropriate response to the conduct in question. Ultimately, the Conduct Investigation Committee may make one of the following directions:

- a) Issue a formal caution, providing advice to the member in relation to the member’s conduct;
- b) Direct the member to participate in a Conduct Review;
- c) Direct that formal charges be brought against the lawyer so that the allegations of conduct unbecoming against the member may be determined by a hearing committee;
- d) Refer the matter to the Competency Committee or the Ethics Committee; or
- e) Direct that no further action is necessary in relation to the complaint.

### Committee Members

- Jeffrey Baldwin (Chair)
- Ian Wagner (Vice-chair)
- Crystal Norbeck (Vice-chair)
- Suzanne Jeanson (Vice-chair)
- Monte Gorchinski
- Craig Zawada, Q.C.
- Evert Van Olst, Q.C.

### Staff

- Valerie Payne
- Tim Huber
- Stacey McPeck
- Jenna Bailey
- Jackie Lane

## Highlights from 2020

21 matters were considered by the CIC in 2020:

- a) 13 matters were directed to a Conduct Review Committee
- b) 5 matters were referred to a Hearing Panel to hear charges of “conduct unbecoming a lawyer”
- c) 1 matter was addressed by Formal Caution
- d) 1 matter resulted in the voluntary practice cessation by the member
- e) 1 matter was sent back for further investigation and remains under consideration

## Strategic Goals Accomplished

### Trusted and Transparent Regulation

#### a) CIC Referrals

The work of the Conduct Investigation Committee supports timely, fair and informed decision-making regarding allegations of member misconduct. The Committee continues to find the large group consideration of CIC referrals, implemented in January 2019, to be very successful in moving matters forward in an efficient and effective manner. The Committee is a consistent panel of seven members, including a Public Representative Bencher and a non-Bencher lawyer. Having a consistent panel results in decisions that are more consistent and uniform, such that the outcomes of conduct investigations are supported by precedent and justifiable.

## Discipline Policy Committee

The Discipline Policy Committee's mandate is to develop policies to improve the efficiency, effectiveness and fairness of the Law Society of Saskatchewan's investigation and disciplinary processes. The Committee recommends amendments to provisions in the Rules, *Code* and *Act*, which relate to disciplinary proceedings involving LSS members. The Committee also works to develop policies, standards, and procedures to improve investigation and discipline. Administrative goals include ensuring timeliness, consistency and fairness in investigations and discipline decision making.

Further, the Committee provides oversight of the Model Code Subcommittee, appointing the members of the Subcommittee and reviewing and approving any changes to the [Code of Professional Conduct](#) proposed by the Subcommittee.

### Committee Members

- Leslie Belloc-Pinder, Q.C. (Chair)
- Barbara Mysko (Vice-chair)
- Nolan Kondratoff
- James Korpan, Q.C.
- Monte Gorchinski
- Lynda Kushnir Pekrul
- Jeffrey Baldwin (*ex officio*)

### Staff

- Valerie Payne
- Tim Huber
- Stacey McPeck
- Jenna Kraushaar
- Jackie Lane

## Highlights from 2020

### a) Limited Licensees

The Committee provided guidance regarding the early stages of establishing a process to allow limited licensees to practice law.

### b) Model Code Subcommittee

The Committee reviewed submissions of the Model Code Subcommittee and directed feedback regarding to harassment and discrimination.

### c) [Hearing Administrator](#)

The Committee provided oversight in the creation of a new Hearing Administrator position, and guidance regarding recruitment and appointment.

### d) [Annotated Code of Professional Conduct](#)

The Committee reviewed and authorized an Annotated Code of Professional Conduct for publication - the first of its kind produced by a Law Society in Canada.

## **Strategic Goal Accomplishments**

### **Trusted and Transparent Regulation**

#### a) Mandate

Informed by the Law Society's mandate to ensure protection of the public interest, the Committee continually reviews discipline policies and procedures with a view of increasing efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness.

## Equity and Access Committee

The Equity & Access Committee assists the Benchers of the Law Society of Saskatchewan by:

- a) monitoring developments and providing advice on issues affecting equity and diversity in the legal profession, and access to legal services in Saskatchewan;
- b) exploring and recommending actions and/or initiatives to be taken with respect to equity and diversity within the legal profession, and access to legal services in Saskatchewan;
- c) identifying deficiencies in the delivery of legal services in Saskatchewan;
- d) making recommendations for and supporting ongoing education and awareness training for members of the legal profession relating to equity and diversity; and
- e) making recommendations to improve access to legal services in Saskatchewan and to provide solutions for appropriate regulation.

### Committee Members

- Martin Phillipson (Chair)
- Barbara Mysko (Vice-Chair)
- Suzanne Jeanson
- James Morrison, Q.C.
- John Morrall
- Kaitlynn McArthur

### Staff

- Kara-Dawn Jordan
- Julie Sobowale
- Kiran Mand

## Highlights from 2020

### a) Member Wide EDI Survey

The Committee continued work on the development of a member wide survey focused on identifying challenges faced by members on entry to and in advancement in the legal profession.

### b) Member Demographic Data

The Committee considered further improvements to the process of collecting demographic data from the membership. This data assists the Law Society to better understand its membership and focus efforts to develop programming and other initiatives.

#### c) Education

The Committee continued to monitor Law Society efforts to deliver educational opportunities to members on topics related to equity, diversity and inclusion and access to justice. Topics covered in 2020 included, bias, systemic racism, sexual assault and harassment victims as clients, and gender bias.

#### d) Collaborations

The Committee continued to monitor progress on several access to justice projects on which the Law Society collaborates, including:

- *The Legal Coaching and Unbundling Pilot (LCUP)* - On October 26, LCUP hosted a webinar as part of Canada's Access to Justice Week, a joint initiative where Saskatchewan, Alberta and Ontario each held their Access to Justice events from October 26 to 30. The October 26 event, [Unbundled Legal Services in Canada: Lawyer and Client Feedback](#), kicked off the week and more than 150 participants from Saskatchewan, Ontario, Atlantic Canada, Alberta and British Columbia attended.
- SALI – In the fall, Reference Librarian Ken Fox began to offer online legal information sessions for the Saskatoon Public Library.

## Strategic Goal Accomplishments

### Increased Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) in the Law Society and Legal Service Provision

#### a) Demographic Data Collection

The Committee continues its efforts to collect data about the membership and to understand member perspectives and personal experiences related to equity, diversity and inclusion. The data collected will inform efforts to advance programs and initiatives that promote a diverse, equitable and inclusive legal profession.

### Increased Access to Legal Services

#### b) Legal Information

The Committee continues efforts to increase diversity and inclusion within the legal profession to advance access to justice and legitimacy and responsiveness in the administration of justice. The Committee also continues to monitor Law Society efforts to increase access to legal services, including legal information.

## Ethics Committee

The Ethics Committee meets several times during the year to review matters of ethical concern that come to the Committee by way of either complaint or voluntary request for ruling by members. The Committee applies the provisions of the *Code of Professional Conduct* to the facts at hand and provides a helpful interpretation of specific *Code* sections. Following their consideration of the issues in each matter, the Committee issues Ethics Rulings (“Lawyer X” Rulings) for the guidance of the membership, generally.

The primary function of the Committee is to consider complaint matters and requests for ruling from the membership, where 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* to guide the members involved in that specific matter. Following this specific guidance and education piece, the Committee creates an anonymized Ruling, containing a summary of the factual information and analysis of the applicable *Code* section(s). These Rulings provide education and guidance to members of the profession, should they encounter similar issues in the future.

### Committee Members

- Scott Moffat (Chair)
- Andrea Argue (Vice-Chair)
- John Morrall (Vice-Chair)
- William Lane
- Cara Haaf
- Jill Drennan
- Kaitlynn McArthur

### Staff

- Jenna Bailey
- Stacey McPeck
- Valerie Payne
- Jackie Lane

## Highlights from 2020

- a) 204 Informal Ethics Opinions requested by members

## Strategic Goal Accomplishments

### Expanded Approach to Competency

- a) Ethics Opinions

Throughout 2020, the Ethics Committee guided the membership in the following areas:

- What stage plea agreements become binding on legal counsel, and the steps counsel should take if an accused wants to back away from an agreement;

- Conflicts of interest against a former client; the delay of delivery of file materials; failure to respond to a former client's request for information; and releasing a statement against a former client who is a form of governmental organization;
- Whether or not sharp practice occurred between lawyers in the same office;
- The ethical permissibility of registering a miscellaneous interest on title of the family home, which was part of the family law proceedings, to secure the payment of legal fees; and
- The ethical obligations of criminal defence counsel continuing to represent the defendant on an appeal of a rejected joint submission on sentencing; specifically, in a situation where the joint submission as to sentence by the Crown prosecutor and defence counsel is rejected by the trial judge, and the trial judge instead imposes a sentence that is lower than the joint submission.



## 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 Benchers exercise their oversight, regulatory and policy development responsibilities.

### Committee Members

- Gerald Tegart, Q.C., President
- Foluke Laosebikan, Ph.D, Vice-President
- Leslie Belloc-Pinder, Q.C., Past President
- Tim Brown, Q.C., Executive Director

### Staff

- Tim Huber
- Kara-Dawn Jordan



## Firm Regulation Committee

The Firm Regulation Committee makes recommendations regarding Rules and practices governing law firms and proactive law firm regulation, and related matters. The implementation of firm regulation is an important building block in moving towards a proactive/coaching model for law firms. The goal of this approach is to reduce complaints and claims, which has the effect of better protecting the public we serve while enhancing the reputation of the profession.

### Committee Members

- Ian Wagner (Chair)
- Erin Kleisinger, Q.C. (Vice-chair)
- David Chow
- Nolan Kondratoff
- Jill Drennan
- Lynda Kushnir Pekrul

### Staff

- Jody Martin
- Stacey McPeck

## Highlights from 2020

### a) Rule Amendments

The Firm Regulation Rules ([Part 9 of the Law Society Rules](#)), came into effect on January 1, 2020.

### b) Law Firm Registration

Pursuant to the new Rules, all law firms successfully completed the law firm registration process and appointed a Designated Representative to act as liaison and primary point of contact for communications from the Law Society.

### c) [Designated Representatives](#)

Having the Designated Representatives in place prior to the onset of the pandemic was invaluable. The Law Society was able to rely on communications with the Designative Representatives to ensure that all firm members and their staff, as appropriate, had timely access to important information as the COVID 19 crisis unfolded, and communications with the Designated Representatives has been ongoing with the various departments of the Law Society since that time.

d) [Practice Management Online Assessment Tool](#)

The Committee was sensitive to the circumstances of Saskatchewan law firms recognizing that the pandemic created unprecedented challenges, both known and unknown for law firms in the province, driving an amended approach and shift in timeline for the release of the Practice Management Online Assessment Tool. As a result, the launch of the Assessment Tool was delayed into early 2021 and the mandatory requirement lifted until at least mid-2021.

## Strategic Goal Accomplishments

### Expanded Approach to Competency

a) [Practice Management Online Assessment Tool](#)

Throughout 2020, the Committee remained committed to the development of the online Assessment Tool. The Assessment Tool allows firms to self-evaluate their practice management tool kit and identify areas of strength and areas that require further development. This process enables the Law Society to provide coaching, resources and support to firms in all areas of practice management and where they have self-identified as needing additional supports. Specific resources will be made available to firms through the online Assessment Tool.

The Practice Management Principles contained in the Assessment Tool are aimed at implementing controls to manage risk, enhance client services, promote infrastructure that supports ethical practice, and contribute to the overall financial soundness and profitability of a firm.

b) Trust Accounting Safety Program – Rule 902(5)

On January 1, Rule 902(5) came into force requiring members to obtain Law Society approval prior to opening a trust account. The Committee began to look at the development of a trust safety program to strengthen the controls around trust account procedures and to educate and assist members to feel more secure in the management of their trust accounts.

### Trusted and Transparent Regulation

a) Communication with [Designated Representatives](#)

The law firm registration process has created a new channel for communication with law firms through the Designated Representatives. As we continue to communicate with the membership about firm regulation, it creates opportunities to educate the members individually and through their Designated Representatives regarding the

various initiatives of the Law Society as a whole and facilitates communications from the Designated Representatives to the Law Society.

b) Implementation of [Firm Regulation](#)

Additionally, firm registration ensures accuracy of current law firm information. As well, the Assessment Tool will provide aggregate data on firm demographics and identify areas where firms in general require the most support. This will help the Law Society identify common problem areas or resource gaps and provide better data directed education and resources addressing the areas of greatest need.

# Future of Legal Services Committee

The Future of Legal Services Committee facilitates the development and implementation of new initiatives pertaining to alternative legal service providers and implementation of a limited licensing framework arising from the Legal Services Task Team Recommendations and subsequent amendments to the *Act* and Rules. The Committee reviews and makes recommendations regarding Rules and practices governing alternative legal service providers, limited licensing and related matters.

## Committee Members

- Gerald Tegart, Q.C.
- Foluke Laosebikan, Ph.D.
- James Korpan, Q.C.
- Cara Haaf
- Martin Phillipson
- Nolan Kondratoff
- Suzanne Jeanson
- Lynda Kushnir Pekrul

## Staff

- Tim Brown, Q.C.
- Jody Martin
- Julie Sobowale
- Tim Huber
- Kara-Dawn Jordan
- Kiran Mand

## Highlights from 2020

### a) [Legislative Amendments](#)

Effective January 1, 2020, amendments to *The Legal Profession Act, 1990* were enacted to include a clearer definition of the practice of law and clarify and identify what represents an unauthorized practice of law. [The Law Society Rules](#) were amended to identify certain groups and individuals who may be exempted from the new unauthorized practice provisions and, in the public interest, continue to provide limited legal services without becoming a lawyer.

### b) Creation of New Committee

The Future of Legal Services Committee was constituted by the Benchers in 2020 to facilitate the implementation of the Legal Services Task Team Recommendations.

The Committee held its inaugural meeting on August 31, 2020 and held a second meeting on November 19, 2020.

### c) [Legal Information Guidelines](#)



Legal Information Guidelines were developed to assist the public and legal service providers delineate between legal information and other types of legal services.

## Strategic Goal Accomplishments

### Increased Access to Legal Services

#### a) [Notice Form Process](#)

The Committee is working to expand access to regulated legal services, in a responsible and sustainable manner, balancing the need for ensuring public protection and enhancing legal services for underserved Saskatchewan citizens. A Notice process was initiated, communicating with over 150 organizations across Saskatchewan, to identify service providers who are not lawyers that may be providing valuable legal services without posing a significant risk to the public.

The Committee has reviewed Notices recommending to the Benchers: provision of a comfort letter; development of a new exemption; or a determination that the services provided fall under an existing exemption, do not fall within the definition of legal services, or that the services provided are too high a risk to the public to be delivered by an unlicensed non-lawyer service provider.

#### b) Legal Information Guidelines

The Committee worked with the Equity and Access Committee, Administration and a leader in the field of legal information to develop the [Legal Information Guidelines](#).

#### c) Other Committee Tasks

- Analysis of Legal Needs Assessment findings;
- Drafting new Rules or amending existing Rules for recommendation to the Benchers in support of alternative legal service providers including but not limited to:
  - expanded exemptions to the unauthorized practice of law,
  - regulatory sandboxes or pilot projects, and
  - a limited license framework
- Reviewing existing Rules and recommending amendments as needed to other regulatory areas of the Society that will be directly impacted by alternative legal service providers; and
- Developing and recommending policies to the Benchers to support the required framework for alternative legal service providers and limited licensing.

## Governance Committee

The Governance Committee oversees the overall governance and management of policy of the Law Society of Saskatchewan to ensure that the Benchers fulfill their legal, ethical and functional responsibilities.

### Committee Members

- Craig Zawada, Q.C. (Chair)
- Lynda Kushnir Pekrul (Vice-Chair)
- Ian Wagner
- Crystal Norbeck
- James Korpan, Q.C.
- Glenn Hepp
- Nolan Kondratoff

### Staff

- Tim Brown, Q.C.
- Kara-Dawn Jordan
- Tim Huber

## Highlights from 2020

### a) Bencher Evaluation Process

The Governance Committee reviewed processes used to evaluate and identify areas for improvement in Law Society Governance, developed a refined Annual Bencher Evaluation, and created a process for receiving regular Bencher feedback throughout the year. With a move to remote governance necessitated by [COVID-19](#), ongoing communication has been particularly important to ensuring continued effective governance.

### b) Bencher Election Process Review

The Governance Committee began its review of the Bencher election process in preparation for the 2021 Bencher election. Work to identify and implement improvements to the Bencher election process will continue in 2021.

## Strategic Goal Accomplishments

### Trusted and Transparent Regulation

#### a) Policies and Procedures

The Governance Committee continually reviews governance policy and processes, evaluates the performance of Benchers, recommends initial and ongoing training, and recommends improvements to policy and process to advance effective governance in the public interest.

## Trust Safety Committee

The Trust Safety Committee reviews and makes recommendations regarding rules and practices governing trust accounts, the Special Fund and related matters.

### Committee Members

- Monte Gorchinski (Chair)
- Crystal Norbeck (Vice-Chair)
- Scott Moffat
- Andrea Argue

### Staff

- Tim Brown, Q.C.
- Jody Martin
- Stephanie Kievits, CPA, CA
- Pamela Harmon, CPA, CA

## Highlights from 2020

### a) Practice Directive

[Practice Directive #2](#), Wire Transfer Procedures via Online Wire Payments Service, was enacted in April pursuant to the Law Society's ongoing efforts to support lawyers in maintaining safe and effective legal services delivery in Saskatchewan during the [COVID-19](#) pandemic. To ensure members and firms utilizing this process did not face any unnecessary challenges upon the expiry of the Practice Directive, the Committee recommended to make the Rule changes permanent.

### b) Ongoing Initiatives

The Committee considered several ongoing projects and initiatives working towards modernizing audit process, strategies and operations including: Digitization of Trust Forms, Trust Safety Program, Remote Audits, and a Trust Safety Pilot Project.

## Strategic Goal Accomplishments

### Expanded Approach to Competency

#### a) Trust Safety Program

The Committee began work in consultation with the Firm Regulation Committee with respect to the development of a trust safety program to support the Firm Regulation Rules that came into effect on January 1, 2020.

The Committee remained apprised of the progress of developing the trust safety education materials for members to support the Trust Safety Program and assist members to feel more secure in the management of their trust accounts. In addition, the Committee considered the development of education materials for accounting staff

and other members of the firm to ensure they also have a complete understanding of trust accounting requirements and procedures. The development of the program and education materials is ongoing into 2021.

## **Innovative, Flexible and Forward-Thinking Leadership**

### a) Rule Amendments - Wire Transfer Procedures via Online Wire Payments Service

The [Practice Directive #2](#) was made permanent through various Rule amendments, which facilitated a new method for a firm to withdraw funds from trust accounts using online wire transfers. These Rule changes ensured members and the public would not face undue challenges upon the expiry of the Practice Directive and modernized the approach to the wire transfer processes generally.

### b) Pilot Project

The Committee considered a pilot project to examine changes to the way our current trust safety model is administered. The pilot project would be aimed at modernizing and improving current risk mitigation strategies, potential cost reduction opportunities for members, and increasing audit capacities. Further evaluation and development of a potential pilot project will continue into 2021.

### c) Remote Audits

As part of the modernization of audit practices, particularly in light of the continuation of the pandemic and social distancing requirements, the Committee considered alternative ways to complete compliance audits. The development of a process to complete remote audits is underway, which is expected to be completed in 2021.

### d) Digitization of Forms

Pursuant to the Firm Regulation Rules which came into effect on January 1, 2020, all law firms are required to complete an [Annual Report](#). For firms with trust accounts, the Annual Report replaces the TA-3. The Committee considered the digitization of the Annual Report to facilitate and streamline the reporting process for members. The online Annual Report became effective January 1, 2021 for all firms with a year end of December 31, 2020.

# Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Group

The Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Group provides advice to the Society on issues within the mandate of the Society affecting Indigenous people in Saskatchewan. The Advisory Group achieves this purpose by assisting the Society in understanding the needs of its current and prospective Indigenous members, and Indigenous people both in the regulatory processes of the Society and in the Saskatchewan legal system, and makes recommendations to the Society on how to address those needs.

## Committee Members

- Elder Sidney Fiddler
- Mary Culbertson (Co-Chair)
- Gerald Tegart, Q.C.(Co-Chair)
- Kaitlynn McArthur
- Cara-Faye Merasty
- Kathy Hodgson-Smith
- Eleanore Sunchild, Q.C.
- Dr. Jaime Lavallee
- Nordika Dussion

## Staff

- Kara-Dawn Jordan
- Pam Kovacs
- Jody Martin
- Riva Farrell-Racette

## Highlights from 2020

- a) The Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Group began consideration of an educational model to conceptualize, assess and plan the Law Society's response to Call to Action 27.
- b) The Truth and Reconciliation Advisory Group began consideration of the recommendations in the report of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada Truth & Reconciliation Calls to Action Committee.

## Expanded Approach to Competency/Increased Equity, Diversity and Inclusion/Increased Access to Legal Services

The responsibilities of the Truth & Reconciliation Advisory Group are broad and include:

- a) monitoring developments and providing advice to the Society on issues affecting Indigenous people;
- b) providing advice and support to the Society in effectively engaging and building relationships with Indigenous people;

- c) providing advice to the Society on and supporting the development of cultural competency in the legal profession;
- d) making recommendations for Society policies and initiatives related to Indigenous issues and advising the Society on how it should prioritize its work in this area;
- e) consulting directly with committees and departments of the Society on the development and implementation of policies and initiatives; and
- f) supporting collaboration between committees and departments of the Society and other stakeholders in the development and implementation of policies and initiatives related to Indigenous issues.

This work is integral to advancing several of the strategic goals of the Law society, including expanding competency, increasing diversity and inclusion and advancing access to justice for Saskatchewan residents.