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NUNAVUMI MALIGALIUQTIT
LAW SOCIETY OF NUNAVUT
BARREAU DU NUNAVUT



To: Members of the Law Society of Nunavut

From: Nalini Vaddapalli, CEO

Re: Report for the 2021 - 2022 Annual General Meeting

Date: June 15, 2022

A year in review

• We began this year remaining in a stable financial position with a minimal general-operational deficit of \$15,000 at December 31, 2020. In 2021, the Law Society's **return on its investments** showed significant promise for both the assurance and liability accounts after taking important well-thought-out decisions to transfer the Law Society's funds to RBC Dominion Securities from Scotia McLeod after more than a decade. In 2022, with the approach of investing every dollar, the Law Society will transfer the majority of its general – operational funds to allow steady growth while maintaining conservative investment portfolios. I wish to acknowledge the time commitment and dedication of the Finance Committee members: Sandhya Chari, Roman Dzioba and Kyle DeYoung.

As in 2020, the Covid-19 context did not negatively impact our overall membership revenues which confirms the steady need for legal services. Other than designated project-related grants and contribution agreements, the membership revenues are the Law Society's only source of revenue; therefore, responsible planning remains the motus operandi including giving consideration to increasing membership fees after five years. The planned membership fee increase will allow the Law Society to continue to hire staff to directly support the work of various Standing Committees, to meet the increased flow of requests (public and lawyers) and invest in operational infrastructure, policy-based

- development and special projects such as the much overdue overhaul of the Legal Profession Act.
- In 2021 and until this year's AGM, we were able to move ahead with a number of strategic and core projects including:
 - The review of the <u>Nunavut Statutes Exam</u> after more than 20 years. The Exam is available in English and now in Inuktitut and French. The Exam generally mirrors the original version and is supported by a robust defensible framework, a protocol, exam tips and an accommodation policy. The dedication of the working group coordinated by member Sara Siebert has been invaluable to bring this mandate to fruition. I wish to thank and recognize the commitment of members Julie Bedford, Caroline Briand and Bruce McRae.
 - The development of the <u>online student-at-law application for membership</u> process was launched earlier this month after the Phase I launch in 2020 (online student-at-law application).
 - The development of the **online Restricted Appearance Certificate** (RAC) and RAC renewal process to be launched this month.
 - The development and recent launch of the Continuing Legal Education (CLE) online report to facilitate the tracking of hours and requirements as per the new CLE policy throughout the year. To this end, the Law Society offered to its membership a second opportunity to access at no cost <u>The Advocates' Society's online library programs</u>. The designated programs were recommended by a number of Law Society member-based organizations and in-house counsels working from Nunavut.
 - Further to last year's June 24 AGM, the Executive Committee committed itself to moving forward with a second round of consultation on both the proposed new CLE policy, including the cultural competency requirement, and the updated Mandatory and Supplemental lists. Comments from the membership have been incorporated and updated versions are before the membership this year.

The inclusion of an extensive proposed list of Inuit cultural and historical materials is a long overdue step with respect to the Law Society's responsibility to identify and offer culturally relevant learning opportunities. I would like to acknowledge the dedication of Law Society staff Romy Leclerc without whom the Law Society would not have been able to complete the various online tools and new <u>CLE policy.</u>

- The development of a handbook for discipline-related investigations is ongoing to be followed-by training videos for investigators developed with support from Law Society members involved in the Discipline Committee. Thank you to all Discipline Committee members who provided feedback and suggestions. The handbook is part of the Law Society's efforts to create and build on existent documents, including from other jurisdictions, a series of core handbooks and guides to assist with its mandate to regulate the profession in the public interest and to ensure its historical and corporate documentation is well organized. They include a Practice Guide, an in-house version of a consolidated Legal Profession Act, compiled historical policies related to Membership and Admissions, compiled Executive Committee minutes from 1999 up until today and compiled Annual General Meeting agendas and minutes from 1999 up until today.
- One final achievement to be noted this year is the work of the Legal Ethics and Practice Committee in regard to the <u>updated Nunavut Code of Conduct</u>. With support from Law Society staff Kishra Dawabi-Ahlfors, the members of the Committee and its Chair, Erinma Abara, are able to deliver a new version at this year's AGM thanks to their diligent work and commitment.
- Our open front door policy remains allowing anyone in need of information or assistance to navigate the system, including Elders, to be welcomed by Law Society staff and myself. The Law Society continues to deliver its services in English, Inuktitut and French. Our efforts to raise awareness over the years about its mandate and to establish a network of contacts, including with non- legal organizations, has proven to be positive with increased number of phone calls from various communities. I take this opportunity to acknowledge

Law Society staff Adel De Belen. As the Executive Administrator, she is often the face of the Law Society for new members, long-standing members, students and the public. I cannot thank her enough for her dedication to support and provide guidance. Adel is now a Canadian citizen since January 2022. On behalf of the Executive Committee and myself, I wish her the very best as this new chapter begins.

On the Access to Justice file:

- I encourage our members to familiarize themselves with the ongoing work related to <u>Family Violence Prevention</u> and the <u>Prevention of Harassment</u> currently funded by the Department of Justice Canada. The Law Society is grateful to members <u>Victoria Perrie and Gloria Song</u> who represent the Law Society on the Access to Justice file including at the national level.
- Most recently, on March 24, the Law Society hosted a Family Violence Prevention roundtable arising from the Final Report & Recommendations for Access to Justice for Family Violence in Nunavut. Next steps include a designated meeting with MLAs and follow-up workshop in October with a focus to expand the next conversation to address specific topics related to Access to Justice for Family Violence.
- The Law Society collaborated and participated in the annual December 6
 National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women
 community walk; and spearheaded a social media campaign marking
 International Women's Day on March 8.
- A number of resources have been developed and shared through community workshops and through the Law Society's well-established network of government and non-government organizations. Getting the word out on one's rights and available <u>supports</u> and <u>resources</u> is fundamental to empower Nunavummiut to break the silence. Learn more about the Access to Justice file by reading this year's AGM report.

The Law Society relies on several dedicated volunteers who share their knowledge and

expertise to assist us in meeting our mandate. In addition to the invaluable work

undertaken by the Chairs and members of the Standing Committees, a number of

members continue to volunteer their time to represent our jurisdiction and the Law

Society in various capacities:

- Julie Bedford, representative on the Legal Services Board of Nunavut;

- Sara Siebert, Council Member for the Federation of Law Societies of Canada

(FLSC); and

- Nikolai Sittmann, Nunavut representative on the Model Code Liaison Group

(FLSC).

As the CEO, I am committed to offering a workplace environment that gives opportunities

for on-the-job training and flexibility all of which contribute to a healthy, positive and

respectful environment. I remain thankful for the Law Society staff team. Each plays a key

role in making our office a welcoming environment.

It has been a pleasure to assist the 2021-22 Executive Members. I am thankful for their support

throughout the year and very much look forward to the future as we continue to move forward.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nalini Vaddapalli, CEO - Deputy Secretary