

June 1, 2022

Report from Sandhya Chari, former President (from June 2021 to April 2022)

Greetings members,

I had the honour and responsibilities of serving as Law Society of Nunavut's President from the last annual general meeting (June 2021) to the end of April 2022), when my residency changed and bringing to a conclusion my volunteering on the Executive since 2018.

Today, I wish to highlight to you some of the significant events that occurred since the last AGM. As a general remark, much of the LSN's activities over the past few years have focused on modernizing its operational and admission structures and procedures, while still engaging in important access to justice work. This work is now coming to fruition, and is very much a team effort by all those who work for and volunteer with the LSN.

Accomplishments

1. Updating Statutory and Regulatory Requirements

Requests for admission to the LSN is steadily increasing. This year, there will also be the much anticipated cohort from the Nunavut Law Program many of whom will be admitted to the Nunavut bar in the coming period.

As a regulator, we have prioritized efforts and allocation of funds to modernize a number of items relating to admissions as follows:

- (a) New, updated and defensible Nunavut Statutes Exam (created in 1999) and now available in English, Inuktitut and French; and related new policies (for example: accessibility)
- (b) Amendments to the Rules of the Law Society and overhaul of the Legal Profession Act
- (c) Review and update of the Mandatory Reading List (for transfers from other jurisdictions) and Supplemental List which include Inuit-related cultural and historical materials

In addition, the LSN worked to provide supports for the articling journey of those joining the profession from the Nunavut Law Program. This support included the following:

- (a) A Practice Guide was developed with mandatory in-person training sessions delivered by members of the private bar. This guide was designed as a resource to assist members in carrying out their professional responsibilities as required under the Legal Profession Act, the Law Society's Rules and Code of Professional. It does so by consolidating and
- (b) highlighting some of these key basic requirements and by providing practical guidance on practice management
- (c) Evaluation forms (mid-term and final) and supporting guide were developed
- (d) Secured online application process was created and implemented

2. Improving Operational Structures and Processes

The LSN's operational modernizations include the following:

- (a) Implementation of a cloud-based system for all Law Society files
- (b) Implementation of a management software for discipline matters and soon to be for membership admissions and complex files with related cyber security and privacy policies
- (c) Ongoing development of web-based features to increase the efficiency for new applicants, members and articling students. For example, a member portal to apply for admission or changes of status, report continuing legal education hours, etc.

3. Financial Growth

After more than 15 years, important decisions were made to update the LSN's financial policy and improve its financial position by maximizing growth in keeping with appropriate risk tolerance. Both core revenues and investments were transferred to a new financial institution with an approach to invest every dollar.

4. Access to Justice

Since the launch of the Law Society's Access to Justice Program in 2014, the LSN continues to coordinate projects that bring partners together to fill access-to-justice gaps. For example:

- (a) Coordination of the development of plain language tools, community-based workshops and roundtables on family violence prevention in Nunavut.
- (b) Securing funding (Nunavut Law Foundation) to assist family members who require support to file claims on behalf of an estate or power of attorney as part of the Federal Indian Day School settlement. The initiative is a collaboration between the Law Society, Iqaluit-based Tukisigiarvik Society and Nunavut Legal Aid.

Recently and for the first time since the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the presidents of Canadian law societies and counsel representatives were able to gather together exchange both successes and concerns--to facilitate collaboration--at the Federation of Law Societies of Canada meeting in April. For one of the smaller-sized bars in terms of memberships and funds, I am pleased to say the LSN accomplishes a great deal and that does not go unnoticed by the regulators across the country.33

In the coming year, some of the LSN's key projects include working towards statutory reform of the Legal Profession Act, principal training reconciling the Law Society's corporate history and increasing Inuktitut content on the Law Society's website, to name just couple things.

Thank you for this opportunity to showcase the LSN's recent work and for the opportunity to have volunteered on your Executive.

Sincerely,

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Sandhya Geneviève Chari