



To: Law Society of Nunavut Members

From: Nalini Vaddapalli, CEO

Re: Report for the 2018 - 2019 Annual General Meeting

Date: May 27, 2019

A year in review

- We began this year in a good financial position which allowed us to undertake special projects and matters that required designated funds. We embarked on the development of a new website that includes user-friendly features: an online membership and restricted appearance certificate (RAC) application process, an online membership renewal process, a membership portal where members will be able to add-on their professional development hours and activities throughout the year and change their contact information as needed. In addition, an online referral system will allow anyone to look for a lawyer in specific areas of the law. With the new website's features, to be launched in September 2019, this will allow to reduce the number of hours dedicated to manual administrative entries and follow-ups that can be reallocated to other operational responsibilities such as support for the membership process and to respond to membership queries and from the general public, and for the discipline complaint intake to minimize delays. When I took on this position in 2010, the membership stood at approximately 230 members and in 2018, the membership had grown to approximately 310 members.
- 2018 has been a year of addressing outstanding matters such as the destruction of Euan MacKay's records (after posting a public notice in all 4 languages) that had been in the possession of the LSN for more than ten years after his passing; supporting the work of the newly formed Rules Committee so it may ultimately assist the LSN in the registration of the Rules of the LSN that have designated authority in the Legal Profession Act; supporting the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Committee as it

began to look into the implementation of its action plan that puts forward various initiatives to allow the membership to increase its cultural competency and knowledge. You will find six reports submitted from the various standing committees all of which receive direct support from the LSN. In regard to the LSN's representatives who sit respectively on the Council of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and the Legal Services Board of Nunavut, Sara Siebert and Julie Bedford were appointed in 2018 and provide regular reports to the LSN Executive.

- The LSN continues to be committed to offering support to its members, new lawyers and students, and members of the public. The LSN has an open front door policy allowing anyone in need of information or assistance to navigate the system, to be welcomed by the LSN staff and CEO. The hiring of a full time Inuktitut speaking staff in January 2019 combined with the toll-free Inuktitut line allows the LSN to now deliver its services , five days a week, in English, Inuktitut and French. The LSN has been able to provide assistance to unilingual Elders who may be facing difficult situations or simply requiring information that other law-related organizations are unable to assist with. The LSN continues to receive calls from communities through its Inuktitut toll-free line or its regular toll-free line. The LSN's efforts to raise awareness about its mandate across Nunavut over the years and establish a network of contacts, including with non- legal organizations, has proven to be positive.
- The LSN remains the only northern jurisdiction who delivers a skills-based bar admission course (CPLED) in its jurisdiction. The course includes three in-person modules delivered in Iqaluit with the assistance of resident members. Their contributions are invaluable as it allows the students-at-law to gain Nunavut-based knowledge and understanding of the practice of law. Sara Siebert continues to be the designated LSN Member who provides assistance and feedback to the students-at-law for the remaining online modules of the bar course. Finally, without the support at-a-distance from the Law Society of Manitoba, the original partner in this initiative that began in 2014, the bar course would not be able to run as smoothly as it is. Once again, the LSN offered the writing of LSAT exams in 2018 (3 sessions) and has been a published site for the last two years which reduces the registration fees for applicants.
- On the Access to Justice file, a strategic decision had been reported on during last year's 2017-18 AGM. The strategic vision was to have the LSN focus its efforts on access to justice projects that could be funded outside of the LSN's operational budget or with minimal operational expenses. The need for legal information and education on various topics, and providing support to navigate a process remains relevant.

- Accordingly, the LSN sustained its efforts in public legal information and education. As you will note from the LSN's representative's report on access to justice, Gloria Song informs the membership of new funds that have been secured through the Law Foundation of Ontario for a 2 year project in partnership with Pauktuutit, Inuit Women of Canada. In addition, the LSN looks forward to sharing news of the launch of public legal information sheets and posters that will be distributed across Nunavut in 2019. These materials have been funded through the first grant approved by the Law Foundation of Ontario and came to fruition with the support and contribution of many LSN Members including Gloria Song, and organizations such as the Legal Services Board of Nunavut. All of the materials developed over the years will be made available through the new website which has an improved platform to support such documents.
- The LSN organized the delivery of professional development (PD) activities, at no cost to the membership, with assistance from the Nunavut Court of Justice and the Nunavut Branch of The Canadian Bar Association. When appropriate, events were opened to members of the public. And this practice will continue on. When looking ahead to new PD events, they are notably guided by the action plan developed by the Truth and Reconciliation Committee where cultural competency and oral traditions are the foundation of these PD events to come. Additionally, culturally-based learning tools are being developed in partnership with the Pirurvik Centre in Iqaluit. The LSN is indebted to former Quality of Life Secretariat ADM Karen Kabloona for allowing the membership and students-at-law to benefit from the Indigenous Cultural Competency two day workshops hosted by the Secretariat.
- Matters pertaining to discipline and to alleged unauthorized practice have kept the office, the Executive and the related designated standing committees busy throughout the year. The work undertaken by each level is informing the ongoing LSN amendment project that aims to provide recommendations to amend the Rules of the LSN and the Legal Profession Act. They include provisions to define a process for unclaimed trust account monies; a fitness to practice process in the context of a discipline complaint; and sharing information with other jurisdictions when lawyers are practicing without a license since the LSN does not have authority to regulate these lawyers. Reports submitted by each respective Chair, for the Discipline Committee and the Ethics and Unauthorized Practice Committee, provide further information on the work being done to improve how these matters can be dealt with within the limits of the Rules and the Legal Profession Act including increased options once the investigation has been completed.
- 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'm thankful for the dedicated staff that is now in place at the LSN and who play a key role in making our office a welcoming environment. We've also welcomed a local high school student over the summer period as part of our commitment to inclusive hiring.

- In July 2018, the LSN welcomed Koovian Flanagan as our new Executive Public Representative. I thank her for her time spent sharing her knowledge and experience about Inuit history and Inuit culture. Moreover, it was an eye-opening and unique learning opportunity to have Koovian present her first time bowhead whale hunting journey to the membership.
- It has been a pleasure to assist the 2018-19 Executive Members. I am thankful for their support throughout the year.

Thank you for the opportunity to continue serving the Law Society of Nunavut.

Respectfully Submitted,
Nalini Vaddapalli
CEO