

Draft Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Law Society of Alberta (the “Law Society”)

December 2, 2021

Videoconference

11:00 a.m.

	Item
1	Call to Order <p>Law Society President, Darlene Scott, QC, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m. The notice of the Annual General Meeting (AGM), agenda, Law Society financial statements, and the Alberta Lawyers Insurance Association (ALIA) financial statements were sent to members via e-bulletin on November 18, 2021.</p> <p>Ms. Scott delivered the Indigenous land acknowledgment statement for Alberta.</p>
2	Credentials Report and Confirmation of Quorum <p>37 active members were present. Ms. Scott confirmed this met quorum in accordance with Section 27 of the <i>Legal Profession Act</i>.</p>
3	Meeting Special Rules and Etiquette <p>In accordance with Rule 3 of the Rules of the Law Society of Alberta, the Benchers varied Rule 33(2) through the adoption of a resolution on November 10, 2021, that provided Special Meeting Rules for this AGM to facilitate the transaction of business through the electronic meeting platform. Ms. Scott went over the Special Meeting Rules and etiquette to remind attendees of key items.</p>
4	Adoption of the Agenda <p>There being no objections, the AGM agenda was adopted as presented.</p>
5	Approval of the 2020 Annual General Meeting Minutes <p>The December 30, 2020 AGM minutes were distributed to all registrants with the meeting materials via email on November 30, 2021. There being no corrections, the minutes of the December 3, 2020 AGM were adopted.</p>
6	President’s Report <p>In accordance with subsection 27(2) of the Act, the President presented a report of the proceedings of the Benchers since the last AGM, noting that the Strategic Plan</p>



provided direction and focus to the Board (Benchers) and the organization for decision making, resource allocation and priority setting, and that all projects and initiatives advanced the Law Society's strategic goals. The following projects and initiatives were highlighted:

- a) Law Society staff worked remotely throughout 2021 due to the continuing pandemic. Operational decisions were informed by the advice of Alberta Health Services and the government.
- b) The Board approved an extension of the pilot project for virtual hearings until June 30, 2022. Thirty-four virtual hearings were successfully held in 2021 to-date.
- c) In March 2021, the Board determined that the amendment to Rule 56 setting the term of articles at a minimum of eight months and a maximum of 12 months will remain in place for 2021-2022 as students and employers continue to navigate the pandemic.
- d) In February 2021, the Board formalized a Bencher Vacancy Policy that operationalized the June 2019 Rule amendments for filling Bencher vacancies. The decision created the opportunity to enhance the diversity of skills and experiences at the Bencher Table.
- e) In October 2021, the Board approved the creation of an Innovation Sandbox to encourage innovation in the delivery of legal services.
- f) Also in October 2021, the Board approved Rule amendments for the approval and management of trust accounts by Alberta lawyers. The enhanced Rules highlight the accountability and oversight required by lawyers for tasks delegated to firms' employees and align with modern banking practices and the digital environment.
- g) The Board approved amendments to the Assurance Fund rules in June 2021 which confirm and reinforce that the Alberta Lawyers Indemnity Association Group Policy is the primary source of recovery in the event of lawyer misappropriation.
- h) The Law Society made progress on the strategic goals of *Competence & Wellness* and *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion*. In April 2021, the Indigenous Cultural Competency Education requirement called The Path (Alberta) — Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada – was launched. The decision to mandate The Path was integral to the Law Society's commitment and obligation to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.
- i) The Board also approved the development of a training course for all principals, to establish a baseline for consistency and quality assurance in the mentorship and training of new lawyers.
- j) The Board rolled out a new initiative in May 2021 where all new lawyers are automatically enrolled in the Mentor Express program for one year. While not a mandatory requirement, Mentor Express provides the opportunity to connect with experienced lawyers.



- k) The Board extended the suspension of the mandatory Continuing Professional Development filing requirement for an additional year to May 2023 to allow the time required to build a new program which is intended to go beyond setting a minimum standard for competence and will offer an enhanced experience for lawyers.
- l) The 2020 “My Experience” Project continued into its next phase. Experiences were shared with the profession by gradual release through weekly eBulletins. The Law Society intends to work alongside others in the legal community to address the areas of concern identified in the survey.
- m) The Board approved an Articling Placement Program in October 2021, designed to assist articling students who are in unsafe or untenable articles due to harassment or discrimination to exit their position and continue their articles with a new firm.
- n) The Law Society launched a survey in spring 2021 to gather input on the Lawyer Referral Service. Survey results and discussion with key Access to Justice stakeholders will assist decision making and help to improve the service.

Ms. Scott then responded to questions and comments from members.

7 Business Arising

There were no items of business arising from the 2020 Annual General Meeting minutes.

8 New Business

There was no new business brought before the meeting.

9 Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:42 a.m.