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**Approved Minutes of the Annual General  
Meeting of the Law Society of Alberta (Law  
Society) held at the Law Society Offices  
Edmonton, Alberta  
April 6, 2017**

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Law Society President, Anthony Young, QC, called the meeting to order at 4:05 pm on April 6, 2017 and confirmed that a quorum of 20 members was met.

**1 Approval of the Minutes**

Anthony Young

The minutes of the April 7, 2016 Annual General Meeting were circulated to members in attendance at the meeting.

**Motion:**

**To approve minutes of the Annual General Meeting held April 7, 2016.**

**Seconded  
Carried**

**2 President's Report**

Anthony Young

The President reported the following:

The past year was a year of major strategic change as the Law Society continued the shift to become a proactive, model regulator. It was a year for discussion and collaboration with the profession and government, as well as a year for advancing our proactive outreach through new programs and resources. The key areas of focus and noteworthy accomplishments for 2016 included:

**Innovating Regulation**

Our work in innovating regulation is driven in part by new technologies, new business models, and access to justice concerns as the regulation of legal services around the world is evolving. In particular, legal regulators have shifted to a greater focus on two major areas. The first is looking at different proactive models of regulation, including the regulation of law firms and other entities that deliver legal services. The second area is improving access to justice. An important task for the Law Society is to focus on ways to improve access to legal services. We can do that by removing barriers wherever possible, and encouraging lawyers to be creative in how legal services are delivered.

In 2016, we began a conversation with the profession online and in six cities across the province. We heard that lawyers want the Law Society to take a targeted, strategic, and risk-focused approach to regulation.

### **Trust Transaction Fee and Trust Safety Funding**

The safety of lawyers' trust accounts represents a significant area of regulatory risk for the Law Society. To better align the cost of operations to the risk incurred, we started exploring different ways to fund our trust safety monitoring operations.

After gathering input from a cross section of the profession, we proposed a trust transaction fee (TTF) last May. Based on feedback from the profession, we undertook additional discussions in October and November to explore other scenarios.

As a result of our work, we learned that the TTF would have some unintended consequences. As a result, the proposed TTF wasn't implemented, and we continue to research alternative funding options.

### **Working with the Government of Alberta on its Legal Aid Review**

The Government of Alberta undertook a review of our province's legal aid system to make sure it's helping the most vulnerable people while keeping the system sustainable in the long term. We participated in the government's consultation in 2016 because we maintain a long-held view that predictable, adequate and sustainable funding for legal aid saves down-stream costs throughout the criminal justice system.

We've been involved in the governance of Alberta's legal aid program for more than 40 years and believe that a properly functioning justice system, supported by a sustainable legal aid program, means that all Albertans, regardless of financial status, are treated fairly and equally under the law. We are also empathetic to the frustration of Alberta lawyers who are at the forefront of access to justice issues in our courts. Their desire to improve the system and provide equitable access to justice for all Albertans is encouraged.

We're pleased to see that legal aid recently received a funding boost and we remain committed to keeping this dialogue open in support of legal aid.

### **National Discipline Standards**

2016 was our second year of measuring against the National Discipline Standards. The Law Society is currently meeting 81 per cent of the standards and is committed to continually improving its processes.

## **Tribunal Office Adjudicator Training**

In 2016, we announced the appointment of 24 new adjudicators to our adjudicator roster. The roster now includes Law Society Benchers, Lay Benchers, practising lawyers and public representatives. The appointment of new adjudicators enhances the Law Society's adjudication work and furthers our commitment to our strategic values of integrity, independence and respect. The adjudicators bring a wealth of experience in conducting arbitrations and adjudications in a number of regulatory settings, and better reflect the public we serve.

All adjudicators, including Benchers, were required to participate in the new adjudicator training course which was implemented in 2016. We'll continue to provide regular training sessions and updated resources using print, video, face-to-face and online materials. The new curriculum, which is the first of its kind in Canada, requires adjudicators to complete a series of online modules and in-person adjudicator training.

## **Early Intervention Program**

Our new early intervention approach is a proactive and collaborative way of supporting lawyer competence and the delivery of legal services to Albertans. It allows us to address concerns about the professional and ethical conduct of Alberta lawyers in a way that manages expectations of the public and the profession, while reinforcing our mandate to regulate in the public interest; and changes our language and processes to reflect our shift from being a reactive regulator to being proactive and supportive.

A major shift in our work relates to how we triage the information we receive from third parties. Our traditional complaint-centric model was resource-intensive and raised complainants' expectations that there would always be a finding of conduct deserving of sanction. It tended to be retributive, and frequently pushed lawyers into an adversarial position with the complainant and the Law Society that did not lend itself to working toward a resolution.

Through early intervention, we're able to provide lawyers with programs and resources that foster better practice management and customer service, and proactively identify opportunities for improvement.

In addition to the early intervention program, our professionalism and policy department offers many resources and programs to lawyers. We've begun building a library of helpful resources that lawyers can access throughout the lifecycle of their practice to help them avoid issues that could otherwise lead to costly discipline measures. These resources range from access to the support offered by our practice advisors, SoloNet, and practice management programs, such as Mentor Connect and Locum Connect.

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## Strategic Plan (2017-2019)

Staff, management and Benchers drafted a new strategic plan for 2017-2019 which will guide our work for the next three years. The plan was presented and endorsed by the Benchers in December.

The main pillars from the previous strategic plan are intact; however, we refocused them into four new goals to:

- Be a model regulator;
- Maintain stakeholder confidence;
- Promote and support access to justice and the rule of law for Albertans; and
- Create a responsive and innovative governance and management culture.

We are optimistic that our plan moves us toward a new kind of relationship with the profession, as we place more focus on proactively assisting lawyers to manage their professional practices in order to minimize risk, and maximize service to their clients. The new plan also highlights diversity and cultural competence.

As we progress through 2017, we'll continue strengthening and maintaining our core regulatory programs, while at the same time growing our proactive and loss prevention programs. We will keep driving our mission to serve the public interest by promoting a high standard of legal services and professional conduct through the governance and regulation of an independent legal profession, while upholding the rule of law.

### 3 Old Business

Anthony Young

There were no items of old business.

### 4 New Business

Anthony Young

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

**Motion:****To adjourn the April 6, 2017 Annual General Meeting of the Law Society.****Seconded  
Carried**