



 1 hr & 30 mins



 3 hours

FOLA FALL PLENARY

ZOOM

THURSDAY NOVEMBER 18, 2021

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FALL 2021 POST PLENARY REPORT

Once again, due to the coronavirus, FOLA held our Fall 2021 Plenary by Zoom but let's all hope that our May 2022 Plenary will be in person! I think we can all agree that, while grateful for the technology that enables us to stay connected, virtual Plenaries do not come close to in-person meetings for such events.

Following Roll Call, William Woodward, FOLA's now Past Chair, offered some opening remarks which included drawing special attention to the continued role FOLA will play in ensuring our Law Libraries are recognized by the Law Society for the critical role they play in the professional and personal lives of all lawyers – especially those in small and sole practices. You can view his video clip [here](#).

Law Society of Ontario Treasurer, Teresa Donnelly, then provided an overview of the many, many things that the LSO has been up to since our last Plenary – including addressing the ongoing need to address access to justice issues, working to improve supports to racialized members of the profession, and supporting our Law Libraries. She also highlighted the strong working relationship she enjoys with FOLA and, notably, FOLA's now Past Chair, William Woodward. You can view her video [here](#).

Next up was FOLA's Executive Director, Katie Robinette, who provided an update of FOLA's work over the past six months. Her presentation can be found on our [Plenary page](#). It should be noted that her Report includes hyperlinks to all FOLA Submissions since our November Plenary as well as highlighting all [Member Rewards](#) which are available to each and every Law Association member! Katie also used her time to inform attendees about plans for FOLA's 2nd Lobby Day. FOLA's Lobby Day (to be held via Zoom on February 23, 2022) will consist of talks, Q&A's and meetings with a variety of Members of Provincial Parliament (MPPs) and their staff. Lobby Days are an excellent opportunity to raise awareness of Ontario's 47 Law Associations and the issues faced by? Ontario's roughly 12,000 small and sole practicing lawyers with some of the most important decision makers in the province. If you would like to learn more about our Lobby Day here and join us, [visit here](#) and fill out our registration form. It's open to all members of Law Associations – not just Presidents! Katie's video clip can be found [here](#).

Following the Treasurer's Report, we heard from Johanne Blenkin, Board Chair, LiRN, and Theresa Leitch, Managing Director, LiRN about LiRN's immediate and future funding priorities. They shared a short version of their Strategic Plan which can be found on our [Plenary page](#) and you can watch their presentation [here](#).

Due to the tight schedule, FOLA decided to forgo our usual Committee and Regional updates. Instead, you can find all Committee and Regional Reports [here](#).

Next we heard from Diana Miles, CEO of the Law Society of Ontario, who walked us through the Law Society's recent budget identifying highlights including: investing in library resources; expense reduction driven by adapted work processes and pandemic-identified efficiencies; and integrating new programs and policy changes approved by Convocation – all the while reducing annual fees! She also addressed some of the priorities moving forward, especially their commitment to regulatory burden reduction. Diana shared her time with George Shipley who is responsible for the Law Society's Member Assistance Program (MAP). Both Diana's and George's presentations are on our [Plenary page](#) and their video can be viewed [here](#).

Following Diana's presentation was LawPRO's President and CEO, Dan Pinnington, who provided an update covering their 2022 insurance program changes, an overview of LawPRO's history and mandate, and findings from pandemic claims. Dan's presentation can be found on our [website](#) and his video can be found [here](#). **His presentation is accredited for 30 minutes of professional content.** LawPRO, we should note, was FOLA's Title Sponsor of our Plenary.

Heading into our lunch break, Christopher Johns, SOLGEN & Peter O'Keefe, MAG walked us through how their respective ministries are modernizing the Justice System and offered a framework for criminal justice design. Their presentation, generously sponsored by [xchangedocs](#), is on our [Plenary page](#) and their video can be accessed [here](#). **It has been accredited for 30 minutes of professional content.**

After lunch, FOLA shared videos recognizing all of our 2021 Award winners. Congratulations to Mark Giavedoni, FOLA's 2021 President's Award Winner; Jennie Clarke, FOLA's 2021 Luminary Award Winner; and Merredith MacLennan, FOLA's 2021 Distinguished Service Award Winner! Check out their special videos [here](#).

Following our Awards presentation, there was a panel discussion titled "Being Indigenous in The Profession". The panel featured an all-Indigenous group consisting of Madam Justice Michelle O'Bonsawin, SCJ; Michael Johnston, Lawyer; Bryanne Smart, Board Chair, De Dwa Da Dehs Nye's Aboriginal Health Centre in Hamilton, and was moderated by Christa Big Canoe, Lawyer & Head of Advocacy, Aboriginal Legal Services. Their session was generously sponsored by [CPDOnline](#) and you can watch it [here](#). **This Panel Discussion has been accredited by the Law Society for 1 hour of EDI.**

We then heard from one of our now regular Plenary guests (and generous sponsor), Rio Peterson from Clio, whose presentation focused on new client expectations as a result of the pandemic and how small and sole practicing lawyers can meet their needs. Her presentation can be found on our [Plenary page](#) and the video can be found [here](#). **Rio's presentation was accredited by the Law Society for 30 minutes of professional content.**

We then headed into another amazing Panel Discussion – this one on diversity in the profession and sponsored by [Rangefindr](#). Panelists consisted of Jennifer Gold, President, Women's Law Association of Ontario; Raphael Tachie, President, Canadian Association of Black Lawyers; Peter Choe, President, Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers; and Devin Persaud, President, South Asian Bar Association of Toronto and it was moderated by Virginia Lomax, Co-Chair of the CCLA's Diversity Committee. You can view their discussion [here](#). **This Panel Discussion has also been accredited by the Law Society for 1 hour of EDI.**

Our final presentation of the day, generously sponsored by [Lawyers Financial](#), featured a one-hour session on sustainable approaches to EDI strategies. Led by Mojdeh Cox, Executive Director of the Pillar Nonprofit Network, the session focused on key components to strategies that Law Associations can use as they design and execute diversity programs at the local level. Joined by Dr. Mohammed Baobaid, Founder and Executive Director, Muslim Resource Centre for Social Support and Integration and Mr. Leroy Hibbert, Multicultural Outreach Coordinator at the LUSO Community Services, the three shared some past experience working with Associations and/or organizations as they implement diversity programs. Mojdeh's presentation can be found [here](#) and their video recording is [here](#). **It has also been accredited by the Law Society for 1 hour of EDI.**

And with that, FOLA's now Past Chair, William Woodward, introduced FOLA's new Board and thanked all retiring Board members. You can see the names and contact information of our new Board [here](#). Fingers' crossed our Spring 2022 Plenary will be held in person!

