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FOLA POST PLENARY REPORT

SPRING 2021

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SPRING 2021 POST PLENARY REPORT

Due to the social distancing restrictions because of the coronavirus, FOLA held our Spring 2021 Plenary by Zoom, kicking it off with an evening of Musical Bingo for a pre-Plenary social. FOLA's Plenary featured a number of outstanding speakers and panelists and contained 4 hours of accredited professional content. If you want to go directly to our Plenary videos, [click here](#) for our Spring 2021 Plenary playlist.

Following Roll Call, William Woodward, FOLA's Board Chair, offered some opening remarks which included drawing special attention to Eldon Horner, FOLA's Real Estate Co-Chair (and a past FOLA Chair) who was honored with receiving the Law Society's Medal. 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 done to help lawyers adapt to our new ways of doing business as a result of the pandemic. She also drew members' attention to the work the LSO is doing in the areas of equality, diversity, and inclusion and on her focus on mental health in the profession. Her video clip can be viewed [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's video clip can be found [here](#).

We then heard from Nathan Baker, FOLA 1st Vice Chair and Chair of FOLA's LiRN Committee who provided an overview of FOLA's advocacy steps taken following the Law Society's cuts to the LiRN budget. He then introduced Johanne Blenkin, Board Chair, LiRN who offered some highlights of LiRN's recent activities and plans for the immediate and long-term future. She then offered to respond to a few questions. You can watch our LiRN video clip [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](#).

Following the unanimous support for FOLA's proposed amendments to our By-Laws and a Treasurer's report from Jane Robertson, FOLA's Treasurer, we heard from Diana Miles, CEO of the Law Society of Ontario, who provided a very thorough update on the Law Society's 2019-2023 Strategic Priorities (including improved automation and burden reductions), a reminder of the LSO's Vision and Values, and an overview of how the pandemic has been impacting the profession and how the LSO has been adapting and responding. Her report can be downloaded from our [website](#) and her video can be viewed [here](#).

Following Diana was LawPRO's President and CEO, Dan Pinnington, who provided a briefing update on LawPRO. Dan's presentation provides an overview of the 2021 insurance program, the impact COVID-19 has had on LawPRO, recent types of claims being filed, and the resources available to members. He also introduced their new TitlePLUS – a completely overhauled platform! Both Dan's presentation and a two-pager introduction to the new TitlePLUS can be downloaded from our [website](#) and his video can be found [here](#). His presentation is accredited for 30 minutes of professional content.

Next FOLA welcomed Ontario's Attorney General, Hon. Doug Downey, who offered some highlights from both MAG (making special mention of thanking FOLA for our active collaboration in helping to ensure access to justice during the pandemic through modernization of services) and on behalf of the government before taking questions from members. His video recording can be found [here](#).

After a short lunch break, our session “Are You Prepared for a Disaster? Illness, Property Damage, Pandemic Planning!” by Ray Leclair, Vice President Public Affairs, LawPRO and Dawn Marchand, CEO, Lawyers Financial offered a one-hour, 2-part session (which was accredited for professional content). Ray focused on the importance of having a plan in place, understanding the types of disaster risks, and where to start in creating your own contingency plan. Dawn focused on how lawyers can protect their income, their business, and their future. Both presentations are on our Plenary page [here](#) and their session can be viewed [here](#).

Then we heard from one of our now regular Plenary guests, Rio Peterson from Clio, whose presentation “From Surviving to Thriving: COVID’s Impact on Legal”, focused on the solo lawyer landscape and how clients’ expectations have shifted, and strategies for business growth - during the ongoing pandemic and beyond. Rio’s presentation was accredited for 30 minutes of professional content. Her presentation can be found [here](#) and the video can be found [here](#).

Following another short break, Beth Beattie, Senior counsel at the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General and a Founding Member of “Voices for Mental Health”, spoke about mental health in the legal workplace and shared her personal story of living with a mental illness and navigating resources while maintaining her practice. In addition to sharing some alarming facts (such as the fact that, according to a 2016 ABA study, 28% of lawyers report experiencing depression and 19% report experiencing anxiety), Beth stressed that there are supports available to lawyers, including the [Members Assistance Program](#). Her talk was accredited for one hour of professional content and the video is available [here](#).

Our final presentation of the day featured a one-hour session on marketing & branding your Association where featured guests from Bar Associations in the United States shared some tips and offered suggestions on a range of topics including how to go about branding your associations (it’s more than just a logo!), communicating your values and deliverables, attracting new members and keeping the ones you have, building up your profile in the community through charity initiatives and with the press and the importance of working with other legal associations, with the local Judges, with the Law Society, and even with other member organizations. The session is filled with great ideas and it could be highly valuable as your Law Association adapts to new demands and needs as we come out of the pandemic. Their video recording is [here](#) and has been accredited for one hour of professional content.

And with some brief closing remarks from FOLA’s Board Chair, William Woodward, our Spring 2021 Plenary concluded. Don’t forget to visit our Sponsors to learn more about them. Our Title Sponsor (LawPRO) and our Welcome/Speaker Sponsors (Clio & the LSO) can be found [here](#) and our Panel Sponsors (Rangefinder, Lawyers Financial, CPDOnline, CaseLines, and GrowthZone) can be found [here](#). Our Fall Plenary will be on November 18th, 2021 and will (hopefully) be our last Plenary to be held on Zoom!

