



LAW SOCIETY Paralegal UPDATE

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Paralegal election results



Ontario's licensed paralegals cast their votes in the first-ever paralegal election in March, electing five of the 39 candidates nominated to run for the Law Society's Paralegal Standing Committee. The elected paralegals are as follows, in order of the number of votes received: **Cathy Corsetti, Paul Dray, Michelle L. Haigh, Kenneth C. Mitchell, and Robert Burd.**

At their first meeting on April 8, the committee's five paralegal members and three lay benchers elected two benchers – **Michelle Haigh** and **Paul Dray**. The entire committee elected **Cathy Corsetti** as chair. [Full Story](#)

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Integration program approved

Paralegals who are members of certain groups exempt from Law Society licensing requirements will be given the opportunity to become licensed through a new integration program. Ontario collection agents will also be permitted to apply under the new program, which was approved at February Convocation.

The program was proposed by the Paralegal Standing Committee following discussions with exempt groups which revealed considerable interest in further opportunities to become licensed. [Full Story](#)

Events & News Briefs

Annual General Meeting

The Law Society will hold its Annual General Meeting on **May 5, 2010**, at Osgoode Hall, 130 Queen Street West, beginning at **5:15 p.m.** All members are invited to attend. A [motion](#) regarding the paralegal scope of practice will be made at the meeting.

Continuing Legal Education

Mark your calendars for these upcoming CLE programs offered by the Law Society:

April 24, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. – [Best Practices for Paralegals Appearing Before the Ontario Court of Justice 2010](#) Following a successful debut in 2009, this Best Practices program will provide a comprehensive review of important issues for paralegals whose practices involve Ontario Court of Justice matters.

June 3, 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. – [Small Claims Court Update 2010](#) The rule changes of January 1, 2010 more than double the monetary limit of the court to \$25,000. Speakers from the legal and paralegal practice and the judiciary will address practical effects of the rule changes as well as strategic considerations paralegals should know to advance their clients' cases.

More programs will be available in the fall. Keep checking the [CLE Calendar](#).

Continuing professional development requirement

In February 2010, Convocation approved a continuing professional development (CPD) requirement of 12 hours per year for practising lawyers and paralegals who provide legal services. The new requirement, which **comes into effect January 1, 2011**, was introduced following consultation with the profession.

Paralegals and lawyers now join other regulated professions in Ontario, including accountants, doctors and architects, in having a form of CPD. [Full Story](#)

Four more college programs receive accreditation

Four more colleges have had their paralegal licensing programs accredited by the Law Society: Diamond Institute of Business and Computer Technology, Toronto; Herzing College, Toronto; Herzing College, Ottawa; and Fleming College, Peterborough. There are now [14 accredited paralegal programs](#) in the province. [Full Story](#)

Discrimination and Harassment Counsel Program

The Law Society provides a Discrimination and Harassment Counsel (DHC) Program to prevent human rights-based discrimination and harassment by lawyers and paralegals. The program began offering services in connection with the work of licensed paralegals in 2008. [Full Story](#)

New Complaints Resolution Commissioner

On April 1, 2010, Stindar Lal, Q.C., became the Law Society's new Complaints Resolution Commissioner (CRC). He succeeds Clare Lewis, Q.C., who served as the first CRC from 2005 to 2010.

The Complaints Resolution Commissioner acts as the Law Society's ombudsman for complaints against lawyers and paralegals where a complaint has been closed by the Complaints Resolution or Investigations Departments and the complainant is unsatisfied with the result and has applied to the CRC for a review.

The commissioner will review the file to ensure that the complaint was handled appropriately and the results were reasonable. The CRC also has the authority to provide alternative dispute resolution between lawyers or paralegals and their clients for issues that don't require a regulatory response.

Mr. Lal is a former deputy minister of six different ministries of the Ontario government and is a seasoned mediator and arbitrator. As a former general counsel to the Canadian Human Rights Commission, he has worked within a complaints-driven process which has many similarities to the Law Society's CRC process.

Practice Tip 3.2

[Confidential Information](#): What to do when dealing with a complaint.

Fee payment reminder

The deadline for payment in full of the annual fee must be received at the Law Society by **5 p.m., Friday, April 30, 2010**.
