

LCO / CDO

LIAISON

**FRIENDS IN THE
COMMUNITY**

LCO Executive Director Patricia Hughes has a seat on a new committee chaired by The Honourable Roy McMurtry and advising Ontario's 77 community legal clinics. The "Friends of the Community Clinics Committee" also includes legal scholars, benchers, practitioners and community leaders. "The LCO plays an important role in Ontario's legal world," says Lenny Abramowicz, executive director of the Association of Community Legal Clinics of Ontario. "We value the insights Patricia and the LCO will share."

**ELDER LAW
CONFERENCE**

Watch the LCO's website for details on the Canadian Conference on Elder Law co-hosted by the LCO and the Canadian Centre for Elder Law. The public conference takes place October 28-30, 2010 at the Delta Chelsea in Toronto.

Message from the Executive Director

When we began operations in September 2007, we knew December 2011 and the expiry of our mandate wasn't all that far away. We began our renewal applications in June. Why so early? We don't want to lose

momentum. See inside about the LCO's external evaluation and the Board of Governors retreat that led to our commitment to be even more wide-ranging in our collaborations with others.

Professor Mona Paré from the University of Ottawa (Civil Law) is one of a long line of Ontario legal academics who will bring their expertise to bear on our work in the future. It's also satisfying that we can provide an opportunity for students to show some of their own enthusiasm for law reform. The story on the community legal clinics new "Friends Committee" shows our appreciation for other organizations that play an important role in law reform. Read more at left and inside.

We can best develop an understanding of how the law affects people by speaking to them. That's the purpose of our most ambitious consultations in our disability and the law project. They're underway as I write this. Take a look at our website for details.

As for the future: keep checking our new website for news about our elder law conference and other developments. And we want to hear from you in return!

Patricia Hughes

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- A vision of collaboration
- Ready, set . . . renew!
- LCO-funded disability and the law research



Planning ahead

Evaluation report inspires vision of second five-year term



LCO BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Standing L-R: Nathalie des Rosiers, Stephen Gouge, Frank Iacobucci, Jinyan Li, Chris Bredt, Neena Gupta and Ian Holloway.

Seated L-R: Patricia Hughes; Larry Banack, Chair; and Murray Segal.

Absent from photo: Lorne Sossin.

A new report evaluating the Law Commission of Ontario's first 30 months has inspired a vision of the future that is collaborative and involving more academics and community groups.

"If there's one thing we learned from this process," says Board Chair Larry Banack, "it's the value of this unique model of law reform that engages our original founding partners and, more broadly, the academy, the profession and the public."

The report compiled by Toronto's Cathexis Consulting was the result of an intensive six-month analysis involving 54 stakeholders and nine recommendations on how the LCO might continue to build on its early successes. "The evaluation showed a young organization that is functioning very, very well," says Senior Consultant Melissa McGuire. "Our recommendations focused on how they might build on their successes and overcome challenges that are completely normal for such a young organization." By the time of the report's release in February the LCO had already taken action on many of the recommendations, including the development of clear roles for Advisory Board members and a process for tracking and reporting on meaningful success indicators.

Cathexis' recommendations were front and centre this spring when the LCO's Board of Governors met to plan for the future. With less than 18 months remaining in the organization's original mandate, the Board is looking to continue to build on existing strengths, leverage resources and bring new, collaborative approaches to the law reform process as part of what they hope will be a second five-year term.

"This was our time to examine where we are, dream about the future and recognize the strengths and commitments of an extraordinary staff and volunteer team," says Banack.

LCO renewal application underway

As early as next spring, the LCO hopes to have approval in principle to operate for a second, five-year term beginning in January 2012. "We're beginning the renewal process now," explains LCO Executive Director Patricia Hughes.

The LCO's future is dependent upon continued support from funding partners the Law Foundation of Ontario, Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General, Osgoode Hall Law School, the Law Society of Upper Canada and from supporting partners the Deans of Ontario's law schools.

A positive evaluation and outcomes like Bill 133, which incorporated key elements of the LCO's 2009 recommendations on pension division on marriage breakdown, will play a role in the renewal application.

"The early message from our founding partners has been positive," says Board Chair Larry Banack. "We're all very optimistic about what lies ahead."

Disability and the law research runs the gamut

Ontario legal scholar among LCO-funded researchers

When the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities was ratified by Canada in March, Mona Paré asked how the country planned to honour its commitment to consult with people with disabilities. As one of seven LCO-funded researchers — and the first from an Ontario law school — she now plans to find out whether the province's education sector has what it takes to get the job done.

“I want to know how children with disabilities exercise their communication rights in education,” explains the University of Ottawa civil law professor and former member of the UN disability program team. “How are their views heard in individual decision-making processes and at the policy level?”

Paré's findings, together with those from other papers ranging from legal capacity to barriers for Aboriginal persons with disabilities, will help frame a comprehensive consultation paper on the law as it affects persons with disabilities. The report will also include results from the LCO's province-wide consultations involving some 200 persons with disabilities, advocacy groups and service providers, including government representatives.

“This project is a good fit for me as a legal scholar,” says Paré. In the LCO's hands, “my research will have wider reach among members of the public and decision-makers in Ontario's schools, communities and governments.”

The LCO's disability consultation paper is scheduled for release this fall.



Mona Paré



LCO staff lawyer **Lauren Bates** (2nd from Right) with 2010 summer student researchers **Amanda Letourneau** (Osgoode Hall Law School), **Maria Pia Brunello** (Windsor Law), **Ari Linds** (University of Ottawa, Common Law Section) and **Denise Cooney** (University of Toronto).

Ontario's foreign worker nominee program sheds light on the implications of the program for workers' statutory entitlements and constitutional rights. Osgoode's Andrea McGarry contributed two papers on Aboriginal child welfare as part of the school's Aboriginal Lands, Resources & Governments Clinical Program.

Says Baxter: “It was a unique chance to be in on the ground floor of a project that I'm hoping has real implications for law and policy in Ontario.”

Law students key contributors

Two new Ontario law school graduates are keeping tabs on the LCO after each made pivotal contributions to research projects involving vulnerable workers and family law reform.

Jamie Baxter was a final year law student last fall at the University of Toronto's David Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights when he made the connection with LCO. Baxter's paper on

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