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2015 Bencher Election

M. ANNE VESPRY

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Candidate Statement

As an educator and sole practitioner, I find that LSUC policies often do not connect with the lived experience of the public the Society protects or the Licensees it regulates. This is not due to ill intent, but at least in part to the relative homogeneity of elected Benchers. LSUC is a big ship, and will not right itself quickly, but we must begin to turn. As a Bencher, I would raise concerns such as the following.

ABS: Legal practices are changing as other providers appear – e.g. international outsourcing agencies, and Internet companies offering “complete” computer generated divorces, wills, corporate documents etc. Contention arises over the perceived competition between lawyers and paralegals for clients, but does the ABS discussion include regulating those alternative businesses? To protect the public LSUC must recognize that quick-fix online services create suboptimal outcomes. We can increase access to justice by finding ways for all licensees to provide services economically – to make the pie bigger, not fight over crumbs.

Both Licensees and the public need more transparency; we deserve evidence-based policies. Presented with “black box” policies, we question whether they are based on evidence or whim. Aggregated data collected by LSUC should be public. Instead of saying some schools are substandard, the Society could publish licensing exam pass rates per school, as some US Bar Associations do. Students will pick accordingly, and LSUC can cease to micromanage educational institutions.

Information-gathering strategies need regular and skeptical review: the purpose of the information should be clear and anonymity considered. If, for instance, a student fears that responding negatively (on the strength of an educational program, work placement or articling position) will risk their chance to write the licensing exam, they will hardly be candid.

CPD: should LSUC provide course content, or would resources be better employed in evaluating whether mandatory CPD improves competence and outcomes for clients? Should CPD be a profit centre for the Society? If so, then LSUC must exercise greater care in accreditation, to avoid apparent conflicts of interest.



Contact: anne@vespry.ca

Experience

Employment

- Lecturer at Algonquin Academy, Ottawa: Paralegal Program, 2011–present
- Solicitor and negotiator in a sole practice: family law, wills and estates, 2013 – present

Memberships

- Canadian Ass’n for Legal Ethics
- County of Carleton Law Ass’n
- Egale Canada, volunteer (1996-99)

Qualifications

- Called to the Ontario Bar, 2003
- LL.B., *Cum Laude*, University of Ottawa, 1999
- B.A., University of Toronto, 1989

Previously

- Partner in a two-practitioner firm, Ottawa: general solicitor’s practice, 2004 – 2011
- Various writing and editing positions; instruction and support for information technology used by small, non-profit, arts and social justice organizations.