



March 20, 2025

Treasurer Peter Wardle  
Law Society of Ontario  
Osgoode Hall  
130 Queen St. W.  
Toronto, ON  
M5H 2N6

**Sent via Email**

Dear Treasurer Wardle:

The OBA has a significant interest in maintaining the profession's reputation as competent self-governors. Issues with respect to the salary increase of the Law Society's former CEO continue to spark debate. At the core of the underlying issue is a lack of transparency. The failure to produce Dennis O'Connor's report is being cited by many as an extension of that lack of transparency. In the absence of updates, solutions and action from the LSO, a mix of leaks, speculation, and gossip has filled the void. Allowing this to continue threatens the reputation of the regulator and, by extension, jeopardizes self-regulation.

We understand that there may be confidential employee information in the report but a debate over whether those considerations trump the need for transparency is unnecessary and has led to detrimental delay. We recommend the immediate release of a robust summary of Mr. O'Connor's report, which should include:

- (a) Any findings of systemic failure or problematic corporate culture, including murky lines of authority, lack of options for professional staff to express concerns, unclear mandates, or a culture of secrecy;
- (b) Any findings of improper actions or failures to act on the part of members of convocation or LSO staff. We understand that, while the actions or inaction of members of convocation should be fully disclosed to convocation's electorate, decisions with respect to staff discipline or training are properly in the hands of the LSO. Accordingly, information with respect to staff members could be anonymized where appropriate;

Cont'd.

- (c) Any recommendations for change; and
- (d) Any other information that is necessary for meaningful accountability to the profession and the public.

If there is delay in producing the summary, suspicions around who or what is being protected by the refusal to disclose the salient details of the report will become deeper and more intractable.

Immediately following the release of the summary, we recommend that:

- (a) The Treasurer and Interim CEO hold a meeting of stakeholders, including government, to:
  - (i) Determine whether the summary is sufficient for those groups to play their various roles in holding the regulator accountable to the profession and the public; and
  - (ii) Discuss the changes recommended by Mr. O'Connor and any other necessary checks and balances that should be implemented; and
- (b) The LSO announce its plans to implement Mr. O'Connor's recommendations for change and any additional checks and balances necessary to avoid future process and transparency failures. Implementation should follow quickly on the heels of the announcement.

Once the issues addressed in the report are adequately remedied, the reputation of the profession as competent self-governors will depend on the LSO shifting its efforts and focus from insular considerations of how to govern itself to the work of governing. It is time to focus on the profession and the public. To many in the profession, the package of governance reforms on which the LSO consulted earlier this year appear to be another symptom of some issues that led to the current crisis, rather than a recipe for improvement. They should be set aside in the interest of focusing effort and attention on initiatives that protect the public, improve access to justice, and promote the continuation of a strong and competent bar.

We look forward to working with the LSO on ensuring the necessary transparency and action to remedy the current issues, and on the more fundamental issues facing the sector.

Yours very truly,



Kathryn Manning  
OBA President