

LEARNING DISABILITIES ASSOCIATION OF CANADA BOARD NEWSLETTER/ COMMUNIQUÉ DU CONSEIL DE L'ACTA

We have made steady progress this past year. At times it can feel overwhelming, but we have achieved much with our small band of dedicated volunteers and staff. And, it is important to celebrate the big and small victories on our journey this year.

Along with the strategic planning process, LDAC's board of directors is initiating a quarterly newsletter that will be sent to all provincial/territorial directors with the goal of keeping our voting members up to date and informed of our activities. One of the goals to our future success will be establishing strong, two-way communications between the national and provincial/territorial boards. If you have any questions or comments about LDAC's work, please contact your provincial/territorial representative, or if you do not currently have a representative, you can contact Colette Charest, Director, Operations at casgrain.charest@gmail.com

The national board is made up of individuals appointed by each province and territory to represent the interest of their jurisdiction and individuals with learning disabilities across the country. In addition, directors-at-large can also be named to the board. At the 2014 Annual General Meeting held on October 31, 2014, the following were named to the national Board of Directors:

Board member	Jurisdiction	Term ending
Thealzel Lee	At large	2015
Bob Cram	SK	2015
Colette Charest	QC	2015
Christopher Thomson	BC	2016
Lorrie Goegan	AB	2016
Millie Leblanc	Atlantic	2016
	YK	Vacant
	MB	Vacant
	ON	Vacant

We want to thank our outgoing board members Judy Craig (AB), Kay Woodford (at-large) and David Banfield (Atlantic Region), and acknowledge their dedication and contributions during this period of transition at LDAC. We are also pleased that they will continue to lend their skills and talents to our committees.

At the 2013 AGM held on January 13th 2014, the membership voted on new by-laws in accordance to the new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act from Industry Canada. Under Section 2 of the new by-laws, all provincial/territorial board members are automatically members of LDAC and eligible to attend and vote at the AGM.

The work of the national board is two-fold. First, it is responsible for the operations of LDAC and secondly, it engages in an array of ongoing collaborative activities that support the organization's work on behalf of its provincial/territorial associations and individuals with learning disabilities. To effectively accomplish these goals, members of the board and other designated volunteers will chair various committees.

Thank you to everyone for their recruiting efforts to bolster the resources at LDAC. We welcome two new volunteers: Ray Frank (Fund Development Committee) and Jason Lesage (Communications Committee).

Below is the current composition of our committees:

COMMITTEE	CHAIR	PRIMARY BOARD LIAISON	SECONDARY BOARD LIAISON
Operations	Colette Charest (QC)	Colette Charest (QC)	Vacant
Governance	Bob Cram (SK)	Bob Cram (SK)	-
Communications	Jason Lesage	Bob Cram (SK)	Lorrie Goegan (AB)
Fund Development	Chris Thomson (BC)	Chris Thomson (BC)	Colette Charest (QC)
Legal	Blair Mitchell	Millie Leblanc (Atlantic)	
Research	Christina Fiedorowicz	Lorrie Goegan (AB)	
Strategic Planning (ad hoc)	Thealzel Lee (BC)	Bob Cram (SK)	Colette Charest (QC)

Following are the highlights of the past year's activities carried out by the various LDAC committees and staff/volunteers:

Strategic Planning

Our main focus this past year has been devoted to the Phoenix Project – our strategic planning exercise and fundraising audit for the future of LDAC and the LDA network.

- Phase I (Spring-Summer 2014):
 - Wiki was developed to track results from interviews held with key people in the LDA network and the general activities of the Phoenix Project <https://sites.google.com/site/ldacphoenix/home> .
 - National Summit held June 26, 2014, which developed guiding principles for LDAC and the LDA network to work together.

- Identified candidate “Rally Projects” that would develop greater cohesiveness for the LDA network in its work to advance the issues of importance to the learning disabilities community.
- Phase II (Summer-Fall 2014):
 - Ongoing national survey to spread the word about the Rally Project candidates and to assess the interest from the LDA network to form teams to implement the projects.
 - Overall theme of Phase II is to use the Rally Projects to demonstrate the role of LDAC as facilitator and convener for the LDA network.
- March 2015 is the “official” end point of the Phoenix Project with the production of a roadmap for LDAC and the LDA network to work together; leveraging the “Lean Canvas” thinking to work on early priorities and harnessing the resources of the entire LDA network.
- Concurrent with Phase II, Good Works was hired to review and audit LDAC’s Fundraising Program and provide recommendations to maximize its donor base, provide good stewardship to its donors by developing best practices, explore other avenues including planned giving, foundations/corporate alignment and explore a fair and sustainable revenue sharing or allocation model/formula for LDAC as a whole to become more sustainable.

Operations

LDAC received several donations of company shares from the public. During the past year and following several discussions, LDAC has decided to close its investment portfolio account with a full service broker and move it to the BMO Discount Broker. The shares in this portfolio will be sold and reserved against the amounts in the two remaining bursary accounts. The BMO Discount Broker account will allow us to accept donations of stocks and other securities which will be sold into the market and the resulting funds will be transferred to LDAC’s operating account. A formal investment policy will only be formulated if the outcome of the strategic planning process and the goals set through this process require that LDAC develop such a policy.

The Operations Committee has also tightened procedures for banking and investing. As per the original donor’s request, LDAC transferred the funds reserved for the Carol Thomson Memorial Scholarships for Students with Learning Disabilities to the Vancouver College Foundation. The Doreen Kronick Scholarship and the JoAnna Townsend Applied Arts Scholarship for Students with Learning Disabilities have yet to be reactivated. The funds remain fully reserved. Our goal is to have the future of these bursaries dovetail strategically with the future of the organization. As such,

the LDAC board has opted to wait for the completion of the strategic planning process before proceeding with any changes with respect to these scholarships.

Governance

LDAC applied and received its Certificate of Continuance to make its transition regarding the Canada Not-for-profit Corporations Act, which came into effect in 2011. This involved reviewing the letters patent, preparing articles, revising the by-laws to make them compliant with the new federal regulations, gaining member approval for those revisions, performing a French name search and filing the required documents to Corporations Canada before the deadline of October 17, 2014.

Communications

Over the past year, several emails have gone out mainly concerning the Strategic Planning. A template has been developed for an internal newsletter and regular quarterly updates will be sent to report on board activities. The Communications Committee will be developing its strategy once the recommendations from Project Phoenix are released.

Fund Development

No activity until the recommendations of the fundraising consultant is put into place after the conclusion of the strategic planning process.

Legal Consortium

A series of 22 short videos featuring FAQ s with Yude Henteleff, chair of the legal consortium, were produced and developed in 2013. These are now captioned on the LDAC You tube channel and available at <http://www.ldac-acta.ca/featured-ld-videos>

The Consortium has developed the following goals for the group:

1. The Legal Consortium of the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada wishes to encourage understanding and applicability of the law and legal principle in the Moore Case (as ruled by the Supreme Court of Canada) for use both in litigation and policy advocacy. To do so, subject to funding:
 - a) The Consortium is seeking to have prepared a comprehensive review of Moore and relevant legal decisions and commentaries, which provides a readily accessible, detailed analysis of the decision and the litigation opportunities and policy implications it presents.

- b) The immediate objective of the review is to provide a Manual-style resource to support counsel representing, or advising potential complainants in special needs education cases.
- c) At the same time, the Consortium also intends to seek to have prepared an accompanying review of expert information and resources, in a similar, Manual-style, to support counsel who are considering, preparing and presenting such claims.
- d) Once the reviews are completed, the Consortium further intends to produce a manual containing materials better suited for use by parents, organizations and others advocating for meaningful services for all special needs students.

Education and Research

The latest version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders; Fifth Edition (DSM-5) published May 2013, includes the diagnostic criteria and features of Specific Learning Disorder. There are DSM-5 criteria at variance with the LDAC Definition of Learning Disabilities and LDAC will need to consider whether the current definition should be more aligned with the DSM-5.

A Working Group of professionals has prepared a draft statement on the changes to the DSM5 and sent out the draft statement to all provincial/territorial LDAs for comments. Currently, they are reviewing and revising the statement to present to LDAC's Board of Directors for adoption in January 2015. Once adopted, the statement will be translated and distributed across the country.

Health and the Environment

LDAC is a founding partner with the Canadian Partnership for Children's Health and Environment (CPCHE). The two LDAC volunteer Health Policy Advisors, Lynn Green and Barbara McElgunn, have attended workshops, webinars and provided input on the impact of lead, neurotoxicities, packaging, pesticides and dyes on brain development and learning disabilities. They have also provided comments to Health Canada/Chemical Management Plan on screening assessments and risk management scopes of the group of Azo dyes.

Executive Director's Report

Claudette Larocque has also worked on the following:

1. *Screening for Success: Screening Adults At-Risk for Learning Disabilities*

This instrument has been very popular with many provinces. LDA New Brunswick in collaboration with LDAC is conducting a revision of the Screening for Success instrument

with the original authors. The aim is to update the instrument and the training manual, conduct pilot sites with the new tool and eventually develop training sessions with all provincial/territorial LDAs and other organizations as a means of a revenue source. The tool is used by learning disability specialists, case managers, career counselors, employment counselors, guidance counselors, community college, university student services specialists and all other professionals working with adults experiencing learning challenges. This project is generously funded by the Government of New Brunswick.

2. Government funded project

LDAC has one government funded project, the Project Phoenix, with the goal of developing a Strategic Plan, a Business Plan and a Fundraising Plan for LDAC. An operational grant was also received from the federal government for this fiscal year.

3. 2015/16 Funding

Recently, the Government of Canada made the decision to provide an additional year of funding to all organizations that were previously in receipt of directed funding, as a means to provide ongoing support while the disability component of the Social Development Partnership Program transitions to its new program design. This funding is intended to support both activities that are related to our ongoing operations, as well as activities that are complimentary to those undertaken through the Project Phoenix.

4. Direct Mail Campaigns

LDAC develops three direct mail campaigns a year: Spring, Fall and Christmas. The Christmas campaign has been sent. LDAC has been conducting direct mail campaigns since 1989 and currently has 3,300 active donors on its donor list.

All provincial/territorial LDAs are encouraged to nominate a representative to sit on the national board or a committee. Names are welcomed anytime.

Wishing you all a wonderful holiday season and a prosperous 2015!

On behalf of the LDAC board of directors,



Thealzel Lee
National Chair, LDAC
thealzel@ldabc.ca