



October 9, 2008

Mediation Results in Agreement in Principle

The Law Society Lawyers Chapter Executive met with mediator Robert Pekeles and representatives of the Law Society of British Columbia for twelve hours on October 3. Mr. Pekeles was helpful in assisting the Parties to agree on the framework to achieve goals that the PEA worked to achieve throughout 12 months of bargaining and mediation.

The PEA pursued four goals regarding compensation:

- i. achieve annual salary increases that would be fair and transparent
- ii. achieve a fair, understandable and transparent process for movement within the salary range of a job group
- iii. make progress on internal equity issues
- iv. make progress on market comparisons.

Additionally, the PEA has taken the position throughout this process that the Parties should undertake joint research to develop a shared understanding of market issues and develop a system of internal equity to achieve an optimal salary structure.

In mediation the LSBC referred to the market data supplied by the PEA regarding Claims Counsel as a job group for a market adjustment. The Parties also agreed that Professional Conduct, Special Fund and Custodianship is a job group that merits internal equity adjustment. Since the commencement of bargaining, the LSBC created the new job group of Custodianship that required the establishment of a salary range.

Annual increases for all staff lawyers of 3% (2007), 3% (2008) and 4% (2009) were established in the collective agreement. The collective agreement also established a 2% fund for each of 2008 and 2009 to address the remaining issues. Although much work needs to be done, the Parties agreed to the application in principle of the 2% fund. In each job group, the agreement provides for six equal steps from the minimum to the maximum salary. The agreement also provides for:

- i. an increase for the Claims Counsel group increasing the maximum salary to \$109,272 for 2008, an additional 3.5% increase;
- ii. an increase for the Professional Conduct/ Special Fund group increasing the maximum salary to \$101,111 for 2008, an additional 5.9% increase;
- iii. the establishment of a new salary range for Custodianship Counsel, with a maximum salary of \$105,000 in 2008.

The PEA and the LSBC will be working over the coming weeks to calculate the application of this agreement to individual lawyers. Given the complexity of establishing new salary scales and applying a fixed amount of funds among many lawyers, this will take some time. The PEA will advise members when this work is completed.

Carmel Wiseman, Chairperson
David Newell, Vice Chairperson
Jack Olsen, Secretary-Treasurer
Ernie Gorrie, Senior Labour Relations Officer