



ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING 2023

June 7, 2023

Videoconference and in person at:

**Blake, Cassels & Graydon LLP
199 Bay Street
Suite 4000, Commerce Court West
Toronto, Ontario, M5L 1A9**

6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

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AGENDA

1. Call to Order
2. President's Opening Remarks and Report
3. Presentation of Financial Statements
4. Presentation of Slate of FACL Directors
5. Any Other Business

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Justin P'ng

FACL Ontario has much to be proud of from this past term, and much to continue making progress on in the coming years. That sentiment crystallized for me when I attended the judicial introduction ceremony on March 23, 2023 for Justice Avvy Go, a founding director of the Federation of Asian Canadian Lawyers in 2007, and the first judge of Chinese heritage to be appointed to the Federal Court. Justice Go was appointed in 2021, and her belated introduction ceremony was the first to be held by the Federal Court since before the pandemic. As I listened to the many richly deserved accolades for Justice Go and the allusions to the significant judicial work that lay ahead for her, I was reminded that while FACL Ontario has made significant achievements over the past 16 years of its existence, some of its most important work undoubtedly lies ahead.

I first joined the board of directors as a student director in 2017. Since then, I have watched FACL Ontario go from strength to strength under the leadership and teamwork of its board and volunteers, from establishing a robust regional presence in Ottawa and the northern GTA, to making submissions on key policy issues before politicians and policymakers, to making multiple interventions before the Supreme Court of Canada on major public interest matters. In 2022, I took on the tremendous privilege of leading this accomplished organization when past President Justice Mabel Lai was appointed to the Ontario Court of Justice. Upon being appointed, she joined a distinguished lineage of FACL board alumni who now serve as judges, including Justice Maryka Omatsu, Justice Sandra Nishikawa, Justice Michael Doi, Justice Leonard Kim, and Justice Julia Shin Doi.

The responsibility of following in their footsteps and moving FACL Ontario forward was in many ways and equal parts challenging and rewarding. Over the 2023-24 term, we successfully transitioned back to in-person programming, enhanced our partnerships with external supporters, and engaged in public advocacy on one of the most important elections in the history of the Law Society of Ontario. In March 2023 we returned to our first fully in-person conference and gala since 2020 and welcomed a number of honoured guests, including Chief Justice of Ontario and President of the Court of Appeal for Ontario Michael Tulloch. We also increased our external partnerships and achieved historic levels of fundraising success that will help support the enhancement of our membership programming and community initiatives going forward.

On May 1, 2023, the culmination of years of organizing efforts by an impassioned network of legal professionals, including the driving force of past FACL Ontario president Brendan Wong, resulted in resounding victory for the Good Governance Coalition. This slate of candidates in the 2023 bench elections for the LSO included past FACL Ontario presidents Gerald Chan and Justice Julia Shin Doi, the latter also being one of the founders of the Federation of Asian Canadian

Lawyers. FACL Ontario was proud to have endorsed and been involved in the campaigning efforts for the Good Governance Coalition, which defeated the FullSTOP slate and their members' attempts to oppose initiatives focused on advancing equity, diversity, and inclusion at the LSO. We look forward to working with the members of the Good Governance Coalition to address systemic discrimination in the legal community and uphold the highest standards of responsible self-governance for the legal profession.

As I now pass the baton to the incoming board of directors and reflect on the past six years of my involvement with FACL Ontario, I find myself enormously grateful for the opportunity to have served this organization. I recognize that FACL Ontario has many areas where it can continue to improve and that it has an ongoing responsibility to focus on how it can better represent and serve its members while growing within its mandate. I am confident that the next board will be steadfast in pursuing this mission and I look forward to working with the FACL community as I transition from my official roles.

It has been an honour to have served as President.

Justin P'ng
President

ADVOCACY AND POLICY COMMITTEE

Hillson Tse

Members: Adrienne Lei, Annecy Pang, David Spence, David Lu, Delna Contractor, DJ Tokiwa, Emily Lam, Eric Cheng, Joshua Ng, Juliet Knapton, Justin Yuen, Kenneth Jim, Matt Kim, Megan Mah, and Victoria Yang

The 2023 Benchers election became a significant focal point for FACL and other equity seeking organizations both leading up to and during the election period. As APC Chair, I had met with core members of the Good Governance Coalition earlier on to discuss the common alignment of principles and the opportunities for partnership in the upcoming benchers elections. Our involvement relating to the benchers election included supporting FACL's endorsement efforts for the GGC and contingency planning for election matters.

With respect to external consultations, FACL was invited to a Hate Crimes Roundtable with Justice Minister Lametti to discuss proposed legislative amendments to combat online hate and hate speech. I attended with Justin Yuen on behalf of FACL. We along with other equity seeking groups present for the roundtable were able to discuss the rise in hate crimes generally and during the pandemic, and provided a number of recommendations on how criminal legislation can be properly structured to address hate crimes. My understanding is that the consultations are still ongoing and that no new legislation has been tabled as of yet but FACL will continue communicating with justice stakeholders to ensure continued participation in the drafting process.

I recently took over the role of FACL's representative to the Ontario Court of Appeal Bar and Diversity Committee from our past-past-President Peter Choe. The purpose of the Committee is to bring together members of equity seeking groups and senior members of the bench for dialogue, training, or lectures on EDI. It is very welcoming to see that our judiciary is actively engaged and open to the challenges faced by a diverse bar.

The Committee received one request for FACL to intervene in litigation which is still under consideration at the time of this report.

I would like to thank all of our members for their contributions this past year.

Hillson Tse
Chair, Advocacy and Policy Committee

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Carissa Wong

Members: Me-Hae Hur (Co-Chair), Annecy Pang (Student Co-Chair), Kari Chan, Rachel Gold, Maneesha Gupta, Nicky Kim, Monica Lee, Megan Martin, Karen Lau-Po-Hung, and Sophie Rao

Mandate/Mission:

The mission of FACL Women's Committee is to create a safe, inclusive and interactive environment to share and build greater awareness of the issues, challenges, and opportunities facing racialized women legal professionals. We inspire and celebrate our members, provide role models, and build a sense of community among racialized women legal professionals. We foster systemic change, support intersectionality among all equity-seeking groups, and provide opportunities to give back to the wider community.

Women's Committee is committed to community outreach, with a focus on facilitating access to community-based resources, support networks and the justice system by racialized and vulnerable women. It is also focused on empowering racialized legal professionals, and supporting other equity-seeking groups, particularly Indigenous communities.

2022-2023 Projects:

1. Navigating Leave and Return to Work as New Parents - Two Part Series and Survey

On Thursday, November 24, between 12:00-1:30pm, FACL ON's Women's Committee and Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP hosted a 'fireside chat' and the first in a two-part series on planning new parenthood and the re-entry into the workforce.

The goal of the two-part series is to bring to light and discuss some of the challenges, success stories, and opportunities for further improvement of the legal profession's practices and culture to make balancing new parenthood and work easier for all parents. The series is aimed at fostering support for racialized men, women, and all gender identities, who are planning to leave and return to work to build their families, as the entire spectrum of gender orientations and identities face these challenges.

The first session included a panel of speakers, a brief Q&A, and break-out into smaller discussion groups, which was moderated. The break-out groups allowed participants to speak in an intimate and safe space about questions, concerns, and challenges they have about becoming new parents and returning to work. The information from the break-out groups was summarized and anonymized.

This event was hosted in-person at Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP (Cassels) in downtown Toronto, and offered a hybrid virtual option for those out of the city or unavailable to attend in person. The in-person portion was catered.

In addition, after the event, Women's Committee and Cassels created a Google survey of the same questions that were asked at the breakout sessions. This survey was distributed in the FACL Newsletter, at the FACL Annual Conference, among our Director and Cassels networks, and posted on the website for anyone to voluntarily complete entirely privately. Cassels generously offered to provide a \$100 raffle prize (a gift certificate to David's Tea) to those who wished to include a phone number or email address, in appreciation of respondents' time in completing the survey. The response to the survey has been good, with interesting results. We intend to do one more push for responses before closing the survey.

FACL and Cassels are planning the second session for September 2023. At this event, we plan to present the data we gathered from the first session and intervening survey, as well as invite speakers from the information with human resources, EDI professionals in the legal field, and partner-level legal professionals. The audience for this event will be upper management in the legal profession.

2. Women in Law Leadership Award Reception

On behalf of FACL, I attended the Women in Law Leadership Reception on October 28, 2022 at the Ritz Carlton in honour of Professor Kathleen Mahoney. She received the Women in Law Leadership's Rosalie Silberman Abella Award for outstanding achievements and advancement of women lawyers, particularly as it relates to inclusion and diversity. Professor Mahoney has agreed to be a guest on an upcoming Podcast, with a scheduled recording date in June 2023.

In the works:

As my two terms as a Director end, there are a number of other projects on the horizon, including a Committee volunteer appreciation event, continued discussion with FACL's Community Outreach Committee and Butterfly on how to improve access to justice for stigmatized, vulnerable Asian and migrant sex workers. The discussion on changing the Women's Committee's core mandate to include more gender diversity is on hold, and at this time we will continue to focus primarily on serving the interests of self-identified Asian women and their allies.

It has been a distinct privilege and pleasure to found FACL Ontario's Women's Committee, to serve as its Chair (and now Co-Chair), and to hand over the reigns to the next leaders.

Carissa Wong
Co-Chair, Women's Committee

MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE

Alexis Eun Young Choi

Members: Daniel Wong (Co-Chair for the first half of term, now Vice President Internal), Abby Leung, Annecy Pang, Barbara de Dios, Hillson Tse, Jocelyn Espejo-Clarke, Manasvin Goswami, Sophie Fu, and Victoria Yang

- In September 2022, the Mentorship Committee held its first in-person event since the beginning of the pandemic aimed at providing support and mentorship for articling students. The Articling Student Mentorship Event was on how to succeed as an articling student, with a panel answering questions submitted by articling students. The event also included a mix and mingle portion, providing an opportunity for lawyers and articling students to interact. Approximately 40 articling students and lawyer attended the event. Our special thanks to Howie, Sacks and Henry LLP for hosting the event and panelists, Bettina Xue Griffin, Jamin Chen, Jackson Huang, and Benjamin Pan.
- In November 2022, we continued our “Real Talk: The Life” of a Litigator series and the third installment featured lawyers working in Crown Civil and Criminal Litigation. The expert panel of proven litigators described their day-to-day experiences in the courtroom and out. This series provided an honest and informative look beyond the law itself, and into the real “Life of a Litigator”. Thank you to our hosts, Dennis Ong and Bronwyn Martin, as well as our speakers, Justice Mabel Lai and Shima Heidari.
- In January 2023, the Mentorship Committee held the “The Power of Mentorship: Why is Mentorship So Important?” webinar with a focus on the impact that mentorship has had on our panelists, who previously participated in FACL’s Mentorship Program. The webinar highlighted the importance of mentorship within the legal profession and encouraged attendees to join the FACL Mentorship Program. Special thanks to our speakers, Dennis Ong and Jasmine Law.
- In January 2023, we hosted our annual flagship event, the FACL-Osler Speed Mentor-A-Thon Event. It was our first in-person FACL-Osler Speed Mentor-A-Thon since the beginning of the pandemic and despite a snowstorm, the turnout was great, with approximately 90 attendees, which is comparable to pre-pandemic numbers. We were joined by our keynote speaker, Amy Sujae Lee. Our special thanks to Richard Wong and Osler, Hoskin & Harcourt LLP for hosting the event.
- In January 2023, we launched our online Mentorship Program where mentors and mentees were matched up until the end of the term. All lawyers in good standing with the Law Society of Ontario were selected as mentors and law students, articling students and recent calls to the bar (3 years and under) were invited to apply to be mentees. This year, we had 106 mentors and 155 mentees participate in our Mentorship program; we are grateful for their participation.

- In January 2023, we also launched the FACL Mentorship Digital Lookbook. We featured FACL mentors on FACL’s online platforms, where they shared interesting facts about themselves and their thoughts about mentorship. The Digital Lookbook celebrated the trailblazers of FACL and promoted the importance of mentorship.
- In May 2023, the Mentorship Committee held the in-person “Discover Your Path: Career Planning Event”. The event was on how legal professionals can take control of their careers by exploring diverse career trajectories (private practice, in-house, government, and law-adjacent positions). The attendees also learned about job market trends, hire backs, job searching, and lateralling strategies. Our panelists with varied experiences supported the attendees with setting and achieving career goals. We had approximately 100 attendees at this event. Special thanks to Tamara Tomomitsu and Borden Ladner Gervais LLP for hosting the event. Thank you to Alfred Chung and TD Canada Trust for partnering with FACL and sponsoring this event. We also express our gratitude to our panelists, Brendan Wong, Ghazala Zaman, Jessica Jesudasan, Madori Sakamoto, and Paul Jonathan Saguil.

Alexis Eun Young Choi
Chair, Mentorship Committee

COMMUNITY OUTREACH COMMITTEE

Melissa Chan

Members: A live roster of Community Outreach Committee volunteers

This past year, the FACL Community Outreach Committee (COC) has been continuing to perform outreach with communities and facilitate public legal education workshops. In order to continue to provide the community with quality legal education workshops, our dedicated volunteers have also been diligently developing and improving our materials. This includes creating handouts summarizing the most pertinent points from each respective topic for community members to refer to after the presentation.

We have also continued to provide support for Butterfly: Asian and Migrant Sex Worker Support Network. The COC initially collaborated with FACL's Women's Committee last year in order to develop projects that would help address the legal needs specific to this community.

It has been a privilege to serve as the Chair of this committee; one that works towards addressing access to justice barriers that continue to exist for Asian communities.

Melissa Chan
Chair, Community Outreach Committee

AWARDS COMMITTEE

Manasvin Goswami

Members: Alexis Eun Young Choi and Maneesha Gupta

At the annual 2023 FACL Awards Ceremony held at the Conference, the following Awards were presented:

- FACL Ontario Lifetime Achievement Award: May Cheng
- FACL Ontario Lawyer of Distinction Award: Parna Sabet-Stephenson
- FACL Ontario Young Lawyer of the Year Award: Rosel Kim
- FACL Ontario Social Justice Award: Philip Cho
- FACL Ontario Corporate Diversity and Leadership Award: Canadian Association of LGBTQ2S+ Lawyers
- FACL Ontario LaForme Scholarship: Helen Wu

The 2023 FACL Ontario Omatsu Scholarship recipients were:

- Yinzi Gao
- Annie Hu
- Deborah Lim
- Filbert Yung

Each scholarship was for \$2,000. The field of scholarship applicants was very impressive and many other candidates, besides the four selected, would have been worthy winners.

We congratulate all award recipients for their outstanding leadership and involvement in their communities. A very special thanks to Alexis Eun Young Choi and Maneesha Gupta for their excellent work on the Committee.

Manasvin Goswami
Chair, Awards Committee

EVENTS COMMITTEE

Ryan Chan

This year, the Events committee was proud to host several very successful in-person social events in the post-covid world.

Our 16th Annual FACL Conference which was hosted entirely in person was extraordinarily popular as always, with tickets selling out for individual participants almost immediately. We will be looking to expand our conference size in future years to ensure that more of our membership is able to attend!

As with last year, post-pandemic interest in in-person events was extremely high, with our first FACL, CABL, SABA joint social since the pandemic reaching the maximum capacity of 90 attendees. FACL was also proud to host an event supporting the Good Governance Coalition, who we are very pleased to have been very successful in the most recent bencher elections.

As always, we would like to thank all of the FACL members for making these events possible and continue to encourage members to maintain this post-pandemic enthusiasm for in-person events!

Ryan Chan
Chair, Events Committee

GTA NORTH COMMITTEE

Ronald Trac

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the GTA North Committee did not host any in-person events during the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

The GTA North Committee remains committed to bringing together Asian Canadian lawyers in the Greater Toronto Area that live or practise outside of the traditional downtown Toronto core, especially those in small firms or solo practices, and to increase the visibility and membership of FACL among those demographics. To this end, the GTA North Committee plans to resume its in-person social and networking events in the 2023-2024 fiscal year, as the return to pre-pandemic life continues.

In addition, the GTA North Committee is continuing to evaluate the capability and viability of setting up a directory of small firm lawyers and solo practitioners with different language capabilities in the GTA to build a referral network to assist the greater Asian community who may need language-specific legal advice and services.

The GTA North Committee is constantly looking for more members to help plan various events and activities. Please feel free to contact us if you'd like to be a part of the committee.

Ronald Trac
Chair, GTA North Committee

ENGLISH AS SECOND LANGUAGE (ESL) / FOREIGN-QUALIFIED LAWYERS COMMITTEE

Jack Yu

In 2022, Canada welcomed 431,645 new permanent residents, a historic high for newcomers, and it is looking to receive additional 485,000 in 2024 and 500,000 in 2025. FACL Ontario's ESL / Foreign-Qualified Lawyers (ESLFQL) Committee aims to represent the ever-increasing number of ESL / foreign-qualified legal professionals and law students who face unique challenges and struggles in Canada, and provide a platform for dialogue, networking and information sharing. In 2022, the Committee hosted an in-person lawyers and articling students social event, and engaged with other organizations and groups sharing similar goals to advocate for the interests of ESL / FQ lawyers and students. The Committee plans to host more in-person events in the coming year tailored to unique language / ethnic groups, in order to better address the more nuanced and specific challenges faced by those in such groups. The Committee also plans to expand its core leadership team in order to increase capacity to deliver more events and contents to FACL members.

Jack Yu

Chair, ESL / Foreign-Qualified Lawyers Committee (ESLFQL)

FACL OTTAWA COMMITTEE

Jennifer Ho

Members: David Lu, David Ang, Emily Deng, Aakash Sanghadia, Alice Mihailescu, and Hilary Chung

The FACL Ottawa Committee (the “FACL Ottawa”) was founded in 2020 to bring together Asian legal professionals and students and highlight Asian representation in the Ottawa legal community. Since its creation during the pandemic, the Committee now has seven members. FACL Ottawa continues to create programming that serves the needs of Asian legal professionals and law students in Ottawa, the unceded Algonquin Anishinaabe territory.

Our programs have been attended not only by professionals and students in Ottawa, but also from across the country, including Toronto and Vancouver. FACL Ottawa continues to leverage the advantages of virtual events, however as we ease out of pandemic restrictions, we have begun planning more in-person events starting this year.

- FACL Ottawa Student Meet and Greet – September 15, 2022
 - FACL Ottawa hosted our inaugural in-person meet and greet for lawyers, law students, and paralegal students in the Ottawa area at The Three Brewers Microbrewery Restaurant. We had a great turnout for an evening of networking over drinks and appetizers, generously sponsored by the FACL Ontario Board and Kelly Santini LLP.
- “Full Stop, or Full Circle? Diversity and the 2023 Bench Election” – December 8, 2022
 - This event was a collaboration between FACL Ottawa and the CCLA Diversity Committee. This panel discussion, over Zoom, explored why EDI and access to justice are critical to the governance of the legal profession through the LSO in the context of the upcoming Bench Election, as well as the position of the Full Stop slate opposed to the LSO’s equity initiatives. Our panellists were Yavar Hameed, Anne Vespry, and Andrew Spurgeon, and the event was moderated by Virginia Lomax and David Ang.
 - This program was accredited for 60 minutes EDI Professionalism Hours.
- 16th Annual FACL Conference Panel: Litigating Identity: On Being Asian in the Courts – March 4, 2023
 - FACL Ottawa organized and moderated a panel at FACL Ontario’s annual conference at the Toronto Region Board of Trade, accredited for 65 minutes of Professionalism Content. The panel discussed the experiences of Asian litigators, the challenges that Asian litigators face, and how racial identity has affected the way Asian litigators conduct themselves. Our panelists included: Tammy Law (Tammy Law Professional Corporation), Susannah Chung-Alvares, and Sakina Babwani (Bennett Jones). The panel was moderated by committee member David Lu (Davidson Houle Allen LLP).
 - This program was accredited for 65 minutes EDI Professionalism Hours.

- A Conversation with BIPoC Bencher Candidates – April 12, 2023
 - FACL Ottawa in collaboration with the Ottawa chapters of the Canadian Association of Black Lawyers, and the Canadian Hispanic Bar Association, held a virtual discussion with BIPoC bencher candidates in the 2023 Law Society of Ontario Bencher elections. Candidates were invited to discuss their background, platform, and key issues that affect BIPoC licensees.

- FACL Ottawa and BLG – Asian Heritage Month Social – May 17, 2023
 - FACL Ottawa and BLG’s Ottawa office hosted an in-person Asian Heritage month celebration, open to all law students and legal professionals in the Ottawa area. Our guest speaker was Priscilla Ki Sun Hwang, a reporter and editor with CBC News in Ottawa. This was our inaugural in-person Asian Heritage month event since the COVID-19 pandemic. The event was generously sponsored by BLG.

We look forward to planning more Ottawa-based programming in the coming year, and we are thankful to the FACL Ontario Board for continuing to support our initiatives.

Jennifer Ho
Chair, FACL Ottawa Committee

COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

David Spence-Valenzuela

Members: Jennifer Ho, Ryan Chan, and Yiwei Zhang

In the 2022-2023 year, the Communications Committee launched FACL's new website with the assistance of our third-party web designer, Sparked Digital. As part of the redesign, we migrated the current website to a new server to optimize performance. In addition, the Committee continued to promote and enhance the FACL brand by circulating FACL events and other news items through our social media channels, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn. The Committee also designed and implemented a new seamless ticketing system for FACL's annual conference and gala. In the upcoming year, the Committee will redesign FACL's membership database by introducing a new and improved membership directory and by transitioning the current annual memberships to align with the January 1 to December 31 calendar year.

David Spence-Valenzuela
Chair, Communications Committee

STUDENTS COMMITTEE

Alexis Eun Young Choi

Members: Annecy Pang, Gabby Aquino, Kate Yau, Sophie Fu, and Teresa Li

In February 2023, the Student Committee was established to facilitate and maintain the engagement of FACL Ontario's student members and the Ontario law schools to further FACL Ontario's mission. The Student Committee serves to engage with FACL Ontario's student members and increase awareness of FACL Ontario's programs and events. The Committee is overseen by at least one full director appointed by the Board, chaired by up to two student directors, and consists of all student directors, as well as up to two student members (executive members of the pan-Asian student club) from each Ontario law school. As the Ontario law schools elect new executives for the upcoming school year, their membership of the Student Committee will be confirmed and active; monthly meetings are expected to begin in May 2023.

Alexis Eun Young Choi
Chair, Students Committee

Note: The FACL Podcast does not currently exist as a formal Committee, only as a project, and thus is not reporting members and activities as a Committee in the 2022-2023 AGM Consolidated Report.