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ADVANCING THE BUSINESS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY GLOBALLY



President's Message: Seven Priority Areas Provide Value To Members

By John Paul, President, LES International

For 50 years, LES has served as a campfire that brings businesses and licensing professionals together from around the world. We gather to tell stories that help us learn from each other and inspire each other. As a result, we build stronger relationships around things that matter to us. Meeting and developing these personal friendships facilitate deal-making important to our businesses—and our campfire discussions help get deals done better and quicker. So, what we do with each other matters, and what we do for each other matters. And if we set our minds to something, we can make it happen.

I'm honored to lead this organization as we enter into our 50th year. So, what will LESI do in the coming year to advance the business of intellectual property globally? How will we help each other better protect and commercialize innovation, and manage and monetize intellectual property?

At the 2021 LESI winter planning meeting, LES leaders from around the world made it clear that we must focus our efforts on producing and providing concrete things that are most valuable to (1) our LES organization (things that make LES stronger and more effective), (2) members of LES (things that interest them and help them do their day job better); and (3) the public (things in our expertise that help the general public and those in need).

We distilled the planning discussions into seven priority areas: education, community, membership, awards, public service, funding, and communication. And we planned concrete projects in each area that would provide value to LES, its members, and the public.

We are dreaming big—that we can engage a far greater number of people involved with innovation and the business of IP in some way with LES. We believe that if we build the right things and reach out in the right way, they will come.

What do we build? How do we build it? How do we present it? And how do we finance it? The journey to chart and start the course for the next 50 years of LESI begins today.

1. Educating Our Members

We have lots of educational offerings throughout the year. But what will best attract and retain membership? I believe it is job training, updates on developments, and understanding how the leaders in our field are doing their job—things that can readily be used in our own day jobs!

On-demand Job Training: LES must be known as the place to go for practical job training in the business of IP and licensing and provide this training on demand. To address this need, we are preparing courses that will be available online starting this autumn, 24/7.

Global Licensing Updates: We will provide regular global updates of legal and regulatory developments affecting business and the licensing profession, building upon what LES USA and Canada and other societies already provide nationally.

Master Classes and Executive Interviews: To better understand how the leaders in our field are doing their job, we will do two things. First, we will organize master classes of top people to provide a deep dive in key areas of practice and share with our members their keys to success. Second, we will tee up interviews highlighting CEOs and other business

executives to provide case studies on effectively protecting and commercializing innovation and managing and monetizing intellectual property. (Think of the 20-minute-long conversation series hosted by David Rubinstein on PBS with leaders from top international companies.)

2. Building Community

Gathering people to discuss issues important to them and their jobs and to form relationships has been a critical aspect of the LES experience. We recently established two affinity groups that are successful and self-sustaining—the Young Members Congress (YMC), and Women in Licensing Alliance (WILA). Inspired by the success of LES Spain and Portugal, we will be working with members of that

LESI Priority Areas:

1. *Educating our members*
 2. *Building community*
 3. *Identifying accomplishments and presenting awards*
 4. *Growing and retaining membership*
 5. *Providing public service*
 6. *Obtaining additional funding*
 7. *Communicating better about what we do*
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society as well as industry advisors to our board and committees to build and grow more global industry communities, like our automotive group, that will gather to identify and discuss top issues and provide leading speakers for LES meetings.

3. Identifying Accomplishments and Presenting Awards

We will work with the national societies to identify and recognize contributions and accomplishments in protecting and commercializing innovation and managing and monetizing intellectual property. In addition, we will present new LES awards to honor the most outstanding achievements. We will share those notable achievements and success from around the world with our members, creating case studies for education. And some of these stories of accomplishment will also raise the visibility of examples where licensing is advancing the business of intellectual property today.

4. Growing and Retaining Membership

Last year, LESI President Audrey Yap issued a challenge to committees and societies to develop more programs and webinars. This year, I am issuing a challenge to develop and retain more members.

We do many things that provide value to our members and the public. We will develop an information sheet to share with LES societies to communicate a strong value proposition that the societies can use in their own efforts to attract and retain members.

We will collaborate with LES societies to reach out to potential members in various ways—announcing and conducting programs, conducting royalty rate surveys, gathering information on cutting edge developments and proposals on awards, conveying what LES is doing and plans to do and the value it provides members and the public. As a start, we will work with societies to identify and reach out to a number of key potential members to discuss LES and how they might get involved.

5. Providing Public Service

We will provide more public service and better communicate what we do for the public.

Educating Innovators and Small Businesses: We will continue our work with WIPO and EPO to develop programs to assist small organizations. This results in more sophisticated players in intellectual property matters, and benefits both new and more established organizations when they work together on deals.

Innovation Bulletin Board: We will establish a bulletin board on our website for innovators and businesses to list projects and attract collaborators for funding, commercialization, and other assistance.

Pro Bono Referral: We are working with LES China to develop a program to provide answers to general questions about licensing and to provide a pro bono referral service to those in need.

Sustainable Innovation: We will be looking at how we can contribute to the dialog around sustainable innovation and other environmental issues.

Diversity, Inclusion, Equity, and Mentoring Programs: We are increasing awareness of diversity, inclusion, equity, and mentoring and are affirmatively increasing our own action in these programs.

6. Obtaining Additional Funding

We will expand our funding model to fund the programs we want to develop. We will make our work for members and the public so appealing that organizations will want to support the work we are doing and the work we plan to do and become patrons and sustaining sponsors.

7. Communicating Better About What We Do

In each of these areas are projects that provide value to LES, to its members, and to the public. We must capture what we are doing and communicate it to LES members and the public in a way that shows its value and is easy to understand.

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LESI 2021 Annual Conference: A Recap

By Dana R. Colarulli, Executive Director

On May 27/28, LESI hosted its first ever entirely virtual annual meeting—a 24-hour marathon event designed to allow attendees to join from their time zone, when their workday allowed. The COVID-19 pandemic had prevented this organization from gathering in person in 2020, but the year that followed stimulated many webinars, meetings and virtual social events or celebrations. If LESI could not bring everyone together in a single conference center and common time zone, we recognized that we needed to bring the meeting to our members.

The innovative format sought to simulate a traditional program with live roundtable discussion and ample opportunity to network. More than 650 LES members and non-members from around the world registered to joined in on the experience. And the virtual format allowed attendees to watch sessions live or on demand as they were able.



The theme for the meeting this year was “Maximizing the Value of Innovation in an Era of Convergence.” Sessions looked at where the most important innovation was occurring and highlighted—through speakers and case studies—some of those responsible for and leading the innovation. Six keynote sessions that spanned technology sectors and hot topics were complemented by 36 concurrent panel sessions. Collectively, they provided engaging discussion and updates on legal and business practice issues that kept our audience interested. There were even a few “Oscar winning” performances by counsel during a mock WIPO mediation.

The keynotes included a timely discussion of the importance of diversity for in-house innovation teams, which featured a discussion between LESI Business Advisor Sarita Venkat from Apple and Sandra Nowak from 3M; a musical performance by

WIPO Director General Daren Tang and then a discussion with the DG and LESI President Audrey Yap on WIPO’s renewed focus on IP commercialization; and a look at the private sector’s role in driving innovation to fuel the space race with experts from Japan and Russia. A highlight included a keynote from Pfizer’s Chief Patent Counsel, Bryan Zielinski, on the Pfizer-BioNTech collaboration that led to one of the first widely distributed COVID-19 vaccines and then a discussion between Bryan and Gillian Fenton, Special Counsel at GSK, about how the deal came about.

Auto industry issues—connected cars and managing SEPs—were addressed in at least two sessions during the meeting. The Deputy General Counsel of Zoom, Ted Gizewski, joined us to discuss the impact of COVID on the way we collaborate and work, and Andrew Cooke, General Counsel of FNatic, stopped by to talk about esports.

Ten live roundtable discussions were also spaced out during the course of the 24-hours, which addressed various topics from trade secrets and blockchain to the future of hybrid working and 3D trademarks and designs. The “Dos and Don’ts in Licensing Negotiations” was the most popular table.

Finally, in between sessions, someone was always awake in the 24-Hour Café (powered by Remo). You could bring your own coffee, tea, water or cocktail to discussions with LESI leaders, speakers and other attendees.

We closed out the event with the passing of the LESI gavel, also done virtually.

Join us in person in 2022 to celebrate 50 years of LESI! We’ll be in Venice! www.lesi2022.org. ■



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We will increase our efforts to collect and promote national society programs in an organized way, globally, to all LES members and the public, through our weekly email blast, social media, and in other ways.

We are investing to make our website more clearly and attractively reflect who we are and what we are doing, to allow members to more easily connect and work together, and to provide easier and better access to programs and publications we developed.

In Conclusion

Our future is bright. We are a great organization. More than thirty national and regional societies with many activities. We have many talented and devoted people, and a long history.

Next year, we will kick off our 50th anniversary at our annual meeting in Venice. Plan to come. It will be great!

Now is when we start building for the next 50 years. I am confident that we will do well this year and in the future. By working together, we will accomplish the great things we need to accomplish.

I look forward to working with all the national societies and their members during the coming year—accomplishing a lot, building more camaraderie, and having more fun. I thank you in advance for working together on this mission to continue building our organization, serving its members, and serving the public in the best way possible. ■