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ADVANCING THE BUSINESS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY GLOBALLY  
CREATING, PROTECTING, AND COMMERCIALIZING INNOVATION | MANAGING AND MONETIZING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

## President's Message:

# The Importance Of New Challenges In Good Traditions

By Ichiro Nakatomi, President, LES International



With Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the global economy is in turmoil with high inflation due to energy supply shortages and a significant decline in GDP. The COVID-19 pandemic shifted the focus of trade partners from interregional trade with remote areas, to more limited intraregional trade over only short distances.

Consistent with LESI tradition, I assumed the role of LESI President following John Paul at the LESI International Management and Delegates Meeting (IMDM) and the LESI2023 Annual Conference in Venice in May 2022. In the blink of an eye, three quarters of my one-year tenure has now passed. During this time, I have initiated a number of conversations about LESI's next 50 years and have asked how we can con-

tinue to build the organization as we had done in the past. While we have made progress in establishing the groundwork for these policies, there is still much work to be done.

### National Presidents Council (NPC)

Last June, in my first contribution to *Global News*, I emphasized the need for LESI to recover from the sharp decline in global membership and to increase sponsorship in the future. Since LESI's revenues depend on membership, it makes sense that a decline in membership would directly affect LESI's operations. The LESI Board has discussed how to invest in targeted activities that could gradually support an increase in membership in multiple societies. One strategy we believed could support this was introducing group memberships for large companies and law firms. This could attract new members and effectively reduce the costs to individual members for an initial period. We found that there were a variety of responses within LES to this request—including societies that planned to introduce new group memberships as well as those who chose to refrain from introducing new group memberships in order to retain their professionals that are already members.

The second strategy is focusing on increasing young members throughout LES. While many societies are interested in this, we found that it was easier for smaller societies to acquire young members as compared to larger societies in terms of young member ratios. Rather, a major issue remained as to how to enable smaller societies to prosper. I believe that an important aspect of this is to communicate with supportive societies for their mutual interest as described in the Sustainable Collaboration guidelines discussed below.

### Key Words For Future LESI



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### Quick Links:

[www.lesi.org](http://www.lesi.org)

[www.lesi.org/les-nouvelles](http://www.lesi.org/les-nouvelles)

[www.lesi.org/les-societies](http://www.lesi.org/les-societies)

[www.les-europe.org](http://www.les-europe.org)

[www.les-asiapacific.org](http://www.les-asiapacific.org)

### Call For Content

We request contributions from all societies and individuals about important events, changes in the law in your country or region, conferences, annual meetings, board changes, and the like. You can submit articles or announcements to the editor or use the form on the website at the following address: [www.lesi.org/les-societies/les-global-news/submission-form](http://www.lesi.org/les-societies/les-global-news/submission-form).

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Another strategy for improving revenue was to increase sponsorships throughout the year through the Thought Leadership Program proposed by Sonja London. This program provided additional ways to recover operating expenses and successfully facilitated programming focused on the critical thematic areas of SEPs, the Automotive Industry and Mediation & Arbitration. In February 2023, under the leadership of Mike Lasinski, the incoming President, Sonja London, who is in charge of finance, and LESI's Executive Director, Dana Colarulli, we conducted a financial analysis and discussed how to shift the budget of the organization from a membership dues and annual conference proceeds-dependent model to a model with multiple revenue sources, such as the Thought Leadership Program, subscriptions to *les Nouvelles*, and sales of videos and materials from LESI hosted webinars. We also decided to add to the budget resources to bring on business development staff to better manage sponsor relationships for annual conferences as well as other opportunities.

### Committee Leaders

I met and spoke with many of the committee leaders and had the opportunity to hear many of their important subjects at the beginning of the year, but unfortunately, I could not touch on and follow up with all of their issues. I was able to participate in the Membership Committee, the Meetings Committee, the Education Committee, the Copyright and Licensing Committee, and the Life Sciences Committee, all of which I am happy to report are working hard on issues relevant to LES members. Each is in the process of improving its operation, and I hope to receive all good final reports.

### Sustainable Collaboration

The challenge for local societies is to increase the number of members and figure out how to collaborate with mentor societies. It is essential to help each other, but most societies are too busy running their own operations. These societies need to have the space and spirit to help each other. For this purpose, we have encouraged societies to share event notices in LESI's weekly email or on the website and to publicize and share the results of the events and committee meetings here in the *Global News* and elsewhere. Since YMC members are very good at cross-society interaction, they might be helpful to serve as a bridge for those societies. We encourage small interactions between societies that may lead to bigger ongoing bridges that can help grow and maintain important connections within our organization. LESI has also significantly increased its own exchange of information and interaction with other organizations such as AIPPI, AUTM and INTA, in addition to our external collaboration with EPO and WIPO. And I have encouraged each society to likewise build their own collaborations locally.

### IP Evaluation for Innovation Trends

We need to evaluate the efforts of all technology-owning companies, financial institutions, and investors in terms of SDG and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) from a CSR perspective. The value of those companies' tangible and intangible assets should be evaluated in con-

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junction with the value of their intellectual property. If we create a new measure of IP value by visualizing how technology-owning, know-how and financial companies are not only addressing carbon emissions through their efforts in renewable energy, digital innovation, etc., but also strengthening governance in areas such as human rights and inequality, we will be a global association unparalleled by other IP associations.

**Future Opportunity:**

As is customary, in Montreal at LESI2023, I will pass the baton to Mike Lasinski. The LES is truly a core organization of individual volunteers, and this is what makes its history unique and meaningful. We have thrived through good friendships built here. I feel that in the future, if I have the opportunity, I would like to visit local societies that I do not yet know and enjoy their friendships. ■

**Photos from the WPM and WIPO Meetings in February 2023**



LESI President Ichiro Nakatomi sits at the dias at WIPO.



LESI conducts the 2023 Winter Planning Meeting.



Dinner on Wednesday evening with special guests from WIPO, including: third from right, Lisa Jorgenson, Deputy Director General (Patents and Technology Sector); and Edward Kwakwa, Assistant Director General, (Global Challenges and Partnerships) at right.



LESI Executive Director Dana Colarulli.



A group shot at WIPO overlooking the beautiful mountains in Geneva.



Past LESI President François Painchaud, LESI Treasurer Sonja London, and current LESI President Ichiro Nakatomi.