

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT
2024
Al Jeraj, O.L.S.

The Executive Director is the senior staff officer of the Association, responsible to the Council of the Association. In addition to formal roles as Secretary to Council and Treasurer of the Association, the Executive Director implements decisions of Council, promotes the welfare and image of the Association, promotes liaison between all segments of the Association and other organizations, government bodies and the public, and ensures the efficient day-to-day operation of the Association office.

This report covers the period from January 1, 2024, to December 31, 2024, under the general headings of Staff, Administration, Strategic Planning, Membership, Government Relations, and Public Relations.

Staff

The Association's staff complement for 2024 included a total of 12 staff members (including four Ontario Land Surveyors). In addition, we had five Ontario Land Surveyor consultants to assist the Survey Review Department (SRD) with the Peer Review Program.

The complete staff list at the end of 2024 is as follows:

<i>Al Jeraj, O.L.S.</i>	<i>Executive Director</i>
<i>Penny Connors</i>	<i>Registrar (until May 2024)</i>
<i>Bill Buck, O.L.S.</i>	<i>Registrar (until November 2024)</i>
<i>Linda Latham</i>	<i>Registrar, (Deputy Registrar from June to November 2024)</i>
<i>Lena Kassabian</i>	<i>Office Manager</i>
<i>Penny Anderson</i>	<i>IT Program Specialist</i>
<i>Joyce Tenefrancia</i>	<i>Statutory Support Coordinator</i>
<i>Cynthia Gibson</i>	<i>Finance Specialist</i>
<i>Paul Wyman, O.L.S.</i>	<i>Survey Review – Manager</i>
<i>Al Worobec, O.L.S.</i>	<i>Survey Review – Field Survey Examiner</i>
<i>Sheila Lavina</i>	<i>Survey Review – Administration Coordinator</i>
<i>Herman Bernardo</i>	<i>Survey Review – Survey Review Department Examiner Assistant</i>
<i>Michelle Petosa</i>	<i>Administrative Coordinator (until November 2024)</i>

The following provides a brief background of staff members.

Al Jeraj, O.L.S. joined AOLS in January 2023 as the **Executive Director and Treasurer**. Al executes on all Council decisions that have associated action items, manages the staff complement at the office and is the staff advisor to all non-statutory committees. Al's background includes being a project manager for J.D. Barnes and being the City Surveyor for 18 years at the City of Mississauga. In 2024, Al led multiple projects including redefining staff roles, selecting technology to enhance service to the public and members, restructuring the Annual General Meeting, redeveloping content for the professional written and oral exam and creating a new multiple choice statutes exam.

Penny Connors joined the AOLS as **Registrar** in June 2022. As Registrar, Penny was responsible for managing all regulatory activities for AOLS which included managing the Complaints, Discipline and Registration process. The position is responsible for issuing licences to members, Certificate of Registrations and Certificate of Authorizations. The position also oversees all AERC matters including the academic review process and experience review process (CBA Application and articling) and the administration of the professional exams. During Penny's time at AOLS she acted as an AOLS representative on the Canadian Board of Examiners for Professional Surveyors (CBEPS). In May 2024, AOLS and Penny parted ways. We wish Penny all the best in her future endeavours.

Bill Buck, O.L.S. served as Registrar for over 18 years at AOLS and retired in 2019. Bill returned to AOLS to serve as interim Registrar until a permanent replacement was found. Bill hit the ground running and picked up his duties as if he never left. His knowledge of the job was an incredible asset to AOLS, and he was able to mentor Linda Latham who was hired as Deputy Registrar until she was ready to assume the position as Registrar. We are extremely grateful to Bill for assisting AOLS while we went through the transition process and remain grateful to him as he continues to serve as Deputy Registrar and will mentor the incoming candidate in 2025.

Linda Latham, P.Eng., joined AOLS in June 2024 as Deputy Registrar. Linda brings a wealth of regulatory experience with her and served as Deputy Registrar for the Professional Engineers of Ontario (PEO) for over 12 years. The role of Deputy Registrar was redefined to align strictly with regulatory activities and the public outreach and advocacy responsibilities were eliminated. Linda's experience and knowledge of the regulatory world was well suited for the role of Registrar which she took over on November 1, 2024.

Lena Kassabian has been with the AOLS since August 2005. While Lena's role changed to focus more on AERC matters, she kept her title as **Office Manager**, as she continues to help and provide advice on all matters related to her previous role. She now reports directly to the Registrar.

Lena is the primary AOLS staff person who meets with prospective candidates and engages them in the process in a positive fashion and ensures that all applicants receive and submit the necessary materials to proceed with their application for professional designation. She continues to act as the main contact for articling students throughout each stage of the process. She takes great joy in helping local and internationally trained candidates achieve their goals.

Penny Anderson has been with the AOLS since June 2012 and is the **IT Program Specialist**. She is certified in Web Design and Development from Sheridan College and obtained her Information Systems Management Certification at Ryerson University. She has her PMP Certification through Sheridan College and is an active member of PMI Lakeshore Chapter.

Her role involves managing the membership database, supporting staff on all IT related matters, scheduling webinars, updating website content and assisting members with technical difficulties. Penny creates and distributes the In Sight newsletter and sends out communications to the membership. In addition to her regular responsibilities, Penny also sits on the Continuing Education Committee, the Inclusivity and Diversity Committee and the AGM Planning Committee.

Joyce Tenefrancia joined AOLS in June 2016 and is the **Statutory Support Coordinator**. Joyce demonstrated a willingness to learn more about the regulatory process and proved she was capable and thus, was promoted from the administrative coordinator role. Joyce's new role reports directly to the Registrar and supports the Registrar's Office to administer the Complaints, Discipline and Registration processes. She continues to maintain the Learning Management System and generates statistical reports related to various AOLS functions.

While Joyce's new role focuses on regulatory matters, she assists wherever she can in any area.

Cynthia Gibson joined the AOLS in April 2018 as **Finance Specialist** and the bookkeeper for the Educational Foundation. She is responsible for all finance related activities for the AOLS including AP/AR functions, preparing various reports, and providing member assistance with invoices related to licensing and insurance. She also assists with creating the annual budget and tracking ~~our~~ investments. All these steps are vital to ensure financial integrity, to monitor financial performance, and to forecast future activities to ensure they are financially feasible.

Cynthia also does all year-end procedures including preparation of various tables, schedules and reports that auditors need to prepare for annual financial statements.

As bookkeeper for the Educational Foundation, Cynthia manages the AR/AP functions, creates receipts for donations, reconciles accounts, administers the banking functions and creates the financial statement. Her work is overseen by the Board of Directors.

Paul Wyman, O.L.S., joined the Association as **Manager** of the **Survey Review Department (SRD)** in September 2021. Paul is responsible for modernizing the department by transitioning from physical plan submission forms to digital ones and introducing digital submissions for the comprehensive reviews. Paul provides oversight to three SRD staff and manages the SRD consultants responsible for conducting the systematic and comprehensive reviews. Paul is constantly looking to make improvements to the department and to the profession. To this end, he updated the accuracy standards in Regulation 216/10 to better reflect the measuring capabilities of modern instruments and approved an enhancement to the Provincial Survey Records Index so member can upload the contents of their comprehensive reviews with ease.

Paul continues to fuel his passion of research and teaching and has developed webinars and papers that he presented to the membership.

Paul has informed AOLS that he plans to resign immediately after the 2025 Annual General Meeting. We sincerely thank Paul for his contributions to the office and to the profession.

Al Worobec, O.L.S. joined the Association as **Field Survey Examiner** of the **Survey Review Department (SRD)** in early January 2014. Al is a graduate of the Survey Science program at Erindale College, University of Toronto (U of T). Al brings a wealth of experience from his many years in private practice and from his involvement in Association activities, most recently as the 2009 President. Al works on a part-time basis completing field reviews.

Sheila Lavina has been with the AOLS since March 2010 and is the **SRD Administrative Officer**. Sheila acts as a liaison between the SRD and the participating firms to coordinate reviews, fulfil orders for plan submission forms and manage the submissions received for reviews. Sheila is also the coordinator for all committees, maintains an up-to-date committee list, and schedules all committee meetings.

Herman Bernardo has been with the AOLS since November 2010 as **Survey Review Department Examiner Assistant**. His responsibilities include preparing comprehensive review files that are complete and ready for field examination and to be sent to reviewers.

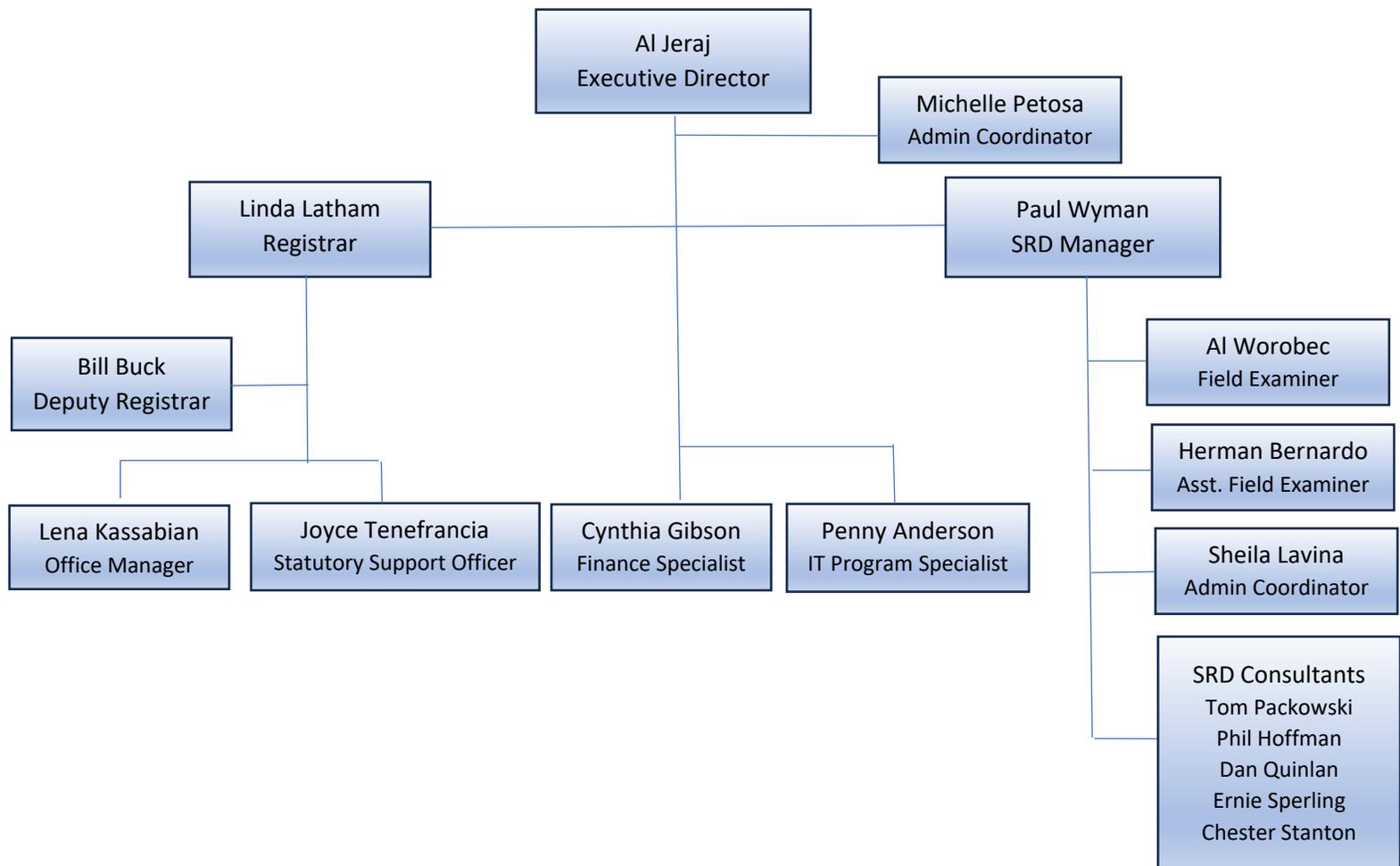
Herman assists the Field Survey Examiner with field examinations, so he is often out of the office, working in the fresh air all over Ontario. He also fulfills the logistical needs for field operations.

He is our go-to person whenever something needs to be assembled, disassembled, moved, or fixed in the office.

Michelle Petosa joined AOLS in September 2023 as the **Office Administrative Coordinator**. Michelle's responsibilities include acting as the initial point of contact for the public and AOLS members, assisting to maintain the member database and generate reports, support AERC processes, attend and organize the Annual General Meeting, and oversee the general operation of the office. In addition, Michelle has assumed the role of Secretary for the Educational Foundation.

Michelle resigned in November 2024, and we wish Michelle all the best in her future endeavours.

Staff continue to work in a hybrid environment and are required to come into the office a minimum of two days a week. Some staff elect to attend the office more regularly but whether they are working from home or in the office, they continue to take their role seriously to protect the public and meet the regulatory needs of our members. I have been pleased to work with all of them.



Administration

The AOLS staff manages the membership database, which tracks key information about applicants and members, including place of employment, status within the licencing process, outstanding fees, etc. To enhance efficiency, improve reporting capabilities, and increase automation, the database required an upgrade to a more robust membership management system. Although AOLS initially partnered with Thentia with plans to launch the new system by Q2 2024, unforeseen challenges necessitated a shift to a different provider later in the year. We now anticipate implementing the new system by Q3 2025. This upgraded platform will simplify profile updates for members, improve communication between members and the office, and provide staff with easier access to reporting tools.

Earlier in the year, we opted to switch exam providers, however, our existing exam provider Prolydian was able to demonstrate that they could administer online exams including the newly developed multiple-choice format for the Statutes Exam. As a result, we have decided to remain with them.

After significantly reducing the amount of paper in the office, AOLS planned to digitize the remaining documents to achieve a fully digital system. However, this project was postponed due to more urgent priorities and budget limitations. It remains a key objective for the Association and is scheduled to be reprioritized in 2025.

Council approved one bylaw in 2024 (bylaw 2024-01) and that was to increase the minimum number of Plan Submission Forms (Plan Stickers) to 50.

The potential changes to the *Surveyors Act* were finalized and have been read twice in the House. It is anticipated that the Bill will receive final proclamation at the same time the changes to Regulation 1026 and 216/10 are

proclaimed, which we anticipate will be in 2025. Changes to the Act and Regulations were presented to the membership at Regional Group meetings.

AOLS continues to work closely with the Office of the Fairness Commissioner (OFC) to satisfy the requirements of FARPACTA (Fair Access to Regulated Professions and Compulsory Trades Act). The Act has added a new requirement that the Regulator work with their Ministry to ensure an adequate supply of professionals to serve the public need. AOLS is committed to working with OFC to understand what this entails and what impact this will have on the organization.

Strategic Planning

As a result of Council's decision to extend the life of the existing strategic plan, work continued on the key priorities and action plans and objectives. Of note, the following items were completed in 2024:

- The changes to the Surveyor's Act were finalized and significant work was completed on the Regulations.
- The design to the microsite was finalized with the intent of promoting the profession to the public.
- All professional exam content (save the AIT) was updated.
- A national council meeting was held with the other provinces and agreement was obtained to work on national initiatives.

While the existing strategic plan was extended to the end of 2025, Council felt it appropriate to embark on creating a new Strategic Plan as most of the items were addressed. To this end, Council identified a new facilitator and the process of developing a new plan will begin in Q1, 2025.

Concerns remain about our demographics and if a large percentage of members retire, there will be a significant drop in revenue which may put a strain on operations. The Office of the Fairness Commissioner, through legislation (FARPACTA) has identified the Regulator as a key stakeholder responsible for ensuring there are enough practitioners to meet the public demand. To address this new requirement and to address our demographics, initial thoughts about revamping our registration process have been developed. This will require further input by committees and task forces and may form part of the overall strategy going forward.

The proposed changes to the Surveyor's Act received two readings in the house. Timelines for legislation are driven by the government, and we expect, the third and final reading to occur in Q1, 2025. The changes to the regulations 1026 and 216/10 are almost finalized and we hope to present the final wording of them to the membership for vote also in Q1, 2025. AOLS is grateful to the Ministry of Natural Resources for its assistance with this project. The changes to the legislation and regulations will better align with modern practices and address some administrative challenges that currently exist.

Membership

The membership continues to shrink due to the number of retirements outpacing the growth of newly licensed members. As noted above, should this trend continue, it will have significant impact on the Association. Despite this, we still have strong engagement from our existing members. Committees are well populated, and member meetings such as the Annual General Meeting and Regional Group Meetings are well attended.

Many members have expressed a desire to have hybrid meetings for the AGM. We continue to explore this option and are considering recording the event and make it available for a fee to members who couldn't attend. Some Regional Groups offer a hybrid option and have invested in technology to ensure their meetings are accessible to all.

AOLS committee work is the bedrock of the Association. It allows us to involve active practitioners, while at the same time containing our costs using volunteers. This year we had 198 unique committee members participate on six statutory committees and 21 active committees or task forces. This is fantastic for an association of our size. We continue to support these committees and task forces with staff and consulting resources as requested. I am extremely grateful to the membership for their engagement in and commitment to the profession.

During the year, AOLS provides educational opportunities to members by highlighting upcoming events through the In Sight newsletter. This year, in addition to the AGM and Regional Group meetings, AOLS highlighted the following:

1. Senseville Geospatial Webinar
2. LandPro Conference
3. Lidar Canex 2024
4. Geognite 2024
5. 21st Real Estate Law Summit
6. Geodetic Picnic
7. Science Rendezvous
8. BeSpatial 2024
9. Subsurface Utility Mapping Strategy Forum
10. GoGeomatics Expo
11. GNSS Best Practices for Geomatics Professionals
12. DEI Webinar – How to Build a Thriving Workplace for Everyone
13. Working in First Nations Communities
14. ACLS Water Boundaries Webinar – Where Your Feet Get Wet?
15. AOLS Webinar - Systematic Review Results with Examples
16. Self Study articles presented by Tom Bunker and Paul Wyman.

Some of the events listed above were assigned CPD credits, while others were not. In cases where AOLS does not specify CPD hours, it is the responsibility of members to assess each event they attend to determine if it qualifies for CPD credit. AOLS reserves the right to audit events to evaluate their suitability for CPD credit. We strongly encourage members to thoroughly review In Sight and take advantage of available CPD opportunities rather than relying solely on AOLS to fulfill their CPD requirements. Additionally, members are urged to seek out their own CPD content to enhance their industry knowledge.

Public Relations

Halmyre, the marketing firm AOLS hired to promote the profession has been busy developing a microsite. The microsite will target a specific audience through LinkedIn and Facebook ads to highlight the path of becoming an Ontario Land Surveyor. The microsite will list the academic qualifications needed and where someone can obtain them, as well as highlight the experience requirement (CBA and articling) and exam process. It also highlights the benefits of working in the industry and references the recent salary survey. We expect the microsite to launch in Q1, 2025 along with the LinkedIn and Facebook ads. Halmyre also developed a communications plan and strategy for the Marketing and Recruitment Committee to reference.

The Marketing and Recruitment Committee have been busy attending career fairs and tradeshow. The Committee regularly meets to review their tactical plan and continues to hone it to ensure they are achieving their goal. Regular check-ins are maintained to monitor progress on items and accountability. Two items of note include updating the NOC (National Occupation Classification) Code description for Surveyor and having a meet and greet with Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) Engineering Students.

The NOC is how the Federal Government classifies professions. It is searched by many individuals who want to know more information about a profession including scope of work and salary expectations. AOLS was successful in engaging with the government to update the description years in advance of when it was scheduled to be updated.

AOLS also organized a meet and greet with 2nd year Civil Engineering students at TMU. With the assistance of volunteers from J.D. Barnes and Tulloch Engineering, we were able to highlight the benefits of a career in surveying and received a lot of interest from the students. This type of grass roots “marketing” is key to attracting more people to the profession. AOLS has promotional material for members to access if they would like to make presentations at local high schools to help spread the message.

Executive Directors' Meetings

The Executive Directors around the country continue to meet on a regular basis to learn from each other and keep each other aware of what is happening on a national scale. Of note was the National Council meeting in November, where Council representatives from each Association attended and provided authority for the ED's to work on a proposal to launch a national initiative. Each Association is facing similar challenges to ours and it makes sense to pool resources where possible. We expect to make more progress on this front in 2025.

Summary

We continue to be very active and progressive as a small regulator. This report is a subset of all the work of staff at the AOLS and I want to thank them again for their dedication to help improve the Association and serve the public.

I would like to thank President Amar Loai and all of Council for their help and support over the past year. It has been an honour to serve as your Executive Director.

Al Jeraj, O.L.S.
Executive Director
Association of Ontario Land Surveyors