

Disclosure | AAPP Newsletter



President's Message | Heidi Semkowich

I cannot believe that we are already in October. To say this year is flying by is a huge understatement. The Board has been beyond busy, working on a plethora of exciting initiatives and projects for you.

I am really pleased to see how much the membership has grown this year. This is by far, the largest membership numbers I have seen since stepping up as President of the Association. I want to thank each and every member for your support. Without you, this Association wouldn't be what it is.

Looking back over the progression of the Association since 2017, I am truly humbled by the accomplishments and progress that has been made. It feels somewhat surreal to see the AAPP coming into its own and thriving. Please continue to get the word out about us. The larger our membership, the louder our voice! It is incredibly cliché to say, but "united we stand, together we conquer".

Regulation of the profession continues to be a huge undertaking for the Association. Consultations with many different legal interest-holders continue and we are happy to be collaborating with all interested parties.

So you might be wondering how we can continue to move things forward with respect to regulation... I think the most important thing that we can all do is to keep spreading awareness on the paralegal profession. Paralegals bring a very unique set of skills to a legal team. Helping the industry understand the different roles (ie. legal assistant and paralegal) goes a long way to clearing up any lines that have previously been blurred.

Keep promoting the Association and spreading the message of who we are and what we offer.

It is a very exciting time to be a legal support professional. As we are witnessing the role of the paralegal grow and change in other provinces, we see our profession and our professional standing in the legal community changing.

The stage is set, everyone is paying attention, so it is our time to rise, and show the legal world what paralegals can do! In the words of Aibileen Clack "You is Kind, You is Smart, You is Important".

Several months ago I heard a mantra that really resonated, so I modified it and shared it with the Board of Directors at one of our meetings. I would now like to share it with you:

"Here's to you"

"Here's to we"

"The AAPP is the place to be"

"For any out there who don't agree"

"You're missing out"

"Here's to we"

Is it a cliché mantra? Perhaps. But it is a mantra that I believe with every fibre of my being. In 2017, the AAPP was a fledging association that faced an unknown future. It was barely in the forming stage. Fast forward to today, it has moved through storming and norming and we are performing at an unparalleled level. This is as a direct result of the engagement of our Board and members. Let's continue to teach, inspire and give strength to each other!



Salary Survey

The results are finally in! Thank you to everyone who participated in the survey. Due to overwhelming response, it took us a bit longer to compile the report, but it is now complete and on our website. Feel free to take a peek at the results when you have time.

2024 Conference & Awards Gala

Plans for next year's conference and awards gala are already underway. The event is going to be held in Edmonton in 2024, and we are incorporating the feedback we received following the 2023 event. Please stay tuned for announcements in the coming weeks about the 2024 event!

Holiday Networking Events

We want to get everyone together in person one more time this year. Plans are currently underway for holiday networking events in multiple cities throughout the Province for holiday networking events. Details are coming soon, so watch your emails and the website!

I hope you all are well and I look forward to seeing you at the holiday networking events!

-Heidi Semkowich

**ALBERTA ASSOCIATION OF
PROFESSIONAL PARALEGALS
YOUR ELECTED 2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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Alberta Association of
Professional Paralegals

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COMMITTEE FORMATIONS—WEBINARS SERIES

A very special thank you to all of the volunteers that came forward when the call out was made – we were overwhelmed and thrilled at the numbers!

The AAPP Board is committed to continuing to provide high quality continuing education and professional development opportunities to our members. The expansion and growth of our membership has necessitated the creation of additional educational sub-committees to design and develop multi-part webinar series in: civil litigation, family law, real estate and wills & estates.

We would like to introduce you to these hard-working sub-committees.

Civil Litigation

Heidi Semkowich (Committee Chair)
Veronica McGuire
John McDonald
Shannan Hill
Crystal Li
Ruby Yao
Adam Anderson

Family Law

Ryan McDougall (Committee Chair)
Bailey Curtis
Andrea Galicia

Real Estate

Katherine Quantz (Committee Chair)
Andrea Galicia
Claudia Li
Ruby Yao

Wills & Estates

Michaela Russell (Committee Chair)
Darlene Kiss
Andrea Galicia

We look forward to rolling out these webinar series in the Fall of 2023. Please watch your email and our social media channels for information about these amazing learning opportunities!

We wish to thank all of our members for your continued support. If you have any suggestions for a webinar series, please reach out to Katherine Quants at: education@alberta-paralegal.com

Lets Connect



Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals



[aapp.aralegal.assn](https://www.instagram.com/aapp.aralegal.assn)



Alberta APParalegals

Upcoming Webinars

Katherine Quantz



We have exciting webinars planned for the Fall! Coming up in October/November we have:

- Lunch-n-Learn Webinar Series featuring Solomon Ngoladi, Officer of the Office of the Whistleblower within the Enforcement division of the Alberta Securities Commission, presenting on Understanding the Alberta Securities Commission (ASC) Whistleblower Commission
- Half-Day Webinar on Unanimous Shareholder Agreements, featuring Norman Schindler and Shannon Fuhrer from Emery Jamieson
- Lunch-n-Learn Webinar Series featuring Veronica McGuire, presenting on the emerging concept of “emoji law”

Be sure to check the [events page](#) on the AAPP website frequently - this is where you can find all the information on upcoming webinars and the links to register.

As always, we welcome your questions, feedback, suggestions, comments, and ideas with respect to the webinar series and our professional development programming. Please feel free to contact us by reaching out directly to Katherine Quantz, Director of Education and Professional Development via e-mail: education@alberta-paralegal.com.

Upcoming 2023 Salary Survey Results

The results are in! Please check out the report at:
<https://www.alberta-paralegal.com/salariesurvey>



Membership Information and Updates

Thanks to every one of our members, we have increased our membership and are almost 300 strong - the excitement and momentum is catching on!

The AAPP is finally getting noticed by stakeholders across Alberta, some of which have been in the industry as long as the AAPP has been, and are only now becoming aware of our existence. We are excited to announce our partnership with the Legal Education Society of Alberta. Members of the AAPP are now eligible to receive a 10% discount on LESA courses, up to full day offerings (multi-day programs are not included). Please contact Heidi at: president@alberta-paralegal.com for the discount code.

We are also happy to announce that members can now receive discounted phones and plans through Bell Mobility. Please watch your email for the upcoming holiday promotions being offered.

As mentioned above, our membership numbers are growing, but we want to see this number explode! Please chat with your firms/employers about the AAPP bundle pricing for organizations that have more than two members with the AAPP. The more members, the bigger the discount! The bigger our numbers, the louder our voice. The louder our voice, the more difficult it is to not hear us when we talk about regulation of our profession. Please keep up the amazing work promoting the AAPP!

Thanks to all who have joined and continue to participate in the development and promotion the Association. **Visit our site for more information:** <https://www.alberta-paralegal.com/join-us>

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

Discounted insurance through Johnson Insurance

Highlander Wine Club

Perkopolis Membership

Discounts at Sherwin Williams

Private Shopping events at Ricki's

Continuing Education/Professional Development - monthly webinars on soft skills and technical topics

Mentorship Program

ARP designation (for paralegal members)

Performance Excellence Awards

Job Postings

Salary survey

Member Newsletter

Networking Events

Discount on courses offered by the ADR Institute of Alberta

Discount on courses (up to 1 day) offered by LESA

Discounted phones and plans through Bell Mobility

And more to come as we grow!



Red Deer Polytechnic

PARALEGAL POST-DIPLOMA PROGRAM

INTAKE:**January 2024****PROGRAM LENGTH:****2 Years****DELIVERY METHOD:****Online**

The Paralegal Post-Diploma Certificate program is a part-time program for those who are already working in the legal field as Legal Assistants. This is the only paralegal program endorsed by the Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals. This one-year certificate includes eight theory-based courses and one consolidated practicum course. This program will prepare graduates to focus on contract law, professional ethics, legal research, legal drafting, torts, rules of evidence and legal interviewing. The Paralegal Post-Diploma Certificate will allow graduates to take on more responsibility within the legal field under the supervision of a lawyer.

PRE-REQUISITES:

- High School diploma with English 20-1 or 20-2 with a grade of at least 60%
- Graduate of an approved legal assistant program
- Minimum of 3 years experience working as a legal assistant
- Candidates, where English is a Second Language (ESL), must meet the English Language Proficiency requirement in addition to the Academic English requirement. Equivalencies are as follows:
 - * Required Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) of a minimum of 7 in each of the 4 language skills (speaking, listening, reading and writing) and not an average of 7; or
 - * By completing high school in Canada. Studies must have been in English at an approved Canadian high school (grades 9, 10, 11, 12) with at least three consecutive years of full-time academic study; or
 - * By completing a recognized post-secondary degree or diploma program in Canada.

The program must have involved at least two full years of full-time, consecutive academic study in English.

Follow the link for more information: <https://rdpolytech.ca/programs/extended-education/programs-and-courses/paralegal-post-diploma-certificate>.

A program for paralegals taught by fellow paralegals and lawyers

Paralegal Diploma Program

8 MONTH PROGRAM / 4 WEEK PRACTICUM



Program Highlights

100% online program delivery: program is delivered completely online through their online learning platform, Brightspace — so you don't have to quit your day job while you study!

Unparalleled career service support: As a Robertson student or graduate, you gain free, lifetime access to employment services and job search assistance through our dedicated Workforce team.

Practical experience: Gain valuable real-world experience through a practicum and ensure you're job ready upon graduation.

Launch Your Legal Career with Robertson College's NEW Paralegal Diploma Program

Robertson College is a private post-secondary institution in Canada providing relevant career training for in-demand fields since 1911. Their focus has been on preparing learners to enter into a new world of work. Their programs are flexible and intensive, with a strong focus on helping learners develop and hone skills that are valuable, transferable and in-demand. Robertson College offers over 35+ hybrid and online diploma programs in the business, health, technology and community service industries.

According to the latest employment projection data from Job Bank Canada, 18,900 new Paralegal positions are expected to be created between 2022 and 2031, leaving a huge demand for qualified Paralegals to fill those openings. To meet industry demand, Robertson is proud to be launching a Paralegal diploma in Alberta.

Robertson College's NEW Paralegal Diploma Program will prepare you for a dynamic career within the legal field through a strong foundation in the Canadian legal system and focused theoretical courses in specific areas of the law and legal procedures. Developed in collaboration with the Alberta Association of Professional Paralegals (AAPP) and industry experts, the program will provide you with the most up to date knowledge, practical skills and real-world experience needed to excel in the legal field.

Throughout your studies, you will gain knowledge of Canadian law, with focus on specific areas including Commercial and Corporate Law, Criminal Law, Family Law, Property Law, and Contract Law. You will also explore areas relevant to the scope of paralegal practice including the Litigation Process, Legal Analysis and Legal Drafting.

Admission Requirements

- You must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident residing in Alberta
- A minimum of one year of experience working in a legal assistant role and successful completion of a legal assistant diploma program as verified by transcript.
- Successful interview with a Robertson Student Admissions Advisor

Admission requirements for students applying as a Mature student:

- Student must be a Canadian citizen or permanent resident residing in Alberta
- A minimum of two years experience working in a legal assistant role
- Must be 19 years of age and one year out of high school

At Robertson College, we help students find **meaningful work**. To learn more about our Paralegal diploma program and apply today, please visit www.robertsoncollege.com/programs/paralegal-professional

So What the Heck is a Paralegal? | Elizabeth Kollias, Senior Paralegal

Paralegals are one of the most viable and valuable resource for supporting improved public access to justice along with a more lucrative client retention and billing scenario for lawyers and law firms alike.

The public doesn't yet understand the role of a paralegal and, right now, neither do a lot of legal professionals. That's OK, everyone's busy. Advocacy and clarity of the evolving role of paralegals hasn't fully taken flight, yet. So let's buckle in and get the wheels up.

A paralegal is a non-lawyer who is a trained professional, working under the supervision of a lawyer. That's straight out of the *Code of Professional Conduct for B.C.* These professionals have the education, training and knowledge necessary to take on specifically delegated legal work ordinarily performed by a lawyer (charging a lawyer's rate).

Enter the British Columbia Paralegal Association and me, its President, Elizabeth Kollias. Our position is that paralegals play a key role in proving affordable alternatives to the public in accessing legal services. And we provide that *without* any reduction in quality of service rendered because our members are trained and skilled legal professionals. Since comic book films are all the rage, right now, allow me to draw a comparison. Paralegals are not Batman. But paralegals CAN BE effective members of the Justice League. We are trained, we are experienced, and we are good communicators. We will become an effective force for heightening public confidence in the legal profession, while giving the public comfort by reducing clients' bills. We're The Atom. I was going to say Green Lantern, but thanks for nothing, Ryan Reynolds.

SO YOU'VE GOT A PARALEGAL... NOW WHAT?

Paralegals work in all practice areas. Our ranks reflect a culturally diverse workforce. These professionals employ sensitive and insightful communication to reach out to clients who, unassisted, might be inclined to "wing it" in drafting and execution, or self-represent in relatively minor conflicts.

The absence of true access to justice has become the elephant in the room among the public. Faced with a legal issue — even a simple one — too many citizens have become inclined to say, "I just can't afford a lawyer." Some of these same citizens eschew the idea of going into "a big fancy law firm" because they're convinced that they'll be met by a bank of high-billing, condescending faces who will use words like "eschew". Paralegals are perfectly positioned to bridge that gap. Effectively engaged and marketed, paralegals will be a vital element in aiding the expansion of public access to justice as well as demystifying the administration of that justice.

"Can't a legal administrative assistant do the same as a paralegal?" No more than a dental office administrator (essential) can scale your teeth. Teeth scaling is the work of an educated and trained

hygienist (also essential, but loses track of appointments). Legal administrative assistants perform supervised non-billable duties, often focused on scheduling and/or clerical tasks.

Paralegals, on the other hand, perform billable work. We interview clients and witnesses, collect information, expertly prepare draft pleadings, court forms and agreements, engage in legal research and generate legal memos. Paralegals also engage in project management through the creation of work plans and budgets.

Any law firm of any size should be looking now to integrate paralegals into their practices. With our skillset, we offer the opportunity to attract and retain more clients, providing a higher level of service at a lowered cost. The engagement and deployment of "designated paralegals" to assume some of a lawyer's traditional work with safeguards in place to cover liability and supervision already exists. Supported by the Law Society of B.C. and the Government of B.C., the landscape is now shifting to allow for the training and certification of "licensed paralegals" whose presence promises to change the game for the better for both the public and the legal profession.



[Elizabeth Kollias](#), Senior Paralegal, Instructor, and President at BC Paralegal Association

This article was first published in the June issue of the Canadian Bar Association of BC's Bar Talk: <https://www.cbabc.org/BarTalk/Articles/2023/June/Features/So-What-the-Heck-is-a-Paralegal>

This article also appears in the BC Paralegal Association's Spring/Summer Edition: <https://silkstart.s3.amazonaws.com/db414d11-ea14-4cad-bc96-642d4df0cde2.pdf>