President’s Report

The goal for 2015 was to keep things as simple as possible at Council; focus on the “needs” and deal with the “wants” if time allowed. Council did a good job of this during the year and we seldom found ourselves solving the problems of the world. My personal goals for Council was to complete the Practice Manual updates, move ODCC to membership ownership, have the province wide surveyors records index well on its way to reality, continue to attract young students to our profession, make a decision on the expanded profession and increase two-way communication between AOLS and its members. These goals from my election platform were discussed, morphed and refined through our Strategic Planning process to form the 2015 Objectives being:

1) Proposed future changes in regulations identified
2) New marketing strategy for profession approved, and resources in place for implementation for 2016
3) 5% increase in Article students in place over 2014
4) Consequences of non-compliance clearly defined and communicated to the membership
5) 100% of membership report compliance with CPD
6) Revised standards and manuals completed and communicated to the membership
7) PSRI system approved and ready for regulation
8) Future composition of membership agreed on
9) Strengthen our relationship with university and college programs

Council discussed proposed future changes to regulations in most of our 2015 meetings. When AOLS approaches the Ontario Government about regulation changes we would like to do so in an all-encompassing manner. There are several areas of our legislation where changes could be considered. There are also many moving parts that need to be resolved before changes should be considered. ODCC, PWSRI, the Constitutional Challenge and Copyright all potentially affect our legislation. While Council recognizes the need for changes, it is felt that moving forward at this point is premature. This item should remain part of Council’s discussions for future consideration.

In 2015 Council had serious discussions about marketing our Association. This item has been discussed in the past but this year we struck a task force to deal with bringing some attention to professional surveyors and the value we bring to the public. The taskforce began focusing on Ontario’s needs but changed direction to a national focus due to changes in Professional Surveyors Canada’s agenda being: advocacy and advertising. We look forward to good things coming from this collaborative effort with PSC.

Council was looking for a modest increase in Article Students in 2015 and we are extremely pleased that we in fact have a 40% increase over 2014. The Public Awareness Committee, Geomatics Recruitment and Liaison Committee and Academic and Experience Requirements Committee should be commended for a job well done.

Item 4 and 5 in the Strategic Objectives for 2015 deal with Compulsory Professional Development (CPD). We believe Council clearly communicated the reasons for CPD, the timelines for CPD and the
consequences of not meeting the CPD requirements. Council also presented many opportunities to gain CPD credits throughout the 3 years that CPD has been in place. We have taken enforcement of this regulation seriously. AOLS issued over 100 letters to members indicating that if CPD requirements were not fulfilled that license suspension would take place. This tactic has met with applause from some members and discontent from others. It is Council’s view that by enforcing the CPD regulation we are exercising our self-governing privilege and protecting the public’s interest.

The Professional Standards Committee worked hard and was able to produce an updated Practice Manual for the members. This manual replaces the 1997 version and not only updates content but provides hyperlinks to current versions of relevant legislation. Work continues on this project and moving forward the plan is to revisit the manual on a regular basis to keep it current.

The Province Wide Survey Records Index task force continued to move forward. Several meetings took place through the year and we are in a much better position for understanding what is required of a system. An RFI was sent out to public tender in February to gauge interest and ideas on how to implement this system. Council continues to agree that proper research is key to protecting the public’s interest. The goal is to have one portal to be the authoritative source of determining if a surveyor has been on-site in the past.

The future composition of AOLS membership has been a question that AOLS has struggled with over the years. We do a good job of providing a home for our Cadastral members but need to work on our value proposition for other disciplines. In 2015 we struck a task force to investigate this item and determine why our non-cadastral members stay with AOLS, why our non-cadastral members leave (exit interviews) and how our cadastral members feel. The questions are ready to be deployed but the task force has not distributed the questions. It was felt that CPD and the recent fees bylaw may change the composition and it is better to wait until the end of the first quarter of 2016 to distribute.

The University and College Student Liaison Committee and the Academic and Experience Requirements Committee continue to work with colleges and universities to promote careers as a surveyor and surveyors assistants. The UCSLC has been laying the ground work to promote our Association in these venues and AERC continue to have York and Ryerson representatives on their committee.

Were we successful on all of our 2015 objectives? No, however, we did move each one of the objectives in a positive direction and set the groundwork for many objectives to be completed in the near future.

In addition to the planned, measurable objectives that were set out, other member driven items presented themselves that consumed time, resources and funds.

The Constitutional Challenge continues to be one of the most costly events to affect our Association. In anticipation of the immediate costs of the Challenge and to allow Council the time to implement a funding model, Council asked many Committees to reduce their budgets this year and postpone non-essential projects. The Committee’s and Task Forces were very accommodating and this provided Council with flexibility to manage costs for 2015. Although this Challenge has some up-front costs, the
long term benefit is that our Association will emerge a better organization for being questioned on many areas.

Our Registration Committee was active this year. A substantial hearing was held concerning the potential admittance of a person to our membership. Much preparation took place for the hearing which resulted in the person being denied membership to AOLS. Again, this was an expensive undertaking for the AOLS but it resulted in better understanding of our security, processes and procedures.

Discipline matters continue to consume AOLS funds and resources. 2015 saw discipline proceedings moving forward. Funds were expended on 4 separate matters with the interim costs of one item being over $120,000.

AGM motions also consumed resources and funds that were not identified in our Strategic plan. The four motions being EDM Baselines, Collaboration with PSC, a special funding model and free membership to members over 90 years of age were all addressed within the Council year.

Along with the items above there were many ways that AOLS asserted itself as a leader in Geomatics. Representatives of the Association attended 11 Annual General Meetings across the country. We are an integral part of the President Forums and Executive Director meetings held throughout the year. We are members of Geoalliance and many of our members are part of Professional Surveyors Canada. We have been integral in bringing 3 surveying organizations together for one historic meeting in Ottawa in 2017 and before the end of the 2016 AGM we will sign a Memorandum of Understanding with our Quebec surveyors to facilitate the sharing of Article students. These are only a sample of the positive, collaborative efforts that the Association has participated in on behalf of its members.

In closing I wish to say it has been an honor to serve as your president. I want to thank Blain Martin, Executive Director and his staff for the support and enthusiasm over the course of the year. Several members have asked me was being President easy? No. But I must say it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career.