



Senior Liberals' Commission • Liberal Party of Canada Commission des aînés libéraux • Parti libéral du Canada

2019-21 Communications Chair Report

INTRODUCTION

The Senior Liberals' Commission has the mandate '*to assist the Liberal Party of Canada in understanding the interests and needs of older Canadians*' and to encourage the latter '*to participate in the political affairs of our country*', both in policy development and through volunteering in their ridings.

Achieving this mandate requires effective two-way communication between Commission Sections and Senior Liberals. To assist in meeting that goal, my role as SLC Communications Chair has been to collaborate with SLC Section Communications Chairs in their outreach to Senior Liberals, and to work with them in support of SLC policy development.

2019 SUMMARY

In January 2019, after I joined SLC as national Communications Chair, I submitted a **Work Plan with 2019 objectives** including: quarterly newsletters; update of the SLC presence on the LPC Commissions page; addition of Section content to the website for all provinces and territories; regular sharing of information of interest to Senior Registered Liberals; establishment of a moderated SLC Facebook group; and support of SLC Policy.

Evidence of the effectiveness of two **SLC newsletters** sent by e-blast to Senior Registered Liberals across the country was the substantive feedback from them (mainly on policy issues). That feedback was then shared with all Sections. A final newsletter (which could not be sent out during the election) was posted on the **SLC website**. A website review led to resolution of technical glitches, update of content, and addition of standard Section pages.

Every one to two weeks, lists of resource links on policy issues, in which Senior Liberals have an expressed interest, are now widely shared within SLC Sections. A Facebook page was also created (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/slcal>) - **Senior Liberals // Canada // Aînés libéraux**. Additional communications support to Policy in 2019 focused on completion of a draft SLC Policy Guide.

2020/21 SUMMARY

In 2020 - the *Year of the Pandemic* – SLC communications was focused mainly on support for the **SLC Policy Committee's** work to develop and vote on policy resolutions. User Guides were written and distributed to Sections to facilitate use of the **SLC Forum** as an ongoing discussion tool for policy work. Once the LPC Policy process began, and online voting was scheduled to take place, communications were written to encourage Senior Liberals to engage, to explain to them how to access the application, and to actually vote - using the **LPC Policy Hub** (polilib.ca).

That effort paid off. Senior Registered Liberals (SRLs) did, in fact, engage in greater numbers than PTBs and other Commissions. Disappointingly, the number was substantially less than in the policy cycle that led to the 2018 Halifax Convention. That may be as a result of missing or inaccurate Senior Registered

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Liberals' email information on file. The Commission has had a growing concern about its outreach through Liberalist, given that only a percentage of SRLs have valid email addresses in that database, or have opted to receive Liberal Party emails of any kind.

Given this challenge, and that of being able to schedule national e-blasts, along with our awareness that they only reach a percentage of SRLs, the Communications Committee has been supporting a parallel strategy. We strongly recommended to the SLC Board that it encourage and support all Sections in growing their relationships with Senior Registered Liberals in EDAs through **Senior Representatives and SLC Clubs**.

This is a major focus for 2021 and beyond. Although Senior Reps are required as voting members of EDAs by **LPC By-Law #2**, a count revealed SLC to have less than 15% EDA representation. This must be improved upon, as they are a major conduit to communications with Senior Registered Liberals in each EDA in the country, as are SLC Clubs.

In 2020, LPC updated all PTB and Commission websites with a common brand. To ensure an accurate portrayal of Canadian Seniors, SLC Communications worked with LPC graphic design on a front page image showing active Seniors from varied backgrounds. The new website's **Blog feature** proved an excellent medium to showcase SRLs who have made or are making significant contributions – Gregg and Nancy Guptill (PEI); Nick Taylor (AB); Christine Blackburn (BC); and, in early 2021, Senior Reps and Club Chairs (ON).

We also reached an agreement with LPC to expedite the website approval/translation process, and are working with them on tools to track website traffic data.

WHAT'S AHEAD

SLC is working with LPC to renew its **SurveyMonkey** subscription, in order to support the SLC Policy Committee's continuing engagement on its 2020 prioritized resolutions, and its development of surveys to launch its next policy cycle. SLC Policy would like to have a better discussion tool than the SLC Forum and would be happy to provide input to **polilib usability** improvements if and when planning for that begins.

Section website pages still need illustration and differentiation. **Bi-monthly website Blogs** are highly desirable (including some on SLC policy work), as is effort to increase website and SLC Facebook traffic. Past proposals were made for an **SLC logo** design and this work should continue (SLC is the only Commission without its own logo). The **SLC-CAL Brochure** is also in need of an update.

However, SLC Communications' most critical work lies in supporting Sections in reinforcing their networking with Senior Liberals through EDA Senior Reps and SLC Clubs. This will be key to encourage Senior Liberals to engage in both policy development and election volunteering. Challenging aspects of this include communication during the pandemic, and also communication with Senior Liberals who lack an online presence.

Finally, I hope to encourage the formation of an LPC Communications Committee, analogous to its Policy Committee, in order to share best practices and enhance two way communication between the Party's grassroots members and all its entities (EDA's, PTB's and Commissions).

Respectfully submitted, March 8, 2021
Hilary Williamson
SLC Communications Chair 2019-21

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