



**Letter from the President of TESL Nova Scotia  
TESL NS now a Non-profit Organization – Financial Restructuring**

**March 27<sup>th</sup>, 2019**

Dear Members,

TESL Nova Scotia is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to support the profession of English Language Teaching in the province. Our members are involved in many occupations within this field, from the education of future professionals, to working with new immigrants who want to develop work-related skills, to tutoring in small libraries and community centres. Until November 2016, according to the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA), we were also an organization with charitable status. Sometime in the 1990s, we received a sizeable donation from an estate. At that time, TESL Nova Scotia applied for and was granted charitable status as a condition of accepting that donation.

We have never operated as a charity. We continue to this day to be an organization for our members - a not-for-profit organization. In 2016, the CRA revoked our charitable status due to non-compliance with filing requirements in the preceding years and changes to the Charities Act. Many other organizations with charitable status have also been reassessed under the same CRA initiative.

Subsequent TESL NS Boards attempted to appeal against the revocation. In November of 2018, we received a letter from CRA outlining the reasons why we should not have charitable status and unequivocally denied our right to charitable status.

The consequences of this revocation were that any and all assets the organization had at the date of the first revocation (2016) were to be disbursed by March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2019. Your Board of Directors decided that we had no further recourse to fight this decision, and so, with the assistance of a tax lawyer, we have reduced our current assets to \$0, as we were required to do.

What does this really mean? First, the moneys we had from the original estate donation, our share of the net income from two TESL Canada Conferences, and the balance in our bank account - essentially our working capital - had to be disbursed. Second, after calculating for allowable expenses since 2016, the return of 2019 membership fees already paid, and the costs related to the accountant's work, the balance was to go either to the CRA or to a registered charity. The TESL NS board chose to designate a charity in Nova Scotia - the Halifax Refugee Clinic. On March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2019, we complied with the CRA ruling.

We have come full circle. We are again a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to support the profession of English Language Teaching in Nova Scotia. The only thing we do not have is our accumulated assets. You elected your Board to carry out the mission, and we intend to do that to the best of our ability. In May, the Spring Conference will take place in Wolfville, just as it has done for the last number of years. It will be a great conference of active, enthusiastic, dedicated professionals. We still have one-off professional development events planned, like those that occurred in February and March in Halifax and Bridgewater. Plans have been underway for a year for an Atlantic Conference to take place in November 2019. This event needs to take place and we will be making maximum effort to have it occur.

What we ask from you is for you to renew your memberships if you have not already done so. We need you to tell your colleagues who are not yet members or have not participated in TESL Nova Scotia in the past to join us so that we come out of 2019 stronger than when we went in. I want to invite you to ask questions. As your Board members are also your colleagues, we are available in your workplaces in many cases, and online via email in others. There will also be opportunities in Wolfville to talk about this. More importantly, I want you to support your professional organization as we build for the future.

David Packer  
President, TESL Nova Scotia