

University of Toronto Faculty of Law

Academic Plan

2012 - 2017

Introduction

The University of Toronto Faculty of Law is one of the world's outstanding law schools. Our student body is extraordinarily strong, not only in terms of academic achievement but also in terms of the diversity of background, experience, intellectual interest, and commitment of our students. Our teaching faculty are internationally-recognized scholars who define their fields and regularly shape the most important policy issues of our time. And our curriculum combines scholarly rigour with innovative experiential learning opportunities.

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Three external reviews of our Faculty over the past decade have described our remarkable trajectory from an institution of national significance to an international leader positioned among the top ranks of the world's great law schools. Strengthening this position despite the relative paucity of our resource base has been and will continue to be the Faculty's most critical task going forward. We also face a second monumental challenge which has been exhaustively documented by three external review committees over the last decade: the inadequacy of our physical facilities. The resolution of our space problem has been one of our key priorities over the past several years, and will continue to be a major focus through 2015, as we complete our fundraising campaign and undertake the construction of the new Law building.

Over the next five years, our Faculty's priorities will be the following initiatives, each designed to enhance our existing strengths and resolve our pressing space needs:

Five-Year Faculty Priorities

- ❖ Guide our **building campaign** through to completion, while ensuring a continued sense of community for students, faculty, and staff throughout construction.
- ❖ Admit the most promising and diverse students from across Canada and around the world through an **expanded recruitment strategy** and a holistic admissions process.
- ❖ Strengthen our **academic program** by enhancing opportunities for students to connect with faculty research, and at the graduate level, by introducing new options within both the LL.M. and GPLLM programs that address the changing nature of graduate education.
- ❖ Strategically recruit **promising scholars** to enhance our faculty's vision and capacity.
- ❖ **Build our scholarly profile** by increasing support for faculty research.
- ❖ **Improve the student experience** inside and outside the classroom by offering: an academic experience that is challenging and intellectually rewarding; the most generous financial aid program among Canadian law schools; and student services that support students in meeting their goals.
- ❖ Ensure the Faculty remains at the forefront of **public leadership on important issues** that engage with the law.
- ❖ **Develop the resource base** necessary to support the Faculty's aspirations and our financial aid, outreach, and engagement programs.

➤ The Building Project

In November 2011, we celebrated the public launch of our fundraising campaign for a new Faculty of Law building. Identified for many years as the Faculty's most pressing priority, the planned building will enable the law school to continue to compete for top law students and world-renowned faculty, adding much-needed teaching, learning, research, and collaborative space for our J.D. and graduate programs.

To date, the campaign has raised over \$32.5 million in private support, including landmark gifts from the law firm community and individuals. Notably, the Hon. Hal Jackman has committed \$11 million to name the new wing on Queen's Park Crescent, which will be called the Jackman Law Building. This fundraising success, along with a generous \$18 million commitment from the University of Toronto in matching funds, means that the Faculty has now reached over 90% of its overall target of \$54 million for the campaign. Throughout 2012 and 2013, we will continue to emphasize solicitation of major gifts for the building campaign, and will also launch a broad-based participation campaign for all alumni.

Construction of the new building is planned to commence in the summer of 2013. Over the next several years, the completion of the building project will therefore form a major focus of the Faculty's efforts. The creation of an inspiring space conducive to the mission of the Faculty was foremost in mind in planning for the new building. As well as enhanced space for teaching, research, and intellectual engagement, the building plan includes dedicated areas for student services, collaborative study, student clubs, and co-curricular activities. Consultation with faculty, students, and staff was extensive in the planning process, and will continue as we move through the building process. Our aim is to ensure that the Faculty's sense of wellbeing and community is maintained throughout the construction phase of our new building.

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The Bora Laskin Law Library, most of which will be redesigned and incorporated into the new building, is critical to the law school community. The construction project brings with it an excellent opportunity to revisit library needs, as well as to examine the impact of changing technology on the use of library facilities. While the physical blueprint for the revitalized library has been drafted, consultations with faculty, staff, and students regarding their library needs will intensify in the next academic year. Further development of services for members of the law school community will figure prominently in plans for the new facilities.

The Faculty has recently signed agreements to rent space at Victoria University for classroom and library use during the construction phase, and we are confident that the space—directly across the street from our current buildings— will facilitate a sense of community and cohesiveness. We are not the first law faculty to face the challenges of operating during a construction, and the

Dean is also consulting with her counterparts at other law faculties that have recently undergone construction to proactively gather ideas for ensuring student and faculty satisfaction throughout the construction phase. Working closely with students, faculty, and staff will be a key priority over the next several years with the aim of facilitating this important transition.

➤ Our Students

▪ The Student Body

The Faculty's outstanding reputation, both in Canada and abroad, has ensured **the continued, and indeed growing, strength of our student body**. The grade point average of our incoming first year class rose from 85.9% in 2010-11, to 86.7% in 2012-13. Median LSAT scores also rose three points from 2004-2005 to the present, resulting in a median score in the 96th percentile for this year's first year class. We have also witnessed a significant rise in the number of J.D. students entering our Faculty with graduate degrees, with 22.6 percent of last year's first year class having completed or currently completing graduate studies. Likewise, the quality of applications to our graduate programs, including both the LL.M. program and S.J.D. doctoral program, has improved over the past few years, in no small part due to recent changes in our application deadlines and personalized outreach to our strongest applicants. The percentage of students in our J.D. program self-identifying as visible minorities, including aboriginal students, has also recently consistently grown to approximately 37 percent of this year's first year class, a rate over double that of the Canadian population at large. The global diversity of our graduate program has increased over the past decade, and international students now comprise over 30 percent of students in our LL.M. program.

Our focus over the next several years will be to ensure that we not only sustain but also increase the diversity and excellence of our student body.

The Faculty is mindful of the fact that continuing to build a truly excellent student body also entails the responsibility to ensure that the J.D. program remains accessible to a broad and deep pool of talented potential applicants representing all segments of Canadian society. Our focus over the next several years will be to ensure that we not only sustain but **also increase the diversity and excellence of our student body**. To this end, this year we undertook a broad review of our recruitment and admissions procedures, and developed a comprehensive strategy for recruiting and admitting the strongest and most diverse class possible. Key components of this strategy include proactively reaching out to underrepresented communities to address systemic barriers to accessing legal education, enhancing support for students in the application process, and developing an expanded personal statement requirement that will facilitate a more

holistic approach to assessing applications.

This year we are piloting a new **LSAT preparation program for low income undergraduate students** who might otherwise choose not to apply to law school because they cannot afford a commercial LSAT preparation course. Taught by a law student, the program is offered free of charge. Just as importantly, it is a comprehensive program which aims to demystify the law school application process, offering support on issues such as how best to complete the application itself, financing a law degree, and choosing the right law school.

Over the past few years, the Faculty has also taken considerable steps to bolster and streamline the **financial aid programs for admitted students and graduates**. In particular, in 2009-10, we developed a more transparent and equitable formula for calculating student bursaries; the success of these changes was immediately apparent, with the number of student financial aid appeals plummeting from 18 in 2009-10 to 2 last year. The mandate of our Financial Aid Committee, which is comprised of students, staff, and faculty, is to monitor the application of the program to ensure that it continues to be inclusive and respond to our students' financial needs. We offer the most generous financial aid program for current students of any law school in the country, and are pleased that our students have acknowledged, in a student-driven study, the scope and successes of this program. We will continue our efforts to enhance the pool of funding available for financial aid over the next five years, in order to ensure that all students have access to the financial support that they require.

The innovative 'Back-end Debt Relief' program is the only one of its kind at any law school in Canada, and it encourages career diversity amongst our graduates.

Our post-graduation financial assistance program offers debt relief to graduates whose income immediately after graduation falls below a certain threshold. The innovative "Back-end Debt Relief" program is the only one of its kind at any law school in Canada, and encourages career diversity amongst our graduates. Our goal is to continue to improve student awareness of and participation in the program, especially among graduates working in rural communities or in non-profit and public interest work, for instance, who might find repayment of their student loans particularly burdensome. Recent efforts to increase awareness of the program resulted in immediate success, with student applications to the program increasing by 48 percent in 2011-12 over the year prior.

▪ Curriculum and Pedagogy

We have made several important improvements to our curriculum in recent years. In 2008-09, our Curriculum Committee undertook a sweeping review of the foundational first year of our J.D. program and proposed a number of modifications, which have now been fully implemented. This past year, we also introduced a skills-based **first year Legal Research and Writing Program**, which was very well received by students and instructors. The coming years will provide an opportunity to assess these changes, and to make any necessary adjustments.

We are continually engaged in efforts to ensure that our course offerings and academic programs are responsive to student interests, including opportunities to explore **interdisciplinary approaches to the law**. The Faculty offers many joint degrees, including the relatively new J.D./MGA (Master of Global Affairs), J.D./MPP (Master of Public Policy), J.D./MA (English), and our longstanding J.D./MBA program. The combined programs are a pillar of the Faculty's commitment to deep inter-disciplinarity, and as such the Faculty continually looks for opportunities to support both the programs themselves and the connections they foster across the university community. In addition to our existing programs, the Faculty also recently approved a certificate in Jewish Studies, and this year has begun to offer new certificate programs in Aboriginal Legal Studies, and Sexual Diversity and Gender Studies. We are also in the process of further strengthening our Aboriginal Law Program, including through the introduction of a new practicum option. Recent successes with respect to external funding for intellectual property law will also enable support for increased curricular and other opportunities in that area at both the J.D. and graduate level.

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The Faculty is also mindful of the fact that the regulatory context of the legal profession is undergoing significant change, which is likely to have an impact on legal education in the upcoming years. The Federation of Law Societies of Canada recently set out new requirements for an approved law degree. The new requirements set forth in the Federation's Report and its ongoing approval process will have implications for the curriculum, and will engage additional programming through the Faculty's Centre for the Legal Profession. Similarly, the Law Society of Upper Canada is in the process of developing recommendations for articling program reform. Those recommendations include a proposal that law schools deliver some of the practical training that is currently delivered post-graduation as part of the articling experience; this proposal could have a significant impact on our existing upper-year programming and curriculum. The Faculty has provided and will continue to provide input into the ongoing Law Society consultations, and

may well be required to implement additional curricular changes in response to any approved regulatory changes.

At the graduate level, several changes are being implemented in 2012-13. Last year, Faculty Council approved the creation of a coursework-only option within our Master of Laws (LL.M.) program. This option was the result of consultation with faculty and graduate students, and responds to the changing nature of graduate education in Law and the increasingly diverse interests of students. In 2011-12, Faculty Council also approved the creation of **three new LL.M. concentrations** in areas of strong student interest and faculty strength. The concentrations are designed to further strengthen the pool of graduate student applicants, and to signal to applicants and the outside world the strength of our Faculty in these particular subject areas. These new concentrations in Business Law, Criminal Law, and Legal Theory will be implemented beginning in 2013-14. In the upcoming year, the Faculty will also consider additional possible areas of concentration in the LL.M. program.

We have also approved and are implementing changes to our relatively new **Global Professional Master of Laws (GP LLM) program**. This executive-style graduate degree program is targeted at experienced professionals.

The first change to the GP LLM program involves the addition of a stream to respond to the increasing and unmet needs of foreign-trained legal professionals, particularly those from common law jurisdictions. A limited eLearning option for some aspects of this program has also been implemented; this option will provide access to a much broader pool of applicants and strengthen the geographic diversity of the class.

Throughout the curricular and co-curricular programs, the Faculty aims to offer our students an outstanding learning experience, whether inside the traditional classroom or beyond. Continuing to find creative ways to enhance teaching and the classroom environment will remain an important objective going forward. We continue to work with UofT's Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (CTSI) to enhance individual expertise, and have worked with CTSI, faculty, and students to develop a more informative course evaluation form. As the University moves to an online course evaluation system, the Faculty will continue to seek ways to ensure that meaningful feedback is used to enhance the learning environment. The Faculty also convenes opportunities such as faculty lunches or focused discussions to discuss pedagogical issues, share innovations, and work together to improve the learning environment for our students.

Over the past several years, the Faculty has increased the opportunities for students to engage

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in meaningful research and learning, including through such programs as the Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights and our International Human Rights Program. Continuing to expand these and other opportunities to deepen student engagement on pressing legal issues, and to connect with the broader research interests of the faculty, is an important goal for the Faculty.

The extraordinary talent and accomplishments of our student body, along with changes in the broader context, prompted the Faculty to begin a re-examination of our grading policy several years ago. After extensive consultation and deliberation, the Faculty recently decided to implement a new grading system which is being phased in starting this year. Successful implementation will require support for instructors, communication with transcript users and other stakeholders, and careful monitoring, and will be a priority over the next three years.

▪ Co-Curricular and Student Life

Our program benefits enormously from the excellence and diversity of our co-curricular offerings. Over the next five years, we will continue to develop our **clinical and experiential learning programs**, such as those offered by the Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights, the five Downtown Legal Services Clinics, Pro Bono Students Canada, and our International Human Rights Program. We know that these experiential learning programs enrich the student experience in manifold ways, while also ensuring that practical legal and professional skills are honed in a 'real-world' learning environment.

Recent changes in the delivery of our mooting program, with enhanced administrative support for the program through the Assistant Dean (Office of the Associate Deans), and the engagement of expert alumni coaches, have reaped tremendous rewards, with our students performing better than ever in the national and international mooting competitions in which they participate. In light of these successes, the Faculty will continue to develop its process to examine opportunities to broaden the range of mooting opportunities, with an emphasis on faculty expertise, broad-based student demand and strong pedagogical value.

We are also proud of our strong **Aboriginal Law Program**. Over the next five years, we will continue to build on recent initiatives in order to enhance the range of supports and programs designed to recruit, retain, and develop Aboriginal law students. We are fortunate to have obtained government funding to hire an Aboriginal Law Coordinator at the Faculty, who coordinates all of the student-focused aboriginal programming, and engages in targeted recruitment efforts and youth programming. We plan to further expand our Aboriginal Law Program by developing new experiential learning opportunities for students, enhanced course offerings in the area, and innovative community outreach initiatives. We will also look for

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opportunities to build and enhance Aboriginal-themed dimensions of our co-curricular and pipeline programs.

The well-being of our students is so vital, and we strive to provide an environment in which students are able to achieve their full academic potential. Last year, we began to offer a range of student wellness programs, and we aim to diversify these offerings in coming years to respond to student interest. Our Assistant Dean of Students has led the development of a **comprehensive, multi-pronged strategy for law student wellness**, with a particular focus on stress and anxiety management, including onsite yoga, meditation and nutrition classes, lunch-time wellness workshops, and a mental health counsellor dedicated to the law school one morning per week. This year, we piloted a 'bring your dog to school' day just prior to exams as part of our stress-reduction programming; this was one of our most highly-rated student events of the year. Continued development of these initiatives will be informed by a new Health and Wellness Student Advisory Committee, which will focus on a peer-to-peer wellness communication strategy.

Our overarching goal in faculty recruitment is to continue to build an extraordinary cohort of scholars and teachers who will continue to strengthen our position as a leading law school.

➤ Our Faculty

The Faculty of Law is deeply and broadly interdisciplinary and internationally renowned for its outstanding scholarly reputation. Our overarching goal in faculty recruitment is to **continue to build an extraordinary cohort of scholars and teachers** who will continue to strengthen our position as a leading law school. To this end, our recruitment activities are proactive, and include outreach to graduate faculties at leading universities worldwide and participation in the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) annual faculty recruitment conference. The result is a strong applicant pool, notable for the number of candidates with doctoral degrees, fellowships, teaching experience, and publications in prestigious journals. Over the next several years, we will continue to identify and recruit promising scholars to respond to identified areas of need, enhance existing Faculty strengths, and develop areas of emerging interest.

Each year we complement our faculty members' areas of teaching strength through our **Distinguished Visitors Program**, in which leading academics from around the world teach short, 'intensive' courses at the Faculty. Enhanced funding, particularly in the area of intellectual property and innovation, will provide important support for the program. In light of this and other input, we plan to review the Distinguished Visitors Program in order to determine how it can be structured to achieve the greatest benefit for the Faculty.

Over the past two years, we have undertaken a significant **enhancement of support for faculty**

research, the lifeblood of our reputation as a Faculty of outstanding scholars. To that end, in 2011 we developed the new position of Associate Dean Research, restructured the position of Assistant Dean Graduate Program to assist with faculty research, and created dedicated administrative support. We also created a Research Advisory Committee led by the Associate Dean Research. Under this leadership, we are continuing to support faculty research, expand the digitization of faculty scholarship, and revamp our Faculty's workshop offerings. These initiatives have already reaped rewards, for instance in the form of growth in number of applications for SSHRC and tri-council funding.

Further improving the range and depth of support for faculty research and intellectual life will be a key priority over the next few years. Faculty members have expressed an interest in a system of 'on-demand' faculty research support, in which specially trained students will assist faculty members with short-term research projects throughout the school year. We are in the process of developing a system along these lines. We will also use the Faculty's completely updated website, which launched early this summer, as an opportunity to significantly expand the digitization of faculty research. Our Associate Dean Research and his team are also working to investigate and publicize funding opportunities beyond the standard tri-council funding model for those whose research projects do not fit within the more traditional funding guidelines.

Recognition of Faculty achievements in research and beyond is also a priority for the Faculty. Over the past several years, the Dean's Office has taken the lead on this issue, and the successes have been notable. In order to enhance these efforts, a new committee on awards and honours has been created to advise the Dean both on individual honours and on the development of a proactive strategy to ensure that faculty members are recognized for their achievements. The Faculty has also sought to enhance its celebration of faculty research achievements, including through distinguished lectures and book launch panels. Nominations for major faculty awards will continue to receive priority from the Dean's Office, with the goal of steadily building on our faculty members' already outstanding record of achievement with major research awards.

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➤ Public Outreach and Community Engagement

The leadership position of our institution gives it an important mandate on the many issues in public life that touch on the law. Over the past several years, the Faculty has exemplified institutional leadership on a number of fronts. For instance, our recent multi-pronged **Middle Income Access to Justice Initiative**, which culminated in a Faculty-organized international

symposium, attracted significant attention from media and policy-makers. An edited collection consisting of all of the papers presented at the symposium has just appeared and is sure to result in further discussion and analysis on this vital issue for the legal community. The Faculty, especially through its Centre for the Legal Profession, is committed to continuing to be an important voice on this and other debates that implicate the legal profession. Similarly, in the wake of the financial crisis of late 2008 and 2009, both the Centre for the Legal Profession and the Business Law Roundtable have been at the forefront of asking hard questions about what went wrong and how systemic weaknesses could be remedied. The Faculty has so much to contribute on these issues, and given their significance, we aim to expand our leadership significantly over the next five year period.

We are also strongly committed to leadership and diversity within the legal profession. Our flagship pipeline program, LAWS (Law in Action Within Schools), is one of the most highly-regarded post-secondary youth outreach programs in North America. LAWS is a partnership with the Toronto District School Board to provide law-themed educational programming and support to at-risk youth in Toronto high schools. This past year, through a new partnership with Osgoode Hall Law School at York University, we were able to expand LAWS programming to three additional high schools. Over the next several years, we also intend to develop a pipeline program for Aboriginal youth, beginning with an **Aboriginal Youth Summer Program** which was offered for the first time this summer, and which hosted 31 Aboriginal youth for a one-week on campus mini-law school experience.

Our **Internationally Trained Lawyers Program (ITLP)** is another example of our engagement with the pressing issues facing the legal profession and broader society. The ITLP, the first program of its kind in Canada when it launched in the summer of 2010, offers foreign-trained lawyers who are new to the country a broad range of programming to develop their legal and cross-cultural communication skills. The first graduates of the program are beginning to gain full admission to the legal profession in Ontario, and have credited the program with giving them many of the tools to succeed in gaining legal employment in the province. We will continue to champion this important program, which recently received renewed financial support from the Government of Ontario.

Our Faculty also continues to reach outward to engage with international partners on issues of international law, justice, and education.

➤ International Programs

Our Faculty also continues to reach outward to engage with international partners on issues of international law, justice, and education. Our **International Human Rights Program (IHRP)**, for instance, which this year celebrated its 25th anniversary, is at the forefront of international human rights law teaching and advocacy in Canada. Every summer, significant numbers of our

most globally-minded students embark on transformative IHRP internships around the world focused on human rights advocacy. As the IHRP embarks on its 'next 25 years', the Faculty will continue to seek ways to support and enhance this signature Faculty program.

Our Faculty was also one of the founding institutional members of the innovative **Center for Transnational Legal Studies (CTLS)** in London, England; each year, approximately 8 to 10 of our students, and one or two of our faculty members, spend a term or two at the Center, studying or teaching issues of transnational law alongside colleagues and classmates from around the world. We see the Center as a model for the globalized education of the future, and are proud founding participants in the school. In 2011-12, the Faculty provided the first non-American Faculty Director for the Center. We are proud of our membership in the Center, and are centrally involved in planning for the CTLS going forward.

While globalization has offered an almost overwhelming array of opportunities for international engagement, as a Faculty, we are focusing our outreach efforts on a small number of foreign 'priority schools', all regional and global leaders, with which we have significant existing ties. For instance, we are in the process of developing a regular inter-faculty conference with leading Chinese law school Tsinghua University Faculty of Law in Beijing, with which we have developed an increasingly strong relationship over the past decade. We are excited to have sent our first student on exchange to Tsinghua this fall as a result of an exchange partnership concluded between the Deans' Offices of our two faculties. Over the coming years, we aim to strengthen similar faculty and student linkages with our other priority partner schools as well.

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➤ **Advancement**

As noted in the opening section of this document, fundraising for the new Faculty of Law building has been the key advancement priority over the past several years. Last fall, the Faculty celebrated the **public launch of its building campaign**. This included announcements of outstanding support by law firms and by individuals. For instance, Osler, Hoskin and Harcourt LLP and Torys LLP each contributed gifts of more than \$2 million, setting a new benchmark for law firm giving in Canada. The campaign has also received several individual alumni gifts of \$1 million or more, including gifts from John Schumacher and David Asper, and very recently finalized a landmark \$11 million gift from former U of T Chancellor the Hon. Hal Jackman. This gift from alumnus and former Chancellor Jackman is the largest received by the Law Faculty to

date, and will result in the new wing on Queen's Park Crescent being named the Jackman Law Building. To date, the campaign has raised over \$32.5 million in private support. Throughout 2012 and 2013, we will continue to solicit major gifts for the campaign, and will also launch a broad-based participation campaign for all alumni. Our goal is to conclude the private fundraising for the building before the commencement of construction in Summer 2013.

During the construction period, the Advancement Office will work closely with all existing donors to the building, developing exemplary stewardship programs that will sustain donor engagement with the project. We will also work with our campaign cabinet and other volunteers to raise any outstanding funds. Finally, we will continue to pursue other fundraising priorities unrelated to the building project, notably for financial aid and co-curricular student programs. We also anticipate continuing to raise private funds for programmatic initiatives that benefit students and faculty.

Conclusion

This Academic Plan is the result of multiple rounds of consultation with the entire Faculty of Law community. These consultations with faculty members, student leaders, senior academic leaders, program directors, staff, and alumni began in January 2012, and were followed by specific discussions on more focused topics with particular groups including junior faculty, leaders in the profession, senior academic leaders, senior staff, and a range of student groups including mature students and student diversity groups. The framework for the Academic Plan that came out of these consultations was then posted online for feedback. There were regular updates at Faculty Council, and members of the law school community were invited to comment. Suggestions were incorporated into a running draft of the Academic Plan which was shared with the community through a permanent location on the Faculty of Law website. The Academic Plan was circulated for final comment in mid-September, 2012.

The Faculty has benefited from this opportunity to reflect on where we have been, and where we are going as a scholarly community. Five years from now, the Jackman Law Building will be our new home; we are confident that the beautiful and soaring new space will accurately reflect our boundless goals and aspirations as a community.