



January 30, 2018

Ms. Karen Wilford
Chair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action Advisory Committee
Federation of Law Societies of Canada
World Exchange Plaza
45 O'Connor St., Suite 1810
Ottawa, ON
K1P 1A4

Dear Ms. Wilford:

Further to our discussion in November, I am pleased to enclose summaries of initiatives Canadian law schools have in place to respond to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. We asked people to keep their summaries to approximately one page. This means that not every initiative is identified, but these summaries do provide a very good picture of the key initiatives in place.

As these summaries indicate, the responses of Canadian law schools are varied, with curricular and co-curricular initiatives. These include new courses, integration of relevant material across the law school curriculum, and increased exposure to Indigenous culture and practices through blanket exercises, interactions with Indigenous elders, and camps and other similar events that give students, faculty and staff opportunities to spend time in, and to learn from, Indigenous communities.

The enclosed summaries also indicate that in responding to the TRC Calls to Action, Canadian law schools are building on various initiatives already in place, many longstanding. Canadian law schools have curricular and co-curricular initiatives in place that pre-date the TRC Report and that are intended to address and provide formal and informal education about the issues of racism, assimilation and reconciliation identified in the TRC report. These initiatives include courses on Indigenous law, justice and legal traditions; integration of Indigenous elders into the daily life of law schools; admissions policies and programmes that promote access to law

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school for Indigenous students and support them once they arrive and after they graduate; hiring Indigenous faculty and staff, and introducing students and the broader law school community to Indigenous ceremonies and traditions.

In your letter of 13 October 2017, you stated that you and your committee “would like to build on the momentum and initiative taken by the academy to address Call to Action 28, and ensure that any future requirements developed by the Federation both complement and support that work.” We would welcome the opportunity to engage with you and your committee to achieve this goal, a goal which we are firmly of the view would not be achieved by adding another mandatory course to the National Requirement. Many Canadian law schools made very carefully considered pedagogical choices against this option, choosing instead integration of material across the curriculum, complemented by a number of other curricular, co-curricular, hiring and program changes, as the way to respond most effectively to Call to Action 28.

We are proud of the work we have done thus far. We also realize, however, that there is more to do, and that the cultural, systemic and structural change required for true and lasting reconciliation of the kind called for in the TRC Report requires constant and ongoing attention. Canadian law schools are committed to continue and improve on their efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Camille Cameron". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

Camille Cameron
President, Canadian Council of Law Deans
Dean, Schulich School of Law