



Ten Years of Transformation

As we mark the 10th anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Final Report, Canadian law faculties have transitioned from initial responses to a comprehensive and enduring integration of the Calls to Action.

In 2026, it is clear that this work has moved far beyond the introduction of single mandatory courses. The updates from faculties across the country reflect a fundamental shift in how law is taught, researched, and practiced in Canada. Central to this evolution is the deepened focus on Indigenous legal orders. Rather than viewing Indigenous laws merely as historical artifacts, law schools are increasingly recognizing them as living, functional systems of justice. This includes the development of dedicated Indigenous law degrees, the expansion of clinical programs rooted in community-based legal traditions, and the respectful braiding of Indigenous legal protocols into the broader academic framework.

The following summaries highlight the transformative developments of the past decade. These statements supplement the foundational reports from 2017, 2021, and 2023, providing a comprehensive retrospective of the evolution of Indigenous legal education.

While these summaries offer an overview of a decade of growth, we encourage readers to visit faculty websites or contact the schools directly for more detailed information.



Dix ans de transformation

Alors que nous commémorens le 10e anniversaire du rapport final de la Commission de la vérité et réconciliation (CVR), les facultés de droit canadiennes sont passées des réponses initiales à une intégration complète et durable des appels à l'action.

En 2026, il est clair que ce travail a largement dépassé l'introduction de cours obligatoires uniques. Les mises à jour des facultés à travers le pays reflètent un changement fondamental dans la manière dont le droit est enseigné, étudié et pratiqué au Canada. Au cœur de cette évolution se trouve l'accent accru sur les ordres juridiques autochtones. Plutôt que de considérer les lois autochtones comme de simples vestiges historiques, les facultés de droit les reconnaissent de plus en plus comme des systèmes de justice vivants et fonctionnels. Cela inclut le développement de diplômes de droit autochtone dédiés, l'expansion de programmes cliniques ancrés dans les traditions juridiques communautaires, et l'intégration respectueuse des protocoles juridiques autochtones dans le cadre académique plus large.

Les résumés suivants mettent en évidence les évolutions transformatrices de la dernière décennie. Ces déclarations complètent les rapports fondateurs de 2017, 2021 et 2023, offrant une rétrospective complète de l'évolution de l'éducation juridique autochtone.

Bien que ces résumés offrent un aperçu d'une décennie de croissance, nous encourageons les lecteurs à visiter les sites web des facultés ou à contacter directement les écoles pour obtenir des informations plus détaillées.



March 22, 2026

University of Alberta Faculty of Law - Law Responses to the TRC Calls to Action

Located in Treaty Six Territory and the Métis Homeland, the University of Alberta Faculty of Law has 39 Indigenous students enrolled in its JD program and one Indigenous student enrolled in the LL.M. The faculty aims to enroll approximately 15 Indigenous students in each 1L class. The faculty currently employs one Indigenous faculty member. In addition, the faculty employs one full-time Indigenous Support Officer who provides support and assistance to Indigenous students and the Indigenous Law Students' Association, including support for Indigenous orientation and graduation, attendance at the Indigenous Bar Association (IBA) annual conference, twice yearly Indigenous mentoring events, an annual Indigenous alumni celebration and the management of a substantial Indigenous student emergency fund.

The faculty has taken numerous steps to directly implement the TRC Calls to Action, while also working to create a law school environment that is safe for and supportive of Indigenous students. These initiatives include:

Financial support for students

- The faculty has created several new scholarships and awards to recruit and support Indigenous law students. In addition, we have secured philanthropic funding for a second group of scholarships, as well as a substantial low-barrier emergency fund for Indigenous students that can provide funds within 24 hours of the request.

Student programming

- The faculty financially supports the Indigenous Law Students' Association (ILSA) Speaker Series, an annual public event featuring a series of lectures by lawyers, legal scholars and other subject matter experts. Speakers and themes are chosen by the Indigenous Law Students' Association.
- Four students are fully funded and coached to participate annually in the Kawaskimhon National Aboriginal Moot.
- All self-identifying Indigenous students are invited to participate in Launchpad to Law, a two-week intensive academic and community program held in August for Indigenous students entering their 1L year.
- The faculty provides annual funding for Indigenous students to participate in the IBA Conference.
- The faculty hosts an Eagle Feather ceremony for graduating Indigenous students and their families.
- The faculty hosts an annual sweat with members of the Samson Cree First Nation.

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- Hosts numerous workshops with scholars and community members, many of which are open to students.
- Accepts articling students.
- Hosts Indigenous bar calls.

Facilities/Safe Environment

- The faculty has a dedicated suite of rooms on the main floor of the Law Centre that hosts the Wahkohtowin Lodge and the Indigenous Law Students' Association. It also includes spaces for ceremony, including smudging.
- The faculty has a well-established policy on smudging, providing daily smudging at the Wahkohtowin Lodge as well as in other classrooms and spaces within the Law Centre when needed.
- The faculty hosts annual events for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls Awareness Day and Orange t-shirt Day.

Mentorship

- The faculty hosts a minimum of two mentoring and one Indigenous alumni event annually. At the mentoring events, Indigenous lawyers, judges and alumni meet with students and offer job shadowing and other mentoring opportunities.

Future Initiatives

- The faculty is currently working on converting the Launchpad into Law program for commencing Indigenous 1L students into a for-credit course.
- Development of an Indigenous Peoples and the Law course as part of a new Undergraduate Certificate in Law (for non-JD students).
- Development of a Graduate Certificate in Indigenous Law.



Dr. Fiona Kelly

Dean of Law

Wilbur Fee Bowker Professor of Law

28: LAW SCHOOLS

We call upon law schools in Canada to require all law students to take a course in Aboriginal people and the law, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and antiracism.

PROGRESS	NEW AND/OR CONTINUING INITIATIVES AND PARTNERSHIPS
New	<p>Funding has been secured to develop a new recruitment plan for Indigenous students, building on approaches undertaken prior to the pandemic and using refreshed marketing materials. With this funding and the work of the new ILS Associate Director, Russell Nesbitt, we were able to attend multiple law school admissions events and connect with prospective Indigenous students from all over Canada. Some of these events included informational sessions where Indigenous students could attend and learn about the work Allard is doing in teaching Indigenous and Aboriginal law. Due to the efforts in Indigenous recruitment, ILS was able to increase its Indigenous applications by 33%. There is still ample funding for Indigenous student recruitment; therefore, there will be a continued effort in the coming years</p> <p>Currently, ILS is working towards finding funding to increase the amount of cultural activities that ILS is able to offer Indigenous students. This funding would help support cultural activities such as beading, drum making, cedar weaving and much more.</p>
Ongoing	<p>The law school has operated its Indigenous Community Legal Clinic (ICLC) in Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside for over twenty-five years. The ICLC’s purpose is to provide law students with an opportunity to use their substantive understanding of law in a clinical setting and to provide the Indigenous community information, referral and on-site and remote access to legal services. The ICLC aims to provide decolonized legal services to Indigenous clients recognizing that those clients may have a history of trauma including from interactions with the legal system.</p> <p>The ICLC’s new Grant of Probate Project, initiated in 2023/24 with funding from the Law Foundation of British Columbia, makes it easier for families to gain access to funds that have been tied up in legal limbo, including class action settlements that were paid to now-deceased survivors of residential schools, day schools and the Sixties Scoop.</p> <p>As of March 2025, the law school has a total of 6 Indigenous faculty members (out of 56 tenured or tenure-track faculty members) and two dedicated staff positions for Indigenous student support and programming. The law school continues recruitment efforts for a senior Indigenous faculty member.</p> <p>The law school regularly hires Indigenous students on short-term, part-time contracts over the academic term or during the summer months to assist with ILS programming and administration.</p> <p>In partnership with the UBC Black Law Students’ Association, the law school continues to offer a free LSAT preparation course for self-identifying Black and Indigenous applicants.</p>

As of Fall 2026, the mandatory first-year JD curriculum -of *LAW 200 – Indigenous Settler Legal Relations*, and *LAW 291 (2) Aboriginal and Treaty Rights*, will be amalgamated into a new 5-credit first-year course *Law-201 Indigenous Peoples and Law*. This new course will provide a more holistic treatment of Indigenous Peoples and law, combining content on Indigenous legal theories and methodologies, sources and authorities of Indigenous law, Truth and Reconciliation to critically examine the history and legacy of colonial legal orders and to foster a decolonized understanding of law, legal institutions and legal processes in Canada, the constitutional rights of ‘Aboriginal’ Peoples under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982, and Parliament’s legislative authority over ‘Indians and lands reserved for them’ under section 91(24) of the Constitution Act, 1867. Students may also take seven upper-level elective courses in Aboriginal and/or Indigenous Law topics, and a land-based experiential learning full-term course in Indigenous laws on Vancouver Island (W̱SÁNEĆ Law Field Course) is offered every second year.

Examples of other learning opportunities include:

- JD students can choose to obtain a Specialization in Indigenous Legal Studies (previously a Specialization in Aboriginal Law).
- As part of its upper year moot program, the law school participates in the annual Kawaskimhon Moot, a specifically Indigenous focused moot for students across Canadian law schools.
- Indigenous Legal Studies (ILS) at the law school hosts regular speaker series that bring in Indigenous scholars and practitioners to speak on various issues.
- The law school supports the Indigenous Law Students’ Association in offering special programming to the law school community during Indigenous Awareness Week.
- All Indigenous students can participate in the non-mandatory ILS Academic Leadership Certificate. The aim of the certificate is to provide academic and leadership skill development and community building within the Indigenous student cohort, including academic skills coaching, mentoring, and guest lectures.

The law school offers numerous financial awards for upper level and incoming Indigenous students.

The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut'ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The city of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation within Alberta (including Nose Hill Métis District 5 and Elbow Métis District 6).

Since 2017 our Faculty's Indigenous Strategy and Student Support Committee (ISSSC) has worked intentionally and in collaboration with students to develop Faculty level responses to the TRC Calls to Action and other National Reports and Calls, and the University of Calgary's Indigenous Strategy: *ii' taa'poh'to'p* to support current and future students. The ISSSC is comprised of current Indigenous law students who are executive members of the Indigenous Law Student's Association, non-Indigenous allies, and Indigenous staff and faculty.

Some of our prior and current work includes:

- Integration of Indigenous programming in our intensive 3-week block courses have included:
 - Indigenous speaker panels in both the 1L Foundations of Law and Justice and 2L Negotiations courses;
 - Mandatory completion of the CBA's and LSA's "The Path" in 1L Foundations and the Foreign Trained Lawyers Program;
 - Topics on Indigenous and Critical Race perspectives and anti-racism;
 - A Blanket exercise with specific local and legal content;
 - Site visits to Blackfoot Crossing, Tsuut'ina, and as recent as 2025: The Confluence Historic Parkland for a day on the land exploring historic Indigenous sites, engaging with Indigenous Elders, and learning about the intersection of Aboriginal and Indigenous Law.
 - Indigenous Welcome Ceremony for newly admitted Indigenous law students.
- Continuing to expand the breadth and depth of Aboriginal and Indigenous law content in the curriculum generally, especially in the mandatory curriculum. Across the mandatory curriculum students now get a full course worth (36 credit hours) of instruction in these topics. Across the entire curriculum no fewer than thirty-four of our courses contain content dealing with issues of Aboriginal and Indigenous law.

- Creation of the Concentration, Aboriginal and Indigenous Law in 2024 for students to focus their legal studies on these areas. The Concentration is noted on the student's graduating transcript.
- Expansion of Indigenous and Aboriginal course content offerings and Concentration courses, including:
 - Indigenous Peoples and the Law
 - Indigenous Legal Theory
 - Kawaskimhon National Aboriginal Moot
 - Residential Schools Settlement Agreement
 - Selected Topics in Indigenous Peoples and the Law
 - Legal Practice: Indigenous Business Law
 - Reconciliation & Lawyers
 - Negotiating Indigenous Rights
 - Indigenous Economic Development
 - On-the-land Law of Modern Treaties (Yukon)
 - Restorative Justice
 - MMIWG
- Building relationships with Indigenous Elders and Knowledge Keepers, Indigenous lawyers and professionals, the Law Society of Alberta, the Alberta Court of Justice through their Indigenous Justice Strategy, and communities.
- Building relationships and working closely with the student-run Indigenous Law Students Association to understand student concerns and interests and ensure they have a voice in decision making (including two seats on the Indigenous Strategy and Student Support Committee).
- Development of Indigenous Students Admissions Process to equitably address the underrepresentation of Indigenous peoples within the legal profession, including the creation of an all-Indigenous Admissions sub-committee.
- Creation and hiring of the part-time Staff position of Coordinator, Indigenous Initiatives and Reconciliation in 2022, evolving to the full-time Staff position of Specialist, Indigenous Education & Reconciliation in 2025
- Hiring of one part-time Indigenous Faculty member in 2022, evolving to a full-time Assistant Professor position in 2025.
- Creation of the country's first LSAT[®] summer preparation program solely for Indigenous students in partnership with LSAC in 2024: A Pipeline Project, Funded from the Law School Admission Council, Inc. This program continued in summer 2025, doubling in capacity, with planning for the 2026 program underway.

- Pursuing partnership with entities in the Yukon Territory to offer Yukon residents the opportunity to attain a law degree from the University of Calgary within their territory.
- Development of a strategy to identify, recruit, hire, and support Indigenous Faculty and Staff.
- Funding for students to attend the University of Saskatchewan Spring and Summer Law Courses prior to their first year.
- Funding for students to complete the University of Calgary First Nations Leadership program as part of their degree.
- Funding for Indigenous students to attain membership and participate in the annual IBA Conference and other Indigenous-focused conferences and opportunities.
- Playing a partnership and hosting role in the “Dare to Dream” student program.
- Working to create scholarship and bursary opportunities to support Indigenous students through their studies, including entrance awards, upper year awards, and emergency funding specifically for Indigenous students
- Working to create career opportunities for Indigenous students through partnership with Indigenous communities and the profession.
- Working to create Indigenous mentorship opportunities with the LSA, Court of Justice, and other organizations.



Schulich School of Law: Reconciliation Initiatives & Responses to the TRC Report (December 2025)

The Schulich School of Law has been promoting Indigenous participation in the legal system since establishing the Indigenous Blacks and Mi'kmaq Initiative (IB&MI) in 1989 in response to the *Royal Commission on the Donald Marshall Jr. Prosecution* report. We have twelve dedicated spaces for Indigenous Black and Mi'kmaq students in each first-year class. The IB&MI is supported by the University, the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia, and the provincial and federal governments.

In 2016, we formed a TRC Committee, made up of faculty and students. The TRC Committee's focus has been on enhancing our curriculum and creating internship, research, mentorship and articling opportunities and other supports for our Indigenous students.

The courses we have added since 2016 include a mandatory two-credit intensive course for our first-year students, *Aboriginal and Indigenous Law in Context 1 and 2 (AILC)*. This course provides foundational knowledge about the history and contemporary experiences of Indigenous peoples (particular Mi'kmaq people, as we are located in Mi'kma'ki) and their relationship with Canada. It also introduces students to the various ways Aboriginal and Indigenous law intersect with Canadian law.

We now offer seven upper-year courses in Aboriginal and/or Indigenous law. For the past three years, we have also offered a Visitorship in Indigenous Law – a chance for an academic or elder to present a short, intensive course in Aboriginal Law topics to a small group of students. This Visitorship is co-sponsored by the Chancellor's Chair in Aboriginal Law & Policy. This year's Visitorship was taught by Elder Gerald Gloade a Mi'kmaq knowledge holder and educator, recently retired from the Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaq and the Mi'kmawey Debert Cultural Center. The intensive focused on Mi'kmaq ecological knowledge derived from the seasons, the Mi'kmaq months, oral teachings as well as the landscape and archeology.

In 2020, we created our Certificate in Aboriginal and Indigenous Law. Since then, 70 students have graduated with the certificate. Student interest and enrollment in our upper year Aboriginal and Indigenous Law electives is high.

We support our Indigenous students in many ways. They receive full tuition support

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(partial if they have some Band support), in addition to financial support for books and a living allowance. We give our students financial support every year to attend the national Indigenous Bar Association Conference. Several workplaces have dedicated summer employment and/or articling positions for our IB&MI students, including the NS Department of Justice, NS Legal Aid, and the NS Court of Appeal. Our TRC Committee and Career Development Office have been working with Indigenous organizations to create and support internship opportunities for our students. These positions are fully paid by the law school. In 2021-22 three paid summer internships were created for our Indigenous students with the Atlantic Policy Conference of First Nations Chiefs, the Kwilmu'kMawKlusuaqan Mi'kmaq Rights Office, and the Union of Nova Scotia Mi'kmaq. We continue to hire at least one summer Research Assistant to undertake research for faculty members to include more Indigenous content in their courses and programs.

We have four Indigenous professors. One holds a Tier Two CRC in Indigenous Governance and is jointly appointed with the Faculty of Management. Another is a newly appointed Tier One CRC in Circumpolar Indigenous Marine Governance and International Law. . Plans for the future include continuing to enhance the curriculum, introducing a graduate certificate and graduate scholarships, and continuing to recruit and invite Indigenous scholars and visitors.

Professor Naiomi Metallic, our Chancellor's Chair in Aboriginal Law & Policy, is currently working with other colleagues on the Lnuwey Dêbludaqan Wiguom (Migmaq Law Lodge), a research and training unit that supports and assists Indigenous communities in the region in the revitalization of their laws and governance. A "wiguom" refers to a wigwam — the style of shelter traditionally used by the Lnùg (the Migmaq people). Wiguoml (the plural of Wiguom) could be easily disassembled and reassembled at different locations to support the seasonal land-use patterns of the Mi'kmaq. While the Schulich School of Law at Dalhousie University will be one home for the revitalization work, we by no means intend it as the only home. We encourage and support the development of Lnuwey Dêbludaqan Wiguom or related complementary units, and engagement in law and governance revitalization projects, within other universities, Indigenous communities and organizations in Atlantic Canada. This joint Law School and Faculty of Management project is supported with funding from the Law Foundation of Nova Scotia.

In October 2022, we acquired an eagle feather as a gift from Professor Cheryl Simon and IB&MI alumni Jamie Vacon and Jade Pictou. The Welcome Ceremony taught us about the significance of the feather and the related protocols and



ceremony in relation to stewarding the feather.

The feather recently moved to our entrance hall to make way for a semi-permanent exhibition of artworks by Alan Syliboy, a well-known Mi'kmaq artist. The eight pieces in the exhibition were purchased for the Dalhousie Art Gallery by an alumnus of the Law School and will remain on display indefinitely. We also have a long-term loan of a ninth Alan Syliboy work from an alumnus that hangs down the hall from the main exhibit. Finally, another Alan Syliboy work of art hangs in the Dean's Office.

We have two sculptures from a local Mi'kmaq artist, Mark Sark, one of which hangs in our entrance hall, along with a work from another local artist, Tayla Paul, which was donated to the School by the Dalhousie Aboriginal law Students Association. This past summer, as part of our community garden, we incorporated Indigenous medicinal plants – tobacco, sweet grass and sage. The community is encouraged to harvest what they need.



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Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action: Bora Laskin Faculty of Law Responses

1) Pre TRC Initiatives

The Bora Laskin Faculty of Law at Lakehead University was established in the fall of 2013 with the blessing and support of Indigenous communities, including Fort William First Nation, Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Anishinabek Nation (formerly the Union of Ontario Indians), Grand Council Treaty #3, and the Metis Nation of Ontario. Since it opened, the faculty's three mandates have served the legal needs of Northern Ontario: 1) Aboriginal and Indigenous Law; 2) Natural Resources and Environmental Law; and 3) Small Town Practice, all with the Integrated Practice Curriculum. Even before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released their final report in 2015, Bora Laskin faculty and staff have been responding to many of the TRC Calls to Action.

Since opening our doors, first-year students have been required to take two courses in Aboriginal Worldviews and Indigenous Law. The first is LAWS 1530 (Indigenous Legal Traditions) introducing students to the worldviews and perspectives of Indigenous peoples in Canada examining laws and legal traditions of various Indigenous nations. It covers the history and legacy of residential schools, treaties understood from an Indigenous perspective, Indigenous law, Aboriginal-Crown relations, and skills-based training in using talking circles as a form of conflict resolution. The second is LAWS 1535 (Indigenous Perspectives) requiring law students to engage in thirty-six (36) hours of activities approved by the Director of Indigenous Relations. The approved activities introduce law students to FNMI culture, traditions, and perspectives through speakers, dialogue, media, and experience-based opportunities to interact with Indigenous communities. In second year, all law students are required to complete a full-year course, LAWS 2000 (Aboriginal Legal Issues) which covers Canadian laws applied to Indigenous Peoples, addressing historical and current interactions affecting Indigenous Peoples including Aboriginal Crown relations, treaties and Aboriginal rights. The course also introduces all Lakehead law students to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

Beyond these mandatory courses, we also offer electives with Indigenous and Aboriginal Law content including IP and Indigenous Knowledge Governance, Indigenous Civil Litigation, Federal and Aboriginal Law of Work, Gladue, Land Use in the North, and numerous others. All instructors are encouraged to also weave Indigenous content into all their courses where possible and Lakehead University has recently appointed an Indigenous Curriculum Specialist to help with further curricular developments in these areas.

Not only are Indigenous content and concerns integrated throughout our curriculum, but also throughout our building and every major event we host. Our Restorative Justice Room, Aboriginal Law classroom, and Indigenous Law Students' Association Resource Centre all provide culturally safe and comfortable spaces for students. We also include

Elders, drummers/singers, and cultural teachings in our Welcome Day, Orientation, Graduation, and other significant events. We have been guided from the beginning by the Anishinaabe Oma-Minowaywin (the Faculty's Indigenous advisory council, which provides guidance to the Dean and faculty) and the Ogimawin Indigenous Education Council (the university's Indigenous governing body which provides guidance to the President on all Indigenous programs and services at Lakehead).

Further, we have a ProBono Students Canada chapter at our law school focused primarily on Indigenous legal issues, as well as a very active Indigenous Law Student Association which hosts various cultural workshops, film screenings, feasts, social gatherings, mentorship and networking opportunities, and academic panels and presentations.

2. Organizational TRC Responses

The Office of Indigenous Relations and the position of Director of Indigenous Relations were established in September 2016. The Director is a support for those who seek information on applying to law school, our current law students, and our law graduates as they enter the legal job market. Recently, the Bora Laskin Faculty of law hired an Indigenous Relations Intern through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation on a one-year term to support the Office of Indigenous Relations. We hope to do so again.

The Indigenous Law and Justice Institute was launched on April 1, 2021. The Institute focuses on research; including engaging students with community members and elders and building on our series of Indigenous law conferences; strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations to revitalize Indigenous laws; and on curriculum development for land-based learning and a law camp.

The above-mentioned Anishinaabe Oma-Minowaywin (AOM) and the Ogimawin Indigenous Education Council (OIEC) both provide input and advice from Indigenous communities and organizations to the Faculty of Law and Lakehead University, respectively. Our Indigenous Admissions Committee is responsible for reviewing all self-identified Indigenous applicants and monitoring the Indigenous Admissions Policy for effectiveness. The law faculty also has committees overseeing the Indigenous Law & Justice Institute, our biannual Indigenous Law Conference, and ad hoc events (such as Truth & Reconciliation Day and Treaty Week), as well as representation on main campus committees, including the President's Council on Truth & Reconciliation (PCTR), the Provost's Task Force on the Indigenous Content Requirement (PTF-ICR), and the United Nations Decade of Indigenous Languages (UNDIL) Planning Committee.

3a) Recruitment – Indigenous students

The Indigenous Admissions Policy's mandate is to assess the self-identified Indigenous applicants for admission to the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law. In doing so, the Indigenous Admissions Committee is guided by eleven principles covering the faculty's mandate areas, the applicant's suitability to our program, entrance scholarships, and expertise and competency of committee members. In recent years, the Faculty of Law has decided to offer all successful Indigenous applicants an entrance scholarship, typically valued at \$5,000. Incoming students also receive support from the Director of Indigenous Relations in locating resources, whether financial, housing, food, legal, or academic.

Recruitment – Indigenous Faculty and Staff (and Staff with TRC Related Duties)

The faculty currently employs one Indigenous staff member in the position of Director of Indigenous Relations. Established in September 2016, the Director coordinates the Indigenous Perspectives course, the Elder-in-Residence program, chairs the Indigenous Admissions Committee and serves on others, conducts student & faculty recruitment activities as well as other events in the region, such as the annual Indigenous High School Law Day and the annual Indigenous Legal Traditions field trip. Currently, one Indigenous tenure-track faculty member is employed by the Faculty, though we are committed to hiring more as we grow. Several of the local practitioners hired by the faculty to teach Indigenous (and other) content are also Indigenous. The Dean is also involved with TRC related duties, including securing resources and training for staff and faculty professional development.

4) Curricular Innovation

Our mandatory courses with dedicated Indigenous content, as well as our electives, are outlined above (see ‘Pre TRC Initiatives’). In addition, we support our students in competing at the annual Kawashkimohn Moot, which incorporates Indigenous Legal Orders alongside federal, provincial, and international laws. In 2025, the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law hosted this moot, which brought 90 mainly Indigenous students from across Canada to Thunder Bay. In addition, we send a delegation of students on a land-based excursion to the Kay-Nah-Chi-Wah Nung Historical Centre every year, we designed a three-day mandatory law camp for all incoming students, incorporating land learning and Indigenous law at SOIL, and we include skills and competencies for Aboriginal and Indigenous Law throughout much of our programming.

5) Governance

In addition to the AOM, the OIEC, and the Indigenous Admissions Committee (see ‘Pre TRC Initiatives’ and ‘Organizational TRC Responses’), staff and faculty support and work with many Law Student Society (LSS) clubs, including the Indigenous Law Students’ Association (ILSA), the Black Law Students’ Association (BLSA), and the Asian Law Students’ Association (ALSA).

6) Facilities/Safe Environment

The Faculty of Law contains many safe and inclusive spaces, such as the LSS Lounge, the ILSA Resource Centre & Library, the Restorative Justice Room, and the Office of Indigenous Relations. The LSS Lounge is a place where students can gather to relax and study when not in class. The ILSA Resource Centre contains a reading library, a large round table for meetings and feasts, our student medicine bundle, and seating for social events or studying. The Restorative Justice Room is our cultural classroom on the third floor which overlooks Lake Superior and the Sleeping Giant. It contains no desks, includes seating arranged in a circle, and houses our faculty’s medicine bundle. This is also the space in which our two elders in residence meet with students each week.

The Office of Indigenous Relations contains office space for the Director of Indigenous Relations, space for student collaboration, and it houses our Indigenous Law & Justice Institute’s medicine bundle. We also have a classroom dedicated to teaching Aboriginal and Indigenous Law. Numerous spaces at the law school are designated smudging areas. We have recently added an outdoor learning space where we can hold sacred fires, seat 90 people, and hold various ceremonies and exercises. We are building a medicine garden adjacent to the space next year.

7) Research

Regarding research, the Indigenous Law & Justice Institute is actively engaged in employing Student Researchers and a Research Coordinator to examine the revitalization of Indigenous laws for communities and organizations, such as Fort William First Nation, the Métis Nation of Ontario, Nokiiwin Tribal Council, and Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services. In addition to the ILSA Resource Centre & Library, our Law Library has a categorization strategy which utilizes a colour-coded system to identify resources related to our mandate areas, including Aboriginal and Indigenous Law. The Director of Indigenous Relations and Indigenous Law Professor also provide support to students looking to access Indigenous Law resources.

8) Mentorship/Internship

Entering our twelfth year, the Bora Laskin Faculty of Law continues to build on the mandate of Aboriginal and Indigenous Law. We have many initiatives that have been generously funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario and the federal Department of Justice to further our efforts in strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities and organizations. Continued initiatives include annual participation in the Kawashkimohn Moot, expanded Pro Bono Students Canada projects with Indigenous partners and content, an increased number of Debwewin student internships, and volunteer and employment opportunities with Lakehead University Community Legal Services, Kinnaaweya Legal Clinic, and Nishnawbe Aski Legal Services. New initiatives include monthly check-ins with Indigenous students conducted by the Director of Indigenous Relations and collaboration with the National Advocates for Indigenous Law Students to discuss and address issues around student support, admissions, recruitment, online learning. In addition to the Peer Mentorship Program facilitated by Student Services, ILSA also creates opportunities for mentorship and networking with the local legal community through seasonal feasts and social gatherings. The Indigenous Bar Association (IBA) Annual Conference and the National Indigenous Law Students' Association (NILSA) also provide a venue for networking and mentorship among Indigenous law students.

9) Community engagement

In addition to the outreach activities and speaker series facilitated by the Indigenous Law & Justice Institute Outreach Coordinator (see 'Organizational TRC Responses'), the Faculty of Law has coordinated a Violence in Policing Workshop for the local legal community, as well as a semi-annual Indigenous Law Conference for law students, scholars, and practitioners from across Canada. We are also involved every year with supporting Lakehead University's events around the National Day for Truth & Reconciliation and Treaties Recognition Week, and we are planning a series of Gladue awareness workshops to educate the local bar and judiciary.

10) Future Initiatives

We continue to seek external funding for an additional full-time or part time programming position to support the Director. We are also planning an Indigenous Law Conference for January 2027 and are for the first time offering a land-based spring course, and our students will travel to Rainy River First Nation for an intensive week-long trip.



Mise à jour des actions posées en 2022 en réponse au Rapport de la CVR du Canada Faculté de droit de l'Université Laval (Québec)

Embauche d'une professeure d'origine innue

Depuis le 1^{er} janvier 2022, la Faculté de droit de l'Université Laval compte dans ses rangs la professeure Kathy Bellefleur, d'origine innue, spécialiste en droit civil. Madame Bellefleur soutiendra bientôt sa thèse de doctorat, entreprise à l'Université McGill, et qui examine les fondements de la propriété en établissant des ponts conceptuels entre la tradition de droit civil et la tradition innue.

Création de la Chaire de leadership en enseignement René-Dussault sur l'inclusion des traditions autochtones dans les programmes de formation en droit

En janvier 2022, l'Université Laval a créé la Chaire de leadership en enseignement René-Dussault sur l'inclusion des traditions autochtones dans les programmes de formation en droit. Cette chaire, dirigée par la professeure Kathy Bellefleur, a pour mission de contribuer à la bonification des programmes de formation en droit en permettant aux étudiantes et étudiants de s'initier et de comprendre, dans un esprit d'ouverture, les traditions juridiques autochtones. Elle bénéficie d'un don philanthropique de Me René Dussault, juge retraité de la Cour d'appel du Québec.

Les travaux réalisés au sein de la Chaire permettront de :

- Favoriser l'intégration dans l'enseignement du droit des perspectives normatives des peuples autochtones afin d'enrichir cet enseignement et de le rendre plus représentatif des réalités québécoise et canadienne;
- Développer des outils pédagogiques propres aux nations autochtones, afin de les inclure dans l'enseignement à la Faculté, notamment sous forme de capsules vidéos, incluant des témoignages d'aînés ou des récits;
- Inclure l'enseignement des traditions juridiques autochtones dans les programmes de formation de la Faculté;
- Intéresser et faciliter le recrutement de futurs juristes autochtones en s'appuyant sur les structures déjà mises en place au sein des communautés autochtones pour aider leurs étudiantes et étudiants souhaitant poursuivre des études universitaires;
- Former d'actuels ou de futurs juristes non seulement aux injustices subies par les peuples autochtones, mais également à leurs traditions, culture et différents modes normatifs.

Création d'un nouveau cours obligatoire *Traditions et enjeux juridiques autochtones* dans le programme de baccalauréat en droit

À compter de la session universitaire 2023-2024, un cours obligatoire de trois (3) crédits intitulé *Traditions et enjeux juridiques autochtones* sera intégré au programme de baccalauréat en droit. Ce cours, qui sera donné à la deuxième session, aura comme objectif d'introduire les étudiantes et

étudiants au concept de pluralisme juridique, en les ouvrant à une diversité d'expressions normatives et culturelles, mais aussi à leur présenter un historique des relations avec l'État ainsi que certains enjeux liés aux interactions entre droit civil et normativités autochtones. La formation juridique vise également à sensibiliser les personnes étudiantes aux enjeux contemporains relatifs à l'identité autochtone, notamment le *Principe de Jordan*, la condition des femmes autochtones, le statut juridique et l'accès à la justice et au logement.

Création du Comité permanent Droit et peuples autochtones

En 2022, la Faculté de droit a créé un Comité permanent sur le droit et les peuples autochtones, composé de professeurs, d'étudiants et de personnes ressources, dont au moins un étudiant ou une étudiante autochtone et d'un représentant externe issu d'une nation autochtone du Québec. Ce comité a pour mandat de :

- Conseiller la direction sur la formation et la sensibilisation des étudiants ou du personnel sur les enjeux autochtones ainsi que sur la compétence et la sécurisation culturelles;
- Proposer à la direction toute orientation, activité ou mesure propre à favoriser l'autochtonisation de la Faculté et la décolonisation du droit;
- Conseiller la direction sur la sensibilisation et la formation des professeures et professeurs sur les enjeux juridiques liés aux peuples autochtones et notamment sur la *Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones*;
- En collaboration avec la personne-ressource de la Faculté et les instances universitaires et étudiantes pertinentes, conseiller la direction sur les mesures de soutien et d'accompagnement des étudiantes et étudiants autochtones qui sont susceptibles d'augmenter leur taux de diplomation et d'assurer leur sécurisation culturelle;
- En collaboration avec la personne-ressource de la Faculté et les instances universitaires et étudiantes pertinentes, conseiller la direction sur les mesures ou initiatives visant le recrutement d'étudiantes et d'étudiants autochtones;
- Faire rapport à l'assemblée de ses travaux tous les deux ans.

Anne-Marie Savard

Vice-doyenne aux études et à l'expérience étudiante

9 décembre 2022

Indigenous Initiatives at Robson Hall (2021–2025) – Progress and Partnerships

Introduction

Since July 2021, Robson Hall (Faculty of Law, University of Manitoba) has significantly expanded its efforts to advance Indigenous legal education and community engagement. Building on earlier commitments – including the Faculty’s 2016 adoption of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Call to Action #28 – the past few years have seen a renewed focus on Indigenizing the Juris Doctor curriculum, increasing Indigenous representation among faculty and students, and strengthening partnerships with Indigenous communities and legal organizations[1][2]. This comprehensive report reviews the initiatives undertaken at Robson Hall from mid-2021 onward. It covers curriculum updates, new Indigenous-focused courses, faculty hiring and leadership roles, student engagement and admissions processes for Indigenous applicants, partnerships with Indigenous law firms and the broader Indigenous legal community, community outreach activities, experiential learning opportunities, and cultural programming. The report is organized by thematic areas, with each section detailing key developments and their outcomes. A summary table of major initiatives launched since 2021 is provided to highlight their purpose, leadership, and status.

Curriculum Development and Indigenous-Centred Courses

Robson Hall has undertaken a thorough **Indigenization of its J.D. curriculum** since 2021, ensuring that all law students gain a firm understanding of Indigenous legal perspectives and Canada’s colonial history. An Indigenous Legal Studies Coordinator was hired in 2021, and subsequently promoted to a Director of Indigenous Legal Learning and Services, to lead a comprehensive curriculum review and work with faculty on integrating Indigenous content and learning outcomes across courses[3][4]. Under this guidance, every required and elective course has been mapped for Indigenous content, and faculty have updated course outlines to include materials on Indigenous peoples, laws, and treaties where relevant.

A landmark achievement was the creation of a **new mandatory course**, *Indigenous Methodologies and Perspectives*, unanimously approved by Faculty Council in late 2021[5]. This course, first offered in Fall 2023, is now required for all second-year J.D. students and directly fulfills the TRC Call to Action #28 by teaching the history and legacy of residential schools, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, Aboriginal–Crown relations, and intercultural skills[5][6]. The course was developed and is co-taught by Indigenous faculty and staff (including Dr. Leo Baskatawang, Assistant Professor, and Marc Kruse, Director of Indigenous Legal Learning and Services) as part of a broader effort to infuse Indigenous perspectives into legal education[7][8].

In addition to this new requirement, several **Indigenous-focused electives** have been sustained or introduced. These include courses such as *Aboriginal Peoples and the Law*, *Aboriginal Law: Criminal Justice and Family Law*, *Indigenous Economic Development and the Law*, *Oral History*, *Indigenous Traditions and the Law*, and the newly added *Kawaskimhon Moot* course[9][10]. Notably, the Oral History course – which exposes students to Indigenous oral histories in legal contexts – was elevated to a permanent part of the curriculum in 2022, and a comprehensive *Indigenous Oral History Reader* was published as a resource for students and educators[11]. Furthermore, many standard law courses now include significant Indigenous law units (for example, Criminal Law, Constitutional Law, Evidence, Property, and others have dedicated components examining Indigenous legal issues and perspectives[12][13]).

Another innovative curricular element is the incorporation of **land-based learning and treaty education**. Starting in 2023, land-based learning opportunities have been introduced for all law students as part of the curriculum[14]. For first-year students, the mandatory *Legal Systems* course now includes a curated educational program titled “You Are On Treaty Land,” developed in partnership with the Manitoba Museum[15]. Through a series of modules set at museum exhibits – from Treaty No. 1 to Treaty No. 5 – students learn on-site about the spirit and intent of the Treaties, the role of First Nations leaders (such as the **Roseau River elders and Treaty negotiators**), and the historical and contemporary significance of treaty relationships[15][16]. This experiential approach helps ground students in the foundational importance of Treaties and encourages reflection on the legal implications of Canada’s treaty obligations[17][18].

Faculty Hiring and Indigenous Leadership

A key priority since 2021 has been to increase Indigenous representation and leadership within the Faculty of Law. The Dean’s Office formed a **Truth and Reconciliation Action Team** in 2021, comprising Indigenous faculty members, the Indigenous Legal Studies Coordinator, Indigenous members of the practicing bar, and students[19][20]. This team advises on implementing Call to Action 28 in substance, spearheading curriculum reforms, and developing strategies for recruitment and student support[21][22]. The Action Team also plays a role in admissions (through a subcommittee that oversees the Indigenous applicant category) and ensures that Indigenous perspectives guide faculty governance decisions on matters affecting reconciliation[23][24].

In terms of hiring, **two full-time Indigenous tenure-track faculty members** joined Robson Hall in the 2021–2022 academic year[25]. These new academics, including Dr. Leo Baskatawang and Daniel Diamond, bring expertise in Indigenous legal traditions and have strong connections to local Indigenous communities[26][27]. Their research and teaching focus on areas such as Anishinaabe law, treaty rights, and decolonization, thereby strengthening the Faculty’s capacity to deliver Indigenous-centered legal education. To support further growth, the Faculty is also **developing an endowed Chair in Indigenous Law and Economic Reconciliation**, with the goal of recruiting a senior Indigenous scholar to lead research and community outreach in that field[28][29]. Hiring processes have been

updated to facilitate these changes: any faculty search for a position related to Indigenous law now involves at least three Indigenous community representatives on the hiring committee to ensure inclusive and culturally informed selection[30][31].

Leadership in Indigenous legal education at Robson Hall is also evident in staff roles. The Faculty created a dedicated **Indigenous Legal Studies Coordinator** position in 2021 and appointed alumnus Marc Kruse (JD 2015) to this role[32]. Kruse, now Director of Indigenous Legal Learning and Services, provides academic and cultural support for Indigenous students and leads many Indigenization initiatives in the curriculum[33][34]. Under his coordination, the Faculty has engaged Elders-in-Residence to advise and support students – including welcoming back Elder Wendy Whitecloud, a respected former instructor and Indigenous support coordinator, to guide students and contribute traditional knowledge[35]. Up to two Elders at a time, including leaders involved in Manitoba’s Aboriginal Justice Inquiry, have been retained to work with Robson Hall, lending wisdom and counsel to both students and faculty[36][37]. This Elder presence ensures that decision-making and teaching are grounded in Indigenous worldviews and community priorities.

Indigenous Student Engagement and Admissions

Robson Hall is committed to recruiting and supporting Indigenous law students, recognizing that a diverse student body is essential to reconciliation in the legal profession. The law school maintains a **Canadian Indigenous Applicant Category** in its admissions process, which provides a holistic evaluation and dedicated seats for Indigenous applicants[38]. This process, in place for several years, is designed to acknowledge the unique experiences of Indigenous candidates and facilitate their access to legal education[38]. Since 2021, the Faculty’s Truth and Reconciliation Action Team has contributed recommendations to ensure fairness in Indigenous admissions and to strengthen pathways for Indigenous students entering law[23][39]. For each incoming class, a subcommittee of the Action Team – including Indigenous lawyers and faculty – reviews Indigenous-category applications and advises on selections, reflecting the community’s voice in admissions decisions[24].

Once Indigenous students join Robson Hall, robust supports and engagement opportunities are in place. The **Manitoba Indigenous Law Students Association (MILSA)** is an active student-led organization that the Faculty consults on major decisions and initiatives[40]. The Dean and administration regularly confer with MILSA to ensure student perspectives inform the Faculty’s reconciliation efforts. Financial and institutional support for Indigenous students have expanded since 2021: for example, the Faculty provides funding for Indigenous students to participate in national workshops, moots, and conferences on Indigenous rights[41]. In the 2022–23 academic year, a group of MILSA members was sponsored to attend the annual Indigenous Bar Association conference, where they networked with peers and professionals from across Canada[42][43]. At that conference, Robson Hall student Shelby Sinclair was even elected Vice-President (First

Nations) of the National Indigenous Law Students Association, reflecting the leadership roles Indigenous students from Manitoba are taking on nationally[44][45].

Student engagement also takes the form of **Indigenous cultural and educational events** organized by MILSA and supported by the Faculty. Each year, MILSA hosts a **National Day for Truth and Reconciliation Lunch-and-Learn** around September 30, creating a space for dialogue on the legacy of residential schools and the ongoing work of reconciliation. In 2024, MILSA received provincial funding to organize such an event, which featured speakers including elders, Indigenous alumni, and community leaders discussing the importance of education about residential schools[46]. Similarly, MILSA hosted a **Louis Riel Day Celebration** in February 2025, held at Robson Hall and open to the faculty and community[47]. This celebration included traditional food, music, Métis dance (jiggers), and a panel of Métis leaders sharing their experiences of heritage and identity[48][49]. These student-driven events, supported by faculty, not only enrich the law school community's cultural life but also strengthen ties with Indigenous communities and alumni.

On the student services side, the Faculty offers tailored programming for Indigenous students – ranging from academic workshops to mentoring circles – and helps connect students with resources like the *Horizon* online map of Indigenous student supports across Manitoba[50][51]. Thanks to these combined efforts in admissions and student engagement, Robson Hall has become an increasingly welcoming environment for Indigenous law students, as evidenced by growing Indigenous enrolment and active student participation in governance and events.

Partnerships with Indigenous Legal Communities and Firms

Deepening partnerships with Indigenous legal professionals and communities has been a cornerstone of Robson Hall's post-2021 strategy. In 2023, the Faculty launched a marquee community-based initiative – an **Indigenous Rights Clinic** – originally in partnership with Manitoba's largest Indigenous law firm[52][53]. This partnership brings practicing Indigenous lawyers together with law students to provide legal services to Indigenous community members. The Indigenous Rights Clinic offers students hands-on experience through assisting clients with applications for criminal record pardons and for recognition of Indigenous Status, among other services[52][54]. Uniquely, the clinic incorporates land-based learning components and outreach to Indigenous youth: law students in the clinic work with local school divisions to connect with prospective Indigenous law students, serving as near-peer mentors and role models[55]. This outreach aspect aligns with the Faculty's goal of building a pipeline for Indigenous youth into legal education.

Another successful partnership we worked on was **“Law Makers” High School program**, initiated in 2022 in collaboration with the Seven Oaks School Division's Wayfinders program. Law Makers paired Indigenous law students from UM with Indigenous high school students to explore legal issues and social justice, for which the high school participants even earn credit[56][57]. The program not only demystifies post-secondary education for

Indigenous youth but also provides mentorship that reinforces students' cultural identity and confidence. Its early success attracted a major investment from the Mastercard Foundation's EleV program, which granted \$16.1 million to expand Indigenous youth mentorship initiatives at UM[58][59].

Robson Hall faculty and students at the have also held various key roles at Indigenous Bar Association conference, where they share their curriculum innovations and built national connections[42][60].

Robson Hall also actively engages with the **broader Indigenous legal community** through conferences, symposia, and professional networks. In October 2023, a delegation of faculty and students from UM Law made a strong impression at the Indigenous Bar Association's annual conference (hosted by Chippewas of Rama First Nation in Ontario)[42]. Faculty members (Assistant Professors Leo Baskatawang and Daniel Diamond) and Director Marc Kruse led a breakout session discussing Robson Hall's implementation of TRC Call to Action 28 and shared best practices for indigenizing legal education[61][62]. Their presentation emphasized a holistic approach to Indigenous content – not treating it as a mere “box-ticking exercise” but integrating it meaningfully throughout the law school curriculum[63]. The ideas exchanged at this national forum position Robson Hall as a leader that other law schools may emulate in the journey toward reconciliation in legal education[64][65].

Locally, the Faculty has strengthened ties with Indigenous leaders and organizations in Manitoba. The Dean and the Truth and Reconciliation Action Team host regular meetings with members of the Indigenous Bar and community to listen to concerns and collaborate on solutions[66][39]. Prominent Indigenous judges, lawyers, and Knowledge Keepers are frequently invited to Robson Hall: for instance, an **Indigenous senator** (a leader in the community and a survivor of the residential school system) delivers the keynote address at every first-year Orientation, underscoring the role of law in healing and justice[67]. The Faculty also co-hosts events with the Manitoba Bar Association and Law Society of Manitoba on Indigenous topics. In September 2024, Robson Hall partnered with those professional bodies to present a major conference on “Engaging in Economic Reconciliation,” drawing Indigenous community leaders, jurists, and business experts to discuss economic development initiatives in First Nations and Métis communities[68][69]. Such partnerships ensure that the law school's academic efforts are in sync with community needs and that students gain exposure to Indigenous legal practitioners and real-world issues.

Finally, Indigenous alumni engagement is on the rise. Many Indigenous graduates serve as mentors and sessional instructors, bridging classroom learning with lived experience. Through the Action Team's mandate of involving Indigenous lawyers in teaching roles[70], Robson Hall has brought in local practitioners to co-teach courses and guest lecture on topics like Aboriginal law, restorative justice, and treaty rights. These collaborations with the Indigenous legal community enrich the educational environment and help to ground legal theory in cultural context.

Community Outreach and Public Engagement

Beyond formal partnerships, Robson Hall has expanded its community outreach and public engagement activities related to Indigenous justice. A signature initiative in this area was the **Indigenous People and the Criminal Justice System Seminar Series**, an annual intensive workshop launched in collaboration with local Indigenous bar members[71]. Held each fall, this seminar examines the interaction between Indigenous individuals and the criminal justice system at every stage – from arrest and bail to trial and sentencing – and critically analyzes systemic issues such as overrepresentation and cultural considerations in sentencing (e.g. Gladue reports)[71][72]. The series invites Indigenous lawyers, judges, and Knowledge Keepers to lead sessions, and practicing lawyers who attend can earn Continuing Professional Development credits, while law students attend free of charge[73]. The open format of this seminar fosters a shared learning environment for students, legal professionals, and community members, and it has become a forum for discussing reforms to make the justice system more responsive to Indigenous people’s needs.

Public legal education and youth outreach are also central to Robson Hall’s community engagement. Clinic students and MILSA members have organized visits to schools and community centers to talk about legal rights and encourage Indigenous youth to consider legal careers[55]. These outreach visits often incorporate cultural elements – for example, law students might open sessions with a Treaty acknowledgment or a teaching from an Elder, demonstrating how legal education and Indigenous identity can go hand in hand.

Robson Hall visibly marks important commemorative days and ceremonies, inviting the public and university community to participate. Every September, the Faculty observes **Orange Shirt Day / National Day for Truth and Reconciliation** with ceremonies and talks (as noted, MILSA hosted a well-attended panel discussion in 2024)[46]. The Faculty also partakes in **Indigenous Veterans Day** and **Louis Riel Day** events. The 2025 Louis Riel Day celebration at the law school was not only a cultural gathering with Métis music and bannock but also an educational forum, where Métis government representatives and lawmakers engaged in dialogue with students and attendees about Métis rights and history[48][49]. By opening such events to a broader audience, the Faculty strengthens public understanding of Indigenous legal issues and demonstrates its commitment to reconciliation beyond the classroom.

Cultural protocol is respected in all public engagements. **Traditional ceremonies** such as smudging, pipe ceremonies, and prayer are regularly conducted at Robson Hall and on its grounds, recognizing the spiritual dimension of law and community[74]. For example, before major events or at the beginning of the academic year, Elders lead smudges in which students and staff can participate, cleansing the space and minds for the work ahead. At Orientation each fall, representatives from local First Nations offer a **“Welcome from the Bar”** address, formally welcoming new law students to Treaty territory and the legal profession with words in their languages and acknowledgement of the land[75][67].

These practices have been woven into the fabric of the Faculty's public presence, setting a tone of respect, reflection, and inclusion.

Experiential Learning: Clinics, Moots, and Beyond

Experiential learning opportunities at Robson Hall have grown to include a strong Indigenous rights component, giving students practical training in Indigenous law and access to justice. The flagship of these efforts is the **Indigenous Rights Clinic** launched in Fall 2023[53]. Through this clinic, students earn credit while working on real cases under the supervision of lawyers, tackling issues such as assisting Indigenous clients. Students also participate in **land-based educational activities** through the clinic, which may involve learning on-site in Indigenous communities or engaging with Elders about traditional dispute resolution practices[52][14]. This blend of clinical work and land-based learning immerses students in both the practical and cultural aspects of Indigenous legal issues. The clinic's creation marks the sixth experiential learning option in the Faculty's roster and the first devoted specifically to Indigenous law, reflecting a significant expansion of hands-on learning in line with reconciliation goals[76].

Competitive opportunities like **mooting** have similarly been harnessed to promote Indigenous legal education. Robson Hall has committed resources to ensure students participate annually in the **Kawaskimhon Moot**, a national Indigenous rights moot known for its non-adversarial, consensus-based format[77][78]. In this moot (Kawaskimhon means "speaking with knowledge" in Cree), law students from across Canada debate complex Aboriginal law issues in a roundtable negotiation style rather than the typical win/lose courtroom setting. Robson Hall's moot teams have excelled in recent years; for example, the 2022 Manitoba team successfully negotiated a multi-party memorandum of agreement in the spirit of reconciliation[79]. By participating in Kawaskimhon, students not only hone their advocacy skills but also learn to integrate Indigenous legal traditions and consensus principles into their legal reasoning[78]. The Faculty views these moot experiences as critical training for future lawyers who will work with Indigenous communities and on Indigenous rights matters.

Other experiential programs, while not exclusively Indigenous-focused, incorporate Indigenous law components. The **Master of Human Rights program** housed at Robson Hall allows law students to take practicum placements with organizations that work on Indigenous issues (for instance, placements with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs or Indigenous rights research groups)[80][81]. J.D. students can also volunteer or earn credit through Pro Bono Students Canada projects that serve Indigenous communities, or through internships at institutions like the Public Interest Law Centre where Indigenous clients are often front and center. Each of these experiences helps students apply their classroom learning to real-world scenarios involving Indigenous peoples and fosters culturally competent legal skills.

Cultural Programming and Learning Environment

Creating a culturally supportive environment has been as important as formal curriculum changes. Since 2021, Robson Hall has amplified its **cultural programming** – the integration of Indigenous ceremonies, teachings, and perspectives into daily life at the law school. This begins with **Orientation Week** for new students: from day one, incoming law students learn that ethical legal practice in Canada must be informed by the findings of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and grounded in an understanding of Indigenous laws and values[82]. At the Orientation’s opening ceremonies, local Indigenous leaders and elders offer greetings on behalf of their Nations and Treaty territories, setting a respectful tone. As noted, an Indigenous Senator or esteemed elder provides the keynote address, sharing personal experiences (such as the impacts of residential schools) and emphasizing the responsibility law graduates have as “law makers” to contribute to reconciliation[67]. These powerful messages impress upon students that Robson Hall is situated on Indigenous land and that their legal education will include learning from Indigenous perspectives from the very start.

Throughout the academic year, the Faculty hosts **regular cultural events and ceremonies**. Smudging is available and encouraged at significant gatherings and even as a daily practice in designated areas, acknowledging the spiritual well-being of students. Traditional feasts and potlatches are organized in partnership with MILSA to celebrate milestones or seasonal events. For example, during the Louis Riel Day event in 2025, a feast featuring bannock and stew was shared, and Métis fiddling and jigging were performed, turning the Common Room into a space of cultural celebration as well as learning[48]. The Faculty also observes **Indigenous customs in academic settings** – it’s not uncommon for a class or meeting to open with a land acknowledgement or even a short prayer by an elder or knowledge keeper. These practices, once rare in legal academia, are increasingly part of the norm at Robson Hall, contributing to an inclusive atmosphere where Indigenous students feel seen and all students gain exposure to Indigenous worldviews.

Educational programming in cultural competence has likewise been enhanced. The law library and faculty offices display Indigenous art and materials (for instance, displaying the *Grandfather Teachings* artwork by Daphne Odjig as highlighted in a 2022 Faculty update[83]), and the Faculty has curated a collection of Indigenous law texts and elders’ teachings for student use. Workshops on intercultural competency, anti-racism, and Indigenous legal methodologies are offered to faculty, staff, and students, often led by Indigenous facilitators. One notable symposium in early 2025, co-organized by Robson Hall, focused on “Decolonizing the Academy & Shaping Legal Education in the Spirit of Reconciliation,” bringing together law deans, professors, and students from across Canada to share progress on Indigenizing legal education[84][85]. These kinds of programs ensure that cultural learning is not confined to students alone but is embraced by the institution as a whole.

In sum, cultural programming at Robson Hall since 2021 has been about embedding respect for Indigenous laws and traditions into the everyday life of the law school. By normalizing ceremonies, supporting an Elder-in-residence program, and encouraging open dialogue about cultural identity and history, the Faculty is striving to create a learning environment in which Indigenous knowledge is valued equally alongside common law and other legal traditions. This transformation in the law school’s culture is fundamental to the larger project of reconciliation in legal education.

Major Initiatives Since 2021 – Summary Table

The following table summarizes the major initiatives launched at Robson Hall since July 2021, along with their purpose, leadership, and current status:

Initiative (Year Started)	Purpose and Description	Leadership	Status (as of 2025)
Truth and Reconciliation Action Team (2021)	Advises on implementing TRC Call to Action 28: curriculum reform, fair Indigenous admissions, and Indigenizing law school governance[20][23]. Includes Indigenous faculty, students, and lawyers to guide reconciliation efforts.	Dean’s Office; DILLS; Indigenous bar members & faculty[19][24]	Active – Meeting regularly; subcommittee oversees Indigenous admissions each year.
Hiring of Indigenous Faculty (2021–22)	Recruited two new tenure-track Indigenous professors to broaden academic expertise in Indigenous law and increase representation[25]. Enhanced hiring practices (Indigenous reps on committees) to prioritize Indigenous candidates[30].	Dean and Faculty Hiring Committee (with Indigenous community members)	Completed – Two hires in place, contributing to teaching & research; further hires ongoing as opportunities arise.
Director of Indigenous Legal	Created a dedicated staff/faculty role to	Dean’s Office (Marc Kruse hired)[32]	Active – Position now

Initiative (Year Started)	Purpose and Description	Leadership	Status (as of 2025)
Learning and Services (2021-current)	support Indigenous students and lead Indigenization of the curriculum[33]. Develops programming, liaises with Elders, and consults on all Indigenous initiatives.		titled Director of Indigenous Legal Learning & Services; central to student support and curriculum changes.
Mandatory Indigenous Course (Approved 2021, launched 2023)	Developed a new required course <i>Indigenous Methodologies and Perspectives</i> for all J.D. students[5]. Covers residential schools, UNDRIP, Treaties, Indigenous legal systems, etc., fulfilling TRC Call to Action 28[86].	Law Faculty Council (course taught by Indigenous faculty team)	Implemented – Course introduced Fall 2023 and now part of core J.D. curriculum[6].
Indigenous Rights Clinic (2023-current)	Experiential learning clinic in partnership with an Indigenous law firm[52]. Students help Indigenous clients with pardons, status applications, and engage in land-based learning and community outreach[52][54].	Robson Hall Clinical Program	Launched – Began Fall 2023; running as a for-credit clinic, with plans to continue as a permanent program.
Indigenous Bar & Community Partnerships (2021+)	Formal and informal partnerships with Indigenous legal community: e.g., annual Indigenous Bar Association conference participation, local Indigenous Bar	Indigenous faculty (Leo Baskatawang, Daniel Diamond), Director Marc Kruse, and MILSA students leading engagement[60][43]	Ongoing – Regular participation in IBA events, Indigenous lawyers involved in teaching, continuous

Initiative (Year Started)	Purpose and Description	Leadership	Status (as of 2025)
	members co-teaching and mentoring[60][70]. Purpose is to integrate community knowledge and expand student networks.		consultation with community leaders.
Law Makers Indigenous Youth Program (2022-2024)	Outreach partnership with high schools (Seven Oaks School Division) to mentor Indigenous youth[56]. Law students provide legal education and mentorship to Grade 11/12 students, helping them earn credits and envision post-secondary paths[56][57].	Faculty of Law & UM Indigenous Engagement (with Seven Oaks SD and Mastercard Foundation funding)[58][59]	Completed
Workshops: Indigenous People and Criminal Justice Seminar (2022), and Interdisciplinary Journal/Conference of Indigenous Inaakonigewin	Annual intensive seminar/workshop led by Indigenous legal professionals on Indigenous issues in the criminal justice system[71]. Aims to educate students and provide Continuing Professional Development for lawyers on topics like Gladue, over-incarceration, and culturally relevant justice practices[73].	Robson Hall (Director of Indigenous Legal Learning) in collaboration with Manitoba Indigenous lawyers	Ongoing – Held each Fall; open to students (for free) and practitioners (for CPD credit), with strong attendance reported.
Endowed Chair/Professorship Indigenous Law & Economic	Establish a funded chair position to lead research and teaching on Indigenous	Dean’s Office (fundraising with donor and community support)	In Development – Proposal in progress; fundraising

Initiative (Year Started)	Purpose and Description	Leadership	Status (as of 2025)
Reconciliation 2022-?	economic reconciliation[28]. Intended to attract a distinguished Indigenous legal scholar and create further community partnerships in economic development law.		ongoing, with goal of launching chair once endowment is secured. Professorship established.
Cultural and Ceremonial Integration (2021+)	New and renewed cultural practices at the Faculty: regular smudging ceremonies, elder-led prayers, Treaty land acknowledgments in events and classes, and Indigenous-led Orientation activities[82][67]. Purpose is to foster an inclusive environment that respects Indigenous traditions in daily academic life.	Elders-in-Residence; Indigenous Legal Studies Coordinator; MILSA	Established – Now part of the fabric of Robson Hall (annual Orientation with Indigenous leaders, ongoing ceremonies, etc.), with positive feedback from students and community.
Manitoba Law Foundation Bursaries	To fund Truth and Reconciliation and Access to Justice in Remote Area students with access to law school	Student Awards	1.6 million dollars over 5 years and 3 million dollars in endowment investment

(Sources: Robson Hall Faculty of Law internal report on CTA28 activities[52][82]; University of Manitoba Faculty of Law news releases and website[87][60].)

Conclusion

Since July 2021, Robson Hall’s Faculty of Law has made significant strides in weaving Indigenous perspectives and priorities into its academic programs, governance, and community engagement. Through curricular reforms like the mandatory Indigenous course and expanded Indigenous content across the board, every law student now graduates with

a deeper understanding of Indigenous laws, history, and rights. The hiring of Indigenous faculty and staff, coupled with the guidance of Elders and the Truth and Reconciliation Action Team, has ensured that Indigenous leadership is at the heart of these changes[19][88]. Initiatives such as the Indigenous Rights Clinic and the Law Makers mentorship program demonstrate an outward-looking commitment – they serve community needs and build bridges for the next generation of Indigenous legal professionals[52][56]. At the same time, student groups like MILSA have been empowered to shape the faculty culture and engage in dialogue from the local level (organizing events at Robson Hall) to the national stage (representing Manitoba at Indigenous law conferences)[43][61].

Robson Hall’s experience since 2021 highlights that meaningful implementation of Call to Action 28 requires more than a single course requirement – it entails a transformation of the institution’s ethos. This period has seen Robson Hall move beyond acknowledgment toward action: revising curricula, forming partnerships with Indigenous communities, and creating an environment where Indigenous legal traditions and voices are not just included but are influential in shaping the future of legal education[63][64]. These efforts are ongoing and evolving. The Faculty continues to learn and adjust (for instance, by identifying and working to overcome structural barriers to Indigenousization noted by its own educators[89]), recognizing that reconciliation is a journey of continuous improvement.

Moving forward, Robson Hall is poised to build on these foundations. Plans for the Indigenous Law Chair, expansion of clinical offerings, and ongoing community collaboration signal a long-term commitment to Indigenous inclusion and leadership in law. The progress from 2021 to 2025 provides a strong model for other institutions and stands as a testament to what can be achieved when a law school, in partnership with Indigenous peoples, dedicates itself to the hard work of truth and reconciliation.

Sources Cited: This report draws on University of Manitoba Faculty of Law internal documentation on Call to Action 28 implementation[52][82], the Faculty’s official Indigenous initiatives web page[87][76], and numerous UM Today news articles reporting on curriculum changes, student programs, and community events at Robson Hall (2021–2025)[5][60]. These sources are cited throughout the text to provide verification and additional details on each initiative discussed.

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[56] [57] [58] [59] UM Today | Indigenous | Law Makers program connects Indigenous high school and UM students

<https://news.umanitoba.ca/law-makers/>

Responses to the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

McGill Faculty of Law – November 2022

Process

- Survey of Indigenous Issues (February 2016, drafted by then law student Molly Churchill)
- *Taskforce in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action* (2016–17)
- Subcommittee of Curriculum Committee (2017–)

Initiatives

Teaching

- Multi-pronged response to Call to Action #28, including the following
 - Creation of a mandatory, three-credit course in Indigenous Legal Traditions for all first-year BCL/JD students beginning in Fall 2020
 - Integrated modules on Indigenous law in all existing mandatory courses
- Existing Indigenous content in mandatory courses:
 - Introduction to Indigenous ways of knowing as part of intensive weeks for first-year students
 - Criminal Justice course (6 cr.) integrates common law, civil law and Indigenous laws, and explores the impacts of criminal justice on Indigenous communities in Canada
 - Property course (6 cr.) integrates common law, civil law and Indigenous laws
- Indigenous faculty:
 - John Borrows, Professor at the University of Victoria Law School, and Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law, appointed Tomlinson Distinguished Visiting Professor for 2017-18
 - Aaron Mills, from Couchiching First Nation, appointed Assistant Professor in August 2018
 - Kerry Sloan, Metis law scholar, appointed Assistant Professor effective August 2019
 - Joshua Nichols, from Treaty 8 territory, appointed Assistant Professor effective August 2021
- Combined Law (BCL/LLB) program with Minor concentration in Indigenous Studies

Experiential Learning Opportunities for Students

- Field courses:
 - One-month interdisciplinary Indigenous Field Studies Course in collaboration with Social Work, Medicine and Anthropology, which includes one week spent in Kahnawà:ke, Mohawk Territory
 - Anishinaabeg Law Class: 3-day intensive land-based course taught by John Borrows on territory of Chippewa of the Nawash First Nation (Ontario) (2018)
 - Anishinaabe Law Field School, pilot project offered in July–August 2022 in Winnipeg, in collaboration with the Treaty Relations Commission of Manitoba
- Outreach:
 - Participation in the annual Eagle Spirit High Performance Camp run by McGill's First Peoples' House (FPH)
 - LEX high school outreach program (partnership with Kahnawà:ke Survival School and other Montreal area schools with 10 dedicated lesson plans)
 - Developing partnership with Connected North to broadcast lessons to remote and northern schools
- Internships and legal clinics:
 - Maliiganik Tukisiiniakvik Legal Services (Nunavut)
 - Wiyasiwewin Mikiwahp Native Law Centre (Saskatoon)
 - Mohawk Council of Akwesasne Justice Department (Ontario/QC/NY border)
 - Justice and Correctional Services of the Cree Nation Government (Waswanipi, James Bay)
 - Yukon Human Rights Commission

- Native Women's Shelter of Montreal
- Native Friendship Centre of Montreal
- Academic exchange opportunities:
 - University of Arizona Indigenous Peoples Law and Policies program
 - Osgoode Hall Law School's Intensive Program in Aboriginal Lands, Resources and Governments
 - University of British Columbia's Indigenous Legal Studies program
- Student research: Aboriginal Human Rights Initiative run through the Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism
- Kawaskimhon Aboriginal Law Moot (hosted in 2018)

Student Experience & Support

- Hire of Assistant Dean (Inclusion – Black and Indigenous Flourishing) (spring 2021), succeeded by Dean's Lead, Black and Indigenous Flourishing (2022)
- Recruitment:
 - Annual visit to [Kiuna Institution](#) (First Nations CEGEP)
 - Admissions workshop in collaboration with Faculty of Medicine in Fall 2018
 - Welcome Days for students at Kahnawà:ke Survival School
 - Lunch events for Indigenous undergraduate students at First Peoples' House to introduce students to faculty members and relevant resources
 - Language training for admitted Indigenous candidates to improve abilities in English or French before or during the law program
- Indigenous Law Students:
 - Creation of an Indigenous Initiatives Coordinator position (part-time students)
 - Indigenous Law Association / Association de droit autochtone (ILADA)
 - *Rooted* (publication run with ILADA)
 - Dedicated bilingual pages [on the Faculty website](#) (explaining admissions process, available resources and sources of financial support)
 - Annual inter-tribal welcome for all first-year law students during orientation and welcome lunch for Indigenous students at First Peoples' House
 - Survey of Indigenous students to identify needs and desired support measures
 - Annual career panels featuring Indigenous legal practitioners and lawyers in Aboriginal law
 - Development of mentorship program and creation of a database of summer job and internship opportunities
 - Installation of RedDress project commemorating missing and murdered Indigenous women in March 2019
 - Development of an Indigenous awareness workshop with university's Social Equity and Diversity Education Office for all law students
- Funding:
 - For Indigenous student participation in professional and academic conferences (e.g. annual IBA conference)
 - Funding available for ILADA initiatives
 - Donor-funded bursaries and scholarships with preference for Indigenous students
 - Dedicated funding for Indigenous graduate students

Decolonization of Space

- Addition of Indigenous artwork in law library, main lobby, and space outside Student Affairs Office
- Proposals for Indigenous learning classroom underway

Inventaire des interventions et initiatives relatives au droit des peuples autochtones à la Faculté de droit de l'Université de Moncton

1. Recrutement

La Faculté de droit a en place des conditions d'admission spéciales pour les personnes autochtones. Le règlement 1.1.3 prévoit ainsi qu'en reconnaissance de la discrimination systémique subie par les autochtones au Canada, la Faculté tiendra compte de ce facteur dans l'évaluation des candidatures d'autochtones et pourra admettre à titre exceptionnel ces personnes même si elles ne satisfont pas aux exigences minimales d'admission.

2. Formation et recherche

Le cours DROI3033 Droit des peuples autochtones fait partie du programme du J.D. et est actuellement offert sur une base annuelle. Cependant, il convient de noter d'autres cours qui sont importants à cet égard. Ainsi, dans le cadre du cours DROI1221 Droit constitutionnel, environ 5 heures d'enseignement sont consacrées aux droits constitutionnels des peuples autochtones au Canada, y compris leur historique. De même, le cours DROI1017 Droit des biens consacre environ six heures d'enseignement à la question du titre ancestral, ainsi qu'à l'obligation de la Couronne de consulter et d'accommoder les peuples autochtones dans le cadre de projets de développement économique. De plus, le cours DROI3120 Droits linguistiques aborde la question des droits linguistiques des peuples autochtones, alors que le cours DROI2321 Histoire du droit traite des enjeux liés à la colonisation et à la réception du droit au Canada dans le contexte du droit des peuples autochtones. Par ailleurs, le cours DROI3533 Droit de l'environnement examine la reconnaissance des droits issus de traités et des droits ancestraux de chasse et de pêche en droit canadien, alors que des éléments du droit des peuples autochtones sont également étudiés dans les cours DROI2231 Procédure pénale, DROI1224 Droit international public, DROI2322 Philosophie et sociologie du droit, DROI3023 Modes de règlements de conflits et DROI3500 Droit maritime. Enfin, notons que des personnes étudiantes de notre programme de J.D. travaillent sur des questions autochtones dans le cadre de leurs mémoires d'études (programme de J.D.), sans oublier la publication de textes liés aux enjeux autochtones par des membres du corps professoral.

3. Centre de traduction et de terminologie juridiques (CTTJ) et Bibliothèque de droit Michel-Bastarache

Outre les nombreuses décisions juridiques qu'il traduit, le CTTJ fournit des services d'expert en jurilinguistique et de traduction, notamment pour le gouvernement de la Colombie-Britannique et le ministère des Relations Couronne-Autochtones et Affaires du Nord Canada eu égard aux accords d'autonomie gouvernementale conclus avec des peuples autochtones au pays.

Par ailleurs, depuis le dépôt du Rapport de la Commission de vérité et de réconciliation, la Bibliothèque de droit Michel-Bastarache enrichit davantage sa collection en matière de droit autochtone / droit des peuples autochtones. Elle développe la collection en la matière de manière plus large qu'auparavant (qui était de maintenir une collection appuyant les cours offerts par la Faculté de droit sur le sujet). La Bibliothèque suit de près les travaux du Comité des questions autochtones de la Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques (FCAB), notamment ses travaux relatifs à la mise en œuvre de la 5^e recommandation du Rapport et recommandations du Comité de vérité et réconciliation de la FCAB.

4. Initiatives récentes

Du financement a été obtenu pour un projet de perfectionnement pédagogique facultaire portant sur le développement des connaissances et des compétences professorales pour répondre à l'appel à l'action 28 de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation du Canada selon lequel, entre autres, les facultés de droit du pays doivent « offrir une formation axée sur les compétences pour ce qui est de l'aptitude interculturelle, du règlement de différends, des droits de la personne et de la lutte contre le racisme. » Dans le cadre de ce projet, des interventions d'experts et de personnes autochtones ont pu avoir lieu dans différents cours de la Faculté, sans oublier que les membres du corps professoral ont eu accès à la formation *Le Parcours : votre voyage au sein du Canada autochtone* de l'Association du barreau canadien (ABC).

D'ailleurs, s'agissant de cette formation *Le Parcours*, une trentaine d'étudiantes et d'étudiants y ont également eu accès, et ce, dans le cadre d'un deuxième projet financé celui-ci par le fonds de la Faculté provenant de la Fondation pour l'avancement du droit du Nouveau-Brunswick. Pour reprendre le vocabulaire de l'ABC, *Le Parcours* cherche « à accroître la sensibilisation au legs du système des pensionnats indiens », à appuyer « la formation visant à lutter contre le racisme et les préjugés » et à approfondir « les compétences en ce qu'elles ont trait à la communauté autochtone ». « Les enseignements proposés dans ce programme répondent aux appels à l'action de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation qui exhortaient les Canadiens et les Canadiennes à recevoir une formation dans le domaine de la « sensibilisation culturelle. » »

Enfin, signalons qu'un nouveau PRIX DE L'ASSOCIATION DU BARREAU (DIVISION DU NOUVEAU-BRUNSWICK) de 4 000 \$ a été créé et sera offert en alternance entre l'Université de Moncton (pendant les années universitaires commençant par un numéro impair) et l'Université du Nouveau-Brunswick (pendant les années universitaires commençant par un numéro pair) dans le cas où il y aurait des candidats appropriés dans les deux établissements.

Update on UNB Law's Responses to the TRC Calls to Action

Curriculum

The subject matter of Call to Action #28 is embedded in UNB Law's **compulsory curriculum** in various ways. The Faculty provides **anti-racism, human rights, and intercultural competency**, for all incoming students as part of its orientation program. These are mandatory sessions and attendance is taken to ensure participation of all students.

As part of our Foundations of Law course, students are given an introduction to Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations, including the **legacy of residential schools, the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, and Indigenous legal traditions**. This introduction provides the historical and social context that students will need when they learn about legal issues affecting Indigenous Peoples, including section 35 of the Constitution Act 1982, the duty to consult, treaties, Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal title, and sentencing principles pertaining to Indigenous offenders. This material is covered primarily in Constitutional Law, Property Law, and Criminal Law – all mandatory first-year courses.

As part of the Legal Research and Advocacy course, first-year students are introduced to **principles of conflict resolution**. Students learn more about **inter-cultural competency** when they take Legal Ethics and Professional Responsibility in third year.

The Faculty also has **several elective courses on Aboriginal law**. These courses are offered consistently and count toward the Compulsory Areas of Study, which are categories of upper-year elective courses that students must have exposure to. Specifically, we offer a course called **Indigenous non-Indigenous Relations**, which looks at the various ways that Indigenous Peoples have asserted their rights, e.g. direct political action, constitutional negotiation, and litigation. We also offer a course called **Land Claims and Self-Government Agreements**, which covers the presentation, negotiation, and adjudication of specific and comprehensive land claims agreements, including the recognition of Aboriginal self-government. This course is **co-taught by two Indigenous lawyers**.

In 2021, the Hon. Graydon Nicholas joined our Faculty as Wihkwatacamit (the person who lives to tell stories) to help us further decolonize and Indigenize the curriculum. The Wihkwatacamit is involved in all aspects of our program, serving as a mentor and advisor to students, faculty, and staff, as well as offering guest lectures in various courses.

Leadership & Engagement

UNB Law's TRC implementation is guided by a **committee of Faculty Council chaired by the Dean**. The committee includes representation from Indigenous students and it **consults with the Faculty's Elder and an Advisory Circle** composed of local Indigenous leaders. The Faculty acknowledges that it is still working toward the Advisory Circle's recommendations, including

the appointment of full-time, permanent Indigenous faculty and the establishment of a course in Indigenous legal traditions.

Student Services

Indigenous students are supported through networking and mentorship programming administrated by the Faculty. Specifically, incoming Indigenous students are connected with the **Indigenous Law Students' Society** right away, and given an **alumni mentor**. Beginning this fall, Indigenous students will also be able to consult with the **Faculty's Elder**, who will have an office in the law building. The Faculty also has a close relationship with the **Mi'kmaq-Wolastoqey Centre**, which is the University's primary resource for Indigenous students.

Recruitment & Admissions

The Faculty of Law has an **Indigenous Admissions Category**, which gives Indigenous applicants special recognition as part of the admissions process. The Faculty's Dean and Manager of Admissions and Scholarships regularly host and attend recruitment events for Indigenous students, particularly in Atlantic Canada. The Faculty also has an **entrance scholarship for Indigenous students**.

Historique

La Faculté de droit, Section de droit civil de l'Université d'Ottawa est une pionnière dans l'enseignement du droit autochtone au Canada. En effet, depuis 2006, nous offrons une école d'été en territoire innu dans le cadre de laquelle une moyenne de 50 étudiants par année sont initiés à l'ordre juridique innu. De plus, de 1990 au début des années 2010, nous offrons un programme d'admission pré-droit de sept semaines en français pour les candidats autochtones. Sur le plan de la recherche, nous comptons plusieurs anciens et actuels professeurs spécialistes du droit canadien applicable aux autochtones et du droit autochtone dont une Chaire de recherche du Canada de niveau 1.

CVR

Pour répondre aux appels à l'action, nous avons mis en place les mesures suivantes :

- Création d'un comité permanent sur la vérité et la réconciliation composé de professeurs et étudiants chargé de développer un plan d'action et des mesures. Ce comité a notamment recommandé la création d'un cours obligatoire en droit autochtone qui sera inclus au curriculum à compter de septembre 2024;
- Création du 1^{er} [programme de certificat en droit autochtone en français](#) au Canada qui permet d'accueillir plus respectueusement les apprenants autochtones en passant par la porte de leurs ordres juridiques. Nous avons accueilli la première cohorte de 17 étudiants autochtones en août 2022; ils étaient tous financés. Nous avons aussi un poste de coordonnateur pour ce programme.
- Création d'un poste d'ainé en résidence (Gilbert Whiteduck) qui participe aux cérémonies officielles, à l'offre de cours et au mentorat de nos étudiants autochtones, y compris dans le cadre du certificat en droit autochtone.
- Création d'un [Laboratoire visuel sur les ordres juridiques autochtones](#) pour appuyer le programme de certificat en droit autochtone créé en août 2022 et financé par Justice Canada.
- Embauche d'une professeure atikamekw nehirowisiwen janvier 2020 et nouvel affichage en cours avec entrée en fonction prévue en juillet 2023
- Cours intensif obligatoire d'initiation au pluralisme juridique et aux ordres juridiques autochtones de 12 heures offert à tous les étudiants de première année en droit au début janvier depuis 2018 qui sera transformé en cours de 36h à compter de 2024-25;
- Embauche d'une mentor.e pour les étudiants autochtones;
- Participation de la Faculté dans le concours de médiation Kawaskimhon;
- Offre de cours optionnels en droit autochtone : traditions juridiques atikamekw, traditions juridiques anishnaabe (en commonlaw); Droit autochtone;
- Projet communautaire de murale autochtone dans le pavillon Fauteux en collaboration avec la Section de commonlaw (janvier 2023).



Le 23 février 2026

À l'attention du Conseil des doyens et des doyennes des facultés de droit du Canada

Objet : Réponses aux appels à l'action de la CVR 2025-2026

Nous avons le plaisir de vous présenter le compte rendu des progrès réalisés dans les initiatives de la Faculté de droit, Section de common law de l'Université d'Ottawa en réponse aux appels à l'action de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation (CVR).

Les appels à l'action de la CVR en matière de justice constituent un point de départ pour l'établissement d'une relation réciproque et respectueuse, nouvelle ou renouvelée, avec les peuples autochtones. La Section de common law est déterminée à décoloniser l'enseignement du droit, à nouer des partenariats avec les communautés autochtones de la région d'Ottawa et d'ailleurs, et à offrir une formation juridique qui jette un regard critique et éthique sur la *Loi sur les Indiens*, les pensionnats autochtones, les droits ancestraux et issus de traités, les ordres et traditions juridiques autochtones, et la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones.

La mise en œuvre des recommandations de la CVR relève du mandat du Comité de réconciliation et de décolonisation (CRD) de la Faculté. Gilbert Whiteduck est le gardien du savoir anishinaabe algonquin en résidence à la Faculté de droit. Nous avons également une spécialiste qui offre aux étudiantes et étudiants autochtones un soutien aux études et au perfectionnement professionnel ainsi que des ateliers culturels. Cette spécialiste organise également des activités pour l'ensemble de la communauté étudiante autochtone et allochtone, notamment un cercle de perlage hebdomadaire. En plus de renforcer le tissu communautaire, ce cercle offre un lieu d'apprentissage et de reconnaissance des pédagogies juridiques autochtones.

La Section de common law a vu naître le tout premier gouvernement des étudiantes et étudiants autochtones en droit du Canada. Avec l'appui du corps professoral, du personnel, de personnes alliées et de la communauté, la Gouvernance des étudiantes et étudiants autochtones en droit (GEAD) a été reconnue comme un organe autogéré en novembre 2020 par le Syndicat étudiant de l'Université d'Ottawa. La GEAD occupe une place importante au sein de la Faculté, aux côtés de l'Association étudiante de common law. Une personne la représente au CRD pour défendre les points de vue et les priorités de la communauté étudiante.

L'ensemble des apprenantes et apprenants de première année suivent le cours CML 1707 – Vérité, réconciliation et peuples autochtones. On y explore divers sujets en lien avec les peuples autochtones et le droit, dont l'histoire et les séquelles des pensionnats autochtones, la Déclaration

des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones, les traités et les droits des Autochtones, le droit autochtone, et les relations entre l'État et les Autochtones. Il s'agit d'une réponse directe aux appels à l'action 27 et 28. Plusieurs autres cours abordent des points de vue autochtones, notamment sur le droit constitutionnel, le droit des biens, le droit pénal et la procédure pénale, la responsabilité délictuelle, les peuples autochtones et le droit, le droit de l'environnement, les fiducies, les droits de la personne, les questions féministes d'ordre juridique, le droit public international et les droits linguistiques au Canada.

La Faculté de droit participe également au concours de plaidoirie de Kawaskimhon. Conçu selon une approche consensuelle et non contradictoire, ce concours allie les traditions juridiques autochtones aux lois fédérales, provinciales et internationales. Les participantes et participants prennent part à des négociations en table ronde sur un sujet particulier du droit autochtone, en représentant la partie qui leur a été attribuée. La Faculté propose par ailleurs des stages auprès de membres du Sénat et de juristes qui défendent activement les intérêts autochtones. En partenariat avec la Division de la justice pour les Autochtones du ministère du Procureur général de l'Ontario, nous offrons trois stages pour des étudiantes et étudiants en droit de première et de deuxième année dans le cadre du programme d'été Debwewin. Au sein d'une organisation hôte, les stagiaires offrent une aide juridique à des collectivités et à des organismes communautaires autochtones.

La Section de common law offre également une option en droit autochtone et traditions juridiques autochtones. Celle-ci s'adresse aux personnes inscrites au programme de Juris Doctor qui désirent acquérir des connaissances théoriques et pratiques approfondies dans ce domaine. Les travaux de recherche des membres de notre corps professoral alimentent un riche éventail de cours en matière de droit et de traditions juridiques autochtones.

En 2026, la Faculté lancera un minicours à l'intention des étudiantes et étudiants autochtones potentiels en droit. Intitulé *Future in Law: Exploring Indigenous Representation and Legal Careers*, ce cours est une introduction au droit autochtone et aux traditions juridiques canadiennes du point de vue des Premières Nations, des Inuit et des Métis. Il présente le parcours qui mène aux études en droit et explore les nombreuses carrières juridiques qui s'ouvrent aux personnes diplômées. En insistant sur l'importance de la représentation des peuples autochtones dans la profession, le cours encourage les étudiantes et étudiants à contribuer d'une façon ou d'une autre à créer un système judiciaire plus inclusif.

Cette année, la Faculté a établi l'Espace territoires autochtones et consultation, sous la direction de Cynthia Westaway, professeure invitée. Alliant l'enseignement du droit et les savoirs autochtones dans un esprit de réciprocité, cet espace invite des étudiantes et étudiants en droit à collaborer avec des nations autochtones à la conception d'outils, de ressources en matière de politiques publiques et d'activités d'apprentissage en appui à l'autodétermination et au renforcement des capacités. Il répond directement à l'appel à l'action numéro 28 de la CVR, qui demande aux facultés de droit d'enseigner les systèmes et les traditions juridiques autochtones, ainsi que les relations de ces peuples avec l'État. Son travail est également ancré dans les principes de la Déclaration des Nations Unies sur les droits des peuples autochtones, qui affirme leurs droits à l'autodétermination

et à leurs terres, territoires et ressources.

La Faculté a organisé en février 2026 la Conférence sur le développement durable et les droits des Autochtones, à laquelle ont participé plus de 70 personnes représentant des peuples autochtones, la profession juridique et la population étudiante, dans un climat dynamique et propice au dialogue, à l'apprentissage et à la collaboration. Cynthia Westaway, première directrice de l'Espace territoires autochtones et consultation, était l'hôte de la conférence, dont le programme comprenait plusieurs tables rondes et discussions sur les thèmes des droits des Autochtones, de la consultation, des litiges liés au climat et du développement durable. On a pu y entendre, outre Cynthia Westaway, la chancelière Claudette Commanda, la cheffe Laurie Carr, la doyenne Kristen Boon, Joshua Amponsem, Marc Bishai, le professeur Thomas Burelli, la professeure Nathalie Chalifour, Nicholas Daube, Reid Gomme, Charlie Hatt, la professeure Heather McLeod-Kilmurray, Patricia Lawrence, Michael Twigg et Shaelyn Wabegijig. Les membres des communautés autochtones et de la profession juridique se sont montrés très enthousiastes devant la profondeur des conversations et l'esprit de collaboration qui règne au Centre. Cette conférence avait ceci de particulier qu'elle intégrait trois domaines essentiels et interdépendants : les droits des Autochtones, les approches environnementales novatrices et le développement durable.

Dans les dernières années, la Faculté a entrepris un éventail d'activités d'apprentissage liées aux lois et ordres juridiques autochtones. Le CRD organise un cercle de lecture en communauté autour de l'œuvre d'une auteure ou d'un auteur autochtone, qui alimente la réflexion et le dialogue sur les réalités et les défis des communautés autochtones du Canada. Cette année, quatre livres sont au programme : *Truth Telling*, de Michelle Good, *Nationhood Interrupted*, de Sylvia McAdam, *Quand tombent les aiguilles de pin*, de Katsi'tsakwas Ellen Gabriel, et *Ojibway Heritage*, de Basil Johnston.

Dans le cadre de la série Perles de sagesse, le CRD invite de brillants esprits de partout au pays à livrer leur savoir, leur vécu et leur expertise sur les questions d'actualité qui touchent les communautés autochtones. Les décisions judiciaires marquantes, la justice environnementale, le racisme systémique et les séquelles des pensionnats autochtones sont autant de questions cruciales qui y sont décortiquées sous l'angle des droits des Autochtones, du droit et de la justice sociale. Sous le signe de la vérité, de l'apprentissage et de la croissance collective, ce forum met en lumière une diversité d'idées de personnes diplômées, de responsables politiques, d'auteurs et auteures, de journalistes, de créatrices et créateurs de balados et de juristes. Cette année, la série a présenté une conférence de la sénatrice Mary Jane McCallum et une séance sur l'utilisation des nouvelles technologies comme leviers d'autodétermination économique dans les communautés des Premières Nations, donnée par Ethan Clark, PDG et cofondateur de Nationsfirst, et Alexander Di Giovanni, conseiller juridique de Nationsfirst. La Faculté a également accueilli des membres du cabinet First Peoples Law pour une discussion sur l'évolution de la jurisprudence autochtone, et elle a organisé, dans le cadre des initiatives de son Centre de recherche et d'enseignement sur les droits de la personne et de la série de conférences sur la justice sociale, une projection du film *My Friend the Green Horse* et d'extraits de *Jordan River Anderson – The*

Messenger suivie d'une discussion en présence de la réalisatrice, Alanis Obomsawin, membre de la Nation des Abénakis et éminente cinéaste canadienne.

Des membres de la communauté ont planté un jardin de médecines sacrées sur la terrasse de l'atrium au troisième étage du pavillon Fauteux, où sont cultivés les quatre remèdes sacrés : le tabac, la sauge, le cèdre et le foin d'odeur. Les membres du corps professoral, du personnel et de la population étudiante sont invités à entretenir le jardin et à prendre part à la récolte des médecines sacrées. Une magnifique murale créée par les artistes autochtones Christi Belcourt et Isaac Murdoch, du collectif Onaman, est exposée au troisième étage du pavillon Fauteux. La peinture représente les enseignements et les principes juridiques du peuple anishinaabe se rapportant à *nibi* (l'eau) et rappelle à quiconque la croise l'importance du droit et des traditions juridiques autochtones.

Renseignez-vous davantage sur les [mesures de la Faculté de droit en réponse aux appels à l'action de la CVR](#). Enfin, nous sommes toujours très fiers de la nomination en 2023 de Claudette Commanda, diplômée en common law et ancienne Aînée en résidence de la Section de common law, à la chancellerie de l'Université d'Ottawa.

La Faculté de droit, Section de common law de l'Université d'Ottawa reste déterminée à poursuivre ce travail dans l'intégrité, la transparence et le respect, et continue de promouvoir le dialogue et l'apprentissage mutuel avec les facultés de droit du Canada pour avancer ensemble vers la réconciliation dans la formation juridique.

Sincères salutations,



Kristen Boon

Doyenne Susan-et-Perry-Dellelce | Susan & Perry Dellelce Dean
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23 February 2026

To the Canadian Council of Law Deans

Re: Responses to the TRC Calls to Action 2025-2026

We are pleased to update you on the University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, Common Law Section's progress in implementing the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Calls to Action.

The TRC's Calls to Action related to Justice are a starting point for developing a new/renewed reciprocal and respectful relationship with Indigenous peoples. The Common Law Section is committed to decolonizing the law school, building partnerships with Indigenous communities in the Ottawa region and beyond, and providing a meaningful and ethical legal education about the *Indian Act*, the legacy of residential schools, Aboriginal and treaty rights, Indigenous legal orders and traditions, and the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*.

Implementing the TRC recommendations falls within the mandate of the Faculty's Reconciliation and Decolonization Committee (RDC). Mr. Gilbert Whiteduck is the Faculty's Algonquin Anishinaabe Knowledge Holder in Residence. We also have a specialist who supports Indigenous students through academic and professional development and cultural workshops. The Specialist hosts regular activities for Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of our community, including a weekly community beading circle. The beading circle fosters community and provides an opportunity to develop and recognize Indigenous legal pedagogies.

The Common Law Section is home to Canada's first Indigenous law student government. With the support of faculty, staff, allies, and community, the Indigenous Law Student Governance (ILSG) became a self-governing student body recognized by the University of Ottawa Student Union in November 2020. The ILSG has become an important institution within the Faculty, working in parallel with the Association étudiante de Common Law/Common Law Student Society. A representative of the ILSG sits on the RDC and provides input on student concerns and priorities.

As a part of the first-year curriculum, all 1L learners complete CML 1307, *Law, Reconciliation & Decolonization*. This course explores various topics related to Indigenous people and the law, including the history and legacy of residential schools, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, treaties and Aboriginal rights, Aboriginal law, Indigenous law, and Indigenous-Crown relations. The course design speaks directly to Calls to Action 27 and 28. A number of other courses contain Indigenous-related units of study, including Constitutional Law, Property Law, Criminal Law and Procedure, Torts, Indigenous Peoples & the Law, Environmental Law, Trusts, Human Rights Law, Feminist Legal Issues, Public International Law and Les droits linguistiques au Canada.

The Faculty of Law also takes part in the Kawaskimhon Aboriginal Moot Competition. The Moot is consensus-based and non-adversarial, incorporating Indigenous legal traditions alongside federal, provincial and international law. Mooters participate in roundtable negotiations on a particular topic in Indigenous law, representing their assigned party. The Faculty also facilitates internships with Senators and legal practitioners who are active advocates for Indigenous issues. In partnership with the Indigenous Justice Division at the Ministry of the Attorney General, we offer three internships for first- and second-year law students (the Debwewin Summer Internship Program). The internships

allow students to provide legal support to Indigenous communities and Indigenous community organizations through a host organization.

The Common Law Section also offers an option in Aboriginal Law and Indigenous Legal Traditions. The Option is intended for JD students wishing to gain in-depth and practical experience in Aboriginal law, including some exposure to Indigenous peoples' legal traditions. The research interests of our professors support a particularly rich array of courses in Aboriginal law and Indigenous legal traditions.

In 2026, the Faculty will begin offering a mini-course for prospective Indigenous law students. Entitled *Future in Law: Exploring Indigenous Representation and Legal Careers*, the course introduces students to Indigenous law and Canadian legal traditions, with a focus on the unique perspectives of First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples. Students will learn about pathways to law school and explore the many career options available with a law degree. The course emphasizes the importance of Indigenous representation in the legal profession and encourages students to consider how they can contribute to shaping a more inclusive justice system.

This year, the Faculty introduced an Indigenous Lands and Consultation Hub, led by Visiting Professor Cynthia Westaway. The Hub brings together legal education and Indigenous knowledge in a spirit of reciprocity, connecting law students with Indigenous Nations to co-develop practical tools, policy resources, and learning opportunities that support self-determination and capacity-building. The Hub directly supports Call to Action 28, which urges law schools to ensure graduates understand Indigenous laws, legal traditions, and relationships with the Crown. Its work is also grounded in the principles of the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which affirms Indigenous peoples' rights to self-determination, lands, and resources.

The faculty organized a Sustainability and Indigenous Rights conference in February 2026 which brought together over 70 participants, including Indigenous representatives, members of the legal community, and students, creating a dynamic space for dialogue, learning, and collaboration. The event was hosted by Cynthia Westaway, the first Director of the Indigenous Lands and Consultation Hub. The conference featured multiple panels and discussions exploring Indigenous rights, consultation, climate litigation, and sustainability. Speakers included Chancellor Claudette Commanda, Chief Laurie Carr, Dean Kristen Boon, Joshua Amponsem, Marc Bishai, Dr. Thomas Urelli, Dr. Nathalie Chalifour, Nicholas Daube, Reid Gomme, Charlie Hatt, Dr. Heather McLeod-Kilmurray, Patricia Lawrence, Michael Twigg, Shaelyn Wabegijig, and Cynthia Westaway. The Indigenous and legal communities were enthusiastic about the depth of the conversations, reflecting the collaborative spirit that the Hub fosters. What made this conference distinctive was its integration of three critical and interrelated areas—Indigenous rights, innovative environmental approaches, and sustainability.

In recent years, the Faculty has undertaken a variety of learning activities related to Indigenous laws and legal orders. The RDC hosts a Community Reading Circle featuring work by an Indigenous author, creating space for thoughtful dialogue around the realities and challenges facing Indigenous communities in Canada. This year, the reading circle will discuss four books, *Truth Telling* by Michelle Good, *Nationhood Interrupted* by Sylvia McAdam, *When the Pine Needles Fall* by Katsi'tsakwas Ellen Gabriel and *Ojibway Heritage* by Basil Johnston.

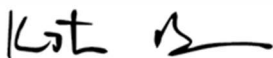
The RDC also hosts the Sage Advice Series, inviting thought leaders from across Canada to share knowledge, lived experience, and expertise on pressing issues affecting Indigenous communities. From landmark legal decisions and environmental justice to systemic racism and the legacy of residential schools, each event sparks critical conversations at the intersection of Indigenous rights, law, and social justice. Featuring a diverse range of voices, including alumni, politicians, authors, journalists, podcasters, and legal professionals, this series is a powerful platform for truth-telling, learning, and collective growth. This year, the Sage Advice Series has featured a talk by Senator Mary Jane McCallum and a session on how emerging technologies can be used as a tool of economic self-determination in First Nations communities by Ethan Clark (CEO & Co-Founder, nationsfirst technologies) and Alexander Di Giovanni (general counsel, nationsfirst technologies). The Faculty also hosted First People's Law for a discussion on evolving Aboriginal case law, and through the initiatives of its Human Rights Research and Education Centre as well as the Social Justice Speaker Series, organized a film screening and discussion of *My Friend the Green Horse* and excerpts from *Jordan River Anderson — The Messenger* with Ms. Alanis Obomsawin, a member of the Abenaki Nation and one of Canada's most distinguished filmmakers.

Community members have planted and maintained a Spirit Garden on the third floor Atrium terrace of Fauteux Hall, where the four sacred medicines are grown: Tobacco, Sage, Cedar and Sweetgrass. Faculty, staff, and students are encouraged to tend the garden and take part in harvesting the sacred medicines. A beautiful mural created by Indigenous artists Christi Belcourt and Isaac Murdoch from the Onaman Collective also appears on the third floor of Fauteux Hall. The painting represents Anishinaabe teachings and legal principles relating to *nibi* (water), while also serving as a reminder to all visitors of the importance of Indigenous laws and legal traditions.

We encourage you to seek further details regarding the [Faculty of Law's commitments to the TRC Calls to Action](#). We continue to be proud that Claudette Commanda, Common Law alum and former Elder in Residence for the Common Law Section, was appointed the Chancellor of the University of Ottawa in 2023.

The University of Ottawa Faculty of Law, Common Law Section remains committed to advancing this work with integrity, accountability, and respect, and looks forward to continued dialogue and shared learning with law faculties across Canada as we collectively work toward reconciliation within legal education.

Sincerely,



Kristen Boon

Doyenne Susan-et-Perry-Dellelce | Susan & Perry Dellelce Dean
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Truth & Reconciliation Report to the Canadian Council of Law Deans

Queen's Law, March 2026

Recruitment

a. Indigenous students

In 2025, Queen's Law launched an Indigenous Tuition Support Initiative developed in alignment with Queen's commitment to reconciliation and aims to provide full tuition coverage for Indigenous students from local First Nations whose traditional territories include or border Queen's University. This initiative directly supports the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action by removing financial barriers, fostering educational equity, and deepening relationships with local First Nations. It responds to urgent societal needs by enabling Indigenous students to access legal education and become advocates for their communities locally and globally. This initiative is critical not only to uphold our responsibilities as outlined in the TRC Task Force Final Report, but also to ensure that Indigenous students are fully supported to thrive within our law school community. Two full scholarships were funded for the 2026-27 academic year and plans are in place to continue fundraising efforts for additional scholarships.

Queen's Law had two Indigenous students enter the JD Program in 2025-26 and one Indigenous LLM student.

b. Indigenous faculty and staff

Kimberly Murray commenced her new role as Queen's National Scholar in Indigenous Legal Studies on January 1, 2025, after completing a federal appointment as the Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites Associated with Indian Residential Schools. Murray is a member of Kanehsà:ke Mohawk Nation, a lawyer, researcher, teacher, and executive leader, who has dedicated much of her legal career to promoting reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people and advocating for Indigenous Peoples. She was awarded a King Charles III Coronation Medal in recognition of her significant contributions to Canada.

Professor Murray joins Professor Lindsay Borrows, a member of the Chippewas of Nawash First Nation (Anishinaabe, otter clan), who teaches in the field of Indigenous law and joined Queen's Law in July 2022. Borrows was appointed Queen's Law Professor in Indigenous Law & Governance, effective July 1, 2025. Her research and land-based teaching has been supported by Queen's Law's Indigenous Faculty Resource Fund, the Canadian Foundation of Legal Research, the Law Foundation of Ontario, and the Principal's Impact Course Award.

The Faculty continues to provide ongoing and dedicated support to equity deserving students through our Equity and Academic Success Coordinator, Director of Indigenous Initiatives and EDI, and other administrative support leads.

Curricular Innovation

Following extensive consultation by the JD Review Committee, Queen's Law offered a new first-year JD course titled *Indigenous Peoples, Law and Reconciliation* starting Winter Term 2025-26, responding to TRC Call to Action #28. This course introduces Indigenous laws and Canadian laws relating to Indigenous Peoples. It examines the

historical and contemporary roles of law in colonialism, including policies that displaced and suppressed Indigenous legal orders, languages, and systems of governance, and explores current legal frameworks and practices aimed at recognition, revitalization, and reconciliation. Through case law, legislation, and Indigenous legal sources, students engage with legal issues affecting Indigenous Peoples across a range of practice areas. The course emphasizes Indigenous perspectives and supports the development of cross-cultural competencies, critical understandings of racism, and inter-cultural skills essential to the practice of law.

In September 2025, Professor Lindsay Borrows launched the Anishinaabe Law Field School, taught in partnership with an Anishinaabe First Nation. The course began with a four-day land-based law camp held on that Nation's reserve, followed by a semester-long group project to conduct research to support the Nation's in-house counsel and band council on their contemporary law and governance work. Students collaborated with community leaders and knowledge-keepers, Anishinaabe scholars, a tribal court judge, and legal database experts. The course is supported by the Law Foundation of Ontario to promote Indigenous legal revitalization and train future professionals in an Indigenous law-informed practice.

Previously, Borrows has offered intensive [land-based Anishinaabe Law courses](#) at Neyaashiinigmiing (Chippewas of Nawash First Nation) and Elbow Lake Environmental Education Centre near Kingston. There, students learned Indigenous legal methods to draw out law from nature, stories, ceremony, language and more. She has also taught two upper-year seminars, "Indigenous Law in Practice", and "Indigenous Law and Ecological Governance."

In January 2025, Professor Kimberly Murray introduced a new course, "Lawyering for Reconciliation", giving upper-year JD students the chance to explore how legal professionals can better support reconciliation. The course covers TRC Calls to Action relating to the legal profession, as well as findings from major public inquiries (like the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls). Students examine whether legal rules and processes—such as professional codes of conduct and civil litigation procedures—support or hinder reconciliation. Readings include case studies, court submissions, discipline decisions and students hear directly from Indigenous claimants and counsel.

Aboriginal Law, a longstanding JD and graduate-level elective, continues to provide foundational learning. Taught in recent years by Professors Mark Walters and Hugo Choquette, the course examines Indigenous legal rights and their interpretation under section 35 of the Constitution Act, 1982. Topics include land and natural resource rights, self-government, and treaty interpretation, with a focus on legal pluralism and international comparisons.

Aboriginal Child Welfare, an upper-year JD course taught by lawyer Sarah Clarke, examines the historical and ongoing overrepresentation of Indigenous children in foster care. Students study recent reforms such as An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth and families and gain tools for child protection advocacy.

Since its launch in 2017, Queen's online Certificate in Law has included a course on Aboriginal Law, taught by Professor Hugo Choquette. It introduces students from across Canada to the legal and political dynamics shaping Crown-Indigenous relations in Canada and explores reconciliation through the lens of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, the TRC, and modern treaty law.

The 2024 International Law Program included a session on "Inter-National Indigenous Law in Canada" engaging with The Witness Blanket during its residence at Stauffer Library. Professor Lindsay Borrows and Professor Kimberly Murray lead participants through an introduction to The Witness Blanket and an examination of the written Witness Blanket Agreement to identify and appreciate ways that Canadian law, Kwakwaka'wakw and Coast Salish law are woven together. In 2025, Professor Borrows gave a talk to International Law students titled "Inter-National Indigenous Law."

With these course offerings—and more on the horizon—Queen’s Law is ensuring that students graduate with the cultural awareness, legal knowledge, and professional readiness to support legal pluralism, reconciliation and serve Indigenous and diverse communities across Canada.

Governance

The faculty launched an Indigenization-Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Anti-Racism and Accessibility (I-EDIAA) Committee in Spring 2025. The purpose of the committee is to cultivate an inclusive community and culture, create welcoming spaces for working, learning, and socializing for all students, faculty, and staff; ensure equitable and inclusive policies, processes, curricula, and events; support marketing, recruitment, and retention initiatives that enhance a diverse teaching and learning community; and to routinely monitor, evaluate, and report on our collective progress. The committee includes representation from staff, faculty, and students.

The Faculty’s I-EDIAA efforts are supported by the Law Students’ Society’s (LSS) Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Indigenization (EDII) Committee through a series of EDII Roundtables. The Roundtables provide an opportunity for student representatives from equity deserving clubs to identify systemic barriers, and to work collaboratively alongside senior administration to address inequities. A series of themes emerged that include, academic talks and speaker series, communication and relationships, curriculum, data collection and transparency, facilities, mentorship, student support and funding, targeted recruitment strategies, and training which helped inform the framework of the I-EDIAA Committee.

Research

With a grant from the Law Commission of Canada, Professor Kimberly Murray hosted a symposium at Queen’s Law on June 16–17, 2025 on crimes against humanity and Indigenous Peoples. She is contributing "Fighting Denialism and Standing Up for the Truth About Residential Schooling," a chapter in a forthcoming book collection being edited by two University of Manitoba professors and affiliates of the Centre for Human Rights Research. Professor Murray is also writing a research paper funded by the Law Society of Ontario titled, "Lawyering for Reconciliation: The Legal Profession’s Role in Truth, Accountability, and Systemic Change," and is also working with the award winning First Nations investigative journalist, Connie Walker, on a research project funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario to preserve the truths about Indian Residential School history and harms.

Professor Lindsay Borrows’ research examines how Indigenous people are writing their own constitutions, rooted in worldviews that see nature not as a resource for extraction but as living kin relations. Through collaborations with several Anishinaabe First Nations, she is exploring how contemporary written Anishinaabe Chi-Naakonigewin/Constitutions can strengthen the ecological integrity of the Great Lakes region.

She is also investigating the complexities of how the creation of an online legal database of Indigenous laws might support Indigenous law-makers, lawyers and courts. This investigation includes the complexities of Indigenous data sovereignty, building off existing community-engaged research methods, and considering the impacts and possibilities of machine learning tools. Legal search engines like CanLII and LexisNexis are integral to Canadian legal practice, yet no such database exists for any Indigenous legal order. Borrows’ research seeks to understand how we might bridge this access to justice gap for Indigenous Peoples.

Professor Mark Walters’ research focuses on reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, emphasizing the importance of rediscovering and reimagining historic relationships that have long been disrespected. Walters is developing a legal history of the Crown–Indigenous treaty relationship known as the Covenant Chain. Originating in the mid-17th century in what is now New York State, the Covenant Chain expanded throughout the Great Lakes region and into Canada by the mid-18th century. This treaty relationship is notable for evidence that Crown representatives actively sought to understand and align with Indigenous laws governing

respectful relations between peoples. Walters highlights that contemporary courts are increasingly willing to engage with the legacy of the Covenant Chain, underscoring the significance of a comprehensive legal history of this unique relationship.

Mentorship/Internship

Since 2016, Queen's Law has participated in the Debwewin Summer Internship program, co-funded by the Indigenous Justice Division of Ontario's Ministry of the Attorney General, providing student placements in Indigenous communities and organizations.

The faculty continues to support Indigenous students and allies at the Kawaskimhon Moot.

The Dean of Law and Director, Indigenous Initiatives host regular coffee chats with members of the Indigenous Law Students' Alliance to support ongoing dialogue and support.

Community engagement

In early 2025, the Kingston Native Centre and Language Nest (KNCLN) in partnership with Queen's Law, secured \$179,000 in funding from The Law Foundation of Ontario to establish the Kingston Indigenous Legal Centre (KILC), an Indigenous-led legal service in Kingston. The initiative, envisioned by Queen's Law '25 alumna Constance Carriere-Prill when she entered law school while serving as KNCLN's Executive Director in 2022, has grown into a collaborative community effort supported by Queen's Law's research expertise and resources. The KILC aims to provide vital legal services to Indigenous people in areas such as family law, housing, and human rights. Queen's Legal Aid Director Blair Crew supervised the inaugural articling student, Aidan Jeffrey (Kaneshatà:ke *Mohawk* Nation) who will be called to the bar in March 2026. The KILC is currently finishing its business report to seek further funding to maintain and grow the Centre. Professor Borrows has led the research initiative with the support of Professor Murray to identify possible models for the KILC and other Indigenous legal centres, which included interviews with leading practitioners, educators and administrators. The Advisory Group for the KILC includes Grandma Kate Brant, Lindsay Borrows, Constance Carriere-Prill, Stacia Loft, Brandon Maracle, Karla McGrath, Kimberly Murray, and Courtney Sovie. Five JD students were employed to support the research over the course of the year. The final report will be published in late spring 2026, and the KILC team is presenting their research at the Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres Justice Gathering February 26–27, 2026.

Overall, the project provides meaningful experiential learning opportunities for students, guided by faculty, to deliver culturally relevant and respectful legal support and connect clients with additional community services. This partnership reflects Queen's Law's commitment to enhancing access to justice and fostering a respectful, supportive environment for Indigenous peoples in Kingston.

In June 2025, Stacia Loft, Director of Indigenous Initiatives, developed a two-day professional intensive course titled "Reciprocal Economies: Charting Pathways to Reconciliation," accredited by the Law Society of Ontario. The course was designed to foster a shared understanding of Indigenous economies and explore pathways to prosperity through economic reconciliation. It offered legal and other professionals practical insights into the principles of Indigenous Economic Reconciliation (IER), including case studies on effective consultation in major infrastructure projects.

The intensive focused on key outcomes such as identifying foundational principles of economic reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples and organizations, engaging with relevant legal frameworks and case law on consultation, and learning how to develop Indigenous and non-Indigenous economic partnerships. Participants were also guided to deepen their personal commitment to economic reconciliation and enhance their ability to build respectful relationships with Indigenous communities.



University of Saskatchewan College of Law: Responses to the TRC Calls to Action

Update April 2026

The College of Law continues to make curricular, staffing and outreach initiatives to fulfil our obligations under TRC Call to Action 28. These new initiatives have been undertaken in addition to the work noted in our 2017 and 2022 updates and build on the strong foundation established in the aftermath of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

1. Curricular Initiatives

Our Kwayeskastasowin 1L course is now in its 8th iteration. All first-year students must complete this 3-credit unit course (whose name means “setting things right” in the Cree language). The course examines many of the issues raised by Call to Action 28 and asks students to reflect on these issues through talking circles, ceremony, and self-reflection exercises. The course will incorporate an introduction to Indigenous Legal Methodologies in future years.

In 2024 the College introduced a compulsory first year requirement entitled Professionalism & Perspectives. The 1L timetable is suspended for a week so students can examine issues related to professional identity formation and professional behaviour. The requirement includes education on Anti-Racism, Anti-Discrimination and Anti-Oppression as required by Call to Action 28.

In 2026-27 the College will also make Canadian Aboriginal Law a compulsory subject for all upper year law students. This requirement replaces the previous requirement to complete an Upper Year Indigenous perspectives course, but students will still be able to choose from a broad range of classes and seminars in both Indigenous and Aboriginal law.

Also, in 2026-27 the College will introduce its first 3 credit unit land-based learning course “soniaskiynipypimatisiwin” which will be available to Upper Year students on an elective basis. This course is funded by a significant gift from the local McKercher law firm. Students will learn about Indigenous laws on the land from Indigenous faculty, Elders and Knowledge Keepers.

Finally, the College and the Indigenous Law Centre continue to offer a Summer Course in Property law for Indigenous students accepted into Canadian law schools for the upcoming academic year. In 2025-26 35 students from 10 Canadian law schools enrolled in this online 5 credit-unit course.

2. Staffing Initiatives

In 2025 Chris Lafleur rejoined the Indigenous Law Centre as Director on a 3-year term after a long and distinguished career as a Metis lawyer with the Federal Department of Justice. Chris served as Acting

Director in 2016. Under his leadership the Centre has recruited two new Indigenous staff and has also added Elder Julie Pitzel to the staff. Julie works alongside our long-serving Knowledge Keeper Joseph Naytowhow to provide cultural support and education to students, staff, and faculty in the College as well as organizing ceremony including smudges and sweats. Julie and Joseph will also play a significant role in introducing students to Indigenous laws in our new land-based learning course. Finally, the College hired additional Indigenous faculty who will begin their work at the College in the 2026-27 academic year.

3. Outreach Initiatives

The College and the Indigenous Law Centre view engaging and partnering with community as key parts of our respective mandates. Of particular note is the signing of an MOU between the College and the FSIN (Federation of Sovereign Indian Nations) in 2023, which was further extended in 2026. Under this MOU, the College and the FSIN have partnered to improve child welfare laws to address the over-representation of Indigenous children in the provincial system and bolstering the application of Federal legislation such as Bill C-92. The MOU has led to the development of an indigenous Child Welfare Practicum where law students work directly with First Nations and the FSIN on assisting nations to develop their own child welfare systems. In 2025-26, the College partnered with Legal Aid Saskatchewan to develop the Advanced Child Protection Externship (ACPE). ACPE builds on the commitments in the MOU by providing 3L students who have completed the Indigenous Child Welfare Practicum with experiential learning opportunities involving working for a semester at Legal Aid in the area of Child Protection. Students attend chambers, family mediations, pre-trial conferences, and assist clients in filling out applications and drafting affidavits thus gaining real world experience and providing invaluable assistance to community members.

4. Time for Celebration

In May 2026, the Indigenous Law Centre will host an event to celebrate its 50th anniversary and its outstanding contribution to the promotion of Indigenous legal education in Canada. The Centre was founded as the Native Law Centre in 1975 by Professor Roger Carter and the majority of Indigenous lawyers in Canada began their legal education at the Centre.



Avec le soutien, le partenariat et les conseils des communautés et des organisations autochtones, des personnes âgées et des gardiennes du savoir, les facultés de droit canadiennes ont donné suite à leur engagement en faveur de la réconciliation et ont mis en place diverses initiatives pour assurer un engagement significatif et efficace à l'égard des appels à l'action de la Commission de vérité et de réconciliation du Canada (2015). Les résumés ci-joints ont été préparés par les facultés de droit canadiennes dans le but de partager des informations sur les nouveaux développements au cours des deux dernières années. Ces déclarations complètent les résumés qui ont été préparés en 2017 et en 2021.

Pour ces mises à jour, le Conseil des doyens et des doyennes des facultés de droit du Canada a proposé des lignes directrices et des thèmes afin de s'assurer que les facultés de droit aient l'occasion de faire un compte rendu de leurs activités et de leurs réponses à la CVRC de manière structurée et complète.

Les thèmes étaient les suivants :

- 1) Initiatives préalables à la CVRC
- 2) Réponses organisationnelles de la CVRC
- 3) Le recrutement
 - a. Personnes étudiantes autochtones
 - b. Professeurs et employés autochtones, professeurs et employés ayant des fonctions liées à la CVR
- 4) Innovation dans les programmes d'études
- 5) Gouvernance
- 6) Installations/environnement sécuritaires
- 7) Recherche
- 8) Mentorat/stage
- 9) Engagement communautaire
- 10) Initiatives futures

Les mises à jour de cette année continuent de démontrer que les facultés de droit canadiennes adoptent des approches variées et créatives pour répondre à la CVRC, et que ces initiatives vont au-delà de l'adoption d'un cours (obligatoire). Les résumés en donnent un aperçu. Pour plus d'informations, nous encourageons les personnes lectrices à se référer aux sites Web des facultés ou à contacter directement les écoles.



Faculté de droit de l'Université de Sherbrooke

Inclusion des perspectives autochtones / CVRC

1) Initiatives préalables à la CVRC

- 2011 : Introduction du cours de droit autochtone (3e année, optionnel).
- 2017 : Mise en place d'une catégorie d'admission spécifique aux candidates et candidats autochtones en droit (disposition officielle et processus adaptés).
- 2019 : Soutien gouvernemental dédié pour la coordination des affaires autochtones en droit (mise en place de services d'aide).

Alignement CVRC

- AA 28 (facultés de droit) — intégration de contenus autochtones au curriculum.
- AA 11 (accès postsecondaire) — appui à l'inscription d'étudiantes/étudiants autochtones.
- AA 62–65 (éducation pour la réconciliation & recherche) — transformation pédagogique et ancrage institutionnel.

2) Réponses organisationnelles de la CVRC

- 2021 : Création du comité ANIBI — comité de professeures et professeurs aviseurs (orientation, cohérence académique, pertinence culturelle).
- 2022 à aujourd'hui : Intégration d'approches décoloniales dans un cours d'approches critiques du droit (Makela & Fortin).
- 2023 : Ajout d'un cours au programme de droit et politiques de la santé (2^e cycle) : Enjeux et perspectives autochtones en droit et politiques de la santé au Québec
- Sept. 2024 : Offre du cours « AUT 101 – Introduction aux enjeux autochtones contemporains comme cours à option aux étudiants du baccalauréat en droit.
- Déc. 2024 : Consultation facultaire (22 réponses) confirmant 22 cours intégrant des enjeux autochtones (mentions ponctuelles → 1–2 séances).
- Plan d'action UdeS 2021–2026 « Pour et avec les peuples autochtones » — cadre institutionnel des initiatives facultaires.

Alignement TRC

- AA 28 — cours et compétences (interculturelles, antiracisme).

- AA 62 — financement/formation pour intégrer les savoirs autochtones (postsecondaire).
- AA 65 — soutien à la recherche et à l'innovation pédagogique.

3) Recrutement

a) Étudiantes et étudiants autochtones

- Politique d'admission dédiée : auto-identification, preuves de statut/affiliation, lettres, entrevue et présence autochtone au jury ; sélection holistique.
- Stratégies de recrutement : dépliant promotionnel (cégeps), participation aux portes ouvertes (Institution Kiuna, Communauté d'Obedjiwan, etc.).
- Admissions en hausse : 7 en 2025 et 7 en 2026 (historiquement 1–2).
- Bourses : Automne 2025 (5 × 5 000 \$) ; depuis 2020 (2 × 1 500 \$/an) ; autres bourses institutionnelles UdeS ; soutien pour bourses externes.
- Arrimages continus avec le Bureau du registraire.

b) Professeures, professeurs et employé·e·s

- Coordination facultaire des affaires autochtones (poste en place ; amorcé en 2019 via financement dédié).
- Mobilisation professorale en recherche, conférences et enseignement décolonial.
- Stratégies de recrutement pour une chaire de recherche du Canada

Alignement TRC

- AA 11 — accroître l'inscription au postsecondaire (bourses et politiques d'accès).
- AA 62.3 — financement/ressources aux établissements pour intégrer les savoirs autochtones (mesures d'accueil & accompagnement).
- AA 28 — compétences et conditions de formation en droit.

4) Innovation dans les programmes d'études

- 2011 à aujourd'hui : Cours de droit autochtone (3e année, optionnel).
- Approches décoloniales intégrées dans des cours (depuis 2022).
- Déc. 2024 : Consultation facultaire (22 réponses) confirmant 22 cours intégrant des enjeux autochtones (mentions ponctuelles → 1–2 séances).
- Cours « Enjeux et perspectives autochtones en droit et politiques de la santé » (2023).
- Cours de « Langue abénakise » (2025).

Alignement TRC

- AA 28 — exigences curriculaires en droit (UNDRIP/DNUDPA, traités, droit autochtone, compétences interculturelles).
- AA 62 — éducation pour la réconciliation (postsecondaire).
- AA 65 — appui à la création de connaissances et à la recherche-action.

5) Gouvernance

Structures et mécanismes

- Comité Anibi — comité de professeures et professeurs aviseurs (orientation, cohérence académique, pertinence culturelle).
- Comité des études — inclusion rigoureuse des perspectives autochtones dans l'ensemble des programmes.
- Comité droit étudiant autochtone — activités de sensibilisation.
- Comité consultatif — convoqué au besoin (persévérance et réussite).
- Consultation facultaire (déc. 2024) — 22 réponses ; 22 cours mentionnant des contenus autochtones.

Alignement TRC

- AA 28 — pilotage curriculaire et garanties d'apprentissage.
- AA 62–65 — gouvernance éducative, partenariats et suivi institutionnel.

6) Installations / environnements sécuritaires

- Espace culturellement adapté réservé aux personnes étudiantes autochtones (sécurité culturelle, bien-être, appartenance).
- Services à la vie étudiante UdeS — volet Autochtones : accompagnement, regroupement étudiant autochtone, équipe Teams, Comité Kassiwi ; activités culturelles ; opportunités de collaboration et d'emploi.

Alignement TRC (extraits)

- AA 28 — milieux d'apprentissage propices à l'acquisition de compétences interculturelles et à l'antiracisme.
- AA 62 — soutien au milieu éducatif et au mieux-être des personnes étudiantes.

7) Recherche

- 2022 à auj.: Conférences/colloques — Ex. Pre É. Jean-Bouchard (culture institutionnelle & droits sociaux), V. Fortin (Miromatisiwin, avec E. Bernheim & E. Ottawa), A. Wawanoloath & A. Maltais Landry (Réconciliation, décolonisation, récits).
- 2022 : Outil de plaidoyer sur le rôle et la place des femmes dans les instances de gouvernance autochtone (FAQ).
- 2022 : Plateforme web d'autoformation sur la gouvernance (FAQ).

Alignement TRC

- AA 65 — programme national de recherche (co-construction, diffusion).
- AA 28 — transfert de connaissances au bénéfice de la formation en droit.

8) Mentorat / stage

- Tutorat spécialisé : jumelage d'une personne étudiante autochtone avec une personne de 2e/3e année.
- Programme de mentorat avec des juristes autochtones.
- Stages et cliniques : notariat au Nunavik ; activité clinique Grand Nord (Justice Pro Bono) ; projets en communauté atikamekw.
- Opportunités de carrière auprès de cabinets/organisations œuvrant en droit autochtone.

- 2021 à 2024 : initiative Kawaskimon

Alignement TRC

- AA 27 — continuité avec la profession (compétences culturelles).
- AA 28 — apprentissages expérientiels et compétences (résolution de conflits, droits de la personne).

9) Engagement communautaire

- 2021 : Semaine du droit autochtone (Comité Kassiwi).
- 2021 à aujourd'hui : Kiosque Vérité & Réconciliation (feutrine orange).
- Mini école de droit en communautés : éditions à Wemotaci, Mashteuiatsh, Uashat mak Mani-utenam (avec Pro Bono Canada).
- 2022 : Exposition « Voies Parallèles » ; présentation d'œuvres de l'artiste Kanien'kehá:ka Hannah Claus (bibliothèque de la Faculté).
- 2025 : Activités cliniques en collaboration avec le Conseil des Abénakis d'Odanak et le Bureau de la recherche du Ndakina.

Alignement TRC

- AA 62.1 — sensibilisation K-12 (Mini école de droit).
- AA 66 — programmes jeunesse axés sur la réconciliation.
- AA 79–83 — commémoration et valorisation des perspectives autochtones (expositions, œuvres).

10) Initiatives futures

- Poursuite/extension des activités cliniques avec Odanak/Ndakina (2025–2026).
- Cour itinérante ? — faisabilité à documenter (logistique, partenaires, financement).
- Renforcement des collaborations et des programmes en langues autochtones (pérennisation du cours d'abénakis).

Alignement TRC (extraits)

- AA 27–28 — continuum éducation-profession ; National Requirement (évolution).
- AA 62–65 — structuration à long terme (éducation & recherche).
- AA 79–83 — consolidation des volets commémoratifs (expositions/œuvres).

Événements phares (chronologie)

- 2011 : Cours de droit autochtone (3e année, optionnel).
- 2017 : Catégorie d'admission autochtone en droit (UdeS). [UdeS/RC]
- 2019 : Financement gouvernemental pour coordination affaires autochtones (droit, UdeS). [Gouv. Québec]
- 2021 : Semaine du droit autochtone (Comité Kassiwi) ;
- 2021 à auj. kiosque Vérité & Réconciliation.
- 2022 : Cycle de conférences / outils & plateforme (FAQ).
- 2023 : Cours Enjeux et perspectives autochtones en droit et politiques de la santé

- Déc. 2024 : Consultation facultaire — 22 cours.
- 4 fév. 2025 : Conférence de l'hon. Michelle O'Bonsawin (CSC).
- 2025 : Cours de Langue abénakise.
- Automne 2025: 5 bourses × 5 000 \$ (droit).
- 8 nov. 2025 : Rencontre étudiantes autochtones — trois juges de la CSC.
- 2025–2026 : Activités cliniques (Odanak/Ndakina).
- 23 mars 2026 : Grand panel sur l'accès à la justice (Picard, Mollen-Dupuis, Lainé). [interne]

Références et sources (sélection)

- TRC — Appels à l'action (version française, NCTR) : https://nctr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/4-Appels_a_l-Action_French.pdf
- RCAANC — Éducation pour la réconciliation (AA 62–65) : <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524504501233/1557513602139>
- RCAANC — Justice (AA 25–42, incl. 27–28) : <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524502695174/1557513515931>
- RCAANC — Commémoration (AA 79–83) : <https://www.rcaanc-cirnac.gc.ca/eng/1524505403680/1557513866487>
- UdeS — Candidatures autochtones (Faculté de droit) : <https://www.usherbrooke.ca/droit/programmes/candidatures-autochtones>
- UdeS — Initiatives autochtones (Faculté de droit, incl. cours d'abénakis) : <https://www.usherbrooke.ca/droit/faculte/initiatives-autochtones>
- UdeS — Étudiantes et étudiants autochtones (services, bourses, Kassivi) : <https://www.usherbrooke.ca/autochtones/etudiantes-et-etudiants-autochtones>
- Gouvernement du Québec — Annonce 2019 (soutien à la coordination en droit, UdeS) : <https://www.quebec.ca/nouvelles/actualites/details/108-000-pour-soutenir-le-programme-dacces-et-de-soutien-aux-etudes-en-droit-pour-les-candidats-autochtones-de-luniversite-de-sherbrooke>

**THOMPSON RIVERS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF LAW
TRC INITIATIVES**

1. Pre TRC initiatives

Ever since the inception of the law school in 2011, the first years visited the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.

2. Organizational TRC responses

The Coyote Project is a pan-institutional program to accelerate indigenization, but its impacts and legacies are meant to be long-lasting. The Secwépemc people of the BC Interior tell a story about Coyote, who is known for being a powerful transformer. The story, called Coyote Brings Food from the Upper World, forms the basis of The Coyote Project at TRU. At the Faculty, the Indigenous Initiatives Committee's mandate is to address Indigenous issues, including systemic challenges, inequities and discrimination faced by Indigenous students. The Committee will: 1) make relevant policy recommendations to Faculty Council; 2) increase awareness about Indigenous issues through education, research and public legal education and curriculum development; 3) foster a dialogue about Indigenous issues; including by reaching out to other committees, bodies and organizations in the university and community to work together on equity related issues; and organize events.

3. Recruitment

a. Indigenous students

To support Indigenous recruitment, TRU Law has partnered with the Aboriginal Education Department to participate in Transition Days. On specific days throughout the school year, Indigenous high school students from the interior will visit TRU so they can learn about the opportunities that await them with a university education, and we can encourage them to pursue a future career in the legal profession. This program ran for many successful years. Due to changeover in the team at the Office of Indigenous Education, the program was not brought back for us to participate this past cycle.

We have also partnered with the other BC Law Schools to coordinate visits to campuses across BC, and we include NVIT (Nicola Valley Institute of Technology) in Merrit as part of the tour stop. This is our opportunity to connect with more prospective Indigenous students. We visit with their students and staff to provide details about law school admission.

Through a Law School Admission Council grant, we also support recruitment by offering free tutoring services for LSAT prep to Indigenous students for the duration of the grant. This program lasted for one year and proved successful.

We have also created a professional document that highlights the supports that Indigenous students receive at our law school, on campus, and within the community so that incoming students know about all the supports and services available to them.

We have streamlined our admissions process so that we can identify Indigenous category applicants earlier in the cycle and assist them in completing their applications. This allows us to communicate admission decisions and entrance award funding much sooner in the cycle.

Plus, we have a growing amount of funds specifically for Indigenous students in the form of scholarships, awards, course prizes, bursaries, and emergency funding.

In addition, upon recommendation by the TRU Indigenous Law Students Association and with support of the Aboriginal Education Department, the Faculty of Law has proposed a plan to protect Indigenous identity by requiring those applying under the Indigenous applicant category to provide proof of their First Nations Status or Metis Citizenship.

b. Indigenous Faculty and Staff

The Faculty has an Indigenous sessional instructor and shares one Indigenous professor with the Bob Gaglardi School of Business. Both instructors are well-connected to Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. The sessional instructor also acts as an advisor and mentor to Indigenous students. The Indigenous professor presents two upper-year courses on First Nations Business and Taxation and First Nations Governance and Economic Development. Both instructors work closely with Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc to develop and present course content.

4. Curricular innovation

Since September 2021, the curriculum included a mandatory course for all upper year students on Truth and Rebuilding Canadian Indigenous Legal Relations (TRC). The course focuses on the substantive elements of the law-school specific TRC Call to Action #28, especially Indigenous Laws, Crown-Aboriginal relations, Treaties and Aboriginal Rights. To ground the learning on Indigenous Laws, land-based learning is a central experiential learning element of the course. The course also elaborates on the history and legacy of residential school building and the colonial foundations of the legal system. The course will build on indigenous teachings and include skill-based training in intercultural competence, anti-racism, human rights and conflict resolution. In addition, it will integrate the international element of TRC Call to Action #28. It refers to the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and the course will further introduce other international legal obligations that Canada is bound by regarding Indigenous Peoples. The addition of First Nations Business and Taxation and First Nations Governance and Economic Development provides more Indigenous content for students to choose from.

5. Governance

As was described in 2 above, the Indigenous Initiatives Committee's mandate is to address Indigenous issues. In addition, the Indigenous Law Students Club is a student club for all TRU Law Students. The students have a lounge for club activities and the faculty actively supports their conference attendance and other activities. With an

Indigenous faculty member on Faculty Council, there is an opportunity to bring an Indigenous lens to decision-making and deliberations.

6. Facilities/safe environment

The Gathering Place at TRU is open to all Indigenous students. It is modeled after pit houses and is a space to meet with Elders, study, or gather for ceremonial or social activities. Most recently, the former moot practise room was re-purposed for the exclusive use of the TRU Indigenous Law Students Association. The students designed their own emblem, and this is displayed on the glass window that separates the room from the law library.

7. Research

Professors Schabus and Morse have successfully applied for numerous LFBC Grants in the past and have completed various research projects. Professor Morse's current grant from the Law Foundation of BC is for his research on Indigenous-Local Government Relationships. Professor Jones is conducting research on the geopolitical history of the First Nations in the Thompson Okanagan region.

8. Mentorship

Indigenous students have an assigned mentor who works with them on all issues related to law school and the profession. The mentor is an alumna of TRU and a practising lawyer. Student engagement takes place on an on-going basis and the mentor reports back to the Dean on an on-going basis.

9. Community engagement

The faculty hosts a research series and various topics are discussed, including indigenous issues. There is no formal process for inviting Indigenous speakers into classrooms and various instructors use dedicated time in their classes to having stakeholders in Indigenous communities speak to the students. Elders participate in the first-year orientation and various other events over the course of the academic year. The TRU Community Legal Clinic assists various members of the community, including Indigenous members, with legal problems.

10. Future initiatives

The Future Indigenous Lawyers (FIL) program's goal is to break down some of the barriers that indigenous students may experience through the law school experience. TRU Law is committed to increasing the number of Indigenous law students at TRU, providing wrap-around support throughout their three-year degree, and ensuring they successfully transition to professional practice. The initiative draws support for recruitment (high school and undergrad outreach, LSAT preparation and funding, Indigenous recruitment officers and travel fund), on-campus Indigenous orientation, wrap-around support (mentorship, emergency funds, access to cultural supports, academic support, health and wellness programming, bursaries and scholarships and writing support) and bridge to practice (career preparation workshops, interview travel fund and

connection to the local bar association). This initiative has raised some funds so far and most funds have been directed to recruitment and entrance awards. A stronger fund will see more of these plans come to fruition.

**Indigenous Initiatives and Responses to the TRC Report:
Lincoln Alexander School of Law,
Toronto Metropolitan University**

In keeping with our commitment to diversity, inclusion and justice, the Lincoln Alexander School of Law at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU) has made it a priority to build relationships with and serve Indigenous communities and has embedded this commitment as a core value in our 2025-2030 Academic Plan. To that end, we have undertaken significant steps in the 2025–26 academic year to meet the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action and contribute to the important work of reconciliation. As a new and still evolving law school, we face distinct challenges in building the infrastructure necessary to support Indigenization. Yet, this stage of growth also represents a unique and timely opportunity to embed reconciliation into the foundation of our institutional framework.

This includes deliberate hiring and admissions practices, Indigenizing curriculum, pedagogy, and physical space, and building strong and meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities.

Our TRC-focused initiatives reflect a long-term, structural approach to Indigenizing legal education. We are committed to fostering an environment where Indigenous students, staff, faculty, and knowledge systems can thrive.

Organizational

To guide us in our efforts to Indigenize our curriculum, programming and institutional decision-making, we have established a committee dedicated to Indigenous legal education and the implementation of the TRC’s Calls to Action 27, 28 and 50. The Indigenous Legal Education Committee (ILEC) has a broad mandate to coordinate the implementation of Indigenous legal education, research and service, and to advise the law school’s Faculty Council on these matters. Law school correspondence includes a territorial land acknowledgement, based on consultation with TMU’s Indigenous community, and we continue to participate in the Indigenous subspace working committee to indigenize our current and future law school space. This included the installation of several Indigenous artwork by Christi Belcourt.

Admissions and Recruitment

As part of our Indigenous recruitment and outreach activities in 2025–26, we were on the planning committee for “Opportunities in the Legal Profession:

Indigenous Perspectives and Reflections,” an Indigenous lawyer panel and law school information session hosted by the National Advocates for Indigenous Law Students (NAILS) at Western University.

Five Indigenous students were admitted to our class of 2023, and six to our class of 2024. For the class of 2025, we made offers to ten Indigenous applicants, three of whom accepted. An Indigenous staff member reviews all applications from Indigenous candidates, who are also eligible for the Kathleen Wilson Award - an entrance award for Indigenous students based on academic standing and financial need.

Clinical and Experiential Programs

Last year, two students were placed with the Indigenous Youth-centred Justice Project, a new, cross-disciplinary project spearheaded by TMU’s Faculty of Community Services that addresses gaps in services for Indigenous youth who are dually involved in the child welfare and youth justice systems.

In March 2022, six students participated in the Kawaskimhon Moot in Montreal, a consensus-based, non-adversarial moot competition that incorporates Indigenous legal orders alongside Canadian and international law. This year, our students were coached by lawyers practicing at Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP, a leading Indigenous rights law firm. We also created a distinct, culturally sound process for selecting students to participate in the Kawaskimhon Moot moving forward. In the summer of 2022, Kimberly Murray - Independent Special Interlocutor for Missing Children and Unmarked Graves and Burial Sites associated with Indian Residential Schools - created an opportunity for Lincoln Alexander School of Law students to further their work around Truth and Reconciliation through professional placements within her new office. As part of these placements, law students conduct legal research related to the investigation, identification, protection and preservation of unmarked burial sites of children who died while being forced to attend Indian Residential Schools. Thanks to support from an existing donor, we were able to fund positions for two students this academic year and plan to support an additional 8 student placements in the next academic year.

Community Engagement

In September 2023, students and faculty attended the Anishinaabe Law Camp at Neyaashiinigiing, hosted by the Chippewas of Nawash Unceded First Nation. This immersive learning experience provided an opportunity to engage directly with Indigenous legal traditions through storytelling, ceremony, and land-based teachings.

The camp included sessions on treaties, gendered activities like sweat lodges, and reflections on Indigenous governance and law. Participants described the experience as transformative, emphasizing the importance of learning law through community engagement. “Indigenous law isn’t something you can just learn in a classroom—you have to experience it,” reflected one participant.

The Rama Law Camp 2025 took place from September 11–14, in partnership with the Chippewas of Rama First Nation. This land-based learning experience brought together Lincoln Alexander School of Law students, staff, faculty, and Indigenous knowledge holders for immersive engagement with Anishinaabe legal traditions, governance principles, and modes of reasoning.

The Camp introduced students to Anishinaabe law through place-based learning, storytelling, ceremony, and dialogue. Students learned to “read the land” as a legal text and explored how Anishinaabe legal principles emerge from relationships among people, land, water, and the more-than-human world. Teachings were shared by Elders, community leaders, and knowledge holders, grounding legal concepts such as responsibility, reciprocity, accountability, and conflict resolution.

Curriculum

Lincoln Alexander Law continues to require all first-year students to complete a mandatory course in Aboriginal and Indigenous law and a lecture on Indigenous law in their first-year fall intensive “Law and Legal Methods”. We also offer seminars on Indigenous legal theory and practice, Indigenous peoples and the criminal law, Indigenous peoples and economic development, and Indigenous dispute resolution.

The law school also continues to offer placements in our integrated practice curriculum with Indigenous organizations and communities in Ontario, including through the Ministry of the Attorney General’s Debwewin Law Program.

Research

Two of our faculty members focus their research on Indigenous and Aboriginal law. Professor Priscylla Joca’s research navigates the intersections among multiple legal traditions and legal orders—including Indigenous, international human rights, and state laws—with particular attention to comparative legal studies between Canada and Brazil. Her research also explores how Indigenous peoples and traditional local communities articulate their own laws and rights, challenging conventional state-centred legal frameworks and advancing decolonial approaches to environmental and ecological justice.

Associate Dean Sari Graben has published extensively in the field of Aboriginal law and resource governance, and most recently co-authored a paper examining the impact that wage-based income, business income and compensatory income has on women in Indigenous economies. Dr. Graben currently serves on the Interdisciplinary Working Group on Polar Bears for the Torngat Wildlife, Plants & Fisheries Secretariat, Nunatsiavut.

In 2025, the Law Foundation of Ontario confirmed two years of funding for an interdisciplinary initiative led by Connie Walker, a Pulitzer-prize winning Cree journalist, in partnership with Lincoln Alexander Law and the School of

Journalism. This project will engage law and journalism students in investigative and legal research and education to create a central repository of court filings against the Canadian government by Survivors of Indian Residential Schools. It will also work with Survivors and their communities to inform them about the impending destruction of Independent Assessment Process accounts which hold information vital to uncovering the lived experience of residential schools and to potentially identifying missing children.

Student Support

Co-curricular activities: Our student services team has created a mentorship program for Indigenous students, and the recently formed Indigenous Law Students' Association is committed to providing a strong social support network for Indigenous students and to bringing awareness to legal issues affecting Indigenous communities through events, visiting speakers and other forms of knowledge sharing.

Awards and scholarships: The Torys LLP Scholarship is a \$30,000 entrance scholarship for Indigenous students entering their first year (offered in partnership is Indspire). The Cassels Brock & Blackwell LLP Scholarships for Indigenous Law Students are renewable scholarships awarded to Indigenous students in their second year, worth \$5,000 per student. Other awards, such as the Dr. Anver Saloojee Anti-Discrimination Award, the Kathleen Wilson Award for Indigenous Law Students, and the Santan and Omega De Mello Community Leadership Award are distributed with a special preference for Indigenous students. The Enbridge Award for Indigenous Students is a one-time \$5,000 award for either a 2L or 3L Indigenous student. With preference for an Indigenous student: The Scotiabank Program for Law Students Scholarship is a \$30,000 entrance scholarship for a student entering their first year, with preference given to an Indigenous student.

We have also created internal grants to support Indigenous-led research and community initiatives.

Future Initiatives

The law school has identified the following future priorities:

- Develop and implement a targeted recruitment strategy to hire at least 2 Indigenous faculty members.
- Refine recruitment and admissions strategies to better attract and retain Indigenous students. Establish financial and other supports for Indigenous faculty, staff, and students. Secure funding for the establishment of an Indigenous Justice and Reconciliation Initiative.
- Establish an external Indigenous Advisory Committee comprising Indigenous legal practitioners, scholars, and community leaders to provide guidance on curriculum development, research initiatives, and student support strategies. This committee could also play a key role in

strengthening community engagement, ensuring that Indigenization efforts are informed by Indigenous legal traditions.

- Create an Indigenous Visitorship Program that invites Indigenous academics, legal practitioners, or knowledge keepers to engage in teaching and research.

Organizational Responses to the TRC

The Henry N.R. Jackman Faculty of Law Indigenous Initiatives Office (IIO) and the Truth and Reconciliation (TRC) Committee function as the central sites of Indigenous leadership within the Faculty of Law. Between 2023 to 2026, our focus has been to shift reconciliation work away from stand-alone programming toward embedded governance, programming, and institutional accountability.

Governance

Jackman Law maintains a standing TRC Committee comprised of students, staff and faculty members that reports directly to the Dean and is responsible for providing guidance on curriculum developments, policy review, and faculty-wide accountability related to the Truth and Reconciliation of Canada's Calls to Action.

The 2023 TRC Committee's mandate focused on three priorities: examining the interaction between the newly introduced mandatory Indigenous law course and the broader JD curriculum, considering potential renaming of the course, and reviewing cultural competency initiatives.

In August 2024, the mandate expanded to include addressing learning gaps among upper-year transfer students who had not completed the mandatory Indigenous law course, reviewing Indigenous identity in the context of admissions and awards, and continuing curriculum coordination.

In 2025-2026, the TRC Committee's mandate includes supporting 2L and 3L transfer students who have not completed mandatory courses, reviewing how faculty integrate Aboriginal and Indigenous law across courses and to provide input on the IIO's 5-Year Strategic Plan.

The IIO supports the work of the TRC Committee and works closely with Faculty leadership, Admissions, Student Services, and the Career Development Office.

Student Recruitment

In 2023, Indigenous JD students from nine First Nations communities became eligible for the University-wide [Indigenous Tuition Initiative](#), improving financial access for Indigenous learners while reducing barriers associated with tuition costs. Although centrally administered, the IIO supports students in navigating the program and coordinates closely with financial aid offices to ensure access is understood and communicated clearly.

In 2025, the Faculty formally implemented an [Indigenous Substantiation](#) process as part of admissions and eligibility for Indigenous-designated opportunities. This shift replaced self-

identification with a framework based on community accountability and Indigenous governance. The implementation of this process was guided by the University of Toronto's TRC Implementation Committee, which documented the harms associated with Indigenous identity fraud and recommended a substantiation process while avoiding narrow definitions such as reliance on Indian Status. The framework maintains access while aligning with broader University processes led by the [Office of Indigenous Initiatives](#), though the Faculty maintains local governance over its admissions process.

Indigenous Leadership

Between 2023 and 2024, the Faculty's Elder-in-Residence continued to lead Teachings on the Bundle, facilitate Reading Circles, and provide individual student support. The Elder-in-Residence program was paused at the end of 2024 following the departure of the Faculty's Elder, who relocated away from Toronto. The Faculty is currently reviewing the program's structure and approach, informed by guidance from the TRC Committee.

In 2025, Andrea Johns was hired as the Program Manager, Indigenous Initiatives. The IIO continues to oversee support for Indigenous law students by connecting them to resources and opportunities that promote balance and wellness. The IIO also organizes Indigenous cultural programming for all students, staff, and faculty.

In 2025, Kyle Kahgee was appointed Loveland Junior Indigenous Research Fellow, strengthening the Faculty's ability to engage in Indigenous-led research and community scholarship. This role supports student mentorship, research development, and collaboration with Indigenous communities in ways that align with Indigenous research values.

Curricular Innovation

In 2022, the Faculty fully embedded the course Indigenous Peoples and the Law into the first-year JD curriculum, taught by Professor John Borrows, Loveland Chair in Indigenous Law. The course introduces Indigenous legal orders, treaty relationships, Crown–Indigenous legal relations, governance frameworks, residential schools, child welfare, and contemporary Indigenous resistance.

Alongside the mandatory Indigenous Peoples and the Law Course, the Faculty maintains its ongoing commitment to integrate Indigenous legal perspectives across the curriculum, including in Property Law, Constitutional Law, Environmental Law, Family Law and more, with a student Research Assistant supporting this work during the summer months.

In response to Call to Action # 28, Jackman asks that all first-year students participate in Reconciliation Reading Circles prior to starting law school. Students are tasked with reading

one book from a curated list addressing Indigenous-settler relations and then participated in sharing circles led by the Indigenous Initiatives Office and the former Elder-in-Residence. All first-year students participated in a reading circle in the summer of 2023 and 2024, with a pause for evaluation in 2025.

The Faculty awarded fourteen Certificates in Aboriginal Legal Studies between 2023 and 2025. This certificate provides an interdisciplinary framework within which concepts and methods from law can be applied to relevant topics in Indigenous Studies. Students can join the Aboriginal Legal Studies program at any time before the end of their first year. Students who complete the requirements receive a notation on their transcript.

In addition to the first-year course, the Faculty offers an intensive course, the Indigenous Law in Context / Anishinaabe Law Camp, taught within Indigenous communities. The program introduces participants to Indigenous law from a land-based perspective, and they receive teachings from Elders and other members of the community on Anishinaabe law and legal traditions, while immersing themselves in traditional practices. One of the primary goals of the course is to invite the law school community to engage in thinking about important legal and historical issues in new ways.

Upper-year students continue to access additional courses addressing Aboriginal and Indigenous legal matters. Upper-year courses include:

- Aboriginal Law Practicum
- Discerning Law in the Fur Trade
- Indigenous Environmental Resources Law: The US Experience
- Indigenous Law Journal; + usually at least one intensive course
- Indigenous Legal Traditions and the Imperial Response
- Indigenous Peoples and the Constitution of Canada
- Kawaskimhon Moot
- OHRC Human Rights and Indigenous Peoples

In addition, students are engaged through the [Indigenous Law Journal](#), research assistantships, conferences, and writing awards, including the [Justin Basinger Memorial Award](#).

Indigenous Spaces

Jackman Law is home to a Sacred Medicine Garden, which provides an important gathering place and outdoor teaching space for the law school's faculty members, Indigenous Initiatives Office, and the Elder-in-Residence. The garden was designed and built over the

course of two and a half years by Solomon King, and includes four large cedar boxes for sacred medicines, a stone pathway, a ceremonial circle with seating, and a mural featuring the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Students, staff, and faculty have come together for a Sunrise Ceremony to consecrate the grounds, and to plant and harvest sage, sweetgrass, strawberry, and tobacco. All members of the University are invited to visit the Sacred Medicine Garden, which offers a peaceful space for reflection and connection.

The IIO now includes ceremonial and cultural items such as wampum belts, Indigenous art, and eagle feathers, creating a space that supports traditional practices alongside daily work and student support. The Indigenous Law Students' Lounge has also been enhanced as a welcoming, student-centred environment with access to medicines, traditional teas, books, and snacks. It functions as both a quiet refuge for study and a gathering space for connection and community. Both spaces are formally designated for smudging and ceremony.

Mentorship and Internship

In 2024, the Faculty piloted the Visiting Indigenous Law Mentor program, embedding an Indigenous lawyer to support Indigenous JD students' career development. The Faculty evaluated the pilot and used the results to inform program redesign.

In 2025, the Indigenous Student Mentorship Program was revitalized with two formal streams connecting Indigenous undergraduates to JD students and JD students to alumni.

Students continued participating in the Debwewin Summer Law Program and the June Callwood Fellowship, working in Indigenous communities across Ontario. These internships are designed to support students interested in delivering community education and legal assistance to First Nations, Métis, or Inuit communities and organizations across Ontario, with a particular emphasis on rural and remote communities.

In 2025, 10 JD students represented the Faculty at the Indigenous Bar Association Conference, the highest level of Indigenous student participation to date.

The IIO, alongside the Indigenous Law Students' Association and Career Development Office, have hosted annual Indigenous career events with invited Indigenous panelists who share their experiences and career journeys.

Community Engagement

The Faculty also delivered a range of programming to our broader community, including alumni, including guest lectures, cultural and ceremonial events, and activities recognizing the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.

Student and IIO-led initiatives during this period included:

- The annual Promise Auction and Trivia Night, raising funds for local Indigenous organizations
- Outreach and support to admitted Indigenous students
- Indigenous graduation ceremonies, welcome lunches, and monthly ILSA socials
- Community field trips to Indigenous events/programming
- Creation of ceremonial bundles for both the IIO and the ILSA lounge

In 2025, the Faculty launched a redesigned website with an expanded [Indigenous Initiatives page](#) to improve access to information and support.

Throughout this period, the IIO also strengthened partnerships with Indigenous networks, staff, and faculty across the University.

Future Direction

Looking ahead, the Faculty is in the process of developing a five-year Indigenous Initiatives Strategic Plan with an ambitious vision for our community's action on reconciliation. This process will involve consultation and collaboration with Jackman Law students, staff and faculty members, alumni, the University's broader Indigenous leadership team, and members of the community.

Initiatives du département des sciences juridiques de l'UQAM, en réponse aux recommandations de la Commission Vérité Réconciliation (2026)

Les initiatives du département des sciences juridiques font partie d'un ensemble de mesures prises à l'échelle institutionnelle. L'UQAM a mis en place, en 2021, un plan d'action intitulé « [Poursuivre l'engagement avec les Premiers Peuples](#) ». Ce plan d'action a été rédigé par le *Groupe de travail sur la réconciliation avec les peuples autochtones* et réfère explicitement aux recommandations de la Commission Vérité et Réconciliation. Il prévoit des actions devant être menées entre 2021 et 2026. Celles-ci sont structurées autour de quatre grands axes :

- AXE 1 – Valoriser les savoirs et les cultures autochtones dans les pratiques de la communauté universitaire.
- AXE 2 – Enrichir la formation sur les savoirs autochtones et les partenariats en recherche.
- AXE 3 – Accompagner les personnes étudiantes autochtones dans leurs projets d'études.
- AXE 4 – Inclure en plus grand nombre les personnes autochtones.

Sa mise en œuvre a donné lieu à plusieurs actions concrètes, dont :

- La mise en place du [Bureau des relations pour les Premiers Peuples](#) (BRPP). Celui-ci a pour mission d'accompagner dans leur parcours universitaire, les personnes étudiantes issues des Premiers Peuples. Le BRPP a également pour mission de coordonner la mise en œuvre des engagements universitaires dans le processus de réconciliation. Cela comprend l'accompagnement à l'autochtonisation des contenus académiques en collaboration avec les facultés et départements.
- L'ouverture du local [NISKA](#) - ce qui signifie « outarde » en langue atikamekw -, un espace spécialement conçu pour les personnes étudiantes autochtones. NISKA est un lieu d'étude, de rencontre et de ressourcement, ainsi qu'un environnement culturellement sécurisant.
- La création d'opportunités de financement spécifiques aux personnes étudiantes autochtones, voir : <https://portailétudiant.uqam.ca/autochtones/soutien-financier/>
- L'accueil de [Joséphine Bacon](#) comme Aînée en résidence depuis 2023.

Le Département des sciences juridiques a pris les mesures suivantes dans le cadre du Baccalauréat en droit et organise des formations destinées aux membres de l'équipe enseignante.

Admission et accompagnement des personnes étudiantes autochtones au baccalauréat en droit:

- Quatre places sont réservées pour les personnes candidates autochtones en sus du contingent. Le processus de sélection des candidatures est effectué par un comité de sélection paritaire, composé d'un.e avocat.e autochtone diplômé.e du baccalauréat en droit, d'une personne étudiante autochtone et d'un membre du corps professoral. Ce comité fait une évaluation sur dossier et effectue des entrevues avec les candidat.es retenus sur dossier. Ces entrevues se déroulent en personne ou de façon virtuelle en vue

de s'adapter au contexte d'éloignement de plusieurs candidat.es. Pour cette étape de la sélection, il a développé un schéma d'entrevue propre à la sélection des candidat.es pour cette base d'admission et s'assure que l'expérience d'entrevue se déroule dans un contexte positif et culturellement sécurisant. Le comité formule ensuite une recommandation d'admission ou de refus, à la direction de programme. À l'hiver 2026, sept personnes admises sur cette base cheminent dans le programme.

- Le département a mis en place un programme d'accompagnement des personnes étudiantes des Premiers Peuples par des personnes étudiantes de 2e ou 3e année (les homologues). Les homologues proposent un compagnonnage pédagogique par l'entremise de rencontres qui peuvent porter sur les méthodes de travail, le contenu des cours, la préparation aux examens ou l'intégration sociale à Montréal. L'accompagnement se veut non hiérarchique et fondé sur la réciprocité, en s'adaptant aux besoins de chaque personne étudiante.
- Le département a mis sur pied un comité d'accueil des personnes étudiantes des Premiers Peuples. En collaboration avec le comité de sélection, le comité d'accueil prépare et diffuse l'appel à candidatures, puis organise l'accueil des personnes admises. Il assure également la formation initiale des homologues au début de chaque session d'automne et propose soutien et encadrement tout au long de l'année, aux personnes étudiantes autochtones et homologues. En collaboration avec le comité de pédagogie et des partenaires externes et institutionnels, il coordonne l'organisation de formations destinées à l'équipe enseignante.

Contenu sur les enjeux autochtones dans les cours du baccalauréat en droit :

Du contenu sur les enjeux autochtones a été intégré dans plusieurs cours obligatoires, dont les suivants :

- JUR2502 Introduction à l'étude du droit : aborde les traditions et systèmes juridiques, incluant ceux des peuples autochtones
- JUR2503 Introduction aux fondements du droit : aborde les répercussions de la création de l'État canadien (et ce qui y a concouru) sur le statut juridique et politique ainsi que sur les peuples autochtones et leurs ordres juridiques
- JUR 2522 Droit constitutionnel : aborde les sources et l'évolution de la Constitution du Canada, incluant ses rapports avec les peuples autochtones
- JUR2536 Droit pénal : aborde le rôle du droit pénal dans la (re-)production d'inégalités dans la société canadienne, notamment par rapport aux peuples autochtones et populations marginalisées
- JUR3503 Droit international public : aborde les peuples autochtones comme sujets de droit, notamment en lien avec UNDRIP
- JUR4520 Droits et libertés de la personne : aborde les enjeux autochtones en lien avec les droits et libertés de la personne

Il existe aussi un cours optionnel JUR6541 - Droit, peuples autochtones, et État canadien et l'UQAM participe au concours Kawashimon qui associe traditions juridiques autochtones, droit provincial, droit fédéral et droit international.

Formations offertes à l'équipe enseignante :

Plusieurs formations ont été offertes à l'équipe enseignante au cours des dernières années, en partenariat avec [Mikana](#) et le collectif [Nitedin](#) du Collège Ahuntsic. Ces formations visaient à familiariser les membres de l'équipe enseignante avec les réalités complexes des personnes étudiantes des Premiers Peuples, et à accompagner leur réflexion sur la diversité des enjeux de décolonisation de l'enseignement.

Initiatives futures :

Le Département des sciences juridiques est également activement engagé dans le développement de l'initiative de recrutement concerté des programmes de baccalauréat en droit civil du Québec et de l'Université d'Ottawa qui a été lancée au printemps 2024. Cette initiative a pour objectif de favoriser l'accès des personnes étudiantes des Premiers Peuples aux études de droit. Elle est le fruit de la collaboration entre sept universités (Laval, Sherbrooke, McGill, Montréal, UQAM, UQO et Ottawa) et plusieurs organisations autochtones qui œuvrent en éducation (dont le CEPN, KIUNA et le C3SPNQL).

Département de droit – Université du Québec en Outaouais

Mise à jour – Démarches en réponse aux appels à l'action de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation

Ayant accueilli sa première cohorte à l'automne 2023, le Département de droit de l'Université du Québec en Outaouais s'est développé dans un contexte où les appels à l'action de la Commission de vérité et réconciliation (CVR) constituent un cadre structurant dès l'origine de sa programmation et de ses orientations. Bien que notre département soit encore en phase de croissance — avec une seule cohorte par année et un corps professoral en voie d'atteindre son plein déploiement — nous avons cherché à intégrer de manière concrète et structurante des initiatives en matière d'autochtonisation et de réconciliation.

Innovation curriculaire

Sur le plan curriculaire, nous avons rendu obligatoire dès la première année le cours « Peuples autochtones et enjeux juridiques », qui était initialement optionnel. Cette décision traduit notre volonté d'assurer que l'ensemble de nos étudiant·es acquièrent une compréhension fondamentale des réalités juridiques, historiques et contemporaines des peuples autochtones.

Par ailleurs, nous avons revu la structure de notre enseignement afin de distinguer explicitement l'étude du droit colonial applicable aux peuples autochtones et l'enseignement des traditions juridiques autochtones. Ainsi, en plus du cours obligatoire « Peuples autochtones et enjeux juridiques », nous offrirons un cours optionnel de deuxième année intitulé « Introduction aux traditions juridiques autochtones ». Cette distinction vise à reconnaître la spécificité, l'autonomie et la richesse des systèmes juridiques autochtones, et à éviter qu'ils soient abordés uniquement à travers le prisme du droit posé colonial.

Recherche

Des membres de notre corps professoral mènent également des travaux de recherche portant sur les traditions juridiques autochtones. Ces recherches contribuent à nourrir l'enseignement, à approfondir la compréhension du pluralisme juridique et à inscrire le département dans un dialogue académique plus large sur la reconnaissance et la revitalisation des ordres normatifs autochtones.

Réponses organisationnelles et engagement

En matière de gouvernance et d'engagement institutionnel, deux membres de notre corps professoral siègent à des comités nationaux visant à renforcer les liens avec les communautés autochtones et à améliorer les pratiques universitaires en matière d'autochtonisation. Cette participation contribue à arrimer nos démarches aux réflexions menées à l'échelle canadienne et à soutenir l'évolution de nos pratiques internes.

Sur le plan de la sensibilisation et du dialogue, nous avons accueilli un avocat autochtone lors de notre activité de rentrée, à laquelle participaient toutes nos cohortes étudiantes. Cette rencontre a favorisé des échanges directs sur les réalités professionnelles et les enjeux contemporains en droit.

De surcroît, l'UQO propose également des ressources pédagogiques en matière de décolonisation et d'autochtonisation, auxquelles notre département peut s'arrimer dans le développement de ses pratiques d'enseignement et de formation.

Perspectives

Conscients de notre jeunesse institutionnelle, nous considérons ces initiatives comme des fondations appelées à se développer au fil de la croissance du département. Nous entendons poursuivre ce travail par l'enrichissement continu de notre offre de formation et la consolidation de pratiques favorisant un environnement d'apprentissage respectueux, inclusif et culturellement sécuritaire.

TRC Implementation at the University of Victoria Faculty of Law

Academic Program

- In 2018, UVic Law welcomed its first cohort in the world's first joint degree program in Canadian Common Law and Indigenous Legal Orders, with 24 students graduating with both a JD (Juris Doctor) and a JID (Juris Indigenarum Doctor) in 2022: <https://www.uvic.ca/news/topics/2022+first-jd-jid-graduating-class+media-release>. This program directly responds to TRC Calls 28 and 50.
- In Summer 2024, UVic Law offered a new Indigenous Summer Intensive program on Intellectual and Cultural Property Law, leading to a Professional Specialization Certificate.
- In Fall 2025, UVic Law officially opened the Indigenous Law Wing – the new wing of the Murray & Anne Fraser Building: <https://www.uvic.ca/law/faculty-and-research/centres-and-collaborations/new-indigenous-law-wing.php>. It houses classrooms and spaces that are appropriate for teaching and learning Indigenous laws, a dedicated student wellness suite, an Elder's garden and purpose-built space for the faculty's clinical programs & research centres, including the Indigenous Law Research Unit, the Environmental Law Centre, and the Access to Justice Centre for Excellence: <https://news.uvic.ca/2025/building-new-pathways-for-indigenous-law/>.
- In June 2025, Dr. Sarah Morales (Coast Salish, Cowichan Tribes) was appointed as the faculty's inaugural [Associate Dean Indigenous](#).
- Shortly after the TRC's release two faculty members created a national blog to share reflections on implementing the Calls: <https://reconciliationsyllabus.wordpress.com>. This blog has received national and international attention as a place to find and share materials for teaching law and continues to be updated with ideas that engage with the Calls to Action and more recently, the Calls for Justice of the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, and the provincial *Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples Act*.

Curriculum and Student Support

- On the first day of the program all JD and JD/JID students are welcomed to the territory by local Elders and Knowledge Keepers.
- All students complete a compulsory, full-time, two-week introductory Legal Process course that includes a half-day introduction to Indigenous legal traditions and Indigenous law exercises. In the Spring Semester, there is an additional day-long Indigenous law session in Legal Process on the Calls to Action. New for 2025, all students also participated in introductory activities on Coast Salish land, story and law.
- Newly piloted in September 2025, all JD/JID students participated in a 3-day immersion in Coast Salish law and practice.

- All first-year students are invited to participate in a student-led Indigenous Perspectives Camp (IPC), that recently celebrated its 25th anniversary. Each year, the IPC partners with a local or regional Indigenous community to host land- and water-based learning experiences.
- In the JD/JID program, Indigenous legal traditions, the history and legacy of residential schools, treaty and Indigenous rights and Indigenous-Crown relations are incorporated into the following compulsory courses:
 - Transsystemic Constitutional Law
 - Transsystemic Criminal Law
 - Transsystemic Contracts
 - Transsystemic Property
 - Transsystemic Torts
 - Transsystemic Legal Processes, Research Writing
 - Transsystemic Administrative Law
 - Transsystemic Business Associations
 - Coast Salish Legal Studies and Language
 - Two mandatory community-based field schools in Indigenous communities
- In the JD program, substantial Indigenous content including Indigenous legal traditions, the history and legacy of residential schools, treaty and Indigenous rights and Indigenous-Crown relations is incorporated into the following compulsory courses:
 - Constitutional Law
 - Criminal Law
 - Law, Legislation & Policy
 - Legal Research & Writing,
 - Property
 - Torts
 - Administrative Law
 - Legal Ethics & Professionalism
- JD and JD/JID students can take the following courses:
 - Indigenous Legal Methodologies
 - Indigenous Ecological Governance
 - Indigenous Lands, Rights and Governance
 - First Nation Taxation
 - Indigenous Feminist Legal Studies
 - Comparative Indigenous Rights
 - Intersocietal Jurisprudence Through Cinema
 - Indigenous Legal Theories.
- JD and JD/JID students can take many elective courses that engage with Indigenous Law or Indigenous Legal Issues including Family Law, Intellectual Property, International Human Rights and Dispute Resolution, Environmental Law, Environmental Law Centre Clinic, and Water Law.
- UVic Law's Academic and Cultural Support Program ("Amicus Program") provides direct support for Indigenous students and over each term, organizes seminars and workshops on matters bearing on intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

We acknowledge and respect the Lək'wəḡən (Songhees and X^wsepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək'wəḡən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.

Research and Community Participation

- Launched in Fall 2025 and led by Dr. Val Napoleon, *Next Steps: Rebuilding Indigenous Law (Next Steps)* is an Indigenous-led initiative to renew and rebuild Indigenous legal orders across Canada, addressing all areas of law. Each project will be co-led and co-designed with Indigenous community-based research teams. *Next Steps* builds strong, community-driven collaborations, supporting Indigenous peoples to revitalize and apply their own legal traditions to contemporary issues: <https://news.uvic.ca/media-release/indigenous-legal-orders/>.
- ILRU partners with communities in the recovery and renaissance of Indigenous laws. They partner with and support work by Indigenous peoples and communities to ascertain and articulate their own legal principles and processes in order to effectively respond to today's complex challenges: www.ilru.ca.
- The Environmental Law Centre works with Indigenous communities researching and advocating for respect and stewardship of traditional lands, including a case for Indigenous Guardian Programs: www.elc.uvic.ca.
- The JD/JID Program partners with Indigenous Nations and organizations to offer field schools to third- and fourth-year students. To date UVic Law has partnered with Cowichan Tribes, Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, North Island communities (Kwakiutl First Nation, Mamalilikulla First Nation and Ma'amtigila Nation), Rama First Nation, Pedzeh Ki First Nation, Łíídlıı Kúé First Nation, Dehcho First Nations, and Fort Good Hope First Nation, as well as the Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness.
- The JD program has offered a field school for several years to Indigenous and non-Indigenous students in partnership with the W̱SÁNEĆ Nations and collaboratively taught with the UBC Faculty of Law.
- In 2023, Dr. Pooja Parmar was appointed to a new research position, the President's Chair in Law and Indigeneity in a Global Context.
- The Faculty hosts Canadian and international Indigenous scholars through its Visiting Scholar program and provides opportunities for these scholars to meet with faculty, students and present their research through a formal lecture.

Staff Identifying as Indigenous

- 8 Tenure-stream Faculty and Librarians
- 4 Sessional Instructors / Adjunct Faculty
- 14 Staff Members

Indigenous and non-Indigenous Faculty and staff are actively engaged in numerous projects advancing the work of recovering, revitalizing and reinvigorating Indigenous laws and legal practices across the faculty, university, and broader community.

We acknowledge and respect the Lək'wəḡən (Songhees and X̱w̱sepsəm/Esquimalt) Peoples on whose territory the university stands, and the Lək'wəḡən and W̱SÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.



Summary of TRC Implementation to April 2026

Western University is located on the traditional territories of the Anishinaabek, Haudenosaunee, Lūnaapéewakand Chonnonton Nations, on lands connected with the London Township and Sombra Treaties of 1796 and the Dish with One Spoon Covenant Wampum.

Many years ago, Western Law formed a Working Group to implement the TRC Calls to Action and other reconciliation projects. We have adopted the approach that Indigenous content and perspectives should be embedded throughout the curriculum. We want our students to be aware of Indigenous rights and perspectives, regardless of and, perhaps, tailored to the practice areas they plan to pursue.

Since the 2020-21 academic year, every second-year student has been required to take a compulsory course in Indigenous law. We have also developed a number of co-curricular activities so that Indigenous law and current issues are highlighted to the student body throughout the academic year. Selected activities are described below.

In November 2022, Western University opened the new [Wampum Learning Lodge](#) as a central gathering place for Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of our community to learn and share perspectives on truth and reconciliation. The Lodge is available for booking for classes from all Faculties, as well as for drop-ins and special events.

Admissions and Recruitment

Western Law has a special Admissions category for [Indigenous](#) applicants. Applications from Indigenous candidates are reviewed holistically by the Faculty of Law Admissions Committee and reviews are informed by principles of equity, diversity, inclusion, decolonization and accessibility. Indigenous applicants are required to declare their Indigenous citizenship or membership and provide supporting documentation in accordance with Western University Policy 1.58. This policy is designed to demonstrate the University's respect for Indigenous communities and for Indigenous members of the University community by safeguarding against ethnic fraud and ensuring that declarations of Indigenous citizenship or membership are affirmed.

Western Law offers a free eight-week [LSAT-preparation course](#) to Indigenous students in the spring of each year. Indigenous students from across Canada are welcome to apply for the course and there is no requirement for students to apply to or register at Western Law in order to participate. (The course is also open to Black and low-income students.) The Admissions Office also conducts a law school application information session for Indigenous students annually.

Western Law offers two scholarships to Indigenous students: the Hewat Family Continuing Award for Indigenous Law Students, valued at \$30,000, and the Clarke Osborne Family Entrance Scholarship, valued at \$2400.

Western Law offers subsidies to incoming Indigenous students to help cover the cost of the University of Saskatchewan's [Indigenous Law Centre Summer Program](#). The program offers a first-year Property Law course from May through July for incoming Indigenous students. Western Law provides students with credit towards their JD degree for successful completion of the course.

Curriculum

In keeping with our approach to embedding Indigenous and Aboriginal law throughout our curriculum, we conducted inventory of Indigenous content embedded in existing courses. Following that survey, we reviewed and amended the official (Senate-approved) course descriptions to make Indigenous content explicit where possible (e.g., Sentencing, International Human Rights, Constitutional Law). We also introduced a new first-year Property Law module, Indigenous Conceptions of Property.

All second-year JD students must complete the one-term, three-credit course Indigenous Peoples and the Law. The course is designed to provide students with an introduction to Aboriginal law, Indigenous legal traditions, and the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the Crown. We have frequently offered a stand-alone course in Aboriginal Law and more recently in Treaty Rights and Indigenous Sovereignty. Western Law participates annually in the national Kawaskimhon Talking Circle (moot).

Over the years, we have offered several group "Reading and Study" courses, where faculty and students come together to discuss relevant books and associated readings. These have included *Borrows's Canada's Indigenous Constitution*, *McNeil's Flawed Precedent: The St. Catherine's Case and Aboriginal Title*, and *Borrows's Freedom and Indigenous Constitutionalism*.

Western Law is working to ensure that TRC-aligned perspectives are embedded across core courses including Contracts, Torts, Property, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, and Administrative Law, in keeping with the competencies now required of law graduates under the amended National Requirement. Faculty have the flexibility to integrate Indigenous content directly into their teaching or, for those who prefer, to bring in a guest speaker to address how their area of law has impacted Indigenous communities.

People

Professor Jeff Warnock was appointed as a tenure track Assistant Professor in July 2022. Professor Warnock is a member of the Métis Nation of Ontario and researches the implementation of UNDRIP, the notion of Free, Prior and Informed Consent, and the interaction of these principles with Indigenous legal traditions. Professor Warnock is one of the faculty members who teaches our compulsory course Indigenous Peoples and the Law.

Professor Michael Coyle has been a member of Faculty since 2000. Aboriginal law is one of his primary research areas and he has published numerous articles on the status of treaties and systemic issues relating to the negotiated settlement of Indigenous rights claims. Professor Coyle teaches Indigenous Peoples and the Law and Treaty Rights and Indigenous Sovereignty.

Other Student Experiences

As part of the [Western Law Internship Program](#), Western Law supports three Debwewin summer law internships in partnership with the Ministry of Attorney General's Indigenous Justice Division. The program enables Canadian law students to provide community education and legal assistance support to First Nations, Métis or Inuit (Indigenous) communities and community organizations in Ontario. The opportunity enhances classroom learning on Indigenous legal issues and traditions and broadens cultural competency and advocacy skills.

We have held a variety of co-curricular opportunities for students and faculty. We have hosted weekend

Indigenous Law "Camps" at local First Nation communities, including Chippewas of the Thames and Walpole Island. Participants have included faculty, JD and graduate students, and some graduate students from other Faculties at Western. In collaboration with the Schulich School of Medicine and Dentistry, we have organized joint Indigenous Cultural Education Events focusing on issues of professional service and cultural competence when working with Indigenous patients, clients, and communities.

Western Law is actively developing partnerships with Indigenous community organizations to deepen our reconciliation work. Following discussions with the London District Chiefs Council (LDCC), two new initiatives are under development: a model through which our Community Legal Services clinic would offer dedicated support for Indigenous clients, and formal land-based learning opportunities for students in collaboration with local First Nations. Both build on our existing relationships and tradition of Indigenous Law Camps at communities including Chippewas of the Thames and Walpole Island. Western Law is also exploring a structured mentorship program, developed in partnership with the LDCC, to connect Indigenous students considering law school with practicing lawyers and community leaders.

In terms of student-led initiatives, our students frequently assist, on a *pro bono* basis, with legal issues facing Indigenous groups and with the development of public education materials on Indigenous and Aboriginal law. Students participate in the LEVEL Indigenous Youth Outreach Program at Chippewas of the Thames. The Student Legal Society has associations that focus on Indigenous peoples and initiatives, including most recently the Indigenous Students Association, which is dedicated to sharing community, professional and academic opportunities with Indigenous students in the Faculty.

University of Windsor, Faculty of Law – Responses to the TRC Calls to Action

2026

Although the Faculty of Law previously offered Indigenous law courses, concerted attention to structural and relational engagement with Indigenous law and Indigenous communities began in 2015. Windsor Law has made significant strides in implementing the TRC Calls to Action since then, particularly Calls 27, 28, and 50.

Dr. Valarie Waboose joined the Faculty of Law in 2015 as its first Indigenous faculty member, coinciding with the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) Final Report and Calls to Action. Dr. Waboose (now Professor Emerita) initiated Windsor Law's response to the Calls to Action by establishing the Faculty's first Truth and Reconciliation Committee. Since then, this work has been advanced by subsequently hired Indigenous faculty and colleagues, including Beverley Jacobs, Sylvia McAdams, Jeffery Hewitt, and Janice Makokis. These efforts span all areas of Faculty life, including research, curriculum development, Indigenous faculty and staff hiring, student recruitment and support, and staff training and professional development. While this work remains ongoing, Windsor Law is committed to ensuring that decolonization informs all aspects of teaching, research, and service.

Several years ago, a leading Nehiyaw scholar spoke at the Faculty and suggested that law schools start their journey by trying to do no harm. Guided by the principle of "doing no harm," Windsor Law has integrated analysis of the common law's role in Indigenous dispossession across core courses, alongside sustained attention to Indigenous laws and ways of knowing. In 2018 and 2019, Indigenous Legal Traditions (now titled *Indigenous Legal Orders*) was introduced as a mandatory component of the first-year law curriculum. The course examines legal issues arising from Indigenous Peoples' relationships with Canada and functions as a comparative law course, engaging with Anishinaabe, Haudenosaunee, and Nehiyaw.

Windsor Law offers an Indigenous Legal Orders Minor and a broad range of upper-year courses, including Indigenous Child Welfare, Anishinaabe Law Camp, First Nations Women and the Law, Reconciliation and Residential Schools, Aboriginal Law in Society. Students can also participate in community-based externships with Six Nations, Kettle and Stony Point, Walpole Island, and Sarnia, and compete annually in the Kawaskihmon Moot, which Windsor Law is hosting this year. Additional offerings have included a Haudenosaunee Law Camp, a course on Indigenous Peoples, Art, and Human Rights, and placements connected to projects on international law, genocide and Indigenous Peoples, and 1492 Land Back Lane.

In 2017, the Faculty hired an Indigenous Legal Studies Coordinator, Michelle Nahdee, whose role focuses on relationship-building with local First Nations communities and strengthening pathways for Indigenous students to attend Windsor Law. Windsor Law's admissions process includes a designated stream for Indigenous applicants, with applications reviewed by two Indigenous faculty, staff, or students. Indigenous students also founded Skawbewisag, an active student-led organization that advocates for Indigenous student interests and participates in the work of the TRC Committee. The Faculty is privileged to host an Elder-in-Residence program. Elder Myrna Kicknosoway provides invaluable support through one-on-one counselling, the opening of Faculty Council meetings and events, and consultation on program initiatives. Windsor Law offers also entrance scholarships of \$10,000 to up to six first-year law students each year, in addition to other awards available to Indigenous students by application.

Faculty members participated in Anishinaabe Law Camps at Walpole Island First Nation in 2016 and 2017 and an Anishinaabe Law Retreat in 2018 in Windsor. In 2019, the Indigenous Legal Orders Institute was created, acting as a hub for Indigenous legal research. The Institute hosts a longstanding speakers' series that features brilliant Indigenous scholars. Windsor Law is currently recruiting for additional Indigenous legal scholars and has recently posted for a Tier 2 Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law and Justice.

The Faculty TRC Committee remains active, typically co-chaired by an Indigenous faculty member and an ally, with ongoing Indigenous student participation. The Committee identifies curricular and administrative barriers and advances decolonization initiatives. One notable project involved the creation of a substantial and evolving database of Indigenous law resources to support teaching and research. The Faculty of Law Library complements this work through relevant programming, such as an annual TRC Reading Circle for staff and students.

Finally, a major renovation of the Windsor Law building, initiated in 2020, was undertaken in consultation with Indigenous faculty, staff, and community members. The Windsor Law building now incorporates a two-row wampum motif throughout hallways and classrooms; Indigenous art and imagery, including representations of Sky Woman; and Haudenosaunee clan representations. The building includes the Naadamaadawin Indigenous Student Lounge, a dedicated space for Indigenous students to study, socialize, and build community. Indigenous ceremony and participation are now integral to major Faculty events, from orientation to convocation. The Faculty strives to ensure that the First Nations surrounding Windsor Law are formally invited, feel welcome, can communicate their needs to the Faculty, and feel included in the law school community. Windsor Law is committed to weaving anti-colonial practices through all aspects of what we do.



Indigenous & Reconciliation Initiatives at Osgoode Hall Law School

Update for CCLD – March 13, 2026

Osgoode Hall Law School of York University remains committed to taking specific actions to advance the larger Canadian imperative of Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples envisioned by the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

As set out in the 2021-2025 Strategic Plan, the Law School has committed to Advancing Reconciliation and Justice as one of its 6 Key Focus Areas. Osgoode aims to take a leadership role in this endeavour through the establishment of various programs. These initiatives build on others the Law School has accomplished over the years, including:

- Establishment of the Intensive Program in Indigenous Lands, Resources, and Governance in 1994, including Osgoode students and law students from across Canada. Example student placements include Aboriginal Legal Services in Toronto, leading Indigenous rights firms in Ontario, and students placed directly with Indigenous nations in Canada and abroad.
- A distinct admissions category for Indigenous applicants, combined with early outreach by Indigenous faculty members to applicants offered acceptance within this category.
- An office in the law school building for the Osgoode Indigenous Students Association.
- Since the fall of 2014, access to dedicated space and programming in Skennen'kó:wa Gamig (formerly Hart House) as a stand-alone centre for Indigenous community life at York University and other pan-University collaborations.
- Anishinaabe Law Camp held over 4 days in September (since 2014) at Neyaashiinigiing (Cape Croker) in collaboration with the Chippewas of Nawash.
- A second 3-day Anishinaabe Law camp established in 2018 in collaboration with the Chippewas of Rama First Nation.

- Establishment of Osgoode's Office of Indigenous and Reconciliation Initiatives in October 2018 led by the Program Manager & Special Advisor, Indigenous & Reconciliation Initiatives (full-time staff person).
- Development of the Indigenous and Aboriginal Law Requirement (IALR), which, as of fall 2019, requires all graduating students to have taken one of several courses (offered in all three years of law school), which significantly expose students to Indigenous perspectives on law. Courses included in these offerings: Indigenous Peoples and Canadian Law; Indigenous Perspectives and Realities; Rights and Reconciliation; Indigenous Legal Traditions.
- Establishment, in August 2020, of the Kendaasowin Gchi-Naakinigewin (which means “the Art of Learning Law”), an Indigenous Student Success Program.
- Recognizing graduating Indigenous students with a separate and additional Honour Ceremony on the same day as Convocation including, most recently, a convocation stole designed by an Anishinaabe-kwe artist (Chief Lady Bird).
- In line with York University’s Indigenous Framework and the Smudging and Pipe Ceremony Policy and Procedure (November 2024), ensuring that Indigenous students, faculty, and staff can more easily practice smudging ceremonies.
- Debwewin Summer Internship program in collaboration with the Ontario Ministry of the Attorney General.
- JD scholarships specifically reserved for Indigenous students.
- Supporting and highlighting the work of the current Indigenous faculty, Karen Drake and Jeffery Hewitt, and Deb McGregor (a CRC shared with York’s Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change).
- Augmenting available funding sources for Osgoode's Indigenous Students Association (OISA) for community projects and events, and proactive outreach for the recruitment of Indigenous faculty, staff, and students.
- Events for the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation.
- Support for student and coach participation in the annual Kawaskimhon Moot.
- Support for Indigenous students’ attendance and participation in the annual Indigenous Bar Association Conference.

Osgoode's commitment to Reconciliation builds upon our past initiatives and reflects our shared goal for the Law School to play a leadership role among Canadian law schools in engaging with Indigenous communities, students and scholars and ensuring that our curriculum reflects Indigenous legal traditions and Indigenous justice issues.