

FACULTY OF LAW MAGAZINE 2025

UofA Law



Legal practice doesn't only happen in law offices. Experiential learning lets students close the gap between theory and 'the messiness of the world'

Where Law Meets Real Life

**Faces of Service
and
Internationally Trained Lawyer
Pathway Program Turns 10**

At Your Service

WELCOME TO U OF A LAW, our yearly publication for alumni, donors and friends of the faculty. We recently renamed and redesigned the publication and we hope you like it as much as we do! In the stories on these pages, we will tell some of the ways in which we are serving our students and communities and how we are making a difference.

For more than a century, our faculty has been at the heart of legal education and scholarship in Canada, shaping generations of leaders in the legal profession, public service, business and community life. Today, we remain committed to the founding vision of our university’s first president, Henry Marshall Tory, to “uplift the whole people.”

Our faculty is distinguished by its sense of service to the community and by its commitment to excellence. We are a home for students, faculty, staff and partners—a place where diverse perspectives are welcomed, where scholarship and teaching advance knowledge and justice, and where each person is empowered to thrive.

We take pride in delivering an innovative and rigorous legal education that prepares our students to be thoughtful advocates and leaders. Experiential learning (read more on page 8), principled mentorship and a strong focus on student wellness and inclusion ensure that our graduates are not only skilled professionals but also

On the cover: Students Samara Sayeed and Leland Morrison meet with Entrepreneurial Law Clinic client Francesco Auricchiella in his shop.

Guided by our new strategic plan, we will continue to invest in our people.

committed to integrity, service and access to justice. We are deeply connected to the profession, our alumni and the wider community. Through partnerships with the legal community, alumni engagement and philanthropic support, we are able to provide transformative opportunities for students and strengthen our positive impact on society. Guided by our new strategic plan, we will continue to invest in our people, expand access to justice, modernize our learning spaces and pursue a vision of equity, inclusivity and innovation. We already have many alumni living and leading this vision. You can read about them in the story “Faces of Service” on page 16.

This is an exciting time to be part of the University of Alberta’s Faculty of Law, as we build on our strengths and look confidently to the future.

Fiona Kelly

Fiona Kelly
Dean, Faculty of Law
Wilbur Fee Bowker
Professor of Law



PHOTO BY RYAN PARKER

COVER AND TOP PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN



Student-at-law Sukh Sangha has a background in Scots and English law, and an LLM in international commercial law. He recently completed the U of A’s Internationally Trained Lawyers Pathway program. See page 22.

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U of A Law

The University of Alberta’s Faculty of Law is a research and teaching powerhouse dedicated to shaping the future and pushing boundaries in the classroom and community. Through exceptional teaching, experiential learning and research, we position our students, staff and faculty for future success. *U of A Law* is dedicated to highlighting the achievements of the faculty to our community, peers, alumni and friends.

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The University of Alberta respectfully acknowledges that it is located on Treaty 6 territory.

The Faculty of Law is part of the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, which seeks to expand the boundaries of knowledge and understanding of ourselves and society. The aims of our research and teaching are to build a creative, just and democratic society. This college comprises the faculties of arts, business, education and law.



Prima Facie

WHAT'S NEW AND
NOTEWORTHY

“Some students end up working or volunteering in this field, and others do policy work. A few have gone on to graduate work or are teaching, and others have a more traditional practice. But they all support these services.”

Katherine Weaver, co-developer of the Low-Income Individuals and the Law program



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

The Law of Empathy

CLINICAL PLACEMENTS BRING LAW STUDENTS FROM CLASSROOM TO COMMUNITY TO BETTER UNDERSTAND CLIENTS' LIVES AND HELP THEM TACKLE LEGAL CHALLENGES

WITH A NEW MUSIC DEGREE from MacEwan University, **Chris Wiebe**, '20 JD, took on a full-time job at Hope Mission's Rapid Exit program, providing support and followup to help people stay housed. Wiebe was responsible for facilitating relations between about 40 clients and their landlords, social workers and medical providers. The job was transformative: in 2017 he started studying law at the U of A and discovered an experiential learning opportunity to help people who “experience poverty and systemic barriers to justice.”

The three-course program, titled Low-Income Individuals and the Law, equips students to help low-income and marginalized people with legal challenges. Classwork and clinical placements help students understand their clients' social, economic and

cultural context. The program includes a seminar introducing students to theory and research into poverty and the law. It includes a two-term placement at a program's partner organization: Edmonton Community Legal Centre, Legal Aid Alberta, the Centre for Public Legal Education Alberta, or the John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights.

“We should have the empathy and understanding to realize what our clients need to make the best decisions for themselves,” says program co-developer and teacher Katherine Weaver.

Students work with clients and debrief with faculty advisers and supervising lawyers. In second term, they take a weekly seminar. “We talk about the trauma that our clients have gone through,” says Weaver, who, in addition to her master's degree in public management, holds bachelor's and master's degrees in law. “We also help students understand vicarious trauma and work-life balance.”

The clinical placements for Low-Income Individuals and the Law embody the goals of the U of A's Shape the Future campaign, aiming to provide more experiential learning opportunities. Research shows these lead to better learning outcomes and student success, and they align with employers' expectations of graduates.

“The clinical experience had been missing,” Weaver says. “We could teach the theory and research around poverty law, but how do you make it real for students to develop their own approach?”

For Wiebe, the 15-year-old program gave him “foundational skills for representing individuals at the raw end of a power imbalance,” he says. “If that isn't what being a lawyer is about, I don't know what is.” Wiebe now works for Engel Law, representing plaintiffs injured by police or in prisons. —GEOFF MCMASTER



▲ From left: Faculty of Law Dean Fiona Kelly, grads Chiara Concini, Connor Meeker and Dustin Edwards

DIVERSE SCHOLARSHIP

Paths to Excellence

This year's medal winners demonstrate that leadership follows many routes

In the Faculty of Law, a trio of student leaders are recipients of the university's most prestigious law medals. But their stories defy a single narrative of straightforward success. One was a drama major, another a career professional in higher education and a third found her calling on a French-language campus. They embody a modern legal landscape where diverse paths are accepted and celebrated. Their accomplishments, and the roads they took, offer a compelling look at the future of law.

FROM MOOT WINS TO TOP HONOURS

Chiara Concini, '25 JD, has been awarded both the Horace Harvey Gold Medal in Law and the Alberta Premier's Silver Medal. The gold medal is the most prestigious honour for a graduating law student, while the silver medal recognizes the student with the highest academic standing across several faculties at the University of Alberta.

“Both medals are a testament to the unwavering support I've had throughout law school from my family, the U of A's phenomenal faculty members and my incredible friends,” she says.

Concini began her studies

at the university's French-language campus, Campus Saint-Jean, where she pursued political science and history. It was there that she developed a passion for law and language rights. Beyond her coursework, Concini credits her education to conversations and debates with classmates and professors.

She was also an active member of the *Alberta Law Review*, volunteered with the Association des juristes d'expression française de l'Alberta, and participated in two national moots. Her mooting success includes winning the Brimacombe Selection Moot in 2023 and the Beverley McLachlin Prize

for Top Female Oralist in 2024. Concini is currently clerking for Chief Justice Richard Wagner at the Supreme Court of Canada.

FROM THE STAGE TO LEGAL ADVOCACY

Connor Meeker, '25 JD, received the George Bligh O'Connor Silver Medal in Law after a non-traditional path. A drama major, he worked in the arts before law school, which came in handy when he co-produced the Law Show. He was drawn to the field by the opportunity to help people, engage in intellectually challenging work and explore diverse opportunities. “Law school is a lot of work,” Meeker says. “It's gratifying to receive this recognition.”

During his studies, Meeker took a course through the Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge to learn about Cree legal principles. He also took an Oceans Law and Policy course in Bamfield, B.C. (see page 8), to study marine governance and conservation. These opportunities align with faculty goals to ensure a diversity of student experiences, including hands-on skills and practise analysis, problem-solving and teamwork.

Meeker, who received various awards during law school, is completing a clerkship at the Court of King's Bench of Alberta and will finish articling at Witten LLP. After that, he hopes to work as an advocate for the legal rights and interests of Indigenous Peoples.

FROM SCHOLARSHIPS TO CIVIL LITIGATION

Dustin Edwards, '25 JD, received the Judge's Bronze Medal, fulfilling a long-held ambition to become a lawyer. He had previously earned a bachelor of science and a master of education and worked in student services at the University of Alberta for a decade. “Winning this medal feels like a beautiful full-circle moment as I move into this next stage of my career,” he says.

Inspired by his husband's passion for his own career change, Edwards decided to leave his career to pursue law. His goal was to get as much out of the experience as possible. Edwards was a writing fellow for LAW 405: Legal Research and Writing, and was a research assistant to former dean of the faculty Barbara Billingsley. And he was a member and president of OUTlaw, a 2SLGBTQ+ student organization for law students.

Edwards, the first in his family to attend university, received several awards, including the Chief Justice Fraser Scholarship. He is clerking at the Court of Appeal of Alberta and will complete his articling at Bryan & Co. LLP, with plans to build a civil litigation practice in Edmonton.



▲ From left: Doug Stollery, Paula Simons, Julie Lloyd and Fiona Kelly.

SPECIAL SHOWING

Pride Defeats Prejudice

A Faculty of Law panel discussion followed the screening of a documentary about a legal battle that changed Canada

OF THE FIVE YEARS that he spent as a university student, **Doug Stollery**, '76 LLB, '22 LLD (Honorary), says: "I did not meet a single person who was out of the closet. Not one!" We owe the changes we've seen since those days in part to the landmark *Vriend v. Alberta* case, which helped set the precedent for the rights of sexual minorities in Canada and around the world. The case is the topic of a new documentary, *Pride vs. Prejudice: The Delwin Vriend Story*. The film, written and directed by Darrin Hagen, follows Vriend's journey to the Supreme Court of Canada in the 1990s to challenge his firing for being gay.

In March, the Faculty of Law, with the Centre for Constitutional Studies, OUTLaw, the Edmonton Queer History Project, MacEwan University and the Edmonton Community Foundation, hosted a screening of the film. Afterwards,

Dean of Law Fiona Kelly moderated a panel discussion with former U of A chancellor Stollery, Justice **Julie Lloyd**, '91 LLB, and Sen. Paula Simons. Stollery and Lloyd worked as lawyers on the Vriend case, while Simons, then a journalist, covered the story for the *Edmonton Journal*. Here are some takeaways from the event. —CARMEN ROJAS

1 The Signal in the Noise

As a lawyer for one of the interveners in the Vriend case, Lloyd recalled how loud the voices of the opposition sounded at the time and how the legal system counteracted this by providing a space where only truth mattered. Don't get lost in the yelling, she advises. "If you're a lawyer, take a deep breath, figure out how to bring the argument before the court, then release the balloon and see where it goes."

2 Paper Had Power

Simons shed light on the role the *Edmonton Journal* played in Vriend's story. The newspaper was able to keep the story at the forefront of public discourse. "The *Journal* was

an extraordinary voice," she said. "If this happened today? The newspaper is a diminished voice in the community and has lost much of its moral authority."

3 A Fight Worth Having

For Simons, the most important message from Vriend's story is that in the fight against injustice, people need to put aside their differences to work together. "This is a story about building alliances, about community. Everybody came together to fight this fight," she says.

4 The Value of One

Delwin Vriend was an unlikely hero: he was a young lab instructor with no money and no power. Yet his courage has changed the laws in Alberta and has influenced legislation across the country and as far away as India and South Africa. "The message is that people have to stand up for what they know to be right," Stollery says. "They can and will succeed."

Contact Law Alumni & Friends at lawalumni@ualberta.net with questions or for information on how to get involved in our next alumni event.

PHOTO BY CHRISTY DEAN

ENMAN-BEECH PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN; HONG AND MAHMOUDI PHOTOS SUPPLIED

"I think what can be learned is the enormous impact that one individual can have. The message is that people have to stand up for what they know to be right, and they can and will succeed."

▼
Former U of A chancellor **Doug Stollery**, '76 LLB, at a screening of *Pride vs. Prejudice: The Delwin Vriend Story* in March

TOP TEACHERS

Meet the New Faculty

With dozens of publications, degrees and even countries between them, our latest instructors bring a world of legal perspectives

In U of A legal scholarship, three researchers — new members of the faculty — are pushing the boundaries of what law can and should do. These scholars are pulling from diverse fields to tackle complex issues and redefine what legal scholarship can be, examining the forces that shape our world. One scholar deconstructs the fine print of our digital lives, revealing how the language of online agreements shapes our relationships with technology and each other. Another is taking on global corruption, not with legal statutes alone, but with the insights of behavioural science. The third new faculty member bridges the gap between abstract environmental law and real-world impact. —MADISEN GEE AND MIFI PURVIS



JOHN (JACK) ENMAN-BEECH
Power and Rhetoric in the Digital Age

John (Jack) Enman-Beech (they/he) joins the U of A from King's College London, where they have taught the law of contract since 2022. Enman-Beech has several degrees (including math and statistics) from the University of Toronto and is a faculty affiliate of the Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society.

Enman-Beech's work considers the ways law of contract rhetorically structures people's professional, personal and online relationships. Their work is methodologically diverse, encompassing doctrinal approaches and

feminist, queer and critical theory. This work isn't just about contracts; it's about power and rhetoric in the digital age. They've been published in the *Canadian Bar Review*, the *Canadian Business Law Journal*, the *Canadian Journal of Law and Society*, the *Dalhousie Law Journal*, the *Journal of Commonwealth Law* and more.



CAYLEE HONG
Energy Afterlives

Caylee Hong is an anthropologist and lawyer focusing on infrastructures, finance, energy, cities and the environment. Hong uses legal, ethnographic and archival methods to research the lasting impacts of energy infrastructures. Her current book project, based on more

than 18 months of fieldwork, examines how diverse affected parties navigate the decommissioning and redevelopment of century-old oil fields in the heart of cities, including Los Angeles and Long Beach, Calif. It asks how oil and gas infrastructure shapes urban landscapes even after production ends. The research has given her opportunities to learn from community organizers, regulators, city planners and elected officials, oil operators and restoration ecologists.

Prior to joining the faculty at the University of Alberta, Hong obtained her PhD in anthropology from the University of California, Berkeley, her bachelor's degrees in law and civil law from McGill University, and her master's degree in law from the University of London, SOAS. In addition, Hong clerked for Justice Luc Martineau at the Federal Court of Canada and worked as a project finance attorney at Milbank LLP in New York City.



AZAR MAHMOUDI
Anti-Corruption Strategies

Azar Mahmoudi specializes in corporate and commercial law, anti-corruption law, and law and economics, with a focus on high-risk industries such as the petroleum sector and correctional institutions.

Mahmoudi's work bridges legal theory, behavioural economics and empirical research to develop novel anti-corruption strategies. Her work focuses on strategies to combat corruption, and she considers how that interacts with the protection and promotion of human rights. She seeks to understand the motivations behind corruption, offering strategies to combat it at its source.

She holds a doctor of civil law from McGill University, where her research examined how anti-corruption clauses in petroleum contracts affect corporate governance and compliance. Mahmoudi has earned degrees from the universities of Tehran, Richmond and McGill. She has taught international human rights law and international development studies and contributed to research on corruption and corrections, particularly in South Africa.

FUTURE LEADERS

Roots of Service

Two students earn grants to advocate for people who are wrongfully convicted and to improve access to tenancy law expertise

EACH YEAR, the Gerald L. Gall, OC, Global Community Services Grant is awarded to Faculty of Law students who embark on projects that improve the lives of others, locally and abroad. The award’s namesake, Gerry Gall, was a longtime professor of law with the University of Alberta, a constitutional law expert and a passionate advocate for human rights. The grant aligns with the U of A’s Shape the Future fundraising campaign, which includes enhancing student success through financial support, among other goals. The grant and the campaign open doors for students to become leaders and change-makers. In 2024, Faculty of Law students **Kimia Nozadi**, ’26 JD, and **Kaitlyn Williams**, ’26 JD, received the funding to support their community work and develop their skills in the field of law.

KAITLYN WILLIAMS
A champion for wrongfully convicted people

Williams has a passion for advocating on behalf of people who have been wrongly convicted in Canada’s criminal justice system. But addressing wrongful convictions is a highly specialized area of law in which few lawyers in Canada—or around the world—have expertise. This is why she chose to work with Innocence Canada last summer. The national non-profit organization works to find and exonerate people who have been wrongfully

convicted of a crime and find ways to prevent similar convictions from happening. Innocence Canada is headquartered in Toronto, so Williams worked for the organization remotely from Edmonton. She attended regular meetings and performed casework—analyzing case files, reviewing disclosures, conducting legal research and learning about the practical side of overturning a wrongful conviction, among other tasks. The Faculty of Law student was also involved in education and reform work, such as curriculum

development for law schools and training police on wrongful convictions. Williams’ passion for this area of law is the reason she earned the Gall community services grant. The grant gave her the opportunity to focus on this work, she says, and surpass her personal and professional goals.

“I am passionate about pursuing a career in criminal law, and I want to learn as much as I can from every angle of our criminal justice system,” Williams says. “I will carry this experience and the skills I gained with me throughout my legal career, and most importantly, I will continue to follow my passions.”

KIMIA NOZADI
A landlord-tenant problem-solver

In 2024, Nozadi found herself involved in a landlord-tenant dispute. As a student at the Faculty of Law, she had access to a network of legal professionals and student support as well as her own knowledge in the field of law. These resources helped

Nozadi navigate the province’s Residential Tenancies Act, and she was able to inform her landlord of her rights and resolve the issue amicably. Not all Albertans have access to the resources Nozadi has, so they turn to organizations such as the Edmonton Community Legal Centre or Student Legal Services. But these organizations see a huge number of requests and often need to triage cases.

Nozadi set out to bridge this gap and began offering free support to those in the early stages of landlord-tenant disputes. Supported by the Gall community services grant, she was able to get the word out about this service by creating a flyer, engaging on social media and connecting with the ECLC and SLS, as well as other tactics.

Over the summer, she received an average of more than three inquiries a day, reviewed more than 26 leases and referred more than three dozen people to community resources. “I felt a strong sense of confidence in my passion and determination to lead this project,” Nozadi says. —DOUG JOHNSON



▲ Kaitlyn Williams



▲ Kimia Nozadi



ALUMNI ADVICE

The Truth is Out There, and We Trust It

A new book demonstrates why the public still believes in science—and how to separate fact from misinformation

Humanity has never had it so good when it comes to accessing accurate information, **Timothy Caulfield**, ’90 LLB, says in his book *The Certainty Illusion*, published this year by Penguin Random House Canada. “We’ve never had so much information ... and, at the same time, less and less certainty about the issues that matter to us.” Despite concerns about a decline in trust in knowledge institutions, Caulfield — also a professor in the Faculty of Law and the research director of the Health Law Institute — points to a 2022 international survey showing that

90 per cent of the public trusts science, and that this trust actually increased during the pandemic. Researchers from the U of A’s Faculty of Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences found much the same thing when they studied 7,200 people in 68 countries: most people trust scientists, viewing them as qualified (78 per cent), honest (57 per cent) and concerned about human well-being (56 per cent). He says that while more false information is circulating, most scientific studies published in peer-reviewed journals are accurate. To help people find reliable information, he offers several tips.

1/Don’t be cynical: Trust that good evidence exists. Try to understand how science works and how evidence is gathered. Always ask, “What kind of evidence is being presented: is it an opinion, an anecdote, a small study or a larger body of work?” Caulfield says.

2/Watch for emotional triggers: Social media algorithms are designed to exploit emotions like fear and anger. Disconnecting from these triggers can make you less likely to believe and spread misinformation.

3/Read beyond the headline: As much as 75 per cent of social media content is shared without the user ever clicking the link. As a result, feelings often win out over facts.

4/Beware of ‘sciencey’ language: Be skeptical of language that sounds impressive but lacks a basis in evidence.

5/Avoid the Galileo gambit: This logical fallacy assumes that truth is being deliberately hidden, so the correct position must be the one that rejects institutional knowledge. “Often people will say, ‘Everyone says I’m wrong, so I must be right,’” Caulfield says. This view falsely equates scientific consensus with groupthink.

6/Cultivate intellectual humility: Be willing to change your mind when presented with sound evidence. Caulfield notes that two recent studies found that people who nurture intellectual humility are less likely to fall for misinformation, suggesting that an inability to admit you’re wrong can be a key factor in falling for misinformation. —GEOFF MCMASTER

GET YOUR FEET WET

EXPERIENTIAL
LEARNING LETS
STUDENTS CLOSE
THE GAP BETWEEN
LEGAL THEORY AND
'THE MESSINESS OF
THE WORLD'

➡ A group of University of Alberta law students were hiking in Pacific Rim National Park on Vancouver Island in May 2024 when they paused at a remote beach for a lecture from their professor.

For 90 minutes, the students learned about the history of whaling on the West Coast, the failure of international law to regulate whaling, the local and sustainable use of whales in Indigenous whaling and all the associated tensions. For the duration of the lecture—while the group was inhaling sea air and absorbing information—a grey whale and her calf were feeding about eight metres from shore. The sea mammals are members of a species that from 2018 to 2020 suffered unusually high mortality caused by vessel strikes and fishing gear entanglements.

“We had the subject matter right there with us,” says **Cameron Jefferies**, '09 LLB, the Faculty of Law professor who was delivering the seaside lecture and had developed the U of A's Oceans Law and Policy course. The course is hosted by the Bamfield Marine Sciences Centre, a teaching and research facility on the west coast of Vancouver Island dedicated to coastal marine sciences education and research.

“We had a recovering species and a success story, and I think we

Students participate in the
experiential, hands-on course
work on Vancouver Island.

BY HELEN METELLA

had an experience that all of those students and I will have for the rest of our lives.”

It was a thoroughly immersive event, illustrating legal disputes about the ocean, within seeing and smelling distance of the beings most affected. It was a vivid example of how experiential learning helps U of A law students make the leap from memorizing legal rules to applying them, long before they have to earn their keep as lawyers. It's the kind of experience that benefits not only the students but the profession and the public too.

Sometimes called “hands-on” learning, the Faculty of Law's



Place-based learning helps U of A students from many disciplines connect the natural world to otherwise abstract concepts.

experiential learning exists in an array of formats.

Oceans Law and Policy is a place-based course that helps students connect with the natural world and link it to laws that may feel distant and abstract, says Jefferies, who is also the associate dean of education in the faculty.

Many people think of law as something that is drafted in boardrooms or in legislatures and adjudicated in rigid environments in front of judges, far removed from the natural experiences of life, Jefferies says. “I think this course, with its focus on place-based learning, can close that gap.”

Oceans Law and Policy—the only applied course on the subject in a Canadian law school—begins with a week of classroom learning about who is responsible for regulating which marine spaces and activities in the oceans and why. Then, over six days at the marine sciences centre, students spend 12-hour days on the ocean and in the forest, and learning about such locations as Kiixin, a 5,000-year-old archeological site.

Students might participate in a licensed ocean dredge, which pulls up a shallow layer of sediment, to observe life on the sea floor. Or they might learn about the legal history of the location, including the undersea telegraph cable network, completed from Bamfield to Australia in 1902, that carried important messages during the First World War. Discussions that follow could involve laws about endangered species, fishing rights, piracy, espionage or terrorism. Current events dictate Jefferies’ main themes each year. This year, the focus was on deep-seabed mining, prompted by the U.S. president’s recent executive order to deregulate it.

In the Messiness of Real Life

Other experiential learning opportunities bridge a different gap, says **Allison Fieldberg**, ’12 PhD, the experiential learning lead at the faculty. These include the performance-under-pressure environments of mootting, and providing entrepreneurs one-on-one assistance in free legal clinics. Both are examples of learning-by-doing. In addition to widening students’ knowledge and research skills, they learn how legal solutions are applied in what Fieldberg calls “the messiness of the real world.”

Fieldberg says that students often struggle with the transition from text-based skills—such as analyzing the law, writing case summaries and researching jurisprudence—to helping a real person sitting in front of them, expecting problem-solving, advice and professional empathy.



“Traditionally, law schools have not really taught that piece,” Fieldberg says. “When I went to law school in the late ‘90s, there weren’t many opportunities to support actual clients.”

For articling students, the learning curve is steep and the runway to it can be short. If students arrive already comfortable with some aspects of legal practice, it boosts their confidence, Fieldberg says. “Experiential learning in law school just gives you a head start.”

Give Trial a Try

Oceans Law and Policy is open to 23 students a year. But other experiential learning opportunities are widespread in the faculty. Mandatory and competitive mootting involves hundreds of law students every year.

Like every first-year student, **Dustin Edwards**, ’25 JD, participated in the mandatory moot as part of a course called Legal Research and Writing. “That first experience

had me hooked on mootting,” Edwards says.

That positive experience led to Edwards and his moot partner being selected to compete in the Right Honourable Beverley McLachlin Moot competition for 1Ls. In addition, Edwards was selected to compete on two of U of A’s national moot teams: the Gale Cup and the Canadian Client Consultation Moot.

Edwards proved to himself that he was indeed assembling genuine skills as he was preparing for and participating in those moots, which students complete in the for-credit Moot Court Competition course. “You can actually notice your own development as you go through, which I don’t think you always get when you do a three-year degree,” says Edwards, who has a bachelor of science in biology and a master’s in educational policy. “You don’t always get to see that improvement.”

The Gale Cup is an appellate-level criminal law moot in which teams of four (two for the appellant side, two for the respondent) from Canadian law schools argue a recent Supreme Court of Canada case. To prepare, U of A’s teams do eight practice moots, each before a three-person panel drawn from local judges, lawyers and law professors. At the competition, they argue before judges from lower courts and courts of appeal. In the final round, a Supreme Court justice presides.

The process includes writing factums, making oral submissions, answering panel questions on the fly, then (at least in Edwards’ case) switching position from respondent to appellant just an hour before the finals. It built his confidence, Edwards says. Appearing before so many elite legal practitioners planted something even more unshakable: an impressive network.

“I’m the first person in my family who’s ever had a university degree, let alone a law degree,” he says.

For students like Maria Kalapurayil and Helena Rizzuto, the learning curve is steep and the runway to it is short.





U of A Faculty of Law students
Emma Tucker and Alborz
Azizpourshoobi prepare for a
moot court debate.

“So I didn’t know anybody coming into this. It’s just an incredible opportunity to get to know people you don’t often get access to in the early stages of your career.”

Having esteemed contacts to consult is certainly gold, but successful lawyers still require bedrock client-facing skills. Edwards began honing those during the Canadian Client Consultation Moot Competition. It simulates introductory meetings at a law firm between a lawyer and a new client.

Teams are told in advance the general area of law where the client’s problems lie so they can research it. A day prior, the teams receive a memo briefly describing why their client, played by an actor, is coming in. During 45-minute meetings with four different clients, the students must explain all their professional responsibilities to each client, take notes on the problem, summarize it, provide a legal analysis, lay out legal options, build rapport but maintain professional distance and then ask if the client wants to retain them. A panel of lawyers observes the meetings to assess the students’ prowess.

Edwards and his partners took third place in both moot competitions, but the big win, he says, is knowing he can handle similar situations once he’s a working lawyer because it won’t be his first time facing them. “I’ve already gone through the stress,” Edwards says.

When students enter the profession with preparatory knowledge from experiential learning, Fieldberg says, it takes some pressure off working lawyers, who must assume the next phase of training

students: overseeing articling.

On the other side of the desk, students are not the only beneficiaries of mooting and other experiential learning. It’s also a boon to practising lawyers to be involved, says Faith Majekolagbe, an assistant professor who developed the U of A’s Entrepreneurial Law course and its sister component, the Entrepreneurial Law Clinic.

Lawyers practising in such areas as corporate, commercial or intellectual property law may not see many avenues where they can give back to the community in ways that align with their interests, she says. The Entrepreneurial Law Clinic, where students offer numerous practical services to startups, small businesses and non-profits, “gives them that opportunity to do so.”

The course has four modules. In the first, students learn about the differences between business and non-profit entities. In the



From left, clockwise: Emma
Tucker, Patrick Battigelli,
Helena Rizzuto and Maria
Kalapurayil are deep in moot
prep in the Law Centre.

From left, students Leland Morrison and Samara Sayeed meet with Entrepreneurial Law Clinic client Francesco Auricchiella.

second, they study financing issues, including how the law intersects with non-traditional methods like crowdfunding. In the third module, they're educated in considerations that entrepreneurs encounter before and after their businesses are up and running. These include hiring, privacy policies, consumer contracts and competition. The last module covers intangible property and intellectual property strategy.

For the clinic portion, which is virtual, students work in groups of two or three on several case files for 80 hours a term. In addition to helping clients prepare documents and find pertinent legal information, they learn how to take on clients, ask the right questions to diagnose a client's legal issue, and manage clients, files and their own time.

While mooting provides practice for future lawyers, the Entrepreneurial Law Clinic benefits actual clients who need legal help, too. The course offers people access to legal knowledge and services that are otherwise out of reach for many, says Majekolagbe.

"When people think about businesses and entrepreneurship, they might think about rich people with plenty of money," she says. "But most people don't go into entrepreneurship like that. It's a means of survival for most people." In fact, some of the clinic's clients are new immigrants anxious to provide for their families by running a small enterprise.

"We have people who are maybe nurses in their own country, for example, who can't immediately work in Canada but have learned a craft and want to go into a craft-making business while waiting to certify in their profession."

The Common Elements

While the faculty's experiential learning opportunities are disparate in content, they all share key elements. Students are immersed in what happens in the real world. They are closely supervised by professors and working practitioners. And—here's the biggie—each experiential learning course requires students to reflect on their learning goals and how they were achieved through the experience.

"It could be a piece of writing, a discussion or some sort of case memo, but essentially it's how they've connected the complex reality of the experience to what they've learned of the legal theories in that area," says Fieldberg.

That reflection can lead to unexpected new paths of learning. For the Oceans Law and Policy course, Jefferies has read papers on law and policy related to specific local marine species, multi-jurisdictional ocean governance and historical analyses of the tradition of lifeboats and coast guard services—topics not necessarily covered in his course but sparked by it.

As well, says Fieldberg, at their core, all experiential learning courses



Dustin Edwards recalls, "Taking that deep breath and knowing no matter what ... I know I can do this."



"It's how they've connected the complex reality of the experience to what they've learned of the legal theories."

—ALLISON FIELDBERG

help develop "the whole lawyer," a contemporary term for practitioners who have a strong grasp of case law, legislation and jurisprudence as well as the ability to apply that knowledge to complicated, evolving issues while anticipating ramifications.

Opportunities like place-based courses, mooting and the Entrepreneurial Law Clinic are made possible through the generosity of donors. Amplifying student success through experiential learning is at the heart of the U of A's Shape the Future campaign, which helps ensure students have the resources, experiences and physical spaces they need to thrive in law school and beyond.

In the study of law, experiential learning is "more than just applying legal rules and legislation," Fieldberg says. "It's the ability to think in complex ways and synthesize various disciplines, including sociology, health care or intellectual property, within the application of black-letter law."

For Edwards, the mooter, experiential learning prepared him for something all-encompassing. During 2L, he had a health setback that could have rattled the progress of someone less prepared. But taking the stairs in downtown Toronto to Osgoode Hall, which houses the Ontario Court of Appeal and is the site of the Gale Cup moot competition final rounds, he was pretty calm. He was aware he was about to argue before a Supreme Court justice, but he says that "walking up and taking that deep breath and knowing no matter what, I have this, I know I can do this—that moment is solidified in my brain." ■

To balance legacy and innovation we aim to move beyond bureaucracy and focus on service in action

FACES OF SERVICE

Illustrations by Kagan McLeod

Institutions built on a foundation of tradition and legacy must by necessity undertake regular strategic planning. Something about the modern world—its speed, its volatility, the way it demands constant re-evaluation—can make an institution turn inward. A strategic plan is supposed to be the answer, but too often it becomes a bureaucratic artifact.

As the Faculty of Law began its strategic planning, it was important to strike a balance between tradition and innovation. As we reflected on the kind of institution we are and want to be, we found ourselves returning to the concept of service. So instead of listing our goals, we thought we'd show you what they look like in action. Here are five members of our community whose work already embodies what our upcoming strategic plan is designed to achieve. Their stories are a reminder that an institution's strength isn't found in its mission statement, but in the daily choices of the people who call it home.

In Service of Reconciliation

Bench-side Builder

Justice Cheryl Arcand-Kootenay's work is a blueprint for mentorship

➤ Among the achievements of **Justice Cheryl Arcand-Kootenay**, '92 LLB, what she values most is lifting others up, especially Indigenous youth and law students. She has seen how important it is for young Indigenous people to see role models who share their background and struggles. After receiving a bachelor of arts followed by a law degree, Arcand-Kootenay established her own law firm, specializing in child welfare and Indigenous justice. In 2018, she became the first Cree woman from Treaty 6 to be appointed to the provincial court, where she was a "tri-hat" judge presiding over criminal, family and civil matters. In 2021 she became the first treaty person from an Alberta First Nation to be appointed to the Court of King's Bench.

Growing up in Edmonton instead of her home community of Kipohtakaw (Alexander) First Nation shaped her perspective and gave her a mix of experiences, building a better understanding of city life and Indigenous traditions. Her family moved to Edmonton

when she was six so she and her four siblings could complete their education. "I'm the youngest, and we moved back to my home community right after I graduated high school," she says. "It was so meaningful to return to my roots, and reconnect with my Indigenous identity."

In conversation, she returns often to the value of remembering where she came from, and that it's important to her to give back, to help future generations dream big and feel like they belong.

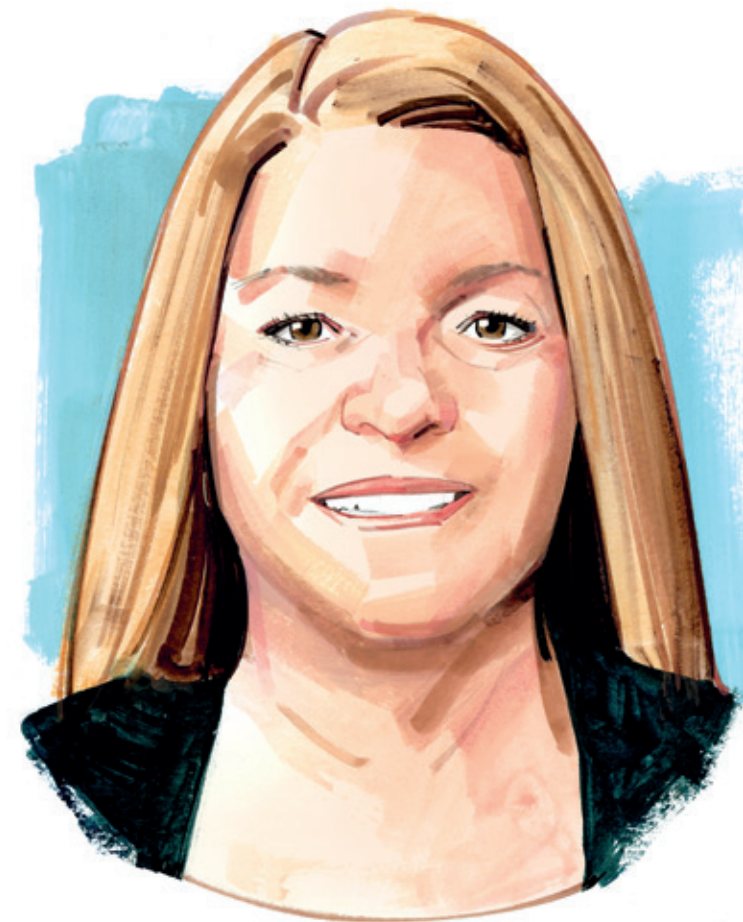
The Aboriginal Students' Association at the U of A played a huge part for her in embracing who she is. Arcand-Kootenay's story is a celebration of her journey, and her personal stories blend with bigger themes: cultural pride, strength and making a difference in the world.

Arcand-Kootenay's love for mentoring comes from experience; she knows it matters to have someone to look up to who understands where you're coming from. To help Indigenous youth and law students build confidence and find their place, she has been returning to the faculty since 2018 at least three times a year, meeting with students and offering them opportunities to shadow her in court. She recently arranged a tour for students of the Edmonton Remand Center and the Edmonton Institution and she's planning more.

No matter what she's achieved, Arcand-Kootenay stays humble. Whether she's in court, teaching or in the community, she approaches her work with compassion and a dedication to reconciliation.

Arcand-Kootenay's path is marked by a commitment to her roots. Despite obstacles she faced as an Indigenous woman juggling a post-secondary education, family

"When I look back, it's important that I've stayed true to myself and given back to the community."



and community, Arcand-Kootenay remains steadfast in her goals, drawing strength from her family and roots. She says the support she found at home and within the university community were instrumental in overcoming adversity. Her story is a testament to resilience, cultural pride and the enduring impact of mentorship.

"When I look back, it's important that I've stayed true to myself and given back to the community," she says. Arcand-Kootenay could inspire anyone navigating adversity. "I often reflect on how these dual urban and Indigenous influences in my upbringing helped me navigate my identity and informed my advocacy and mentorship," she says. Her dedication to justice, education and cultural pride have left a mark on her community. "I hope my journey inspires others to honour their backgrounds, help others and strive for positive change." —WITH FILES FROM ISABELA VARELA



In Service of Research

Forward Focus

Rebeca Macias Gimenez is thinking about the future

➤ Legal research often feels abstract, even to other legal practitioners, but that intangibility might be one of its more important characteristics. For Rebeca Macias Gimenez, an assistant professor in the Faculty of Law, legal research is about seeing how the law can make a difference in the community it's looking to serve.

"As legal researchers," Gimenez says, "we're thinking of what is possible — ways for laws to change and evolve."

Gimenez is working on several research projects. One is about Indigenous jurisdiction using the "ways of life" clause in treaties 6, 7 and 8. The clause says governments must uphold the ways of life of Indigenous Peoples when using land and resources, including consideration when issuing permits and approvals for projects.

Blueberry River First Nations in B.C. — the first and so far only group to take this approach — was successful

"We're thinking of the future. We're thinking of what's possible, ways for laws to change and transform and evolve."

in using the ways of life clause to defend their treaty rights. Gimenez and her team will use their research to make recommendations to the provincial government about recognizing Indigenous decision-making authority over traditional territories.

Gimenez received a 2024 Insight Grant for this project from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council with co-applicant Deborah Curran of the University of Victoria Environmental Law Centre.

The Insight Grant application was supported by the Faculty of Law and the College of Social Sciences and Humanities, which hosted a week-long workshop in which interdisciplinary applicants learned about the grant process and reviewed each other's applications. Within the faculty, Gimenez received feedback from her peers, including Vice-Dean Joanna Harrington, who had experience with the program. Gimenez says the feedback was invaluable in the application process.

Gimenez is also working on community and land-based research, looking at the legal orders of Indigenous Peoples in northeast B.C., specifically the Dunne-Za and Cree. She spends summers interviewing and learning about their legal orders. This ethnographic research takes time and depends on the relationships she has built over the years. It will culminate in a community report published with Elder Dean Dokkie.

Her research has also taken her around the globe. She's working with scholars from across Latin America and Canada, looking at the disproportionate negative effects of climate change on marginalized communities. Her research stretches to include "non-human beings" kin to communities, such as river systems.

Teaching is an important part of the research process for Gimenez. She has hired research assistants in the past, and this summer worked with two students, Saloni Sharma and Rae Wilson. Her hope is that she can help instil a sense of curiosity and imagination in the next generation of legal researchers.

"I think our role in researching and teaching is showing students 'you're part of this process of transformation and being imaginative,'" she says. "I want them to be innovative and I want their voices to come out in the project." —MADISEN GEE

In Service of the Community

Reciprocal Lawyer

How giving back makes Norm Assiff a better advocate

➤ **Norm Assiff**, '98 LLB, was in attendance for the call to bar of one of his many articling students when a judge said something that reminded him of who he wanted to be in the world. "She said, 'Being a lawyer is more than a piece of paper. People listen to what you say. Make sure you give back to the community, but not just for them. It's for your sake too.'"

The words weren't directed to him, but they have stayed with Assiff, and philanthropy and the spirit of reciprocity have continued to guide him. Outside of the legal profession, Assiff works with several charitable organizations, including the Mustard Seed and Edmonton's Foodbank. He cites his wife, Mahassen Kadri, who runs a not-for-profit organization, as a major inspiration for his philanthropy. "My work in the community has made me grow as a person and it's made me grow as a lawyer," says Assiff. "The benefit of working with charitable organizations is a two-way street and you get a lot more back when you give."

Assiff never knows who will walk through his door needing help. Assiff Law focuses on personal injury litigation, representing those who have been injured in motor vehicle collisions. He has represented friends, former teachers, religious leaders and others. Being connected to the community through volunteer work helps Assiff better understand his clients and their needs.

"Ten minutes ago, my brother's customer of 20 years came by to get something notarized," says Assiff. "That's what we do here. We are part of the community. We're connected to the community."

But there are a lot of misconceptions about the role of plaintiff counsel, says Assiff. It's harmful to

"We are part of the community. We are connected to the community."

the profession when popular culture labels personal injury lawyers as "ambulance chasers." Injuries such as whiplash and concussion have the potential to wreak decades-long harm on sufferers. Assiff often has clients tell him, "I used to think that these people were just making it up until it happened to me."

His legal practice has made Assiff a big believer in experiential learning, and he says that early exposure to clients helps students get a better sense of the challenges they face. It inspired him to become a donor to the Dean's Law Fund, supporting experiential learning. (In recognition, the Faculty of Law unveiled the Assiff Law Room.)

Mostly, though, Assiff prides himself on his advocacy for victims. He serves on the board of the Alberta Civil Trial Lawyers Association, where he has been a member for almost three decades. He has won the President's Award, which the association gives to a member of the Alberta Bar Association for contribution to the profession and community and stalwart dedication to civil justice in Alberta. "Without groups like the Alberta Civil Trial Lawyers Association, victims wouldn't have a voice. There's just one person against a government or against an institution or against a corporation." —MADISEN GEE



In Service of the Profession

Beyond Big Law

Chris Samuel steps up to lead and serve Alberta's legal profession

➤ Chris Samuel didn't set out to pursue an unconventional legal career.

Like many law students, Samuel didn't have a clear idea of what he wanted to do upon graduation. In his 1L year at the University of New Brunswick, he followed the crowd and applied for jobs at "Big Law" firms. "We just didn't hear much about alternative career paths at the time," he says. Through his own research, he found a 1L summer position with the federal Department of Justice. It set him on a different trajectory.

He completed his articles with the department and began working as a Crown prosecutor with the Public Prosecution Service of Canada. After eight years in the role, he made what turned out to be his best mistakes: applying for an early promotion. Two to four years shy of the usual timeline for this type of advancement, his "very optimistic application" wasn't successful.

"But that freed me up to take on my current role as legal writing and research director for the U of A Faculty of Law," says Samuel, whose job includes overseeing the faculty's highly successful competitive moot program. "I think in law school there is a feeling that every application process is high stakes and make-or-break, but patience and an open mind will almost always result in unforeseen opportunities opening up."

When it comes to serving his profession, Samuel can trace his ongoing involvement with the Canadian Bar Association back 20 years to his law school days. "As a student, I saw value in connecting with senior lawyers and members of the judiciary," he says. "When I started practising in criminal law, the CBA was invaluable for connecting me with lawyers from different practice areas."

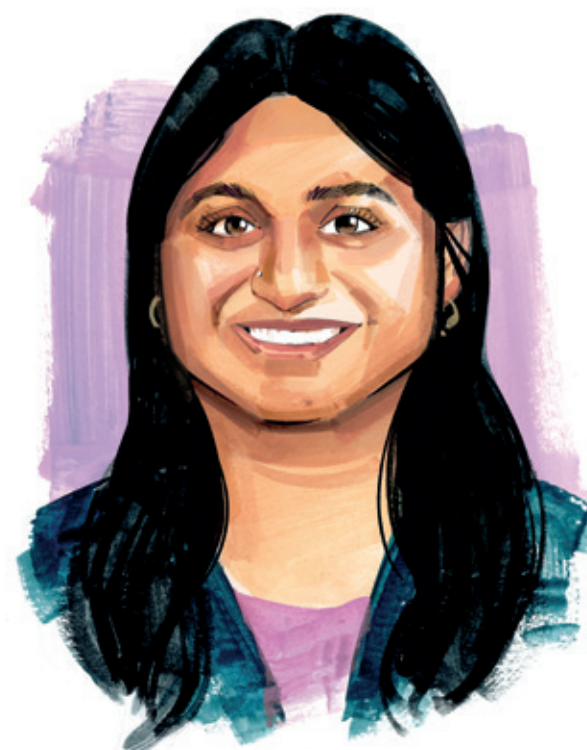
"What I love most about the role is that every day brings a different challenge."

Now, as the new president of the CBA Alberta branch, Samuel is the official spokesperson for the organization, which represents more than 5,500 lawyers, law students and judges. He also chairs both the executive committee and the board of directors, where high-level strategic decisions are made about the organization's priorities and direction.

"The role of president is multi-faceted and engages different aspects of my skill set," he says. "I switch between public speaking, chairing meetings and even occasionally getting to stretch my persuasive writing muscles! What I love most about the role is that every day brings a different challenge."

Samuel also believes his involvement with the CBA has helped him become a better legal research and writing instructor. Exposure to a wide variety of legal problems and practice areas has broadened his ability to teach about various aspects of legal practice.

Between his roles with the Faculty of Law and the CBA, Samuel has found "tremendous satisfaction" in his career, maintaining a solid work-life balance along the way. In fact, if you were to catch him on a TED Talk stage 10 years from now, he might be reflecting on his unconventional path with a talk entitled: "I Don't Want to Miss a Thing: How I carved out a satisfying legal career while never missing an opportunity to chaperone my kids' school field trips." —CARMEN ROJAS



In Service of Students

The Power of 'Parking Nihilism'

How looking beyond herself defined Neha Sree Tadepalli's law school journey

➤ When you look at the accomplishments of **Neha Sree Tadepalli**, '25 JD—just the ones during law school—it's hard to believe she compiled such a list in only three years. During her time as a student, Tadepalli volunteered extensively, led fundraising efforts for humanitarian crises, served as chair of the Women's Law Forum and was president and treasurer of Law Students for Human Rights, where she led more than 15 community-focused programs. After second year, she worked as a summer student with the government of British Columbia's legal services branch. Tadepalli was also extensively involved with Student Legal Services and the Law Students' Legal Advice Program.

Prior to pursuing law, Tadepalli received her master of arts in human rights studies from Columbia University. Her research focused on interviewing people who had been arrested in U.S.-based protests, and how those experiences had affected their lives. Her research

"Law students are primed to understand that we could do a lot more with our degrees."

opened her eyes to the barriers that existed in the justice system and informed her career choice.

There is a responsibility that comes with studying and practising law, Tadepalli says. "From the very beginning, as law students, we are primed to understand that we could do a lot more with our degrees than just learn the law and practise the law." But doing more and making change can be arduous. One phrase that has kept Tadepalli motivated came to her from professor Tamara Pearl. "Park your nihilism," she would say," Tadepalli recalls. In other words, when situations feel as if they're too big, if enough people work together, they can always accomplish something.

That outlook has guided Tadepalli's leadership, letting her create an atmosphere where students are able to advocate for the causes they believe in, and where they feel supported. "That's how cultivation happens, when communities are inclusive and welcoming and ready to help you accomplish what you want," she says. "If you don't see the initiative that you're looking for, you have the means and ability to create it."

Tadepalli says that the faculty supports its student body. She recalls a time when a grant for a conference she was helping to organize on international humanitarian affairs and artificial intelligence fell through just days before the event. The team reached out to the dean's office, and the school was able to help with funding. "It was so responsive. It felt really accessible."

After crossing the stage this spring, Tadepalli decided to spend the summer taking a break before beginning articling in August. "I'm really good at taking on very complicated baking projects and halfway succeeding at them," she says with a laugh.

The recipient of the Cecilia Johnstone Award for Community Service, Tadepalli also volunteered with an ad hoc organization helping elderly people who with government paperwork. "The word was put out about a need in the community and it was like a drop-in style grassroots event," she explains. The experience was a rewarding one that has reinvigorated her love for helping people. "This is why I'm here. I want to help eradicate barriers before they become an issue." —MADISEN GEE



FOR 10 YEARS, THE INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED
LAWYER PATHWAY PROGRAM HAS HELPED
LEGAL PROFESSIONALS WHO HAVE TRAINED
ELSEWHERE QUALIFY TO PRACTISE IN CANADA

By Caitlin Crawshaw

GLOBAL TRAINING, LOCAL PRACTICE

Photos by John Ulan

Sukh Sangha, '25 ITLP, landed in Alberta from Scotland in 2024 after extensive legal studies in the U.K., including earning a dual-qualifying law degree in Scots and English law. Then he completed a diploma in professional legal practice and earned an LLM in international commercial law, graduating with merit.

"I felt Canada offered a lot of opportunity," he recalls. "With the Scottish market being small, I thought, 'why not take the leap?'"

Sangha's assessment by the National Committee on Accreditation offered him the option to challenge its exams via self-study or enrol in a specialized program. Although he'd been in university for the past decade—he also earned an undergraduate degree in health sciences—Sangha wasn't keen on the first option, which seemed too isolating. "When I learned that the U of A had the Internationally Trained Lawyer Pathway program, I thought it would be great to get out there and meet people in the legal profession," he says. "The U of A offered great networking opportunities for students. And I'm thankful for mentors—James Song, Sean McMann, Simon Trela, Camron Schwartz, Sean Carey and Duncan Purvis—who played an instrumental role in my journey."

At the ITLP, Sangha learned about Canadian case law and tapped into a diverse network of peers. "Everyone in my cohort was an international lawyer, from all over

A student-at-law at Prowse Barrette LLP, Sukh Sangha is part of the 10th cohort of the Internationally Trained Lawyer Pathway program.

the world. That's grand—you realize there's not just one way of practising or learning the law."

Sangha is articling at Prowse Barrette LLP, gaining exposure to litigation and expropriation. His interests lie in corporate and commercial law. After all his formal education, finally practising law feels somewhat surreal, he says: "Sometimes I sit in the office and think, 'Wow—my whole journey led me here.' I'm feeling very fortunate."

This year marks the 10th anniversary of the program, which was created to help internationally trained lawyers establish careers in Canada and has become a model for similar programs across the country.

SMART SOLUTIONS

Since its inception, the ITLP has provided a bridge for hundreds of lawyers trained abroad, including

both Canadian citizens and students newly emigrated from countries around the globe. Recent cohorts have included students from the U.K., South Africa, Turkey, Jordan, Nigeria and Bangladesh.

The program addresses a hurdle that internationally trained lawyers encounter: recognition of their previous education. Legal systems and education vary around the world, with each jurisdiction requiring certain courses and competencies for admission to practise. As it did with Sangha, the National Committee on Accreditation assesses candidates and prescribes additional coursework required to qualify to practise in Canada. The NCA is administered by the Federation of Law Societies of Canada, which regulates the legal profession in Canada.

This year's ITLP cohort is the faculty's largest to date, with nearly 30 students. The program enables them to complete their required courses at the U of A, alongside students of the Faculty of Law's three-year Juris Doctor program. Depending on the accreditation committee's assessment, ITLP students spend one or two years completing the required courses.

"All the students that come here are treated just like regular JD students," says Michael Rajan, the program's co-ordinator. "They can attend events, and they become part of a cohort that supports each other."

Creation of career planning opportunities specific to the ITLP are underway with the help of donor and alumni support.

A PATH REDEFINED

Nicole Munteanu, '24 ITLP, and her husband didn't put their lives in Romania on hold while they were waiting for their visas to move to Canada. But when the visas came through in 2011, she was in law school and they had a baby. Munteanu made the difficult and courageous choice to move to Canada, stepping away from her law studies in Romania to embrace a new beginning with her family.

"At the time, our son was just seven months old, and our priority was to give him a safer, brighter future with greater opportunities than we could provide in Romania," she says.

Years later, with two children and a full-time career as a human resources consultant, Munteanu returned to her dream of becoming a lawyer. She enrolled in an online law degree based in the U.K., often attending classes at 2 a.m. due to the time zone difference.

"It was exhausting, but when you have passion, anything is possible," she says. "But I knew that I wanted to finish my law degree, no matter what."

"There were sleepless nights and long days, but quitting wasn't an option," she says.

"Hiring someone who has already worked as a lawyer is a benefit to an employer."

PAUL BARRETTE

"Knowing what I was working toward made the sacrifices easier. I was determined to finish my law degree and become a lawyer to make a difference in the lives of Albertans."

That determination carried her to the University of Alberta's ITLP program, where she completed the coursework required to practise law in Canada. Now, Munteanu is completing her articling at Merchant Law Group LLP, with a focus on family law, and is soon to be called to the bar.

Students like Sangha and Munteanu are not the only beneficiaries; law firms are gaining a different kind of employee.

EMPLOYER CONFIDENCE

For Sangha's employer, the feeling is mutual. **Paul Barrette**, '11 LLB, senior partner at Prowse Barrette LLP, has hired several alumni of the program, including Sangha, and says their diverse educational, cultural and linguistic backgrounds are assets to the firm.

"There's not really any reason to be closed to it," he says. "There are benefits to having experience in other legal systems. It gives lawyers mental plasticity when approaching problems." He notes that ITLP graduates are often multilingual, which gives the firm access to new markets, and have a level of professional maturity.

"Hiring someone who has already worked as a lawyer is a benefit to an employer," says Barrette.

GROWTH AND CREDENTIALS

The program has evolved to meet the changing needs of its students. "We've integrated our students more into the community," says Rajan. "They now have many of the same access points as JD students, such as student groups, wellness events just for them, potlucks and year-end celebrations to help them feel at home."

Other changes include the addition of the Legal Research and Writing course to meet requirements of the accreditation committee as well as stronger networking events to help students find articling placements—a process that is notoriously competitive. Munteanu credits the program's networking



opportunities and career support, particularly the guidance she received in refining her resumé, with helping her secure an articling placement.

The faculty continues to refine the program for future cohorts, with work underway on creating a formal credential for graduates and additional job shadowing opportunities.

Another priority is financial accessibility. Due to the program's status as a non-credit offering, these students are currently ineligible for government loans, bursaries or scholarships. Tuition and living expenses can pose real barriers, especially for mid-career professionals supporting families. "Right now, we tell students their best option is a line of credit from a bank, using their savings or seeking family support," Rajan says. "But by retooling the program and attracting community and donor support, we hope to open doors to awards, scholarships and government funding."

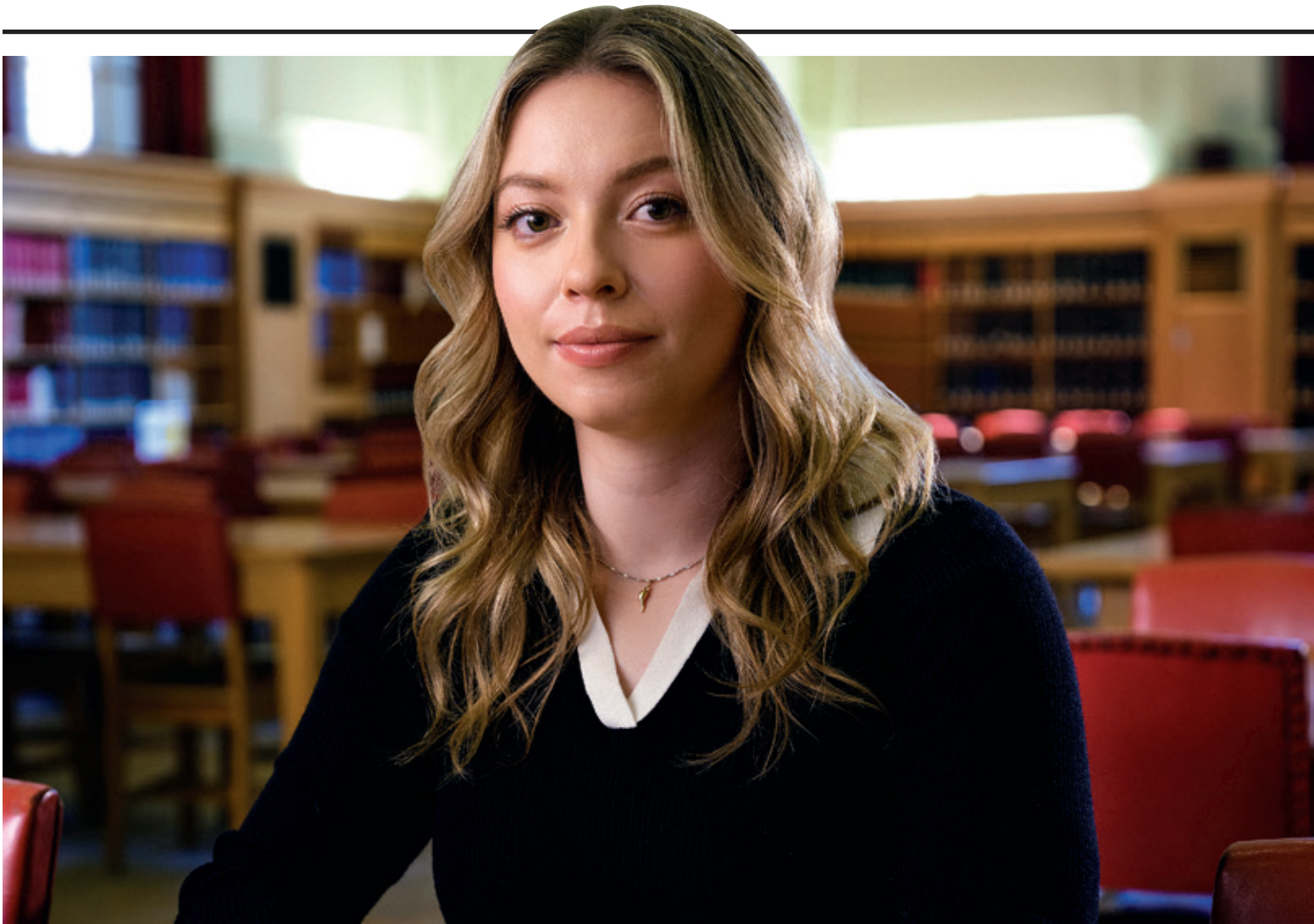
As another cohort launches this fall, Rajan remains committed to improving the program for future students. However, for alumni like Sangha and Munteanu, the program's impact is already clear. ■



Signatories from Canada’s biomedical, clinical, research and health-care community — including director of the Health Law Institute, Timothy Caulfield — signed a joint statement correcting false claims about vaccines, autism, cancer and more.

“In a world of AI, I think being human is one of the most important things we can bring as educators. I want my students to know I’m here for them if they want to build that relationship. When they do, it’s the best part of my day.”

Sandrine Ampleman-Tremblay, 2025 recipient of the Hon. Tevie H. Miller Teaching Excellence Award



EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Scholarships Open Doors to Justice Reform

Donor generosity enables law student Alex Gagnon to make change in Canada’s prison system

TWO WEEKS BEFORE ALEX GAGNON was scheduled to start her law degree, she received an e-mail that prompted happy tears that blurred her vision as she called her mom.

Gagnon had just found out she’d be receiving two prestigious donor-funded scholarships to support her studies in the Faculty of Law. After juggling work and late-night study

sessions through her undergrad, she knew these funds would transform her law school experience. She could now focus on pursuing meaningful endeavours and professional development.

“The scholarships were life-changing. There is stress with so many life expenses,” Gagnon says. “So receiving that support—it was a huge relief. I can breathe better now.” Scholarships are an area of student success supported by Shape the Future, a fundraising campaign to enhance experiential learning,

student spaces, and access and affordability.

Gagnon says her scholarships have allowed her to stretch her wings in research. Now a second-year law student, she is continuing work she started during her graduate studies in sociology as a research assistant on the U of A Prison Project, a major study based at the university’s Centre for Criminological Research. The project team looks at incarcerated people’s experiences in Western Canadian prisons, with the goal of making evidence-based changes to the justice system. For Gagnon, this means opportunities for her to create a lasting impact.

Gagnon has earned the John A. Weir Memorial Scholarship supported by Weir’s former students, the Louis Desrochers Scholarship in Law thanks to the generosity of Louis Desrochers, ’52 LLB, and his wife Marcelle, the Bryan & Company Pursuit of Excellence Award, and the Gerald L. Gall O.C. Global Community Service Grant.

“When I walk into my law classes, I think about the people that came before me,” says Gagnon. “I’m in the same seats that past judges have sat in, that someone on the Supreme Court was in. I look around me and think, ‘There are change makers in here.’” —ANNA SCHMIDT

PHOTO BY COOPER & O’HARA

PHOTO BY BILL HILL



CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Class of ’74 Support

Justice James Ogle, KC, ’74 LLB, calls his classmates competitive “but not ruthless.” Still, when the class of 1974 heard their 20-year reign for the most significant student bursary endowment might be challenged, they rallied.

Ogle has chaired the class of ’74 bursary committee since its creation in 2004. In 2024, the class reaffirmed its commitment to supporting future lawyers Through a renewed fundraising campaign, driven in part by committee member Gordon Hoffman, KC, ’74 LLB, the bursary has nearly doubled and has received nearly \$240,000 in contributions.

That’s more than a financial milestone. The bursary reflects the group’s desire to help students overcome barriers to pursue careers. It eases the burden of tuition and living costs, which have risen sharply since the 1970s. The bursary has simple criteria: to assist a student in any year of law school who has satisfactory grades and a demonstrated financial need.

Ogle wants to see more lawyers in criminal, family and pro bono law: tough areas of practice that may not deliver huge paycheques, especially early in a career. “If this bursary allows

students to go into one of those three areas of law, then hallelujah.”

He and his classmates know the cost of a legal education has risen. They also know how much opportunity they enjoyed, launching careers during Alberta’s economic boom. “We lived at a good time in the 1970s,” he says. “We went to a good university at the right time.”

The class of 1974 includes an impressive roster. Ogle is a former assistant chief of the Alberta Court of Justice, Criminal Division. Peter Royal, ’74 LLB, became one of Alberta’s foremost criminal defence lawyers. And Andy Sims, KC, ’74 LLB, chaired the Alberta Labour Relations Board. The late Justice Cecilia Johnstone, ’74 LLB, was president of the Alberta and national branches of the Canadian Bar Association. The late Phyllis Smith, KC, ’74 LLB, was the first female president of the Law Society of Alberta.

The class of 1974 was the first to complete all three years of law school at the then-new Law Centre. (See page 32.) Many were new to Edmonton, and the cohort leaned on one another, establishing the U of A law school’s famed collegiality. As the university grows, so does the need for student support. Through the Shape the Future campaign, gifts like this give students opportunities to succeed.

—HELEN METELLA



LEADERSHIP

In a Time of Fire

In summer 2024, wildfires grew near Jasper, Alta., and converged on the town. It was a crash course in crisis leadership

By Richard Ireland, '81 LLB | Photo by Allison Seto

I WAS VISITING my son and his family near Crossfield, Alta., last summer. It been hot across the province, and wildfires surrounding my hometown of Jasper had ignited and grown dangerous. On July 22 the decision was made to evacuate the town of all but essential workers. I am the mayor and I wasn't there! My efforts to find a way home were crushed. Two of three access routes into Jasper were closed. The third was open only to people evacuating the area.

Over the next 48 hours I was in constant contact with essential staff in Jasper. On July 24, I was on a video call with the director of protective and legislative services, Christine Nadon, and people from Parks Canada. They told me that fire had entered the town and only workers with a breathing apparatus could stay. Over the video, I heard the incident commander say, "Christine, it's time to go."

It was also time for a leader to step up, but I was five hours away. So began my crash course in leading through crisis—from afar.

There are lessons I took from that experience that I hope are worth sharing. First among them: leadership in a time of crisis differs

"Leadership in a time of crisis differs from leadership at other times only by degree, not by kind. The fundamental responsibilities do not change."

from leadership at other times only by degree, not by kind. The fundamental responsibilities don't change. But the stakes, the pressure, the pace—those do.

Second: leadership, proximate or remote, is rooted in relationships. Leaders must rely on the strength of others and on the trust built long before the crisis. Elected leaders, particularly in a crisis, must understand the essential elements and limitations of their role, and stay in their own lane, allowing others to travel freely and effectively in theirs.

My experience suggests that we lead best in crisis not by directing traffic but by setting the tone and inspiring unity. The goal is to instil an attitude of shared purpose, resilience and hope for crisis responders and those who rely on them. We must also acknowledge the loss, fear, disruption and uncertainty experienced by responders and the public alike.

Crisis leadership requires a mix of humility and confidence: humility in oneself and the boundaries of one's role, and confidence in the people, systems and structures put in place for these moments.

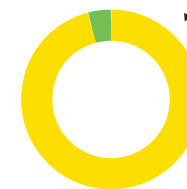
A leader's job isn't to know everything, do everything or be everywhere. It is to trust others to rise to the moment. And it is to communicate and reflect through words, actions and tone the qualities we hope to see echoed throughout the community: courage, calm, hope and compassion.

To instil those qualities in others, a leader must embody them. The public will reflect the attitude of their leaders, though it may not always be obvious. Authenticity and empathy are crucial, especially when there is risk of those attributes



13

The number of faculty members and grad students that have Supreme Court citations this year. Their research has implications for everyday people.



96%

Students who secure articling positions by convocation

being misconstrued as softness, even weakness.

Leading through a crisis isn't a time for posturing, pretence or false bravado. Experience leads me to observe that people, at least in Jasper, respect authenticity.

During the wildfires of 2024, Jasper was filled with leaders: people fulfilling their roles with humility, courage and the grace to allow others to also fulfil theirs. First responders, Unified Command, Incident Management Team members, administrators, Parks Canada staff, provincial and federal government officials, business owners, residents and visitors all played parts. Each person helped lead our community through one of its most difficult moments, often by simply doing what was required of them, and doing it well.

With luck, I'll never need to lean so heavily on the lessons of last summer. But as wildfires, floods and other extreme events increase in frequency and intensity, others will face similar circumstances. To them, I offer my experience, not as a blueprint but as a reflection that may be of value. A crisis is more than a test of preparedness; it's an exercise in facing adversity. As the saying goes, adversity doesn't build character, it reveals it.

Leadership, in crisis or otherwise, is character revealed. The 2024 wildfires revealed Jasper's authentic character: strong, united, compassionate and quietly brave.

Jasper Mayor Richard Ireland's house was one of 358 buildings consumed in the 2024 fire, which destroyed about a third of all the structures in town. He had lived there since he was two years old.

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

Late Lunch, Perfect Fit

Courtesy luncheon turns into unexpected hire

In 2024, representatives from the Edmonton offices of Felesky Flynn LLP met with that year's recipient of a yearly tax law scholarship the firm has been awarding since 2009. The courtesy luncheon marked the first time they'd met with one of the recipients. It might not be the last.

When **Melanie Williams**, '23 JD, met with Felesky Flynn partner **Jeremy Herbert**, '04 LLB, and associate **Justin Di Liello**, '18 JD, and the firm's business manager, Shae MacPherson, for lunch at the Royal Mayfair Golf and Country Club in July 2024, the timing was perfect.

Williams was already articling with a full-service law firm, and the Felesky Flynn team wasn't actively recruiting. But it was one of those meetings where things just click.

"I wasn't always 100 per cent sure that I wanted to focus on tax law, and that's why I was articling at a firm that was more of a full-service environment," Williams says. "But the moment I started talking with Jeremy and Justin — it was like we were speaking the same language."

That is to say, they were all fluent in tax law. It was music to Herbert and Di Liello's ears. "In our world there's not that many people who actually want to do tax law and are passionate about it," says Herbert.

"Our tag line is, 'We're trying to find creative solutions to complex problems,'" Herbert says. "And most people don't want to find complex problems, let alone look for creative solutions. So if you find somebody who's like, 'Hey I'm interested in that

complex problem' and we know that they have the horsepower to do it and they are personable, then we're obviously interested."

The feeling was mutual. Herbert had taught the Corporate Taxation law course for which Williams had been awarded the scholarship. He remembered her as being a sharp, inquisitive student. And Williams had worked with Di Liello at another firm while she was a summer student. Her experiences with both were overwhelmingly positive.

Williams says that as an instructor, Herbert was genuinely interested in his students' success and always made time for them. She welcomed the invitation to meet. "For all the scholarships I've won, they are the only donors who I got the chance to meet," she says. "They took the time to connect with me."

The scholarship itself, she says, had a financial impact, but the personal impact is what she valued the most. "Yes, it helped me with tuition, but it also told me that all my hard work was paying off, that I was going down the right path, and it gave me a real morale boost," she says. "I could go on and on about how it made me feel to win that kind of award."

And maybe that's the final element of being suited to practising tax law, understanding the impact you have on others: those you work with and those you work for. Now working as an associate with Felesky Flynn, Williams spends her days working with numbers, laws, and people in stressful circumstances.

"When a client is faced with tax planning decisions, an audit or a CRA dispute, a tax lawyer can offer strategic advice and take some stress away on the tax problem that they're facing," Williams says. "There's that human side of things, too — helping people find relief and strengthen their financial future."

—RICHARD CAIRNEY

“My work as a lawyer involves presentations and helping people understand legal concepts, but teaching students was something new. It’s nice to know I’m having the same kind of impact on students that my instructors had on me when I was in law school.”

Jason Kully, '12 JD, recipient of the Pringle/Royal Sessional Teaching Excellence Award

CLASS MEMORIES

It’s About the People

Ask any Faculty of Law grad to think back on their experiences in law school and you might get a few talking about their favourite classes. Most, though, will talk about whom they met and the experiences they had along the way

MAY YOU NEVER LOSE TOUCH

I went to law school at the U of A and I graduated in 1989. A classmate of mine, **Thomas Achtymichuk**, '89 LLB, was my moot court partner in first year. We developed a friendship but then grew apart as the years went on after graduation. I went into a criminal law practice and Tom developed a strong civil practice.

Recently our careers have come together again. We have both been appointed as justices to the Edmonton Region Division of the Alberta Court of Justice. From friends and colleagues and moot court partners in first-year law school, we went on to very, very different careers but came back together and now sit as brother judges in the same court. It feels like we’ve come full circle! –**CLIFTON PURVIS**, '89 LLB

LONG MAY YOU PLAY

Once a year, under the cover of darkness—and dubious legality—we students transformed the law library into Augusta National Golf Club. (Imagine if Augusta had dusty books and fluorescent lighting.) After hours, students would sneak in, set up an 18-hole putting course among the stacks and tee off in what became known as the “sanctioned” Johnny Weir Library Golf Tournament.

The tournament is no longer a thing, and fortunately no windows were broken, at least in the three years I was there. Thankfully, this all happened before the invention of camera phones and social media. –**ROBERTO NOCE**, KC, '91 LLB

MAY YOUR LATE START LAST

I started law school at 32 after having two kids and quitting my job. I was nervous. Was I doing the right thing for myself and my family? Was I going to be a dull student, trying to catch up after a decade-long crush of technological change? Most importantly, would I find any friends?

Well, we supposedly “mature” students in our 30s, 40s and 50s spotted each other straight away, like dogs in a park. We didn’t exactly bark at each other across the lecture hall, but pretty close. We sidled up to each other without embarrassment for the neediness, inquired about how everyone was handling child care, formed study groups that wouldn’t interfere with family dinnertimes, and gave each other tips on how to get through. We celebrated each others’ successes, helped each other cope with difficult balancing acts and discussed how to find jobs.

My group remained a source of reliability and encouragement into my legal career. They gave me a sense of community, and showed me that success in law, like anything, doesn’t depend on adhering to a prescribed route and is usually a group project. –**KRISTAN MCLEOD**, '04 LLB

Share your class memories with us at law.communications@ualberta.ca.



ILLUSTRATION GETTY IMAGES; PHOTO BY JOHN ULAN

BY THE NUMBERS

DONORS SUPERPOWER OUR STUDENT EXPERIENCES AND LEGAL COMMUNITY

Support teaching, learning and research at the Faculty of Law ualberta.ca/LawGive

58

Students travelled across Canada for moot competitions, thanks to donors

LAW ALUMNI ARE

2.8X

MORE LIKELY TO DONATE THAN OTHER GRADS

83%

of donors to the Faculty of Law live in Alberta

THANK YOU

“We went to a good university at a good time, in the 1970s, to have great careers.” **James Ogle**, KC, '74 LLB, chair of the class of '74 bursary committee “We have an obligation to support the school that was instrumental in our having successful lives.”

“I am honoured to receive scholarships recognizing my academic achievement and my commitments to community service. These awards allowed me to continue my passion for advocacy and giving back to the organizations and communities that have supported my educational journey and shaped who I am. I’m grateful to the donors and awards committee for their consideration, and to everyone who supported my legal career.”

Taryn Ghostkeeper-Dachuk, '27 JD

329

Students participated in experiential learning courses

\$2,017,694

Amount distributed to 359 students in awards and bursaries, averaging \$5K

36

First Nations, Indigenous, Métis, Inuit (FNMI) students received scholarships or bursaries

\$5.5M

TOTAL FUNDS RAISED

1.4M Research

2.6M Facilities



650K Student Awards

300K Programming

550K Endowments

Numbers from 2024-25 unless noted otherwise

STEADY HAND

A Decisive Dean

In just two years, an outsider broke tradition to launch the new Law Centre and shake up the teaching faculty and curriculum

By David Percy, KC

When Gérard La Forest died in June at the age of 99, the obituaries justifiably focused on his decade and a half as a judge on the Supreme Court of Canada. His tenure as dean of the U of A's Faculty of Law earned slight mention. But his deanship deserves more than a footnote.

I recall La Forest as not much interested in small talk, though he was known to buy students a beer after a moot. I met him in the late 1960s, when he hired me to teach after his own controversial appointment as dean in 1968.

Dean Wilbur Bowker had retired, and the acting dean was favoured for the permanent position. But Ivan Head, a faculty member then on leave as an adviser to Pierre Trudeau, campaigned for La Forest's appointment. He knew La Forest as a fellow international law scholar and from their work to solve Canada's maritime border dispute with France over Saint-Pierre and Miquelon islands.

Then a law professor at the University of New Brunswick, La Forest accepted the U of A's law deanship. Legal education in Canada was entering a period of ferment. Canadian law schools were at the

start of explosive growth. In the mid-'60s law classes at the U of A had about 35 graduates per year. At the end of La Forest's term, the class of 1970 comprised 75 graduates. In 1972, the entering class numbered more than 200. This transformation required the expansion of facilities and teaching staff.

During La Forest's term, law classes were scattered around campus. I taught courses in the Tory building, Rutherford Library, Campus Towers and the ancient V-Wing of the Department of Physics building. The Faculty of Law offices were located in Campus Towers and Rutherford Library, as well as two old houses where Hub Mall is now. The university had long promised a new law building, but its construction kept being deferred in favour of other projects.

La Forest had insisted on the construction of a law building when he accepted the deanship, but in 1968 the university again equivocated, citing other priorities. La Forest stated that he would resign immediately unless the new law building project was restored to the top of the list. The resulting Law Centre was done by start-of-classes in September 1971, opening officially in 1972.



The expanding student body inspired other changes. The small classes of the mid-'60s were homogenous in background and career expectations: a conventional law practice in Alberta. The curriculum was compulsory but for one option. By 1970, this model of legal education was beginning to crumble, and the U of A entered a heated debate on curriculum restructuring. The Law Faculty Council's vote on creating more optional courses ended in a tie; La Forest cast the deciding vote to expand the curriculum.

Curriculum changes were facilitated by an influx of new faculty. La Forest cast a wide net for recruitment, and I was one of the new hires in 1969. Of six faculty hired that year, none of us had previous connections to Alberta, four held U.S. degrees and all had experienced different curricula and teaching methods. La Forest changed the face of the faculty.

But in 1970, he accepted a plum job offer as deputy attorney general under then-justice minister and attorney general John Turner, with whom he had studied at the

University of Oxford.

La Forest left the U of A with two major legacies. First, he had ensured that a new law building would be built. (The execution of the Law Centre was planned and supervised by professors Trevor Anderson and Rowland Harrison.) Second, he created a more diverse faculty with a modern and interesting curriculum.

I owe him a great deal. In my first year, he showed me his book entitled *The Water Law of Canada: The Atlantic Provinces*. He asked whether I'd consider doing the same work for the Prairie provinces. As a result, I taught my first (optional!) class in natural resources law in 1971 and I have spent much of my career in the fields of water and energy. His 1969 book, *Natural Resources and Public Property Under the Canadian Constitution*, remains a foundational study of a vexing subject that continues to challenge federal-provincial relations.

David R. Percy, KC, is the Borden Ladner Gervais Professor of Energy Law and Policy at the U of A.



2025 SPRING RECEPTION COMMITTEE Back row from left: Garnet Matsuba, KC, Jessica Kennedy, Samantha Hanson, Randal Carlson, Lovin Narula, Adam Kotlowitz. Front row from left: Catherine Miller, Leslie Paetz, KC, Christine Pratt, KC.

GROUP EFFORT

The Indispensable Social Event

For 24 years, Law Alumni & Friends have channelled efforts to raise money to fund student opportunities

LAW ALUMNI & FRIENDS hosts their Spring Reception and Silent Auction every year at the Fairmont Hotel Macdonald. This event is Law Alumni & Friends' only annual fundraiser and it has become a tradition. The evening features a silent auction that funds bursaries, awards and summer internships

for law students like Farshad Labbaf, below. The event also supports professional development opportunities for students and alumni, and supports law student groups, programs and projects. May 2026 will mark the event's 25th year. Find out more at uab.ca/lawalum or chapters@ualberta.ca.



"I had the privilege of working as a summer student with the Edmonton Community Legal Centre, thanks to the support of Law Alumni & Friends. I worked with a team of lawyers, social workers and intake workers to learn about accessing social benefits. I've always wanted to serve my community, and the experience reinforced my belief in the importance of compassionate, community-oriented legal services."

▼ Farshad Labbaf, third-year student



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JEREMY HERBERT
PARTNER, FELESKY FLYNN LLP

”



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