



News Release

Federation of Law Societies of Canada approves proposals for two new Canadian law degree programs

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The Council of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada (Federation) has taken another step in the process of approval of new law degree programs in Canada by adopting the recommendations of a committee which reviewed applications from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and Thompson Rivers University in Kamloops, British Columbia.

The Federation's recommendation for approval will now go to the individual law societies for their review and approval, as they have the ultimate authority to recognize Canadian law degrees conferred upon individuals seeking admission to law society bar admission programs. "It has been more than 30 years since a new faculty of law was established in Canada" says Federation President Ronald J. MacDonald Q.C. "Since that time, Canada's law societies delegated to the Federation of Law Societies of Canada the authority to review and make recommendations with respect to new Canadian law degree programs".

In 2007 the Federation established a task force to develop criteria and standards to be used in assessing Canadian law degree programs. That task force recommended national requirements which were unanimously adopted by Canada's law societies last year.

In 2009, the Federation set up a special committee to assess whether proposals for new Canadian law degree programs would meet the new national requirements. The committee report to the Federation noted that "a clearly articulated national requirement is necessary to ensure that new Canadian law schools know what they must do to enable their graduates to enter bar admission programs."

"The special committee reviewing the applications noted that its mandate did not extend to considering policy issues such as the desirability to increase the number of law graduates in Canada", Federation President Ronald J. MacDonald added. "These questions are best left to universities which seek approval of new programs and the provincial education authorities charged with approving such programs."

The last time new Canadian law schools were opened in common law jurisdictions in Canada was in the 1970s. The University of Moncton initiated a French language law degree program in 1978. The University of Calgary opened its law school in 1976, and the University of Victoria launched one in 1974.

Lakehead University proposes establishing a three year program of study at a new Faculty of Law at its campus in Thunder Bay, Ontario leading to a Bachelor of Laws Degree (LL.B.). Its proposal calls for a program accommodating 150 students based on a first year admission of 55 students.

Thompson Rivers University has proposed a three year program of study leading to a degree of Juris Doctor (JD). It anticipates a first year intake of 60 students.

The Federation's recommended approval of the proposals is conditional on the issuance of appropriate government permits for the new law schools, as well as the full implementation of the programs as described in their submissions to the Federation.



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The committee report and the applications from Lakehead University and Thompson Rivers University are posted on the Federation's website at www.flsc.ca.

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada is the national coordinating body of the 14 law societies mandated by provincial and territorial law to regulate Canada's 95,000 lawyers and Quebec's 3,500 notaries in the public interest. It is a leading voice on issues of national and international importance relating to the administration of justice and the rule of the law.

For more information on the Federation, please visit our web site at www.flsc.ca.

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