



News Release

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Marking a Decade Since the TRC Report: Advancing Truth and Reconciliation in the Legal Profession

June 2025 marks ten years since the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) final report – a historic document that continues to shape Canada's collective journey toward reconciliation. Chaired by the Honourable Senator Murray Sinclair, the TRC brought national attention to the experiences of Indigenous Peoples in Canada's residential school system and issued 94 Calls to Action, including several directed at the legal profession.

This anniversary offers an important moment to reflect on the progress made in response to those Calls to Action, and to reaffirm a commitment to continued learning, collaboration, and meaningful action.

Call to Action 27 called on Canada's law societies to ensure legal professionals receive appropriate cultural competency training, particularly in relation to Indigenous peoples and legal traditions. In responding to this call, law societies have adopted a broad and evolving approach, recognizing that meaningful reconciliation requires more than training alone. Across the country, initiatives have emerged that reflect the distinct histories and communities within each jurisdiction, aimed at fostering greater understanding, accountability, and trust within the legal profession and beyond.

These efforts have included (but are not limited to):

- Embedding truth and reconciliation as a strategic priority in their governance planning and regulatory practices or frameworks
- Creating Indigenous advisory committees to guide decision-making

- Introducing mandatory cultural competency courses for legal professionals in some jurisdictions
- Updating bar admission programs to reflect Canada's history with Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous law issues, and bridge the gap between new curriculum being taught in law schools and the realities of law practice
- Ensuring law society staff and leadership receive appropriate training
- Establishing resource portals to share information on a range of truth and reconciliation-related topics or Indigenous law issues, as well as enhancing supports for Indigenous members of the bar and public
- Reviewing regulatory practices to improve the experience of, and support for, Indigenous individuals navigating law society complaint and discipline processes

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada, while not a regulator, is committed to complementing these efforts and working in collaboration with law societies to advance truth and reconciliation on a national level. Guided by its 2020 *Recommendations and Guiding Principles*, the Federation has:

- Formally committed to advancing truth and reconciliation in its work
- Created an Indigenous Advisory Council made up of legal professionals and leaders from Indigenous communities across Canada to ensure the Federation's approach is informed by, and inclusive of, Indigenous perspectives
- Amended the *National Requirement* for Canadian law schools and the National Committee on Accreditation (NCA) to reflect Call to Action 28
- Developed and consulted on proposed changes to the *Model Code of Professional Conduct* to align the ethical obligations of lawyers with the spirit and intent of Call to Action 27
- Engaged in ongoing national information-sharing to improve transparency, break down silos, and foster greater learning around law society initiatives developing across the country
- Partnered with the Council of Canadian Law Deans to enhance collaboration efforts and information-sharing between the legal academy and legal regulators on truth and reconciliation in legal education
- CanLII, created and wholly owned by the Federation, launched a major initiative to integrate Indigenous and Aboriginal legal content into its platform. To support this work, it is engaging in broad consultations and building relationships with Indigenous communities, organizations, legal academics, and practitioners across Canada. The initiative also includes significant infrastructure and technological upgrades to support the effective publication and accessibility of this content.

In January 2025, the Federation and the Council of Canadian Law Deans co-hosted a national symposium focused on the continuum of legal education in advancing truth and reconciliation. The event brought together Indigenous and non-Indigenous legal academics, regulators, practitioners, students, and community leaders to share



experiences, highlight progress, discuss what still needs to be done and explore opportunities for collaboration. A summary report is currently in development.

“Our work in truth and reconciliation is ongoing,” said Teresa Donnelly, President of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada. “We have made progress, but we must continue to listen, reflect, and act with humility. This work must be guided by Indigenous voices and grounded in relationship-building and trust. The Federation remains committed to helping drive this work forward in partnership with law societies, law schools, and Indigenous communities.”

The Federation recognizes that fostering truth and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples is a journey, not a checklist, and that any national initiatives undertaken should promote best practices while also empowering law societies to respond in ways that respect and reflect the Indigenous communities within their regions. The Federation remains committed to honouring the legacy of the late Honourable Murray Sinclair who dedicated his life to giving a voice to First Nations, Inuit and Metis and to fostering understanding, compassion, and reconciliation.

As the legal profession marks this milestone, the Federation remains committed to building relationships that support reconciliation and contribute to a more just and inclusive legal system. The Indigenous Advisory Council continues to remind us of the importance of meaningful consultation with Indigenous Peoples whenever laws, regulations, or policies are developed that may affect their rights and interests.

The Federation of Law Societies of Canada is the national association of the 14 law societies mandated by the provinces and territories to regulate Canada’s legal profession in the public interest. It is the body through which Canada’s law societies collaborate at the national level, share information on trends and issues affecting the legal profession, and engage in collective action and decision making.

The Federation is also the law societies’ national and international voice on important issues related to the regulation and core values of the legal profession. For more information on the Federation, please visit our web site at www.flsc.ca.

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