

The background of the page features a soft, abstract graphic of orange and white smoke or liquid swirling across the frame. It is more concentrated on the right side and more diffused on the left, creating a sense of movement.

THE CONTINUUM OF LEGAL EDUCATION IN TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION SYMPOSIUM 2025 REPORT

SUMMARY

This report summarizes the discussions and outcomes of a symposium held on January 30 and 31, 2025 in Toronto, ON called *The Continuum of Legal Education in Truth and Reconciliation Symposium (Symposium)*. Law schools in Canada provide the foundational learning environment for future legal professionals to gain knowledge, awareness, and understanding of how Canadian Law has impacted Indigenous Peoples as well as how Indigenous Laws and Legal Orders intersect with, and contribute to, the legal fabric of Canada. Law societies build upon this knowledge and prepare students for success in legal practice and ensure that practitioners are competent to serve their clients. This is done through their licensing processes (i.e. articling and bar admissions requirements) and continuing legal education programming. Given this continuum, it is imperative that legal regulators and academics work together (where possible), and learn from one another, to envision pathways that could shape the future of legal education in Canada in the spirit of reconciliation.

This Symposium was the first opportunity to engage in national collaboration and dialogue on how truth and reconciliation is being interpreted and reflected within regulatory and academic spaces. This event was a collaborative effort of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada (the Federation) and the Council of Canadian Law Deans (CCLD), with support from the University of Manitoba and the Law Society of Ontario. Participants included Indigenous and non-Indigenous members of the legal academy, legal profession, law societies, law students, and leaders within Indigenous communities.

The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the discussions that took place over the two days, including the advancements made and remaining challenges. A summary of core principles stemming from those discussions has also been provided to serve as a roadmap for continued learning, opportunities for collaboration, and future action. Unattributed participant quotes have been included to reinforce the importance of the learning and sharing that took place over the two days.

It is often said that truth and reconciliation is a journey; not a destination. As the Tale of Two Spiders (below) conveys, what's important is to take action even if it is unclear which actions may be required or whether they will be successful. May this report shed light on the good work that has begun and offer inspiration for what more can be done as our journeys unfold.

FOREWORD

Whether using an Indigenous paradigm, a Common law or Civil law paradigm, or some combination of these approaches, issues of power, cultural differences, language barriers, and the effects and impacts of colonialism need to be addressed. While these challenges may be perceived as overwhelming, the following story, which comes from Dewhurst's chapter on "Parallel Justice Systems," tells the story of The Tale of Two Spiders. In keeping with the Indigenous epistemology of storytelling, the story below illustrates that these challenges are not insurmountable and that action is preferable to inaction. Dewhurst tells the story like this:

Once upon a time there were two spiders in a lodge, sitting on the roof, discussing the web of justice. After a very long time they both agreed there was injustice in the world that needed to be fixed. And, because spinning webs is what spiders do, they both agreed that they had to spin a better web. But sadly, they could not agree on how the new web should be spun. So, each spider decided to try to solve the problem in the best way she could.

The first spider continued to sit on the roof thinking about how to build the complete and perfect web. She sat and she sat without moving, without spinning, thinking about all the things that could go wrong. If she moved too fast, she might make a misstep, destroy the web, or fall to her death far below. If the creatures that sometimes lived in the lodge with her didn't like her web, or if it got in their way, she would be frustrated and hurt by building her web only to have it smashed. The more she thought, the more problems she discovered.

To try and head off these disasters, she thought about the best place to start her web. While many places seemed beneficial, none seemed perfect. So, she thought about where her web should end. Again, there were too many possibilities. She couldn't sort through them all. So, then she thought about the exact design of her web. There were just too many things beyond her control that might affect the web's shape, like the wind and the movements of the other creatures. She finally decided that she could not predict exactly how her web should turn out. When the other creatures saw her sitting there and offered to give her a helping hand, she refused for fear that the hand might crush her or be snatched away, leaving her to fall. So, there she sat, without a web to sustain her, and there she died.

The second spider crawled across the roof of the lodge looking for a place to spin her web. In a little while she found an opening where no webs had been built. Although she wasn't sure exactly how her web would turn out, she felt that it had to begin with the first strand. So, anchoring the first strand of her web securely to the framework of the

lodge around her, she dropped into the empty space. There she hung, suspended in midair. She wasn't sure where the wind or the other passing creatures would take her but she placed her faith in the forces of nature to take her to a spot where she should tie off her first strand. The wind blew her back and forth. Finally, it blew her to a place where she could tie off her first strand and she quickly did so. Then she started the whole process over again.

On and on she worked, and her web took shape: sometimes through her own efforts, sometimes redirected or assisted by those around her, sometimes guided by the forces of nature. As she spun, some of the old strands were cut or broken, and she replaced them or resecured them. She never knew in advance what the final shape of her web would be. As her web developed, she took time to appreciate what she had done and a pattern began to emerge. In the end, after long effort, she had spun something unique and beautiful. Her web was firm and flexible, it filled the openings that she had found, and it was able to sustain her in a way that nothing had before¹.

OPENING PRAYER AND TEACHINGS

Participants were honored to be joined by Elders Ed Connors, Jean Becker, Myeengun Henry, and Tauni Sheldon from the Law Society of Ontario's Indigenous Advisory Group to open the Symposium in a good way and offer words of encouragement and inspiration for the discussions that took place. The Elders sat with us throughout the symposium to listen, learn, and to offer their insights. Including Elders and their knowledge systems is essential to any reconciliation process.

INTRODUCTION

The Continuum of Legal Education in Truth and Reconciliation Symposium was the first national symposium of its kind where members of the legal academy and legal regulators could engage in meaningful and reciprocal dialogue about how they have been responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions' (TRC) Calls to Action since their release in 2015. These discussions were enriched by the voices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous legal academics, legal practitioners, law societies, law students, and community leaders. The complete agenda is attached in **Schedule A**.

¹ Wenona Victor, *Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) in Aboriginal Contexts: A Critical Review*, https://publications.gc.ca/site/archivee Archived.html?url=https://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2008/chrc-ccdp/HR21-75-2007E.pdf

This event was initiated and coordinated by a joint working group of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada (the Federation) and the Council of Canadian Law Deans (the CCLD), with support from the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Law, and the Law Society of Ontario. Funding for the event was also provided through a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada grant. This working group was established in 2021 following the 2020 [recommendations](#) of the Federation's former TRC Calls to Action Advisory Committee, which encouraged collaboration and information sharing between legal regulators and the legal academy on how they are responding to the Calls to Action (with a particular focus on 27 and 28²), and how best to promote or publicize their responses.

In the 10 years since the release of the TRC final report, law schools and law societies have taken unique and diverse approaches to responding to the Calls to Action (CTA). Infusing truth and reconciliation into legal education speaks to the heart of CTA 27 and 28, which has been essential to shifting the knowledge, understanding, and competence of the legal profession in serving Indigenous Peoples across the country. This education falls along a continuum between law school and legal practice to reflect the importance of continuous learning and development amongst legal professionals.

As law schools and regulators have evolved in their responses to CTA 27 and 28, their focus has also shifted in more recent years to Call to Action 50³ prompting dialogue on not only the establishment of Indigenous Law Institutes and research centres but also the recognition, revitalization, and integration of Indigenous Legal Orders into legal education and professional development. The Symposium was an opportunity to explore these and other important issues.

While only one piece of a much bigger reconciliation puzzle, the Symposium's focus strived to not only shed light on the journeys taken to date, but to create a collaborative space for critical dialogue and mutual learning, and for envisioning pathways that could shape the future of legal education in the spirit of truth and reconciliation. This is just the beginning. While progress has been made, the journey is ongoing and challenges persist. The insights captured in this report are meant to shine a light on what more needs to be done, and provide a roadmap for legal regulators, academics, and the profession around how to inspire and implement meaningful change for the future.

We must all remain, we must all continue to remain, committed to our collective journey to advance reconciliation with Indigenous peoples. Together, we are building a better and more equitable future for all.

² Refer to Schedule B for the specific wording of these Calls to Action and background information on the TRC.

³ Refer to Schedule B on the specific wording of this Call to Action.

SYMPOSIUM OVERVIEW

Day 1: Indigenization and Decolonization of the Legal Academy

The first day of the Symposium was an opportunity for members of the legal academy to share and discuss the advancements, barriers, and challenges in Indigenizing law schools and curriculum. There were also opportunities for exploring how this learning could be mirrored in licensing requirements, and continued education for the profession.

The Federation shared its most [recent amendments to the National Requirement](#), which lays out the knowledge, skills, and learning resource requirements for common law school program graduates. While it does not directly apply, the National Requirement is also significant to the assessment of internationally educated lawyers and law graduates seeking to become licensed in Canada. While the National Requirement outlines the required competencies, legal knowledge and skills expected of Canadian law graduates, law schools maintain the discretion for determining how those competencies will be acquired. The new amendments, which were approved by the Federation in early 2024 following consultation with various parties, including the legal academy and Indigenous groups, are a direct response to Call to Action 28. These changes were woven throughout pre-existing requirements and were also reflected in new requirements (sections 3 (Truth and Reconciliation) and 4.4 (Indigenous Law)).

Several Canadian law schools highlighted changes made to their programs since 2015⁴, for example the creation of mandatory courses on Indigenous Peoples and the Law, the weaving of Indigenous Law courses into upper year programming and/or opportunities for on-the-land learning. Opportunities for law students also include Indigenous legal clinics, special certifications and concentrations, joint degree programs with a focus on Indigenous Laws, and, in some places, the establishment of Indigenous Law Institutes and research centres. These advancements are not universal across all law faculties. The recent amendments to the National Requirement are meant to ensure that all approved Canadian law school programs include legal education specific to truth and reconciliation and Indigenous Laws and Legal Orders, while recognizing the need for law schools to build context-specific programming.

Fifteen years ago, ‘Indigenous Legal Orders’ were not even a term that we heard. We’re now at the beginning of meaningful integration.

A key component of Day One was the opportunity to gather in small groups to workshop how best to integrate Indigenous Legal Orders into law school curricula, which was a meaningful step towards reconciliation. These lessons are equally applicable to the continuing education of legal professionals. These workshops also highlighted the

⁴ A compilation of the most recent survey of law school Indigenous initiatives can be found [here](#).

importance of creating educational spaces where everyone, from students to judges, can learn practical approaches to engaging with Indigenous Legal Orders.

It's more than just cultural competence – it's fluency. Lawyers should be humble enough to recognize what they don't know.

It was suggested that to gain fluency, one must learn directly from Indigenous communities rather than extracting legal traditions without engagement. Indigenous Legal Orders must be learned in context. The term fluency also moves us away from the notion of competence, which connotes a finality that is contrary to reconciliation work and the life long learning it entails.

Day 2: Collaborative Futures – Walking Together to shape Legal Education in the Spirit of Reconciliation

The second day focused on how legal regulators are interpreting and responding to Call to Action 27⁵. Like law schools, regulators are tailoring their approaches to their jurisdictional context, and working with local Indigenous communities and/or leaders to ensure their approaches are informed.

Participants had the opportunity to learn about the changes taking place and the lessons learned along the way. They also offered feedback on how these changes are being received within the profession and from the newer generations of legal professionals.

Day two highlighted several key innovations and programs demonstrating advancement towards reconciliation in professional training. Law societies have interpreted Call to Action 27 broadly. They continue to explore ways to integrate Indigenous histories, perspectives, and Legal Orders into the licensing process and professional training (among other areas) that reflect and respect the diversity of Indigenous nations. Some examples of these changes include; law societies partnering with Pro Bono Students Canada, developing interactive programming for high school students to promote legal education with a focus on attracting Indigenous students, Land-Based learning collaborations between law societies and law schools, opportunity for benchers to hear from Elders, the creation of Indigenous advisory committees, and many community engagement sessions.

Seven law societies have created mandatory continuing professional education requirements in this area. These are self-paced, online programs developed by, and/or in consultation with, Indigenous experts. Participants expressed a particular interest not only in the development and nature of these programs, but also the reaction of the profession (and in some cases, provincial governments) to the law societies' decisions to mandate.

⁵ An aggregated summary of the most updated survey of law society Indigenous initiatives can be found [here](#).

Day 2 culminated in workshopping discussions aimed at diving deeper into some of the topics raised over the two days, and exploring the ways in which legal regulators can collaborate with their local law schools (and other stakeholders) to promote and support the continuum of legal education in truth and reconciliation. There was a general sense that coming together in 2025 to assess the state of the legal profession a decade after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action was both necessary and overdue, and stronger collaborations and partnerships between all stakeholders are needed going forward.

There have been many very positive and constructive discussions. These conversations need to continue and it's been amazing to see how many people from across the nation, and many nations, came together.

KEY TAKE AWAYS FROM DAYS 1 AND 2

- Reflecting the spirit and intent of the Calls to Action through the continuum of legal education from law school to legal practice continues to evolve. Expanding educational and professional training initiatives to include experiential learning and partnerships with community knowledge holders further deepens understanding and practice.
- Institutions are exploring ways to integrate Indigenous Legal Orders meaningfully without imposing a uniform approach. Each province and territory has its own context, and diverse Nations within its borders. This approach reflects a growing recognition of Indigenous self-determination and legal pluralism.
- Sustainable relationships with Indigenous Nations are key to successful implementation of the Calls to Action. It ensures that legal education is grounded in community knowledge and accountability.
- Securing and scaling resources and ensuring long-term institutional commitments signals a shift from symbolic gestures towards collaborative and meaningful structural reconciliation.
- There is a need for continuing these conversations across borders and institutions to maintain momentum and foster collaboration. It is a shared responsibility to demonstrate leadership in implementing the Calls to Action.

REFLECTIONS: FRAMING THE CHALLENGES

While meaningful advancements have been made by both law schools and law societies, discussions at the Symposium made clear that the journey toward reconciliation in legal education is ongoing. The following section highlights persistent challenges that continue to shape this work. The themes presented here are not an exhaustive list; they are meant to provide important guideposts for ongoing reflection and collective action.

Challenge 1: Ongoing Tensions in the Implementation of the Calls to Action

Progress has been uneven across jurisdictions, with some regions further along in their reconciliation efforts than others. There is a delicate balance between promoting national advancement through the use of standards and avoiding a “pan-Indigenous” or uniform approach. Each initiative must reflect and respect the sovereignty and diversity of local Indigenous Legal Orders and Indigenous Nations.

Determining best practices for integrating Indigenous Legal Orders into law school curricula and professional licensing remains a central challenge. Participants emphasized the need to consider where Canadian Law and Indigenous Legal Orders can be brought together in harmony, where they should operate in parallel systems with reciprocal learning, and where they must remain distinct. Effective reconciliation in legal education requires contemplating all three modes of interaction to support genuine legal pluralism.

The Indigenous intercultural competency programs across law societies vary; some have mandatory courses, while others are optional. Oversight or verification mechanisms also differ. Some law societies face resistance from within the profession and/or provincial governments to the mandating of this curriculum and, in some cases, its content.

Finally, participants noted that while online courses are a step in the right direction, alone they are insufficient to meet the spirit of the Calls to Action.

It can't be just 'check the box' ... learning is an ongoing changing landscape and we have to adjust ... We also have to adjust for geography - it's not the same in the north as in the South. You've heard that over and again. Urban centers versus remote communities.

Challenge 2: Structural gaps or barriers, and capacity constraints

Participants underscored that systemic racism and structural inequities remain barriers to progress. Without addressing these foundational issues, efforts to indigenize or

decolonize legal systems risk being superficial or short-lived. Reconciliation requires sustained institutional accountability, equitable resourcing, and the dismantling of structures that perpetuate exclusion within the legal profession.

Law schools and law societies continue to face significant capacity constraints. Many law schools have only a small number of Indigenous faculty and staff (often between one and three individuals), creating challenges for curriculum development, mentorship, and sustainability. Similarly, some law societies face challenges in advancing meaningful work due to limited resources and/or a lack of Indigenous representation among staff, leadership, and benchers.

Challenge 3: Limited Collaboration and Resource Sharing

Another recurring theme was the fragmentation of efforts across and between institutions. Law schools, law societies, and Indigenous communities often work in silos, with limited sharing of models, best practices, or lessons learned. Greater transparency and collaboration could accelerate progress and prevent duplication of work.

Participants also noted the emerging development of Indigenous Law Institutes and research centres across the country as a promising step toward coordination and innovation. However, in many regions, connections between law schools and local Indigenous Law Institutes are partial or absent. Building stronger inter-institutional networks and community partnerships will be key to ensuring that Indigenous legal education and practice are sustainable and responsive to local contexts.

CORE PRINCIPLES EMERGING FROM THE SYMPOSIUM

The following core principles emerged as directions for the future:

- **Respect for Legal Pluralism:** Recognizing Indigenous Legal Orders as living systems of law that must coexist alongside Canadian law. Indigenous legal education is not simply an 'add-on'. It is a reimagining of legal pedagogy.
- **Relational Accountability:** Sustaining partnerships with Indigenous communities through reciprocity, respect, and long-term engagement. Legal education needs to be place-based, experiential, and grounded in Indigenous Legal Orders, pedagogies, and methodologies. We need to move away from transferring information to transforming our understanding.

- **Capacity and Representation:** Building Indigenous leadership and staffing within law schools and legal regulators. Also creating opportunities for Indigenous law faculty to share with and learn from one another.
- **Shared Learning and Collaboration:** Strengthening networks between institutions by sharing resources and innovations promotes best practices. Breaking down barriers between law schools, as well as between law schools and legal regulators, is integral to advancing the continuum of legal education.
- **Institutional Commitment:** Securing stable funding, policy support, and governance reforms to embed reconciliation at the structural level.
- **Duty to Learn:** True intercultural competency requires humility, discomfort, and lifelong engagement. It is no longer optional. The legal profession needs to work towards fluency to honour the lived needs, realities, and laws of Indigenous communities.

Together, these principles provide a framework for law schools and legal regulators to continue advancing reconciliation — not as a checklist of actions, but as a living process of renewal, respect, and shared responsibility.

CONCLUSION

The Symposium offered an invaluable opportunity to share innovations, strengthen relationships, and envision next steps in the journey toward reconciliation. There remains much to learn and much more to do, but the progress achieved thus far demonstrates the growing commitment to meaningful, systemic transformation within Canada's legal landscape.

The framework provided in this report is to help law schools, legal regulators, and others determine what discussions need to take place going forward, and who needs to be at the table. It is hoped that this report will also be a launch point for diving deeper into the conversations that took place and for building greater capacity, trust, and the relationships necessary for moving the needle forward.

This work is for our children and the children yet to come.

Elders reminded everyone that we are doing this work for our future; for our children, our grandchildren and the seven generations who have yet to come into this world. Keep going. They concluded with the following story:

In November there was a group of stars that came up in the sky. You might have seen a constellation called Scorpio before. I don't know if you know about those things, but it rises above the horizon and it brought winter to this part of the world. It got really cold over some parts of the winter. And that constellation, we called him Nanabozho. It's a storyteller that we've linked to our traditional stories. And when I think about Nanabozho and what he taught, I want to reflect on what we were here for the last couple days [through a story]. As that winter got stronger, people got cold, and they were getting tired of winter. Then January came around this time of year and it started moving a little bit more westerly and people thought that maybe the end of winter is coming and then it kind of came back in force. Winter got cold again, kind of like how it is now. We're going through a little warmer stretch and then it'll get cold again. But we get tired of it after a while and around March, Nanabozho will make itself kind of vulnerable. And the families are saying 'let's just get rid of winter, we can't wait for spring'. And I thought about that because it's kind of like what we're going through. Let's get rid of this racism. Let's get rid of this inequality. So what they did was they'd ask the children to come out in their backyards and they would shoot their arrows up in the sky to get rid of that cold winter that keeps us depressed. And as they did, we started to see some clarity. The spring came and I was reminded of that when [a student] was carrying her copper cup because the [spirit] was in the water and it keeps the protection of the copper, which keeps us healthy. So, when that comes and when it all forms, we find that healthiness. And I think that's what we're alluding to now with Truth and Reconciliation, trying to get rid of that inequality, that stuff that held us back, the results of residential school, the places where we're not able to fit anymore ... So I hope, you know, we all walk away with that kind of anticipation of getting rid of the things that are causing the harm and get more people, you know, that's able to produce a better future for all of us.

This story reminds us that this work is hard, sometimes slow, but with collective effort change will come.

Schedule A – Symposium Agenda

SYMPOSIUM ON THE CONTINUUM OF LEGAL EDUCATION IN TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

January 30 – 31, 2025

CCLD
CDFDC



**Law Society
of Ontario**

**Barreau
de l'Ontario**



Federation of
Law Societies
of Canada

Fédération des ordres
professionnels de juristes
du Canada

Faculty of Law



**University
of Manitoba**



**Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada**

**Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada**

Canada

WELCOME FROM THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE JOINT WORKING GROUP

The Joint Working Group of the Council of Canadian Law Deans (CCLD) and the Federation of Law Societies of Canada (Federation) is delighted to welcome you to The Continuum of Legal Education in Truth and Reconciliation symposium. This is the first national symposium of its kind where members of the legal academy and legal regulators can engage in meaningful and reciprocal dialogue about how they have been responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's (TRC) Calls to Action. These discussions will be enriched by the voices of Indigenous and non-Indigenous legal academics, practitioners, students, and leaders.

In the nearly 10 years since the release of the TRC final report, law schools and law societies have taken unique and diverse approaches to responding to the Calls to Action. Infusing truth and reconciliation into legal education speaks to the heart of Calls to Action 27 and 28 and has been essential to shifting the knowledge, understanding, and competence of the legal profession in serving Indigenous Peoples across the country. While only one piece of a much bigger reconciliation puzzle, the symposium's focus strives to not only shed light on the journeys taken to date, but to create a collaborative space for dialogue and mutual learning, and for envisioning pathways that could shape the future of legal education in the spirit of reconciliation.

This is an impressive agenda. The conversations that will take place over these two days are sure to inform the next chapter in academic and regulatory approaches to legal education, and highlight future opportunities for moving beyond historical understandings to actionable change in learning and practice.

We would like to thank the Joint Working Group and its Planning Subcommittee for their hard work in pulling this event together. We would also like to thank the University of Manitoba, Faculty of Law and the Law Society of Ontario for their sponsorship and support in organizing this event.

BRIEF BACKGROUND

The Joint Working Group was established in 2021 following years of discussion around how the legal academy and law societies (via the Federation) could share best practices, promote information sharing, and collaborate on responding to Calls to Action 27 and 28. The Joint Working Group has been in active discussions about the work that is taking place across the country. Members proposed this symposium to broaden the discussion and to facilitate an opportunity for identifying concrete steps and strategies to advance reconciliation in legal education across the country.

DAY 01

INDIGENIZATION AND DECOLONIZATION OF THE LEGAL ACADEMY

8:00 AM

REGISTRATION AND WELCOME BREAKFAST

9:00 AM

OPENING CEREMONY BY ELDERS COUNCIL

9:20 AM

WELCOMING REMARKS FROM LSO TREASURER

9:30 AM

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: ADVANCING INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVES
IN LEGAL EDUCATION

Speaker: The Honourable Gerald M. Morin

10:10 AM

2024 NATIONAL REQUIREMENT AMENDMENTS: OVERVIEW
AND WHAT'S TO COME

Presenters: Prof. Scott Franks (Professor, Allard School of Law, UBC) and Deborah Wolfe (Executive Director, National Committee on Accreditation and Law School Programs)

Session Description: Law schools across Canada have been actively making changes to their programs to address the Calls to Action. In March 2024, following extensive consultation, the Federation of Law Societies of Canada approved amendments to the National Requirement, including content to reflect the spirit and intent of Call to Action 28. This session will provide an overview of the approved changes, as well as the anticipated impacts on common law school programs and the National Committee on Accreditation.

10:45 AM

HEALTH BREAK

11:00 AM

ROUNDTABLE: ADVANCES, BARRIERS, AND CHALLENGES IN INDIGENIZING THE LEGAL ACADEMY

Presenters: Tasha Simon (Senior Specialist, Indigenous Programs, University of Ottawa, Faculty of Law)
Robin Sutherland (Director of Indigenous Relations, Bora Laskin Faculty of Law, Lakehead University)
Gavin Cazon-Wilkes (Legal Counsel, Wahkohtowin Law and Governance Lodge)

Session Description: Roundtable discussions from administrators and staff from law schools across Canada will address the developments in Indigenous legal education. Topics will include admissions, new Indigenous hiring practices, retention of students and staff, and the development of new courses. The panelists will discuss their experience in working with their law schools, and universities in their respective roles. Lastly, panelists will discuss best practices when partnering with community and community organizations. Q & A will follow the panel.

12:30 PM

NETWORKING LUNCH

1:30 PM

WORKSHOP 1: INDIGENOUS LEGAL ORDERS IN LEGAL EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL FORMATION

Session Description: Attendees will be broken into smaller groups to discuss how Indigenous Legal Orders [ILO] have been added to curricula in law schools, and explore how that learning may be mirrored in articling requirements, and continued education for the profession. The discussion will be an opportunity for attendees to discuss lessons learned from their processes in working with ILO to date. Each group will have a research assistant taking notes to bring back to the larger group for the last half an hour to discuss key takeaways from each workshop.

3:00 PM

HEALTH BREAK

3:20 PM

WORKSHOP 2: VISIONING SESSION: COLLABORATIVE VISIONING FOR FUTURE ACTION IN LAW SCHOOL LEGAL EDUCATION

Facilitator: Marc Kruse (Director of Indigenous Legal Learning and Services, University of Manitoba Faculty of Law)

Presenters: Andrea Hilland (Assistant Professor, Allard School of Law, UBC)
Brian Calliou (Assistant Professor, University of Calgary Faculty of Law)

Session Description: Marc Kruse will lead a Panel discussion of visions for the future of Indigenous Legal Education. Topics will include projects of collecting and protecting Indigenous Legal Orders, partnering with other units on campus to assist with the work in law schools arguing for an interdisciplinary approach to Indigenizing law schools, working with central processes at universities (donor relations, awards and bursaries, Senate, etc.). Other topics will include how law schools can partner with Law Societies for CPD courses, events, and summits. Q & A and group discussion will be encouraged.

4:30 PM

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

4:50 PM

CLOSING CEREMONY BY ELDERS COUNCIL



DAY 02

COLLABORATIVE FUTURES: WALKING TOGETHER TO SHAPE LEGAL EDUCATION IN THE SPIRIT OF RECONCILIATION

8:00 AM

BREAKFAST AND NETWORKING

8:45 AM

OPENING CEREMONY BY ELDERS COUNCIL

9:00 AM

OPENING REMARKS FROM CATHY BANNING (MEMBER OF THE
FEDERATION'S INDIGENOUS ADVISORY COUNCIL)

9:05 AM

WELCOME AND OVERVIEW OF AGENDA FROM FEDERATION
PRESIDENT, TERESA DONNELLY

9:10 AM

DAY 1 RECAP: WHAT DID WE LEARN?

9:20 AM

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN LAW SCHOOLS AND
LAW SOCIETIES

Moderated by: Brian Calliou (Assistant Professor, University of
Calgary Faculty of Law)

Presenters: Marla Brown (Director of Equity and Access, Nova
Scotia Barristers' Society)
Marissa Prosper (Project Coordinator, Nova Scotia
Barristers' Society)
Christine Johnston (Admissions and Education
Counsel, Law Society of Saskatchewan)

Session Description: The language of Calls to Action 27 and 28
mirror one another, signaling the importance of ensuring legal
professionals acquire the necessary understanding, awareness,
and skills (at all stages of their legal careers) to serve Indigenous
clients. Law societies and law schools have been actively
identifying ways to collaborate with one another to promote
and support this continuum of legal education. This session will
highlight some approaches to collaboration currently unfolding
across the country, followed by a fireside chat exploring
opportunities for legal regulators and the academy to work
together to move the dial forward on truth and reconciliation.

10:10 AM

ADVANCING THE CONTINUUM OF LEGAL EDUCATION – APPROACHES TO CHANGE IN BAR ADMISSIONS PROGRAMS

Moderated by: Priya Bhatia (Executive Director, Professional Development and Competence, Law Society of Ontario)

Presenters: Kathy Lewis (Director of Admissions, Law Society of New Brunswick)
Liza Worthington (Chief Executive Officer, Canadian Centre for Professional Legal Education)
Shaanzéh Ataullahjan (Executive Secretary, Law Society of Nunavut)

Session Description: Many law societies have taken a broad interpretation of Call to Action 27, which includes the modification of bar admission programs, to ensure a smoother transition between law school and practice. This session will focus on the lessons learned from the development and implementation of these programs, the nature of the curricular changes implemented across the country, as well as the impacts we expect these changes will have on the newest generation of lawyers.

11:00 AM

HEALTH BREAK

11:10 AM

CALL TO ACTION 27 IN CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION: APPROACHES TAKEN AND LESSONS LEARNED

Moderated by: Kimberly Murray (Professor, Queen's University, Faculty of Law)

Presenters: Lesley Small (Senior Director, Professional Development, Practice Support and Credentials, Law Society of British Columbia)
Barbra Bailey (Manager, Education, Law Society of Alberta)
Eileen Derksen (Director of Continuing Professional Development, Law Society of Manitoba)

Session Description: Continuing legal education is directly responsive to Call to Action 27. This session will focus on how continuing legal education (CLE) has evolved in response to the Calls to Action over the last decade, and the diversity of approaches taken in developing curricula. Law societies will provide their insights on lessons learned along the way, and their views on the path forward for continuing legal education in this area. This session will be followed by a Q/A with attendees.

12:00 PM

THE GREAT DEBATE: TO MANDATE OR NOT TO MANDATE CONTINUING LEGAL EDUCATION

Moderated by: The Honourable Gerald Morin (Retired Judge, Provincial Court of Saskatchewan)

Presenters: Cara-Marie O'Hagan (Executive Director Policy, Equity & External Relations, Law Society of Ontario)
Lesley Small (Senior Director, Professional Development, Practice Supports and Credentials, Law Society of British Columbia)
Barbra Bailey (Manager, Education, Law Society of Alberta)

Session Description: Several law societies across the country have opted to mandate CLE programs that are directly responsive to the Calls to Action, while others encourage their members to pursue the educational content and opportunities available in their jurisdiction. This session will discuss law societies' decisions to mandate (or not), highlight some of the challenges (both within the profession and from external sources) they have faced, and continue to face, in pursuing in this approach, and offer some thoughts on the future.

1:00 PM

NETWORKING LUNCH

1:45 PM

ARE THE ADVANCES MADE MAKING A DIFFERENCE?

Facilitated by: Karen Wilford (Former Co-Chair, (FLSC) TRC Calls to Action Advisory Committee)

Presenter: Lori Mishibinijima (on behalf of the Indigenous Bar Association)

Session Description: The Indigenous Bar Association will present its 'Report Card' on what has been accomplished in the legal profession so far in responding to the Calls to Action, as well as some thoughts towards what the focus of our shared work should be going forward. We will also hear how the experience of being an Indigenous lawyer and Indigenous legal academic has changed pre- and post-TRC. This presentation will be followed by a facilitated dialogue with attendees to explore, among other things, whether the efforts being made within law schools and legal regulators are meaningful, and how they will know going forward if their work is making an impact.

2:30 PM

'COFFEE AND SNACK TO GO' HEALTH BREAK

Attendees are asked to make their way to their respective small group meeting rooms ahead of the workshop.

2:45 PM

WORKSHOP: DECOLONIZATION IN LEGAL EDUCATION - WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

Session Description: Attendees will be divided into small groups to reflect on, and dive deeper into, the important issues covered over the past two days. This session is a collaborative opportunity for attendees to take what they've learned and engage in future-thinking on how law schools and legal regulators can continue supporting one another, and the legal profession, in fulfilling the goals of the TRC. Feedback and/or recommendations gathered from this workshop will be included in the final report for the symposium.

4:00 PM

SYMPOSIUM REFLECTIONS FROM DIANNE CORBIERE (MEMBER OF FORMER (FLSC) TRC CALL TO ACTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE)

4:30 PM

CLOSING CEREMONY BY ELDERS COUNCIL



**THANK YOU TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CCLD-FLSC JOINT WORKING GROUP ON
APPROACHES TO TRC CALLS TO ACTION**

Don Mackenzie

Former Co-Chair, Federation Council Member nominated by
the Law Society of Prince Edward Island

Stephanie Roberts

Current Co-Chair, Federation Council Member nominated by the Barreau du Quebec

Jula Hughes

Former Co-Chair, Former Dean, Lakehead University Faculty of Law

Richard Jochelson

Current Co-Chair, Dean, University of Manitoba Faculty of Law

Dianne Corbiere

Federation member, nominated by the Law Society of Ontario

Brook Greenberg

Federation member, nominated by the Law Society of British Columbia

Karen Wilford

Federation member, nominated by the Law Society of Northwest Territories

Brad Morse

CCLD member, Former Dean and now Professor, Thompson Rivers University

Marc Kruse

CCLD member, Professor, University of Manitoba Faculty of Law

Robert Hamilton

CCLD member, Professor, University of Calgary Faculty of Law

Patricia Barkaskas

CCLD member, Professor, Allard School of Law, University of British Columbia

Brigitte Pilon

Executive Director, Council of Canadian Law Deans

Kiara Paylor

Policy Counsel, Federation of Law Societies of Canada

**THANK YOU AS WELL TO THE PLANNING SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS
WHO SUPPORTED THE JOINT WORKING GROUP WITH THIS EVENT:**

Jenna Chemerika

Courtney Carrier

Daniel Diamond

Shawndah Rennie (Research Assistant)

Simon Moll (Research Assistant)

Janell Jackson (Research Assistant)

LUNCH SPONSORS

We are grateful to our sponsors who generously donated to provide food for this event.



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ADVOCATING FOR OUR NATIONS. FIRST.

Schedule B – Background Information

Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Calls to Action

The Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement, the largest class-action settlement in Canadian history, began to be implemented in 2007. One of the elements of the agreement was the establishment of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) to facilitate reconciliation among former students, their families, their communities and all Canadians. The TRC provided those directly or indirectly affected by the legacy of the Indian Residential Schools system with an opportunity to share their stories and experiences.

In June 2015, the TRC presented the executive summary of the findings contained in its multi-volume final report, including 94 "Calls to Action" (or recommendations) to further reconciliation between Canadians and Indigenous Peoples. In December 2015, the TRC released its entire 6-volume final report.

Among the Calls to Action relating to Justice are Calls to action 27 and 28 :

27. We call upon the Federation of Law Societies of Canada to ensure that lawyers receive appropriate cultural competency training, which includes the history and legacy of residential schools, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Treaties and Aboriginal rights, Indigenous law, and Aboriginal–Crown relations. This will require skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights, and anti-racism.

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

Another Call to Action that has garnered increasing attention among law faculties is Call to Action 50, which states:

50. In keeping with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations, to fund the establishment of Indigenous law institutes for the development, use, and understanding of Indigenous laws and access to justice in accordance with the unique cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.

Background on the Symposium Organizers

Pursuant to Calls to Action 27 and 28, in December 2020, the Council of the Federation of Law Societies of Canada approved the Terms of Reference for the creation of a joint working group (“Joint Working Group”) of representatives of the Federation and the Council of Canadian Law Deans. The mandate of the Joint Working Group was to engage in ongoing information sharing and collaboration on the responses of law societies and law schools to the TRC’s 2015 report.

The creation of this Joint Working Group was prompted, in part, by recommendations from the Federation’s former Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action Advisory Committee.

The Joint Working Group has been in active discussions about the work that is taking place across the country. Within the framework of this work, members of the Joint Working Group proposed the holding of a symposium to broaden the discussion and to facilitate an opportunity for identifying concrete steps and strategies to advance reconciliation in legal education across the country.

Schedule C – Truth and Reconciliation Initiatives within the Federation, Law Societies and Law Schools

A. Federation initiatives

Since 2020, the Federation has been actively reflecting on its commitment and identifying national initiatives to advance its role in fostering truth and reconciliation. This journey is ongoing.

As mentioned earlier in this report, the Federation established a joint working group with the CCLD in 2021 to share information and best practices about how law societies and law schools are responding to the Calls to Action. This collaboration resulted in national surveys on the initiatives that are taking place across the country as well as the development of the Symposium at the core of this report.

In 2022, the Federation established an [Indigenous Advisory Council](#) (IAC) to advise the Federation on all proposed and existing initiatives in furtherance of its commitment, as well as strategic engagement with Indigenous stakeholders. It may also provide recommendations to Federation Council for initiatives that fall within its mandate. The members of the IAC include lawyers, legal academics, law students and members of the public from different First Nation, Metis and Inuit communities across the country.

The Federation has also been pursuing national initiatives that fall within its mandate, which complement and/or support the work of law societies:

Amendments to the National Requirement:

In early 2024, the Federation completed a comprehensive review of the National Requirement, resulting in amendments to reflect the recommendations for law schools in Call to Action 28 (among other areas). These changes were informed by extensive consultations with Indigenous legal academics and organizations, law school Deans and others throughout 2023 (refer to June 2023 [Discussion Paper](#)). The [Final Report](#) of the review committee was unanimously approved by Federation Council in March 2024. The [amended National Requirement](#) will come into effect on January 1, 2029 (with application to spring 2029 graduates of approved Canadian common law programs and to internationally trained law graduates whose filed are ready to e assessed by the National Committee on Accreditation (NCA) on or after January 1, 2029). The [January 1, 2018 National Requirement](#) will remain in effect until that time. In the interim, law schools will be asked to report on their progress towards implementing the new standards (starting in 2025).

Amendments to the National Competency Profile for NCA Assessment Modernization:

The Federation has been undertaking to modernize the assessment process for NCA applicants, which included the creation of an NCA Competency Profile. The Federation approved revisions to the NCA Competency Profile at the end of 2024 to mirror the 2024 National Requirement, including the content related to CTA 28. It also completed its work in identifying new assessment tools. The NCA will be implementing a new module on Indigenous Peoples and the Law into its assessment process in early 2026.

Amendments to the Model Code of Professional Conduct:

The Federation's Standing Committee on the Model Code of Professional Conduct released a [Consultation Report](#) in November 2023 seeking feedback on draft amendments to the Model Code that reflect the spirit and intent of Call to Action 27. The proposals were developed after extensive engagement with Indigenous individuals and organizations and law society Indigenous advisory committees. The goal of these amendments is to address a legal professional's ethical duties with respect to truth and reconciliation. Feedback from this consultation was received at the end of 2024. A second consultation on modified proposals is anticipated.

The Federation's work is ongoing and informed by the guidance of the Indigenous Advisory Council.

B. Law Society initiatives

Law societies have been identifying the most meaningful and appropriate approaches to developing programs and initiatives in response to Call to Action 27. These approaches vary by jurisdiction, as do the number and type of programs and initiatives either created or under consideration. A compiled survey report of the responses from the law societies is available [here](#).

C. Law School initiatives

Law schools are committed to being responsive to the Calls and have been actively developing strategic approaches to Indigenizing their curriculum and expanding the learning opportunities for students. These approaches vary by institution, resulting in a rich and creative array of law programs across Canada. The most updated compilation of law school responses to truth and reconciliation can be found [here](#).