

## OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSE to York University's Institutional Strategic Directions Document

### Context and Overview

Osgoode is engaged in an inclusive, consultative, coordinated, and iterative strategic planning process, which culminated in *Experience Osgoode: Strategic Plan 2011-2016*. Focusing on three main themes, our Strategic Plan reaffirms the Law School's commitment to experiential legal education, to research that makes a difference in the world and to ensuring every student contributes to and strengthens the communities in which he or she lives and works. While it is difficult to identify a single guiding light for a law school as diverse in its strengths as Osgoode, it is possible to see the themes discussed in the Strategic Plan as all focused on Osgoode's engagement with outside communities, reflecting a law school that looks outward rather than inward. Our Strategic Plan builds on York's University Academic Plan and the Provostial White Paper, which set out a number of key themes, including experiential education, research intensification, expanding digital pedagogy, and student and community engagement. Osgoode continues to rank as among the best law schools in Canada (for example, placing second overall in the most recent *Maclean's* survey) and within the top tier of law schools globally.

Osgoode has continued to report on our progress towards a clear set of goals through regular discussions at Osgoode's Faculty Council and through York's Integrated Resource Plan (IRP) process, including annual reports to and discussions with York Senate's Academic Policy, Planning and Research Committee.

As Osgoode continues to pursue the ambitious goals within the Experience Osgoode Strategic Plan, we are also dedicated to measuring performance, enhancing transparency, and developing key metrics for tracking our success. In addition to revamping our Law School Annual Report, Osgoode also now provides annual filings to the Federation of Law Societies of Canada as part of a new national accreditation regime for Canadian law schools (Osgoode's JD program was formally "approved" for the first graduating class under this new accreditation scheme in 2015). In 2013/14, Osgoode participated in a Cyclical Review for the JD and Professional Master's programs (which in turn built on survey data, comparative benchmarks and a self-study); while in 2014/15, Osgoode's research graduate programs (LL.M. and Ph.D.) are the subject of a Cyclical Review and Osgoode's participation in the JD focused Law School Survey of Student Engagement (LSSSE) Survey in 2015.

Since 2012, Osgoode has participated in York's Process Re-engineering and Service Enhancement (PRASE) Project, and in particular has generated data and analysis to support the new SHARP budget model that aims for greater transparency in the identification of costs, allocation of resources and generation of revenue across the University. Osgoode also recently participated in the York-wide AAPR process, which largely confirmed the rationale and basis for the planning objectives mapped out in the various processes mentioned above. We look forward to incorporating the input from these varied sources both in our planning and accountability initiatives, and contributing to the Institutional Strategic Directions Document.

Based on all of the data, review and evaluation, Osgoode recommends that it continue to pursue its strategic plan goals of academic innovation, research intensification, community engagement, enhancing accessibility, and inclusion, while at the same time seek out new sources of revenue and modernize administrative services.

#### **A) Recommendations/initiatives that implicate local level only (within a unit/Faculty/Division)**

Osgoode envisions continuing to advance our existing academic plans and goals. Those plans and goals are premised on living within our means with respect to our operating budget and generating surpluses through existing professional development activities and new revenue-generating programs in order to fund OTO initiatives and innovations, particularly in relation to accessibility, experiential education, research intensification, and community engagement.

Additionally, in order to maintain our ability to excel in a fluid and competitive environment of law schools, Osgoode continues to modernize and update our administrative operations. During the life of this Strategic Plan, this has included restructuring External Relations and Communications, the IT department, the Office of Student Services, and the Graduate and Research Offices. In the past year, Osgoode also has restructured the Executive Office to enhance its effectiveness and capacity to respond to the evolving needs of the Law School.

#### **B) Recommendations/initiatives that involve an inter-Faculty or inter-Divisional approach**

Osgoode continues to deepen existing collaborations with other Faculties and divisions at York (for example, Osgoode has just finalized a joint Canada Research Chair with Environmental Studies) and pursue new partnerships (including mounting its first joint course with the Lassonde School of Engineering).

While inter-Faculty teaching has not played a significant role at Osgoode in the past, Osgoode plans to create new undergraduate courses addressing gaps in undergraduate teaching in law at York (for example, developing courses in intellectual property for Engineering and Science faculties). This initiative is also part of an emerging plan in relation to Osgoode's graduate program to provide more opportunities for Osgoode graduate students to gain teaching experience.

Osgoode is also embarking on new partnerships with York's administrative divisions. For example, in 2014-2015, Osgoode has shifted from a stand-alone Osgoode bookstore to a strategic partnership between Osgoode's Materials Distribution Centre (MDC) and the York University Bookstore (YUB). Additionally, the Osgoode Hall Law Library has partnered with the York University Library to centralize inter-library loan services. Finally, Osgoode has actively participated in piloting other modernizing initiatives at York (for example, most recently, by piloting the Concur reimbursement/recovery system).

### C) Procedural proposals for implementation or pursuing the discussions

Recommendation/ Strategy/Initiative	Objective	Details	Timeline
Strategic Partnership between MDC and YUB	Enhancing services to the community and creating a sustainable service model	(i) Transferring all administrative and financial functions from MDC to YUB (ii) Negotiation of a service agreement between the two parties	Will be completed in Spring 2015
Law Library Staffing Changes	Utilizing library resources more effectively	(i) Centralizing inter-library loans with YUL (ii) Reorganization of non-academic staffing (part-time and full-time) in response to the changing needs of the community and the overall shift away from print materials.	Completed
Professional LL.M. Growth: Common Law and International Business Law	New revenue from Professional LL.M. Program	Modest increases in Common Law LL.M./International Business Law LL.M. enrolment targets	Ongoing
OPD Digital Investments	Strengthen the digital services and course offerings at OPD	(i) Building a system to include key student and course information and functionality for students to do course selection online and automate generation of course enrollment data. (ii) Developing online modules for legal research and writing instruction and skills practices. (iii) Developing at least one hybrid (online and in person) LLM credit course to be offered in Winter 2016.	2015-2016
Collaboration with Lassonde	Creating new interdisciplinary teaching and funding opportunities for our graduate students	Introduction of a new course for Lassonde students: "Legal Aspects & Governance in Engineering." The course administrator and instructors shall be provided by Osgoode Hall Law School. Lassonde School of Engineering has committed to financially support the course including but not limited to course instructor salaries and benefits, course materials, and physical resources.	Tentative Date: Fall 2015
Collaborations with Environmental Studies	Creating new clinical and learning opportunities for our JD students	(i) Development of courses in Latin America (e.g. building on FES partnership with Universidad de Costa Rica and Osgoode partnership with Universidad de Concepcion in Chile) (ii) CRC in Indigenous Environmental Governance (with a planned collaborative experiential program led by the incoming CRC holder)	2015-2016
Space Rentals	New revenue from Space	A business plan will be developed to rent out space in the Ignat Kanef Building to outside organizations to conduct law related activities such as arbitrations and limited OPD activities.	2015-2016
Summer Initiatives	New revenue, building on our current access initiatives, and community building	(i) The Osgoode/Winkler Institute Summer Program on Justice Innovation (ii) Success Beyond Limits Summer Program (Collaboration with Faculty of Education) (iii) LSAT Prep Course for low-income/high potential students (iv) Access to justice community event	Summer 2015

## D) Opportunities for new revenue

Osgoode Professional Development (OPD) remains the centre of Osgoode's Strategic Plan with respect to revenue generation. OPD is pursuing a plan that features both growth in some areas and adaptation to diminishing markets in others.

- OPD will continue to grow its new Common Law LL.M. and maintain enrollments in its other Professional LLM specializations. OPD continues to shift resources to developing and distributing digital programming, on-line content and distance access.
- OPD continues to develop and expand non-degree certificate programs with a particular focus on the non-lawyer market, where Osgoode has strong brand recognition as an authority in legal education and areas such as dispute resolution.

Additionally, Osgoode will continue to develop new summer programs (in conjunction with Osgoode divisions and Osgoode-based research centres and institutes). For example, the Winkler Institute at Osgoode is developing a summer program on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Justice.<sup>1</sup>

## E) Doing things differently

While Osgoode remains committed to the path and goals set out in the Experience Osgoode Strategic Plan, it is also necessary to adapt and respond to a series of evolving dynamics in the postsecondary, professional and York environments. Some examples include:

- The new Federation of Law Societies of Canada accreditation standards led Osgoode in 2014 to adopt its first on-line curricular modules.
- The growing challenges of increasing tuition and high student debt have led Osgoode to adopt a number of new accessibility initiatives, from funded need-based summer internships to the country's first law school-based income contingent loan program.
- Internal audits and reviews of Law School operations led to the evolution from a stand-alone MDC model to a partnership with YUB, and the need for this evolution was confirmed by the AAPR feedback.
- The Cyclical Review completed in 2014 and internal working groups have encouraged Osgoode to consider the impact of the rapidly changing landscape of transitions from legal studies to professional licensing – and particularly the launch of the Law Practice Program (LPP) as an alternative pathway to articling – as well as greater flexibility in the JD program, including the potential for flex-time JD studies.

Additionally, as York moves into the SHARP budget model, we have been exploring reimagining core aspects of how the Law School has been structured. For example, under the SHARP model, Osgoode will be responsible for the cost of its dedicated space in the Ignat Kaneff Building. In the past, many of our classrooms were dark over the summer and the Law School did not offer courses or continuing education during that time. We now envision a summer of vibrant programming, which will feature: the Success Beyond Limits Summer Program for disadvantaged youth; a free-LSAT prep course and introduction to law school program for students facing financial barriers; a summer program of certificates put on by our research centres and institutes; and the opportunity to rent out space in the building to outside organizations (a practice that has generated significant revenue at OPD over the years).

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<sup>1</sup> See "Doing things differently," below for other ideas for summer programs, some of which are community-building as opposed to revenue-generating.

Moreover, the Law Library is looking into other revenue-generating possibilities, including subscription memberships for members of the practising Bar. The extension of the subway to York will make all of these much more viable options.

To conclude, Osgoode remains on track to realize the goals set out within our 2011-2016 Strategic Plan – and other planning initiatives – while maintaining a surplus budgetary position. That said, Osgoode also remains keenly aware of the fiscal challenges to the current and likely future environments for postsecondary and professional legal education and the need to continually adapt and innovate if Osgoode, and York more broadly, are to thrive.