

# **Osgoode Strategic Plan – “Access Osgoode 2017-2020”**

Draft November 14, 2016

## **Chapter One: Who We Are and the Difference We Have Made – Building on “Experience Osgoode”**

Osgoode’s mission statement commits the Law School to the pursuit of academic and professional excellence and justice through law. To that end, we remain dedicated to these equally vital goals: contributing to new knowledge about the law and the legal system by being a centre for thoughtful and creative legal scholarship; the provision of an outstanding and professional liberal education to our students so that they can assume positions of leadership in the legal profession, among legal academics, and in all aspects of public life; and service to Canadian society in a manner that furthers social justice. This Plan aims to demonstrate both a progressive set of future-oriented goals and aspirations, and a commitment to Osgoode’s rich history and tradition.

Between 2011 and 2016, our mission was advanced through three areas of focus in the Law School’s Plan, *Experience Osgoode*:

- Experiential Education and the exploration of law in action;
- Research Intensification and pushing the bounds of legal knowledge, including new and innovative ways to access that knowledge ; and
- Community Engagement, both in our backyard and throughout our city, province, country, and world.

### **Experiential Education**

Under the *Experience Osgoode* Plan, Osgoode undertook an ambitious expansion of its experiential curriculum, including the adoption of the Praxicum (a required seminar, course or program of study that integrates legal theory with practice) and the establishment of the Office of Experiential Education.

During the life of the Plan, Osgoode launched new programs in the fields of Anti-Discrimination Law (in partnership with the Human Rights Legal Support Centre), in Intellectual Property, in Disability Rights (in partnership with ARCH), in mental health (in collaboration with CAMH), in domestic violence (in partnership with the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic) and in refugee law (in partnership with the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program). An Experiential Education Fund disbursed over \$200K in support of new initiatives, and Osgoode received a generous York Academic Innovation Fund grant in support of the Office of Experiential Education.

## **Research Intensification**

Osgoode built on its foundation of excellence in scholarship. Osgoode adopted rigorous new writing requirements for the JD program, hosted new journals and instituted a Research Intensification Fund. Osgoode welcomed the Winkler Institute for Dispute Resolution as the newest of its faculty-based centres and institutes.

## **Community Engagement**

Osgoode advanced its engagement in the community in a number of ways during the *Experience Osgoode* Plan. The launch of Osgoode's partnership with the Law in Action within Schools (LAWS) program, the establishment of the Access to Law and Learning (ALL) free LSAT prep program, hosting Success Beyond Limits (SBL) youth leadership camp, and new partnerships with Indigenous communities all reflect new approaches to the Law School's relationship to our communities.

A significant component of Osgoode's commitment to community engagement supports access to justice, whether through the Osgoode Public Interest Requirement (OPIR), Osgoode's 16 clinical and intensive programs, and our faculty's many research contributions to the access to justice field.

Osgoode's continuing commitment to York University's motto, "The Way Must Be Tried"—as expressed through the pillars of experiential learning, research intensification and community engagement—will continue to animate this new Plan, together with a renewed commitment to accessibility in all of its many forms and a more express engagement with the journey toward Reconciliation with Indigenous communities. For this reason, this new plan will be known as the *Access Osgoode Plan*.

In the summer of 2015, as we moved into the final phase of the *Experience Osgoode* Plan, we launched a new strategic planning process, intended to be inclusive, consultative, and coordinated. In creating this new Plan, Osgoode has built upon a series of planning initiatives, including:

- the Digital Initiative in 2013-2014;
- separate, JD and Graduate program Cyclical Reviews in 2014-2015 (including self-study, survey and data gathering and external review and recommendation phases);
- annual Integrated Resource Planning (IRP);
- the Academic and Administrative Program Review (AARP) and Institutional Integrated Resource Plan (IIRP) in 2014-2015;
- Osgoode Professional Development's Business and Strategic Plan;
- several rolling Faculty Complement Plans;
- a LSSSE survey on law student experience in 2016;

- an evaluative exercise on the previous Plan seeking to assess which goals have been achieved and which remain to be achieved; and
- a series of roundtables, retreats and reports from Faculty Council Committees, Law School administrative units and Working Groups.

The *Access Osgoode Plan* also builds on York's 2015-2020 University Academic Plan (UAP). The UAP sets out a number of key themes which are also embedded in this Plan, including three core areas of focus: 1) experiential education, 2) research intensification, and 3) community engagement. The UAP both informs and reinforces the goals set out in this Plan. As a result of our shared desire to align Osgoode and York planning, and in light of a rapidly changing external environment in legal education (discussed further below), we are embarking on a three-year rather than five- year plan (2017-2020).

In addition to an ongoing commitment to the three areas of focus detailed under the *Experience Osgoode Plan*, this planning process disclosed a growing consensus within our community to highlight Accessibility as a cross-cutting goal. Accessibility may be seen through multiple lenses. It includes, importantly, a concern for financial accessibility in the face of rising tuition and unsustainable levels of student debt, and a concern for inclusion among Osgoode's diverse student body, including students from equity- seeking groups and students living with disabilities, mental health challenges and who experience other barriers to full participation in the life of the Law School. We are especially mindful of the need to ensure inclusive and accessible clinical and intensive programs.

Osgoode's goal is not just to accommodate specific needs in the fullest way we can, but to incorporate "universal design" principles wherever possible into the student experience at Osgoode (so that the academic program and services are designed from the outset to be accessible to all).

Accessibility may also be seen through the lens of how students will obtain legal education at Osgoode, whether using digital tools or through Faculty Council's exploration of flex-time options for the JD program. Yet another perspective on accessibility relates to ensuring Osgoode's research is freely available to wider communities (for example, through the Digital Commons), enhancing the impact of Osgoode's thought-leadership across many areas of law. Accessibility also captures our aspiration for Osgoode's buildings and IT infrastructure.

Osgoode is committed to continuing to invest in the Accessibility Fund to advance the goals set out in this Plan.

Beyond accessibility and inclusion, our consultations and input from students, staff, faculty, and alumni also make clear that Reconciliation with Indigenous communities must be a further cross-cutting priority for this Plan:

- We held a specific faculty retreat in May of 2016 on the issue of responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action for Law Schools and the goal of deepening Indigenization at Osgoode. We are grateful to all those who shared their thoughts, offered their suggestions, and urged us to be realistic and ambitious, clear and imaginative.
- At a session facilitated by Marilyn Poitras of the University of Saskatchewan involving various staff and Faculty Council Committee representatives in March of 2016, we spoke of what it means to “prepare our bundle” to capture existing experiences of Indigenous and non-Indigenous community members and to be ready to deepen our commitment to Reconciliation. At Black Creek Pioneer Village in April, with Ontario Court of Appeal Justice Harry LaForme and MP Romeo Saganash among those sharing their knowledge, we explored the Anishinaabe idea of “Nandagikend,” or what it means to “seek to learn.”
- Osgoode will seek out and support ways to deepen our commitment to Reconciliation and to Indigenous engagement in a way that is reflected in the Law School curriculum and research strategies, including a First Year Curriculum Review being undertaken by the Academic Planning and Policy Committee (APPC).
- Osgoode’s Indigenization strategy will also focus on Law School spaces and community life – including Osgoode’s support for the renovated and re-imagined Hart House as a new home for Indigenous life at Osgoode and York University, and the development of appropriate ways to acknowledge Treaties, Indigenous land and territories.

To assist in advancing this priority under this Strategic Plan, Osgoode will establish a new Reconciliation Fund.

This new Plan will not only continue to chart Osgoode’s course, but also define Osgoode’s values at a time of rapid and significant change in legal education and the legal profession, including:

- the rise of technological innovation in legal education and legal service delivery;
- the emergence of new law schools in Canada and internationally- based law programs for Canadians;
- more internationally- trained lawyers seeking to practise in Canada;
- far-reaching regulatory initiatives including the Law Society of Upper Canada’s Pathways to Practice reforms; and
- the Federation of Law Societies national competency requirements and proposed national admission standards.

Additionally, Osgoode must navigate uncertain budgetary contexts as York moves to a new budget model, and do so in a transparent and clear way. Additionally, Osgoode must adapt

to planned initiatives from the Province of Ontario for changes to the funding models of Postsecondary and Professional programs.

Just as we need to focus on innovation, we also need to be attentive to supporting the broad range of new projects and programs which Osgoode has launched over the past few years, and to assessing pilot initiatives in order to ensure their long-term health and vitality. For this reason, the thrust of the *Access Osgoode Plan* is not further growth, but rather ensuring the sustainability of Osgoode's many new programs and initiatives, and that as many as possible benefit from these innovations. For this reason, Osgoode's Experiential Education Fund will be directed to enhancing and sustaining existing experiential programs.

A key foundation for Osgoode's ability to realize the goals in this Plan is the strength and revitalization of its full-time faculty complement. In our previous Plan, we set a goal of at least 15% growth of full-time faculty, a goal we have not yet reached and so remain committed to achieving over the life of this Plan. Continuing growth of Osgoode's full-time faculty complement is essential to the success of many other goals set out in this plan. The breadth and depth of Osgoode's curriculum also will continue to be enriched by our excellent Adjunct and Visiting Professors, and the many others who contribute to the Law School's academic community.

Over the next three years, we intend to rededicate ourselves to these core goals, to the support needed to achieve them, and to Osgoode continuing to demonstrate national and international leadership in law teaching and learning, in the production of research that shapes the public debate and drives law reform, and in service to the broader community and to the justice system.

## **Chapter Two: The Heart of Osgoode: Our Students**

Osgoode students bring tremendous energy, exciting ideas, diverse perspectives and experiences, and great ambition to their legal studies; and it is those qualities that they will bring to the legal profession. They are the heart of our school and we take great pride in our student body. The graduates that we produce are an expression of Osgoode's commitment to academic rigour and creativity, diversity and inclusion, community engagement, and to a legal education that is steeped in a concern for social justice and our dedication to understanding law in context, in theory, and in practice. Over the term of this Plan, as we challenge and support our students through their legal education at Osgoode, pursuit of these commitments in relation to our students and academic programs will be reflected in a number of strategic priorities and initiatives:

### **A Commitment to Reconciliation**

Osgoode will prioritize efforts and initiatives that will make meaningful and lasting contributions as a law school to the larger Canadian imperative of Reconciliation with Indigenous peoples envisioned by the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. First and foremost, we are committed to listening to Indigenous communities, students, and scholars about what role Osgoode can play and what steps it should take to serve a leadership role amongst Canadian law schools in this transformative process.

Building upon past initiatives to enhance our commitment to Indigenous legal studies — such as the Intensive Program in Aboriginal Lands, Resources & Governments and the Anishinaabe Law Camp offered at Neyaashiinigmiing (Cape Croker, Ontario) in collaboration with the Chippewas of Nawash — Osgoode is committed to strengthening and deepening ties with Indigenous communities and ensuring that curricular reform and course development emphasizes thoughtful and deep engagement with Indigenous legal traditions and Indigenous justice issues. Our commitment to reconciliation includes, centrally, enhancing accessibility and support for Indigenous students at Osgoode and our hope is that closer relations with local Indigenous communities and governments will help us to develop supportive links for our students with leaders and Elders in those communities.

### **Accessibility**

As outlined in the introduction to this Plan, the Osgoode community views accessibility as a cross-cutting goal for the Law School over the next three years. Dedication to improving accessibility has a broad set of implications for our program, involving admissions, financial support, and curricular design. In 2007, Osgoode's admissions policy was substantially revamped, adopting a holistic approach aimed at ensuring that we had the most diverse and accomplished student body possible, and subsequent reviews of that policy and student experience has suggested the policy has had positive effects. Osgoode remains committed to better realizing the vision of a student body that is reflective of the diverse backgrounds and experiences found in Toronto — and Canada more broadly — and will pursue that goal through enhanced outreach to underrepresented communities and developing innovative

approaches to reducing barriers to law school, such as our Access to Law and Learning (ALL) program and our collaboration with Law in Action Within Schools (LAWS).

Osgoode is also committed to providing educational opportunities to qualified internationally-trained lawyers and law students through non-degree and professional graduate programs.

The high cost of tuition is a serious barrier to access to legal education. Financial barriers threaten Osgoode's ambition to inclusivity and commitment to social justice through law. Additionally, the links between rising tuition and rising student debt jeopardize student mental health, wellness and academic success. For these reasons, Osgoode will expand existing initiatives and develop new approaches to increase financial accessibility to law school. These may include:

- Taking a leadership role amongst law schools in advocating for increased public investment in accessible legal education so that Law School tuition increases can be reduced or reversed;
- Providing tuition transparency so Osgoode students can see how tuition revenues support the academic program and student success, and where tuition reduction might be possible;
- Extending and expanding our newly-implemented Income Contingent Loan Program so that more students can study first, and pay tuition only when their post-graduation income permits;
- Expanding the value and number of Wendy Babcock Graduation Bursaries;
- Prioritizing accessibility in our development and advancement efforts, including funds for both front-end scholarships and in-program bursaries, in pursuit of a goal of growing the total endowment for financial assistance by 10% over the next five years; and
- Pursuing new, recurring sources of operational funding that can replace tuition revenue so that tuition increases can be reduced or reversed.

A commitment to accessibility also involves innovation in program design, course delivery, and evaluation methods. While our commitment encompasses addressing all barriers to accessibility, we are particularly mindful of the challenges faced by law students with disabilities. During the term of this Plan, as Osgoode continues to strengthen its accommodation practices and policies, the Law School is committed to having accessibility for all students inform curricular design and innovation, moving incrementally towards principles of "universal design" in the provision of our curriculum and approaches to student evaluation, so that the need for accommodations is minimized. This will also require developing approaches to accommodation and accessibility suited to our clinical and intensive programs. A centrepiece of universal design is involving users in all aspects of the design process.

## **Mental Health and Wellness**

Over the term of the *Experience Osgoode* strategic plan, Osgoode assumed a leadership role in integrating attention to issues of mental health and wellness into the life of a law school. Expanding its resources dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellness of students, Osgoode appointed its first Student Success and Wellness Counsellor and played a central role in initiatives aimed at assisting law students across the country, like [justbalance.ca](http://justbalance.ca).

Sensitive to the salience of mental health and wellness issues within the legal profession, Osgoode is committed to continuing to lead Canadian law schools in adopting innovative approaches to enhancing the wellbeing and resiliency of its JD and graduate students, preparing them for healthy and enriching careers.

Osgoode will continue to invest in, expand, and enrich Osgoode's proactive and reactive supports and resources for student mental health and wellness, aiming to make attention to mental health and wellness an essential part of curricular reform and program development, including additional capacity for the Office of Student Success and Wellness, and roles for Osgoode's alumni in supporting Osgoode students making the transition from Law School to legal careers.

## **Academic Success and Support**

With the newly-configured position of Associate Dean (Students), Osgoode has continued to develop its Academic Success Program supporting students with skills development, academic counselling, and learning resources in their first year of studies.

During the term of this strategic plan, the Associate Dean (Students) will build upon the growth in the 1L Academic Success Program by enhancing learning supports to upper- year students. In particular, Osgoode will provide increased writing supports for our JD students to support our upper- year writing requirements and will provide greater assistance to students in presenting and publishing their research through writing workshops and the JD Research Symposium, organized by the Osgoode Hall Law Journal and the Associate Dean (Students).

Osgoode will also enhance its support and advising for students' upper-year academic program planning, helping them to navigate our incredibly rich curriculum and craft a program suited to their professional and learning goals.



## **Curricular Reform**

The period of our last strategic plan saw the implementation of a new upper-year curriculum, involving a new universal practicum requirement, greater focus on research and writing, and emphasizing the integration of theory and practice.

Over the next three years Osgoode will engage in a first-year curriculum review and reform, seeking to refresh and renew our approach to the critical first year of law school. This reform will seek to ensure that our first-year curriculum is well integrated with our upper-year program, is responsive to changes in the legal environment, and continues to reflect Osgoode's values and vision of legal education. Across our curriculum we will encourage innovation in digital learning and course delivery, explore best practices in methods of student evaluation, and continue to build our offerings of supplemental learning opportunities (such as our "Leading and Learning" series, offering mini-courses such as "Legal Terminology in French" and "Business Fundamentals") to give students the ability to add skills and knowledge to their core curriculum.

New courses in "Legal Information Technology" and "Beyond Bay Street: Starting up a Sole or Small Practice" provide students with more exposure to the realities and possibilities of legal practice. Overall, our objective is to ensure that our JD program continues to produce outstanding law graduates who are excellent researchers and writers; flexible and adaptable in a rapidly-changing legal services environment; with a broad sense of the nature, ends, and social and political context of law; and able to relate theory to practice and practice to theory.

As discussed in several roundtables and retreats on Indigenization, and further to the commitment to Reconciliation and responding to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, Osgoode will, through our Faculty governance mechanisms, develop an inclusive curriculum that both explores Indigenous approaches to law and the impact of other legal systems on Indigenous communities.

## **Graduate Education at Osgoode**

As they pursue their advanced education in law, supervised and mentored by our full-time faculty, Osgoode's research-stream graduate students play a key role in the life of the School, producing scholarship that advances debates across diverse areas of law, contributing to our JD curriculum, and enriching our research culture.

As our Research-Stream Graduate program continues to strengthen and evolve, we will seek to reduce the financial burden of graduate school on our students by promoting existing endowments and scholarships within the Faculty, by encouraging them in the pursuit of prestigious scholarships and fellowships, and by working with faculty to build financial support and training for graduate students into faculty grant applications. We will also seek to enhance opportunities and support for graduate students to participate in conferences and workshops, to gain classroom experience, and to otherwise develop professional skills that will serve them as they advance in their careers.

Our Professional graduate programs, offered through Osgoode Professional Development (OPD), continue to provide a rich variety of graduate education opportunities for Canadian and internationally-trained lawyers and law graduates, as well as qualified executives and professionals without a prior law degree, seeking to explore new areas of legal knowledge or open up new career opportunities. As we continue to enrich these programs, we will improve our preparatory courses and tools, including online resources, and will increase online, simulated, and problem-based learning and course content across our Professional LLM curriculums. Seeking to support our students through their studies and into their careers, we will also enhance career development and personal counselling resources for our Full- Time Professional LLM students.

Beyond degree programs, OPD offers a wealth of Certificates and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) conferences, in diverse areas from mental health law to mining law, from securities law to the law of search and seizure, and that represents yet another way that Osgoode engages with and supports communities. OPD is in the midst of an ambitious plan to enhance the flexibility and options in its CPD offerings, including more on-line and hybrid course offerings, and customized certificates and programs developed in collaboration with a broad array of organizations.

### **An Integrated Student Community**

Graduate and JD students at Osgoode wish to see the greater integration of these strong and diverse student communities. With the arrival on main campus of OPD's Full- Time LLM students, we are presented with even greater opportunities for students at varieties of stages in their legal educations, and from diverse backgrounds, to learn with and from one another.

Whether through academic opportunities, research collaboration, or other forms of mentorship, Osgoode will pursue means of facilitating the interaction between JD and Graduate students in order to achieve a more integrated student community. As our clinical and intensive offerings have grown and deepened, creating this integrated student community also involves working to ensure that students who are involved in off-campus experiences continue to feel connected to the resources and services, and involved in academic life, at Osgoode.

Additionally, we will aim to better integrate all Osgoode students with the York community, both to take advantage of additional networks, shared commitments and resources and in order to contribute to the strength and success of the University.

### **Ongoing Leadership in Experiential Education**

As outlined in Chapter 1, the period of the *Experience Osgoode* Plan saw significant growth and pedagogical innovation in our experiential curriculum, including in our intensive and clinical programming. Guided by exceptional faculty teachers and researchers, our Office of Experiential Education, and our Clinical Education Committee, Osgoode leads thinking and practice in experiential approaches to legal education in Canada.

In the next three years, our priority will shift to evaluating, consolidating, and ensuring the sustainability and accessibility of our experiential offerings and initiatives, focusing on supporting our existing programs, the students who participate in them, the partners with which we work, and the communities that we serve.

Osgoode will explore new approaches to assessment in our experiential learning programs and undertake an assessment of the Osgoode Public Interest Requirement (OPIR), seeking to strengthen the OPIR program and enhance its contributions to the objectives set out in this Plan.

### **Student Engagement in the Community**

As an essential aspect of our dedication to community engagement, discussed in Chapter 4, Osgoode is committed to cultivating law graduates who are dedicated to serving, contributing to, and strengthening the communities in which they live and work as legal professionals. We will invest energy and resources in creating and supporting opportunities for students to make community engagement a central part of their legal educations.

Osgoode's leading clinical and intensive programs have, for over 45 years since the founding of the Intensive Program in Poverty Law with Parkdale Community Legal Services, provided the catalyst for Osgoode's collaborative community engagement.

We continue to support our current programs, including 16 clinical or intensive programs, including the recently established Environmental Justice and Sustainability Clinical Program (EJSCP), the Feminist Advocacy clinical initiative with the Barbra Schlifer Commemorative Clinic, the International and Transnational Law Intensive Program (ITLIP), the Refugee Sponsorship Support Program Directed Research Project, the Community Organizing and the Law, and CLASP's two new clinical divisions in the areas of family law and employment law.

We will focus on strengthening our relationships with Indigenous communities, communities in the part of Toronto that Osgoode calls home, and communities, like Parkdale, with which we have longstanding partnerships. While exploring new opportunities, we will ensure that we sustain support for our existing community partnerships. We will also remain committed to facilitating student engagement in global communities through programs such as Osgoode's International Legal Partnership, the Justice & Corporate Accountability Project in Latin America, and ITLIP.

### **Career Development Office**

With students facing a rapidly evolving legal services sector, Osgoode will invest additional resources into an expanded and responsive Career Development Office (CDO) that can provide tailored support for the diverse needs and career goals of the Osgoode student body, including the following commitments:

- We will enhance and modernize existing career development supports and online resources.

- The CDO will, of course, continue to build new — and strengthen existing — relationships with prospective employers in all sectors and at the local, national, and global levels.
- The CDO will also work to improve data collection about student career outcomes to help to identify systemic challenges that students face in the job market, and to implement strategies to address those challenges.

In order to achieve these goals, additional resources are needed. Osgoode is committed to enhancing the capacity of the CDO to better serve Osgoode students' needs. The measure of the success of the CDO will be our students' success, in a diverse range of career settings.

### **The Law Library**

Building upon its history as one of the finest law libraries in the common law world, our Library has evolved into an innovative hub for engaging with legal knowledge in all of its forms, playing an essential role in supporting students and faculty in their learning, teaching, and research, and helping to advance all of Osgoode's strategic goals. The Library serves not just as a virtual and physical space for accessing legal information, but a site for study, collaboration, exploration, and a place to encounter art, exhibitions, and other expressions of knowledge.

Over the next three years, as we continue to enhance the resources and group and individual spaces available to our students — and as our librarians continue to provide students and faculty with expert training, direction, and advice in their research and study — the Library will prioritize support for advancements in scholarly communication and will provide leadership and resources for digital initiatives at the Law School, including the use of technology in the classroom. Osgoode remains committed to maintaining the existing level of support for the Library and its collection and to expanding that support where possible.

### **Chapter Three: Osgoode Research: Shaping the Debate**

Osgoode is committed to continuing to produce and disseminate excellent legal research and scholarship that has local, national and international impact in academic and public discourse, law and policy. Over the next three years, Osgoode will seek to build on the long history of, and reputation for, thought leadership established by its faculty and students. This summary is drawn from Osgoode's broader Research Plan, which can be found here [\[insert link\]](#). Osgoode's goals over the life of this Plan include:

- Enhance and support a culture of scholarly inquiry and research intensification;
- Broaden and deepen the impact of faculty scholarship;
- Encourage and grow new areas of research opportunity, including those that may use non-traditional and interdisciplinary research methodologies.

Osgoode boasts a vibrant research culture nurtured by faculty with ambitious and cutting-edge research agendas, thriving research centres and institutes, a Graduate Studies program that is nationally and internationally recognized, and a growing number of globally renowned and award-winning scholars, many of whom attract significant external research funding. While we celebrate these existing strengths, there are opportunities for Osgoode to enhance and support its culture of critical scholarly inquiry. These include:

- Continuing to develop a collegially-based approach to supporting research development and success, with ongoing funding to support Osgoode's scholars pursuing small and large-scale research projects through the Research Intensification Fund.
- Improving the capacity for Osgoode faculty and Graduate students to conduct major research projects and to build research partnerships by increasing the quality and quantity of external research grant and funding applications.
- Increasing opportunities for Osgoode faculty to dedicate more time or focused attention to research-based activities between sabbaticals by growing the number of Osgoode faculty who hold research chairs, professorships, and fellowships, and exploring other means by which to clear time for sustained focus on research projects.
- Continuing to enhance and promote the use of the Osgoode Research Hub as a dedicated physical space in the Law School for interactive research engagement that fosters collaboration, research discussions, and a strong research culture. The Research Hub is a vibrant physical space newly repurposed with the objective of fostering research and academic collaboration. The space now houses Osgoode's Research Office as well as our cutting-edge Media Innovation & Creativity Lab, a casual lounge-library, and shared workspaces.
- Encouraging the integration of JD and Graduate students into Osgoode's research communities, centres and institutes, allowing Osgoode to attract top Graduate

students and to nurture the research potential of all of its students, through the following initiatives:

- Osgoode will strive to more fully integrate its Graduate students into the research life of the Law School by ensuring effective cooperation between research and Graduate program administration, providing more funded research-related opportunities to Graduate students, and encouraging and assisting faculty to build such opportunities into external research grant applications.
- Osgoode will continue in its efforts to encourage JD students to participate in its research culture by providing more opportunities for students to contribute to research projects through Research Assistant and other positions with Osgoode faculty or research centres. In addition to continuing to support an annual JD Research Symposium, as well as many student editorial positions and publication platforms,
- Osgoode will establish a Dean's award for JD research excellence, and maintain a record of student-authored publications.

### **Broadening and Deepening the Impact of Faculty Scholarship**

Osgoode has an impressive history of producing field-defining scholarship, and continues to be regarded as one of the world's top law faculties for excellence in research. Osgoode's thought leaders push boundaries and exert influence in academic scholarship, national and international policy-making, domestic and international jurisprudence, law reform and public debate.

Driven by new technological platforms and possibilities, the methods and media by which we communicate and share legal research are in flux. This produces two pressing challenges: first, to ensure that we utilize the most effective methods currently available to us for disseminating research (while avoiding premature commitments to particular platforms) ; and second, to identify the most reliable and meaningful measures for gauging, comparing and communicating the quality and impact of our faculty's research contributions.

In order to broaden and deepen the impact of faculty scholarship, Osgoode will:

- Continue to enable and promote open access to Osgoode Research through the development of transparent open access publishing and research management policies, the promotion of best practices for open access publishing at Osgoode, and effective use of the Osgoode Digital Commons.
- Continue to enable and promote research aimed at policy and law reform, through developing Osgoode's partnership with the Law Commission of Ontario, reinvigorating the York Centre for Public Policy and Law, hosting policy and law

reform events and facilitating the capacity of Osgoode researchers to disseminate research through a variety of media.

- Increase the engagement of the Osgoode community in the internal dissemination of research. Osgoode supports and hosts an increasing number and incredible wealth of research events each year, from faculty seminars to workshops, and from speakers' series to conferences.
- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy and engagement plan that will support the wide and effective dissemination of Osgoode research. The broad dissemination of research multiplies the possible pathways to impact. By continuing to improve our external communications regarding the work of Osgoode researchers we can help them to reach new audiences, and raise the profile of their research projects. Osgoode will encourage and provide enhanced supports to faculty to pursue diverse means of knowledge dissemination.
- Develop a comprehensive approach to accurately and fairly measure and represent the research contributions made by Osgoode faculty. While traditional metrics, such as publication and citation counts, the h-index, external funding, etc. will necessarily remain important indicators of our research productivity and success, any effort to measure the quality of Osgoode research must strive for a fuller understanding and appreciation of the many ways in which our researchers influence the academic conversation, the development of law, policy and public discourse.

### **Encourage and Grow New Areas of Research Opportunity**

Osgoode research continues to bring a sharp-edge focus to contemporary legal issues. From Aboriginal law and transnational legal theory to intellectual property law and environmental justice, Osgoode's research remains diverse, innovative and committed to addressing issues of inequality and injustice. As leaders in the field of collaborative and interdisciplinary research that reflects the pluralism of law, Osgoode takes great pride in supporting research partnerships at local, national and international levels and encouraging collaborations that cross disciplines and break through silos. As we look forward to the next three years, we see tremendous opportunity to build on these research strengths. Osgoode will encourage and enable scholars to explore new areas of research opportunity, including research on pedagogy, interdisciplinary research collaborations (including the use of non-traditional and interdisciplinary methodologies), and academic and non-academic partnerships at the local and global levels. All research initiatives pursued or promoted by the law school will be open to participation by all faculty members with relevant research interests. In particular, Osgoode will:

- Explore ways to assist faculty in showcasing and translating their creative and innovative approaches to legal education into research outputs. Innovative legal education is a research output in itself. Osgoode is a national leader in innovative

legal pedagogy (see Chapter 2: Students). This connection between innovative teaching methods and research successes -- between great teaching and excellence in research -- will continue to be a core value for Osgoode.

- Promote research initiatives that advance access to justice. The establishment of the Winkler Institute for Dispute Resolution, which launched in 2013, has provided significant opportunities for innovation leadership and engagement with local and national justice sector organizations (e.g. various teaching, research and innovation projects with Legal Aid Ontario, the Cyberjustice Lab, International Academy of Mediators, Yukon Courts, the Justice Design Project, etc.). Osgoode's partnership with the Canadian Forum on Civil Justice (CFCJ) has deepened the Law School's connections to local, national and global initiatives relating to access to justice.
- Sustain our strong culture of community- engaged research and enhance the impact of such research through improved dissemination of research outputs. When community partners are involved in all aspects of research, including the conception, design and execution of research projects, the result is research that is relevant to society, and research products that have immediate impacts. Osgoode continues to be a leader in community- engaged research, reflecting its commitment to collaborative leadership and social justice.
- Explore how best to nurture and support the development of research agendas in non-traditional areas, or those employing novel approaches to legal scholarship, thereby encouraging the use of research as a driver of change and innovation in law. It is an important facet of Osgoode's research culture that faculty freely set their own research agendas, which has produced a long history and reputation for working at the cutting edge of legal research. This may involve pursuing scholarship in areas that are emergent and experimental, that reimagine what law is or how it works, and that present new critical perspectives. The law school is committed to supporting and recognizing legal scholarship and research without restrictions as to area or approach.

### **Global Reach**

Osgoode is in the midst of significant growth in international research partnerships, including research funding relationships and exchange programs for researchers. With the support of the Osgoode South Asian Advisory Council, Osgoode has deepened its relationships throughout the region, including clerkships for Osgoode students with Indian Courts, and new partnerships with the Jindal Global Law School, and the National Law University (Delhi). Through the Osgoode in China outreach, new partnerships were forged with Tsinghua University in Beijing (supported by the Felix Fong '78 Osgoode/China Travel Fund), and Osgoode welcomed its first summer institute program from the Chinese University of Hong



Kong. International research partnerships can provide a catalyst for new ideas and research projects that have global impact.

Osgoode's expansive and growing list of Institutional Exchange Agreements, the growth of OPD's International Business Law LLM and LLM in the Common Law programs, as well as our leadership in the Association of Transnational Law Schools (ATLAS), illustrate our ongoing commitment to extending Osgoode's global reach.

### **Conclusion**

Osgoode is committed to maintaining a vibrant research culture that reflects a shared sense of the importance of legal research and scholarship to the institution, the academy, and the public at large.

We will seek to ensure that generous research supports and opportunities are accessible to our researchers, sustaining conditions conducive to ground-breaking, productive and rewarding research careers.

Through a revitalized Research Intensification Fund, we will advance the goals set out in this Plan, and further seek to ensure that Osgoode's excellent and innovative research, and the broad benefits that flow from it, are accessible to the widest possible audience.

## **Chapter Four: Future Directions for the Law School**

As we look to the future, this Plan has set out an ambitious array of goals in relation to innovative legal education, enriching the student experience, community engagement and legal research that shape the public debate. New areas for more focused attention include deepening Osgoode's commitment to Accessibility and pursuing Reconciliation with Indigenous communities both within and outside the Law School.

It is challenging to plan with any certainty for the future in legal education, given all the change that has occurred since our last Plan, and is likely to occur over the next three years. In 2011, the Digital Commons did not exist yet by 2016, over 15,000 articles are housed there, with approximately 25,000 downloads monthly. Osgoode remains committed to the Digital Commons (and its further expansion) over the life of this Plan.

Thus, while we have anticipated some future directions in this Plan, we remain open to embracing all opportunities which may arise and enable the Law School to advance our goals. As we pursue these goals, whether through the various special purpose Funds set out in this Plan or through new initiatives that may arise, we commit to do so in a transparent and consultative way, through collegial governance mechanisms where applicable, respecting the various Collective Agreements that govern Osgoode staff and faculty, with outreach to our alumni, partners and supporters, and with full, clear and timely reporting to the Osgoode and York community.

As we move forward, Osgoode is committed to continuing leadership in new areas of legal education, research and engagement. These include:

- Developing the relationship between new technology and law. During this Plan, Osgoode will launch a Tech Transformation & Law Certificate as part of the Learning & Leading Series, expand the Justice Design Project (JDP), develop new opportunities through OPD for the legal sector to thrive in the innovation economy and continue to explore digital pedagogies in legal education both within Osgoode and through links with other peer law schools and Law Societies.
- Expanding the ways in which law is taught, researched and practised through various media. Osgoode will expand the Law.Arts.Culture initiatives and new Fund for Innovation in Law & Media (FILM) initiative to include new visual advocacy clinical programs, including the deployment of new media to enhance Access to Justice goals, and exploring legal ideas through new media in our Artists in Residence program.
- Pursuing new opportunities to increase our exposure to new fields of interdisciplinary expertise related to law, from our existing interdisciplinary programs with the Schulich School of Business, Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies and the Faculty of Environmental Studies, to our growing partnership with the Lassonde School of Engineering.

- Strengthening relationships with those who regulate and support legal education. Recent proposals from the Federation of Law Societies of Canada and the Law Society of Upper Canada have highlighted the importance of ensuring those whose decisions affect legal education have a clear understanding of the impact of those decisions on law schools and law students. The Law Foundation, Legal Aid Ontario and other public institutions provide invaluable support to Osgoode, particularly in programs to enhance access to justice. With significant change on the horizon both to licensing standards and the accreditation of common law schools in Canada, these relationships appear likely only to grow in importance.
- Seeking new communication venues to tell the story of the Law School, its alumni, staff, students and faculty, its aspirations and its impact, through the continued development of the Osgoode website, video content and podcasts, social media, digitizing more of the history and records of the Law School through the Osgoode History and Archives Project (OHAP).

Finally, Osgoode remains dedicated to the future improvement of Osgoode's buildings, including anticipated renovations and expansions to OPD's 1 Dundas St. location, the launch of the Hart House as a centre for Indigenous life at the Law School, renovations to the 4th floor at Osgoode to add an additional classroom and lounge space to better serve full-time LLM in the Common Law students, improving the accessibility of the building for those living with disabilities, enhancements to student safety in the building, new art projects, and updating the wireless and other infrastructure in the building to ensure it serves present and future needs.