

## **Dean for a Day Contest Submission**

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Law school holds the power to shape the legal minds of the future, and by extension, the world we envision ourselves to reside. As a current student at Osgoode, I can readily say that this institution prides itself on diversity, inclusion, access to justice, and equality; and as the future Dean of Osgoode, I welcome you the opportunity to progress these values even further within the next five years.

There are already several initiatives in place to promote these values within the Law School, such as the Osgoode Public Interest Requirement, the mandatory course on Indigenous studies, the first-year perspective option, as well as the first-year course on Ethical Lawyering in a Global Community. However, in my perspective, there remains a disconnect – while every student partakes in these mandatory requirements, many students remain indifferent to the values Osgoode is trying to instill with these various initiatives.

As future leaders-in-law, no matter what line of the legal profession we choose to enter, there needs to be a greater emphasis on social responsibility that Osgoode must help foster. This should be done in the most genuine sense to counteract the current disparity amongst law students. For example, many students view pro bono work solely as a means to an end, a way to gain the necessary legal skills for a future career. However, this work should also and predominantly be seen as an end in itself – to recognize that we as current law students are privileged with the power to help and uplift others within our communities, and society at large, with our position as future lawyers.

In my perspective, the Law School needs to facilitate in bridging this gap between public interest and other streams of law, in the sense that both need each other for the legal community to thrive. One way to achieve this can be to issue a mandatory course on Corporate Social Responsibility. This would allow students, many of whom will be working in large, corporate firms, to understand the reasons and methods by which these firms should undertake more accountability to use their influence and resources to assist in public interest work. In addition, current initiatives, such as the Ethical Lawyering in a Global Community course, should be re-assessed to ensure that principles such as the need for empathy and compassion within the legal profession, are reinforced in a more meaningful and engaging way within course content.

Although our diverse backgrounds and experiences will shape the way in which we primarily think about the law, as law students, we are under the tutelage of the institution we attend that will in turn help dictate the kind of lawyers that we will become. I am grateful to be at Osgoode, an institution that reflects the values I want to emulate in my own legal career – values emphasizing diversity, inclusion, access to justice, and equality. As future Dean of Osgoode, I welcome the opportunity to progress these values even further in the upcoming years.