The Osgoode Brief (Fall 2012)
Osgoode Hall Law School of York University

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OPD
expanding the classroom with distance learning

the OSGOODE BRIEF

OSGOODE HALL LAW SCHOOL OF YORK UNIVERSITY
ALUMNI NEWSLETTER · FALL 2012

expanding the classroom with distance learning
From that idea almost 20 years ago to now, OPD has grown into a program with a tremendous global reach. In fact our tagline, “A World Leader in Law School Lifelong Learning,” is no exaggeration. No other law school in the world has such extensive and diverse offerings devoted to lifelong learning:

- Professional LLMs in more than 17 specializations, plus the ability to customize a personal program
- Single course enrollment in many Professional LLM courses
- More than 20 post-graduate Certificate Programs (and growing!)
- Dozens of short courses, conferences and lunch hour webinars in a broad range of practice areas
- Synchronous and asynchronous remote learning options, including webcast and videoconferencing to desktop
- Credit and non-credit programs developed especially to meet the needs of internationally trained lawyers - and Canadian lawyers who want to be international lawyers
- Custom and in-house program development, including skills training and speakers’ series.

But it’s not just lawyers who seek out OPD. There are numerous programs for other professionals and executives, including teachers, healthcare practitioners, law enforcement officers, finance, banking and investment professionals and others. These have become increasingly in demand as OPD’s reputation spreads well beyond the legal community. OPD has become a catalyst for innovation, pioneering webinars, hands-on simulations, and peer-led pedagogy. OPD programs feature a stellar faculty including leading lawyers, judges, academics (many of whom are also Osgoode alumni) as well as experts drawn from business, government and the NGO sector. OPD has become, in short, the destination of choice for professional legal education!

OPD may be just what you’re looking for whether you’re considering this year’s Continuing Professional Development requirement or your own lifelong learning needs. Look at all they have to offer at www.osgoodepd.ca.

I am incredibly proud of Osgoode Professional Development (OPD), both as the Dean and as an alum. When Professor Marilyn Pilkington was Dean of Osgoode she realized that learning doesn’t end with the JD or LLB. Lawyers were hungry for continuing professional education.

Lorne Sossin ’92
Dean

Message from the Dean
“The class was exciting, challenging and a lot of fun. He provoked me into looking at the law in ways I hadn’t looked at it before.” P. Jonathan Faulds, Q.C.

The Osgoode Professional LLM
A Class Act

They come for the love of learning, to rekindle their passion in an area of law or because they’re looking to grow or change. They are enrolled in the foremost program of its kind in Canada – the Osgoode Professional Master of Laws (LLM) Program – which was first established in the 1970s and now encompasses 17 different specializations geared mainly to lawyers, but also to non-lawyers.

“There’s an appetite for practitioners to do LLMs,” says Professional LLM Director Amy Britton-Cox. “A lot of professionals don’t have the luxury of taking a year off to do a research-based LLM, so the Professional LLM is critical.”

Each two-year Professional LLM program is taught by some of the best legal educators in the country including professors from Osgoode and other leading law schools as well as top practitioners, judges and policy-makers. Courses generally entail a combination of intensive classes (up to five days in duration) and weekly evening classes. Approximately one-quarter of the 300 LLM students this past year were “remote learners” who attended via two-way videoconferencing delivered directly to the student’s desktop computer. They included students from every province in Canada, the United States, Barbados, Bermuda, Singapore, the United Arab Emirates and Belarus.

We talked to three busy Professional LLM students about their time in the United Arab Emirates and Belarus.

Alireza Naghavi Cohen

Al Cohen, an oil and gas executive from Houston, Texas, began the Osgoode Professional LLM in Business Law in the winter of 2010 and will convocate this fall. “At first I was reluctant and skeptical as to how the program would evolve, however it turned out to be the best educational, intellectual, and inspirational experience of my professional career,” says Cohen. “The combination of terrific professors, diverse, knowledgeable peers and in-depth cogent analysis of subject matter gave me a broader perspective, influencing my decisions in my role as VP of Business Development for Imenco.”

Prior to starting the Professional LLM in Business Law, Cohen – a United States citizen who has an MBA degree from Tulane University – had completed the Oxford Global Investment Risk Management Programme at the University of Oxford’s Said Business School.

A non-lawyer wanting to learn about Canadian law, he checked out a number of law schools and ultimately chose the Osgoode Professional LLM in Business Law because he says it was flexible and affordable. He has frequently participated in the program in person in Toronto, but he has also attended classes remotely from Brazil, Germany, Norway, Malaysia and the United States. Cohen has been impressed with the many different perspectives that both the instructors and the participants have brought to the program. “You learn, achieve and grow in a wonderful collegial environment,” he notes, adding that the LLM program has personally given him “confidence and knowledge.”

“Remotely, it’s remarkable what they can do. They have really great tech support. It feels like you’re in the class.” Kelly Hynes

Kelly Hynes

Originally from St. John’s, lawyer Kelly Hynes moved to the small town of Happy Valley-Goose Bay in Newfoundland and Labrador in January 2011 to continue her job with the Newfoundland and Labrador Legal Aid Commission. She has since transferred to the Department of Justice, Civil Litigation Unit in the same town.

Frequent travel to hearings in various remote aboriginal Labrador communities keeps her busy. Yet the young, bilingual lawyer has also found time to pursue Osgoode Professional LLM studies from her east coast location. She has come to Toronto a few times – she raves about an ADR intensive class with Osgoode Professor Paul Emond and Adjunct Professor Leslie MacLeod – but participates in most of her classes via videoconference. “Remotely, it’s remarkable what they can do,” says Hynes. “They have really great tech support. It feels like you’re in the class.”

Hynes, who graduated with a Bachelor of Laws degree from the University of Moncton in 2010, started in the General Legal Aid Commission. She has since transferred to the Municipal Department of Justice, Civil Litigation Unit in the same town. “I think it’s important to challenge yourself to learn and keep growing in your career,” the 28-year-old says. “As a really young lawyer, it’s hard to compete with other lawyers who have years and years of experience. I believe the LLM will open up a lot of professional doors for me.”

For more information about the Osgoode Professional LLM Program, please visit http://www.osgoodepd.ca/pt-llm.html
From the Director...

The coming year will be one of new learning and teaching opportunities for more professionals than ever before. We’ll be launching new certificates in areas as diverse as compliance for financial institutions and workplace health and safety law. For the first time, you’ll be able to try out the Professional LLM by taking a single course. You can attend the annual Search and Seizure Law conference in Banff this year—or the Procurement Law Certificate—in Whitehorse. The Madoff scandal whistleblower, Harry Markopolos, will join us for a Toronto breakfast session in October. Staff in organizations including the Ontario Securities Commission and the Office of the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth will attend in-house programs designed by OPD. New remote learning technology and a new Web presence, slated to come onstream in early 2013, will bring you more online learning—and teaching—opportunities, both live and asynchronous.

At OPD, our mission is to meet your needs and explore new ways to help you meet your professional challenges. Have an idea? Drop me a note at vwatkins@osgoode.yorku.ca.

Victoria Watkins
Director, OPD

When Jon Faulds graduated from law school at the University of Alberta in 1978, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms had yet to be enacted. Faulds, who has practised law in Edmonton since 1980 and joined the firm of Field Law in 1988, saw his practice expand over the years to include more and more Charter-related cases. He felt he was at a disadvantage never having studied the Charter. “I always felt a little bit insecure that I had no academic grounding in the Charter,” says Faulds whose practice focuses on aboriginal law, constitutional law, and class or mass actions.

To fill what he describes as “a significant gap in my legal education,” Faulds decided to enroll in the Osgoode Professional LLM in Constitutional Law. He came to Toronto to attend three intensive courses and did the rest of the LLM program via videoconference. His very first intensive class in constitutional theory was with Osgoode Professor Allan Hutchinson. “He just blew my head off,” Faulds says. “The class was exciting, challenging and a lot of fun. He provoked me into looking at the law in ways I hadn’t looked at it before.”

Faulds’ enthusiasm for the LLM has spilled over to fellow Field Law partner Daniel Carroll, Q.C. who is currently enrolled in the LLM in Civil Litigation and Dispute Resolution. Faulds, who received his LLM degree at Spring 2012 Convocation, says he feels an added degree of confidence now when dealing with constitutional issues. “I have a broader and deeper understanding of the issues and how the court views them than I did before.”

P. Jonathan Faulds, Q.C.

Lori Borovoy, Risk Manager at Central Community Care Access Centre, which provides home and community health care services, recently took Osgoode Professional Development’s Mental Health Law Certificate Program. “It was an absolutely phenomenal course,” says Borovoy who has also been on the other side of the fence as a faculty member in the Health Law Certificate Program.

So, what’s a Certificate Program? One of the most valuable learning opportunities for lawyers and other professionals to come along in some time, that’s what. “Certificate programs, which are a unique package of practical legal education, industry knowledge and skills training, have been growing exponentially,” says OPD Director Victoria Watkins. “We started with one in 2008 – the Mental Health Law Certificate Program – and the demand has been so great that we now have more than 20.”
At the helm of OPD’s Certificate Programs is Senior Program Lawyer David Thomas whose background is in teaching. “This is something I’m really interested in, developing curriculum and working with faculty,” Thomas says. “It’s a lot different from a one or two-day conference. It’s very gratifying.” Employment law, mining law, procurement, pension law, labour law, workplace health and safety and construction law are examples of some of the Certificate Programs that OPD offers. What the Certificate Programs have in common is that they are five or six days long, which is sometimes spread over weeks or months. They are each backed by a four to seven-person Advisory Board, a who’s who of experts from all sorts of backgrounds. The students in these Certificate Programs are evaluated on their skills for a specific work or practice context.

Mary Jane Dykeman ‘96, a Partner at Dykeman Dewhirst O’Brien LLP, a Toronto health law boutique, has been the Program Director of the Mental Health Law Certificate Program since its inception in 2008; she now shares those duties with her law partner, Kate Dewhirst. It’s their job to set the tone and make it a cohesive program. That means weaving together a series of modules each consisting of five sessions a day and four or five faculty. “The faculty are people who are very knowledgeable, who are great speakers and who are highly responsive to the students,” Dykeman says.

One of the things that never fails to impress Dykeman is the students’ diverse backgrounds. The program attracts lawyers, front-line mental health workers, peer support workers, police, case managers, regulated health professionals who work directly with clients, physicians, psychiatrists, panel members on health tribunals, staff from health regulatory colleges, and so on. “That makes for a very rich learning environment, which we really enjoy,” Dykeman says. “We learn from them and they learn from us.”

A number of the OPD Certificate Programs are specifically directed at non-lawyers – people who need an understanding of the law in a particular area for their jobs. That means that for those participants or instructors who are lawyers, the Certificate Programs can be good for a new business development. “It’s a long enough period of time together to build relationships,” Watkins says. Another interesting phenomenon, Watkins says, is the growing number of organizations that have partnered with OPD in Certificate Programs including a certificate in adjudication in partnership with the Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators (SOAR), a certificate in providing expert testimony with the International Property Tax Institute and several certificates with the Human Resources Professionals Association. OPD has also delivered certificates through other institutions including the Caribbean Procurement Institute and Yukon College. Several new partnerships are in development. OPD Certificate Programs deliver practical, focussed learning to the participants or instructors who need legal education or skills for a specific work or practice context. All indications are that demand for these unique programs will only continue to grow.

At the University of Toronto, the Certificate Programs are housed within the Office of Professional Development (OPD). OPD runs over 70 certificate programs, and its work has been recognized with a variety of awards, including a Certificate of Distinction from the Canadian Bar Association.

The OPD Certificate Programs are also capped. The number of people who can attend teaching in the Certificate Programs. The OPD also offers a Certificate Program in Social Justice through Law (CPSJL). The program is designed to provide a comprehensive curriculum and working with faculty who are very knowledgeable, who are great speakers and who are highly responsive to the students. The program attracts lawyers, front-line mental health workers, peer support workers, police, case managers, regulated health professionals who work directly with clients, physicians, psychiatrists, panel members on health tribunals, staff from health regulatory colleges, and so on. “That makes for a very rich learning environment, which we really enjoy,” Dykeman says. “We learn from them and they learn from us.”

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The William Osgoode Society was established to honour Osgoode’s most generous donors. Named after the first Chief Justice of Upper Canada, the Society recognise the contributions of donors who are committed to upholding our tradition of academic excellence by supporting the Law School’s mission.

Membership in a society is based on paid gifts in support of Osgoode Hall Law School during the University’s last fiscal year.

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The Thomas Brown Phillips Society was created to commemorate Thomas Brown Phillips Stewart (1865-1892) who was admitted to Osgoode Hall as a student-at-law in Michaelmas Term in 1888. Sadly became ill and died at the age of 27 before he could graduate. He left a portion of his estate to establish a student library at Osgoode Hall Law School, which later became the largest law library in Canada.

Society

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We would be pleased to discuss with donors and their advisors, the many areas within the Law School where bequests can be directed. We do appreciate the opportunity to review the terms of the Will especially for specific bequests before they are finalized, so that we can confirm our ability to accept and fulfill the gift's intent.

For more information, please contact Anita Herrmann, External Relations & Communications Office at 416-736-5364 or aherrmann@osgoode.yorku.ca.

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