

**UNIVERSITY COUNCIL
ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE
FOR INFORMATION ONLY**

PRESENTED BY: Kevin Flynn, Chair, Academic Programs Committee

DATE OF MEETING: November 17, 2016

SUBJECT: Nunavut Offering of the Juris Doctor (J.D.) Program

COUNCIL ACTION: For information only

CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND:

The College of Law has entered into an agreement to provide legal education to a single cohort of students in Iqaluit, Nunavut. The degree awarded will be the existing University of Saskatchewan Juris Doctor (J.D.). The primary differences for this offering will be the admission process and the addition of a preparatory year.

DISCUSSION SUMMARY:

The College of Law will accept a maximum of 25 students into a single cohort in Nunavut. These students will be in addition to the usual intake of students in Saskatoon. Students entering the program in Nunavut will not be required to take the LSAT nor will they be required to have the minimum 60 credit units of post-secondary education that is required for students applying to the College under the normal admission category. Students entering the Nunavut offering will apply under the Special Admissions category and will be required to complete a timed, invigilated writing exam meant to serve as a substitute for the LSAT and will need to provide three letters of reference.

The program will be delivered over four years, with the first year containing 30 credit units of prerequisite courses designed and offered by the College of Law to encourage student success over the next three years, during which they will take courses as part of the J.D. program proper. The courses offered during the first year will be delivered as Special Topics courses.

This offering will be delivered in Iqaluit, Nunavut, with most courses being offered in classroom space provided by Nunavut Arctic College. Students accepted as part of this initiative will study in Iqaluit, though some classes may be taken through e-learning or

other distance learning methodologies, or by physically attending the College of Law at the U of S.

APC first considered this as an item that might need to be referred to Council for decision, but the committee's policy consultation revealed that the program, which is not a new program, required only College of Law approval. APC discussed this offering at its October 25, 2016 meeting.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Information regarding the Nunavut Offering of the J.D. Program



UNIVERSITY OF
SASKATCHEWAN

Information for the Academic Programming Committee

INTRODUCTION

This is not a proposal for a Program change. This is information being provided to ensure that the Academic Program Committee and Council are aware of new developments at the College of Law.

Summary

The College of Law has entered into an agreement to provide legal education to students in Iqaluit, Nunavut. The degree awarded will be the existing University of Saskatchewan JD. The requirements for students to complete the JD are unchanged. The primary change is in the admission process, and of course in the geographic location. The College of Law will be working closely with the Arctic College of Nunavut and the Government of Nunavut to secure classroom space, student funding and living space for students. A single cohort of students will be admitted, with an expected graduation date of Spring 2021.

The JD requires 90 credit units, which are typically taken over three academic years. Students admitted through this initiative will complete the identical requirements as students taking classes in Saskatoon at the College of Law. In addition, students admitted through this initiative will complete two additional requirements, which flow from the admission process not requiring previous post-secondary education or a Law School Admittance Test ('LSAT') score. These two requirements are the successful completion of 30 post-secondary credit units which the College of Law will offer in Nunavut and a timed, invigilated writing exam meant to serve as a substitute for the LSAT.

Detailed Description

The agreement we have entered into is to accept up to a maximum of 25 students. These students will form a single cohort. This is a one-time program offering. The (maximum) 25 students will be accepted in addition to the College of Law's usual intake of students.

The purpose of this initiative is to incorporate contemporary law and Inuit traditional law. It is intended to produce graduates who can practice in a number of fields of law "on the ground" in Nunavut, although they will be able to apply for admission to any bar in Canada. This initiative is intended to increase access to justice in Nunavut and contribute to a representative work force within all levels of government in Nunavut.

The College of Law plans to invite applications for this initiative without requiring applicants to write the Law School Admittance Test ('LSAT') and without requiring applicants to have already undertaken post-secondary education.

The JD requires 90 credit units, which are typically taken over three academic years. Students admitted through this initiative will meet the identical requirements. In addition students admitted through this initiative will complete two additional requirements which flow from the admission process not requiring previous post-secondary education or an LSAT score.

The College of Law currently has three categories of admission: Regular; Aboriginal and Special. The Special category currently allows for admission of students with no LSAT score and fewer than 60 post-secondary credit units (which is the minimum number of credit units permitted in the Regular category).

Special Admission

The Admissions Committee will consider special applicants based on the Committee's assessment of the applicant's ability to cope successfully with the requirements of the JD Program. LSAT score is usually given significant weight. There is no formal quota under this category, but the number of seats are limited. Applicants under this category must complete all steps

in the regular application proves and provide additional documentation that includes:

- a) A statement explaining the nature of their educational disadvantage (which may include first language other than English, barriers resulting from ethnic or racial background, employment impairment, significant interruption of post-secondary education)*
- b) Relevant supporting documentation such as medical reports.*
- c) Details of any relevant occupational experience or community involvement.*
- d) Two or three supporting letters of reference.*

This admissions template for the College of Law indicates the “LSAT score is usually given significant weight”. The accreditation authority (the Federation of Law Societies) permits the College of Law to accept students with fewer than 60 post-secondary credit units, and without an LSAT score, provided that an explanation is provided.

An LSAT score is not being required for this initiative for two reasons. One is a lack of accessibility. The LSAT is administered four times per year (with additional dates to accommodate those who cannot write on the set date for religious reasons). The test is written many centres in North America and beyond. It is not administered in Nunavut. This presents a significant practical barrier to writing the LSAT for those living in Nunavut. In addition, the college of Law is not convinced that the LSAT is culturally unbiased for Inuit individuals. Therefore, the decision was made to not require applicants to write the LSAT. As a substitute however, the College of Law will work with the Nunavut Arctic College to administer a timed invigilated writing test as part of the application process. This test will be made available in every community in Nunavut. The purpose of the writing test is to determine applicants’ ability to recognize, consider and evaluate evidence they have been presented with, to solve the problem they have been presented with using logic, and to effectively communicate their proposed resolution.

The program will be delivered over four years and will be structured as a ‘1+3’ program requiring one year (30 credit units) of prerequisite courses, followed by three full-time years of 30 credit units each. This

is a summary of the 30 credit units of preparatory law classes that will be offered as a special topics course. Approval will be obtained for each course in the usual way.

Courses [Tentative]

Writing and Research – 6 c.u.

Land Claims Agreement – 6 c.u.

Mindfulness, Wellness, Reflective Practice – 6 c.u.

History (Inuit history; Inuit-government relations) – 3 c.u.

Introduction to Legal Systems – 3 c.u.

Introduction to Social Research – 3 c.u.

Dispute Resolution and Negotiations – 3 c.u.

Supports will be provided to students in the participating in this initiative, including peer mentoring, instructor and administrative mentoring, cultural advice and encouragement from members of the legal profession. The College will be working with NAC with respect to other student support services and amenities that may be available for students in this program.

Applicants must submit their applications by December 31, 2016. Acceptance decisions will be made early in 2017. Applicants who are accepted into this initiative will have to successfully complete 30 specific post-secondary credit units during the 2017-2018 academic year. These 30 specific credit units will be designed by the College of Law, and delivered by the College of Law in Iqaluit, Nunavut.

As a result, although students admitted through this initiative need not have post-secondary education at the date of acceptance, they will each have successfully completed a minimum of 30 post-secondary credit units prior to commencing the 90 credit units, which make up the standard JD curriculum. All students admitted through this initiative, including those who may have already earned 60 or more post-secondary credits, will be required to successfully complete these 30 credit units. In addition to providing a common minimum level of competency, this academic year is intended to support this cohort of students as they assist each other in developing the skills necessary to becoming a successful law graduate in Nunavut.

Beginning in 2018-2019, students admitted through this initiative will begin to undertake courses, which make up the 90 credit units required for the JD.

The majority of these courses will be taken in classroom space provided by the Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit, Nunavut. Students accepted through this initiative will physically be located at the Nunavut Arctic College in Iqaluit, Nunavut, although some classes may be taken through e-learning or other distance-learning methodologies, or by physically attending at the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan or elsewhere.

Students accepted through this initiative will be required to adhere to Nunavut Arctic College's policies. Students in housing provided by the Nunavut Arctic College will have to abide by their housing policies. It will also be necessary for all students to adhere to relevant policies of the University of Saskatchewan, such as the *Regulations on Students Academic Misconduct* and the *Standard of Student Conduct in Non-Academic Matters*. Policies and regulations of the College of Law and the University of Saskatchewan with respect to examinations, assessment, accommodation for examinations and other academic matters will also be applied.

Students admitted pursuant to this initiative will be University of Saskatchewan students, although for most or all of their studies they will not physically be located on our campus. Successful students will be entitled to convocate with their graduating classmates at the College of Law convocation, although another ceremony in Nunavut will also be held.

Faculty

Teaching faculty will include University of Saskatchewan College of Law faculty, and also faculty from other Canadian Colleges of Law. We have already received offers to teach from several senior Canadian law professors. A Director will be hired to oversee day to day operations in Iqaluit.

BUDGET

Separate funding is being provided by the Government of Nunavut for this initiative.