

Law Teaching Network Project Summary

Individual instructor level:

- **Faculty Learning Communities (FLCs)**

2010-2013

During this period, 31 law faculty participated in eight FLCs. The FLCs were intended to be environments in which dialogues about teaching and learning would occur among colleagues at all career stages and where innovative educational practices would be developed. The FLCs addressed multiple topics based on faculty interests: learning-centered course re-design, advancing teaching and research, teaching and learning with technologies, sharing and developing active learning strategies, peer observation in the classroom, and assessment.

Workshops and events:

- **Teaching portfolio workshop**

Eight law professors attended a workshop in which they worked with law-specific examples of exemplary teaching portfolios. (Dec. 2010)

- **Teaching strategies workshop**

Twenty-nine Law instructors attended two workshops in which they learned about active learning strategies for legal education, and considered ways to incorporate these strategies in their courses. (Aug. 2011 and 2012)

- **Assessment methods workshop**

A total of eighteen law instructors attended an annual workshop in which they explored best practices for assessment of student learning and reviewed a range of assessment materials and methods in legal education, including McGill Law-specific examples. (Nov. 2011 and Aug. 2012)

- **Faculty of Law retreat**

A highly successful 1.5-day retreat occurred in the first year of the project. Evidence collected in the context of the LTN project led to activities promoting meaningful, data-driven discussions involving everyone concerned. Topics included program outcomes, the curriculum, students, and reflecting upon the LTN program's first year and next steps. (June 2011)

- **Experiential learning and critical reflection day (May 4, 2012)**

Dr. Patti Clayton visited the Faculty of Law for a series of legal education activities specifically organized around experiential learning, integrating clinical and internship experiences and critical reflection. She presented a plenary, "Designing Experiential Education as an Approach to Scholarship," and a workshop, "Generating, Deepening, and Documenting Learning: The Power of Critical Reflection in Experiential Education/Service-Learning." (May 2012)

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- **“Indigenous Law in the World – Research, Pedagogy, and Application” (February 18, 2013)**

A presentation on indigenous education in the Moot Court was offered by visiting scholars Dr. Val Napoleon (Law Foundation Professor of Aboriginal Justice and Governance at the University of Victoria’s Faculty of Law) and her colleague, Hadley Friedland. The talk was specifically intended to move forward the Faculty’s continuing reflections on how to expand the transsystemic program beyond the common and civil law traditions. (Feb. 2013)

Follow-Up:

This workshop has resulted in three initiatives that will move the Faculty forward on contemporary issues in indigenous law over the next couple of years. McGill Law students will have the opportunity to participate in a collaborative research project with Professor Val Napoleon of the University of Victoria in a summer course, or in a cross-university seminar (via videoconference) on integrating legal traditions that involves student responses to faculty papers and discussion. Further, law instructors at McGill and University of Victoria may contribute to a special issue of the *Canadian Legal Education Annual Review* focusing on teaching across legal traditions.

- **Workshop on Interdisciplinary Teaching (May 24, 2013)**

This event, with visiting scholars Dr. Joshua Cohen and Dr. Julie Haack, and co-sponsored by the Marcel Desautels Institute for Integrated Management and the CREATE in Green Chemistry, was specifically intended to move forward the Faculty’s continuing reflections on interdisciplinary and experiential/clinical teaching. The primary goal of the workshop was to generate ideas for developing similar interdisciplinary and experiential initiatives at McGill. (May 2013)

Follow-Up:

This workshop has resulted in four initiatives that will move the Faculty and broader University community forward on interdisciplinary issues over the next couple of years. A collaboration with the Social Equity and Diversity Education (SEDE) Office will permit students from across disciplines to work on governance questions with an aboriginal band; the McGill School of the Environment (MSE) will offer a cross-listed field course exploring environmental governance in Montréal; and an Engineering faculty member is preparing a course on green product design and bringing ideas from the laboratory to the market. Finally, teaching and research collaborations with the North American Consortium of Legal Educators regarding transnational environmental issues are currently being explored and implemented.

Faculty Grants:

- **Experiential/Active Learning fund**

Between Fall 2010 and Winter 2013, 29 proposals were granted funding to facilitate the creation of high-quality learning experiences for students. These grants have led to a variety of interesting course innovations in teaching pluralist subject matter across the Faculty, as well as funding guest speakers, a poster exhibition, and panel discussions on diverse topics such as international law and intellectual property.

- **Conference fund**

This fund is intended to make attending (legal) education conferences more feasible for instructors and teaching staff in the Faculty of Law. Sixteen proposals have been funded to date, including seven presenters from the Law Faculty / Law Teaching Network Project at the 2012 Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) annual conference.

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Faculty level:

- **Ad Hoc Committee on Curricular Reform**

Struck by the Dean in 2011, this committee met monthly during the 2011-2012 academic year.

Following the **curriculum inventory** process (an extensive process of consultation, benchmarking, and research synthesis), the group finalized the undergraduate **program outcomes** and presented them to the Faculty Council in December 2011. These programs outcomes are intended to help guide curricular decisions and ensure a more intentional progression of skills and knowledge through the curriculum, thus providing a more coherent student experience. Subsequently, the committee developed a **curriculum mapping** survey, summarized the information and facilitated follow-up informational meetings (Spring 2012). This has contributed to a growing awareness of the program outcomes and their implications for curricular decisions in the Faculty.

A new committee with the same name was struck for the 2012-2013 academic year to work towards building the Faculty's knowledge base and to consider possible pedagogical reconfigurations for the delivery of the first year program.

- **"Talking Teaching" Profiles**

A website was created to provide a portal for McGill law instructors to share ideas about teaching in Law. Since its launch in June 2011, nineteen "Talking Teaching" profiles have been added, and have also been linked to each individual's faculty member web page. The profiles feature McGill Law professors talking about various aspects of their teaching and students' learning, and are intended to provide a catalyst for discussion and reflection among colleagues within and beyond the Faculty. In Fall 2012, a "Teaching" tab was added to the Faculty of Law website. The "Talking Teaching" profiles, and three additional profiles created this year, are now highlighted in this new section dedicated to teaching (<http://www.mcgill.ca/law/teaching>).

- **Clinical Legal Education Working Group (CLEWG)**

This group assessed the clinical legal education offerings within the Faculty and undertook benchmarking of experiential learning initiatives offered in Canadian law schools. The working group sponsored the development of a course specifically designed to help students integrate their internship experiences with other in-course aspects of their curriculum.

In its third year, the CLEWG has developed a website that brings together the various clinical legal education opportunities at McGill, in a student-friendly format

(<http://www.mcgill.ca/law-studies/information/clinical-legal-education>).

Further, the group is considering various means of disseminating their accomplishments, and raising awareness of clinical legal education at McGill, within and beyond the Faculty, including conference presentations, seminars or discussion sessions during Fall orientation activities.

- **Dissemination**

The LTN project team, along with Professors Robert Leckey, Rosalie Jukier, Shauna Van Praagh, Tina Piper and Hoi Kong, presented legal education papers at the Society for Teaching and Learning in Higher Education (STLHE) annual conference, June, 2012. The LTN project team also presented at STLHE in June 2011 with Professor Tina Piper.

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Appendix

