

## Five Year Strategic Plan 2015-2020

### **Mission**

The mission of the Centre is to advance law and policy in the contemporary workplace.

### **Vision**

The Centre will be a leading force for innovation in law, policy and dialogue in the contemporary workplace.

### **Needs Met by the Centre**

Canadian law of the workplace is shifting rapidly in response to a range of forces including globalization, demographic changes, the human rights revolution, economic restructuring, and the recent constitutional entrenchment of a right to collective bargaining. These developments pose daunting challenges to policy makers, practitioners and academics in Ontario and across the country. How well employers, workers, unions and policy makers respond to these challenges will have a profound impact on our social and economic well-being. Sound research and education are needed to ground effective policy debate, administrative reform and community outreach initiatives, and to support innovative thinking on current and emerging legal issues.

However, recent years have seen a decline in the capacity of universities across the country to meet these needs, and a decline in the number of top students drawn to field as future practitioners, policy makers and teachers. For the intellectual renewal of workplace law, it will be necessary to:

- Continue to increase the number of JD students and graduate students drawn to labour and employment law and other workplace-related fields of law, by offering intellectually and financially attractive conditions of study;
- Identify and communicate, through teaching and research, the great significance of labour and employment law to the well-being of Canadians; and
- Seek to build strong and diverse inter-university research networks to plan and carry out sophisticated projects, and to obtain the funding needed for them.

## **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats**

### *Strengths and Opportunities*

No other Canadian law school has a centre dedicated to labour and employment law. The Centre seeks to contribute to reversing the long-term decline in research and teaching capacity in this field. Queen's Law has a record of national leadership that leaves it particularly well-placed to address the need for more and better teaching and research in labour and employment law. The Centre will take a broad and forward-looking approach to its field of study, positioning it to address the ever-closer interaction between traditional labour and employment law and such other fields of regulation as the law of corporate governance, bankruptcy law, immigration law, constitutional law and social security law.

The Centre benefits from an Advisory Committee representing a wide and balanced range of perspectives on workplace law. This committee will continue to provide invaluable guidance, and will enhance the Centre's credibility with external stakeholders. The Centre will draw upon its Advisory Committee to facilitate research partnerships and other joint activities with tribunals, community organizations, think tanks and government departments.

### *Weaknesses and Threats*

As is the case for most university research centres today, the Centre will rely upon new externally raised funds. The current economic slowdown will challenge the Centre's ability to meet its fundraising goals. The current faculty complement in labour and employment law at Queen's – the equivalent of one and half full-time faculty members, one emeritus faculty member, and several adjunct teachers - is not large enough to develop a complete teaching and research program. The Faculty is committed to hiring an additional qualified candidate in the field of workplace law.

## **Approach**

The Centre for Law in the Contemporary Workplace will provide leadership in the intellectual renewal of workplace law as a field of study, practice and policy, by:

- Facilitating high-quality research on emerging problems in workplace law;
- Educating the next generation of leading practitioners, teachers and scholars;
- Actively exchanging knowledge with those who have a stake in improving this area of law; and
- Reaching out to students to engage their interests in the study and practice of workplace law.

The Centre will aim to provide an intellectual home for the labour and employment law community, in Ontario and nationally. It will be committed to a diversity of perspectives, to multipartism, and to open and innovative inquiry. The Centre will continue to engage

an Advisory Committee representing a wide and balanced range of perspectives on workplace law.

The Centre has to actively seek stable funding in order to secure its future. Over the next five years Centre staff and Advisory Committee members will work with the leadership of the Faculty of Law towards raising an endowment sufficient to meet ongoing operating needs. Fundraising will include an active campaign to solicit private donations to cover many of the Centre's future costs. Individuals, law firms, unions, employers, employer organizations, foundations and governments will be approached as appropriate.

In addition, Centre researchers will make applications to granting councils for funds to support research projects and the development of research networks and tools for information sharing and dissemination.

The Centre will set its priorities carefully, to avoid both the danger of trying to do too much and the opposite danger of unduly limiting its aspirations. It will be mindful of succession planning, in light of its current reliance on a small number of key faculty and staff members, including emeritus faculty.

## **Goals and Objectives**

Contingent on obtaining the necessary resources, the Centre will aim to realize within five years the following goals and objectives:

### *Leading Research*

- Anchor collaborative research, within and outside Queen's on key contemporary challenges facing labour and employment law such as those identified by the Centre's Advisory Committee and listed in Appendix A to this plan.

### *Educating the next generation of teachers and leading practitioners*

- Support a high quality, research-intensive program of graduate studies;
- Ensure that the Queen's Law curriculum has the breadth and depth to address the issues of greatest significance to today's and tomorrow's workplaces; is multidisciplinary and pluralistic, responding to the diverse needs of students who expect to represent employees, unions and employers; concerns itself with problem-solving skills, such as relationship building and social dialogue, and with practice norms such as collegiality, civility and professionalism; and exposes students to work by the best scholars from Canada and abroad.

### *Active knowledge exchange*

- Hold, co-sponsor and actively promote regular conferences, workshops and debates on issues of importance.

- Open and promote a visiting speakers series to members of the profession and the general public.

*Reaching out to engage students, the profession and the public*

- Organize activities and programs such as career forums, moot programs, and mentorship programs that engage student interest in workplace law.
- Build an attractive and informative web site.
- Make use of videolink and web dissemination to make conferences and lectures broadly accessible.
- Develop courses accessible to members of the professional community.