



Statement of Support – Law School at MUN

The Law Society of Newfoundland and Labrador is mandated by provincial legislation to regulate the practice of law and the legal profession in the public interest. This mandate includes responsibility for standards of legal education and training for lawyers. The Law Society also has a general obligation to promote access by the public to legal services in both the civil and criminal justice systems. In accordance with this mandate, the Law Society supports the establishment of a Law Faculty at Memorial University.

A Law Faculty has the potential to have the following impacts:

- Attract legal scholars and students with academic perspectives that will enrich the legal culture of the Province, which has one of the oldest and most unique justice systems in the common law jurisdictions in North America;
- Bring significant academic experience and expertise to the examination of laws and court decisions in the Province, which for many years has had little institutional capacity dedicated to ongoing law reform. This requires dedicated, scholarly review of existing laws and the advancement of proposals for changing existing laws or for developing new laws in certain areas;
- Employ subject matter experts on faculty who may be a resource to Government and, by representation, the public, for some of Government's legal research initiatives or for specialized legal policy analysis;
- Provide a locally-focused forum for informed commentary and debate on national legal issues from a Newfoundland and Labrador perspective, or on legal issues at the provincial or local levels;
- Be a centre for learning in the law that can be accessed by Law Society members (primarily practising lawyers and articled clerks) for assistance with their own legal research and in fulfilling their Continuing Legal Education obligations;

- Present opportunities for partnerships or the pooling of resources among the Law Society, Government and the Law Faculty for more cost-effective improvements in programs or facilities;
- Advance programs to address problems of access to justice and legal poverty in our community by establishing faculty-supervised legal aid clinics in certain underserved sectors that can be easily accessed by members of the public;
- Provide an opportunity for the Province to become a leader in emerging and specialized areas of the law and to contribute to the advancement of legal ideas and knowledge throughout Canada; and
- Increase affordability of legal education for local students as potential members of the Law Society.

The Law Society believes that a Law Faculty at Memorial University will enhance access to legal education by residents of the Province and has the potential to give rise to real and tangible opportunities and benefits for the public and members of the Law Society.