

# nexus

THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO FACULTY OF LAW ALUMNI MAGAZINE  
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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF LAW

## G-Force

In the Global Professional LLM, learning occurs on both sides of the podium

The Path Forward  
Indigenous Initiatives Office turns 7



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### PLUS

Q & A WITH MICHAEL  
EMORY, CEO  
OF ALLIED REIT

CAMPAIGN FOR  
EXCELLENCE WITHOUT  
BARRIERS

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PHOTO BY MICHELLE VEE

Excellence  
is our strength,  
enthusiasm  
our energy

Hard to believe an incredible academic year is over, and we're busy planning for an even more remarkable one starting in August. I am looking forward to welcoming the next cohort of first year students and greeting all the returning students as well.

A special welcome to our newest faculty, Chris Essert and Gillian Hadfield, both teachers and scholars of international acclaim. They will contribute to the tremendous scholarly activity here at your law school, where on top of their contributions and scholarship, almost every day one can read an op-ed or interview in local, national, or international media showcasing the thought leadership generated by our faculty. We also discuss the big issues of the day through our panels and conferences. This year, I'm pleased to report we resurrected the annual Corporate and Commercial Law Conference, a jewel of our business scholarship for more than 50 years, and you can read up on this year's event in this edition of *Nexus*.

Another growing Faculty of Law initiative that is marking a milestone is the Indigenous Initiatives Office. Celebrating seven years, an auspicious anniversary in Indigenous cultures, we highlight it from its early days to the robust programming it features today.

And in keeping with our drive to innovate, our Global Professional LLM is bigger and better than ever, with new exciting concentrations and more executive graduate students from across the business and legal spectrum. Our cover story showcases the enthusiasm that fuels the teaching and learning successes of this unique program and, as you'll read, it's not just the students who are learning.

We had another spectacular Convocation, with more than 200 students now joining you to become a part of a remarkable and global alumni group. The Faculty of Law was honoured to have the Right Honourable Beverly McLachlin speak at the ceremony, and you can hear her [wonderful speech here](#). Read the fantastic Q & A with alumnus Michael Emory, founder and CEO of Allied REIT, a proud Canadian company, and of course, we have a number of Class Notes, one of your favourite sections to read.

All of this incredible activity—and much more!—has occurred in the Jackman Law Building, our beautiful home. Our students, faculty and community continue to benefit from the outstanding spaces made possible by the generosity of our alumni. And we are determined to continue to fill the law school with the very brightest and most deserving students, no matter their financial background. That's why I'm so proud to see generous alumni, such as Marcia Moffat and Campaign Co-Chair Mark Wiseman, step up with an outstanding gift of \$1M to their alma mater, including \$800,000 to support our students. The momentum to deepen financial aid continues to build and in this issue, we thank alumni from a variety of class years, such as Don Crawshaw, Lisa Talbot, Roslyn Tsao, Richard Shaw and Anne-Marie Sorrenti for their generosity. We are also very grateful for these early [supporters](#) and I hope we can add your name in a future issue too.

I never tire of telling the compelling story of the Faculty of Law, and the remarkable place it fills in Canada and the world. Enjoy this digital issue of *Nexus*, and have a fantastic summer!

ED IACOBUCCI  
DEAN OF THE FACULTY OF LAW

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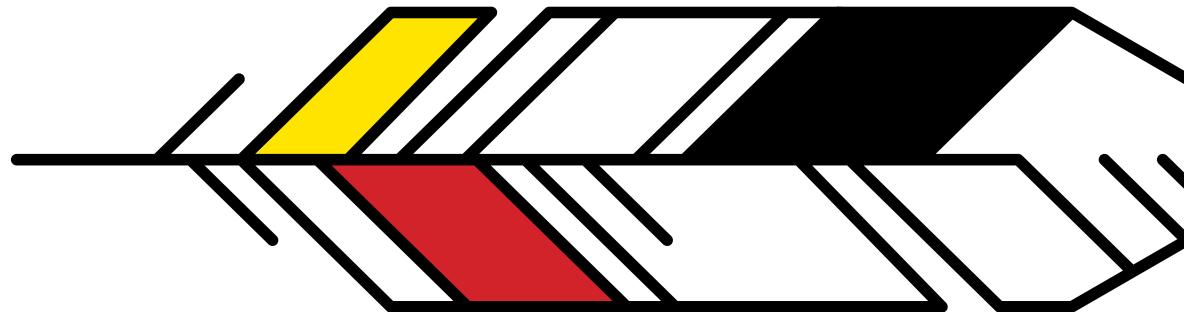
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*There's no question enthusiastic would be a word many people would use about me, and I think rightly so. I just love what I'm doing.*

**MICHAEL EMORY**



# The Path



# Forward

The Indigenous Initiatives Office  
celebrates seven years—and looks  
seven generations beyond

From small town Cochrane, Alberta to the hustle and bustle of Toronto, Nêhiyâw (Plains Cree) Zachary Biech left home in 2012 to pursue his undergraduate degree at U of T in public policy and governance, with minors in Aboriginal Studies and Russian—and to seek out community in the big city. The first person in his family to attend law school, he didn't make this decision lightly: Biech spoke to students and faculty at the Faculty of Law for a sense of what to expect. "I wanted to go to law school to become a lawyer so I can support Indigenous communities specifically. With its reputation for robust programming and the Indigenous and ally on-campus community, I knew U of T Law was the right school for me."

Now entering his third year of law, Biech says one of the Faculty's offerings that caught his attention was the Indigenous Initiatives Office and its programming. Celebrating its seventh anniversary, the IIO—formerly the Aboriginal Law Program—was launched when the province began funding post-secondary institutions to engage in strategies to recruit, retain, support and graduate Indigenous students.

It's an auspicious year for the IIO, as seven is a sacred number for many Indigenous Nations. For some, there are seven sacred directions, seven stages of life, seven sacred teachings, sometimes called seven Grandfather or Grandmother Teachings as well as the Big Dipper Teachings. The Iroquois Confederacy's Great Law and other Nations' teachings speak of the core value of the Seventh Generation, keeping in mind those who are not yet born. There are many more teachings too, and they are as diverse as the First Nations and tribes of these lands.

In the IIO's launch year, the Faculty of Law hired an Indigenous lawyer to help provide a relevant, responsive law school experience to Indigenous students, integrating their heritage into colonial law and education to reflect their voices and needs. The IIO manager position has been filled consecutively by Indigenous-identifying lawyers: Lisa Del Col of the Temiskaming First Nation in Notre-Dame-du-Nord, Quebec; alumna Promise Holmes Skinner, JD 2013, of the Cape Croker First Nation; and currently, Métis lawyer and alumna Amanda Carling, JD 2012. Acting as the daily touchstone for students, Carling consults with students and colleagues to develop programs that address the challenges and barriers Indigenous students often face when attempting to merge into a colonial education system.

"We wanted to make sure Indigenous students had the supports they felt they may need while at law school and beyond—academic supports, housing, financial aid, academic accommodations, daily touch points including meaningful connections between the outside community and Indigenous youth—to provide a welcoming, inclusive learning environment," says Alexis Archbold, a lawyer and assistant dean of the JD program. "We also developed youth-outreach programs, like our week-long Indigenous Youth Summer Program. Youth were recruited from across Canada, often from remote reserves, to come to Toronto to learn about Indigenous law and how it interacts with settler law, gathering with Indigenous law students and academics. After three successful summers we are hoping to offer this again."

In addition, the law school has gone much further than the talk of “recruitment to completion”: the IIO is working toward implementing the [TRC's call to action #28](#), which calls upon law schools in Canada to provide skills-based training in intercultural competency, conflict resolution, human rights and antiracism. This, says Zach, is crucial. He's the co-president of the [Indigenous Law Students' Association](#) (ILSA), a role that led to his representing ILSA in the Faculty's 2017 TRC Committee where he attended meetings throughout the year and participated in committee decision-making focused on Indigenous issues at the Faculty of Law.

In the seven years since its official launch, the IIO's programming has become a robust commitment to supporting Indigenous students and creating community for them in the largest urban centre north of the medicine line. Indigenous students are encouraged to get involved in the community through externships offered at the Aboriginal Legal Services Clinic and fellowships available to Indigenous students to work at different community organizations and agencies over the summer. Last summer, Biech received the June Callwood Fellowship through the IIO.

“I worked at Aboriginal Legal Services as a research assistant helping the director write a legal textbook about Indigenous peoples and the Canadian criminal justice system,” says Biech. “This helped me build relevant experience and networks, which led to my job this summer. I'm employed at Olthuis Kleer Townshend LLP, one of Toronto's top Aboriginal law firms.”

He applauds the variety and relevance of the academic Indigenous-focused programming, citing the Certificate in Aboriginal Legal Studies and the June Callwood Fellowship for Indigenous students as “very enriching experiences focused on Indigenous legal issues.”

Striving to break down the barriers between large institutions and Indigenous students across the country, the Faculty of Law wants prospective students to consider the University of Toronto law school as their potential community. Many initiatives are in full swing, such as regular [blanket exercises](#) (public workshops on Indigenous-settler history and reconciliation), a “See Yourself Here” day specifically for Indigenous youth interested in attending law school, group outings with students, faculty and staff to powwows, and the involvement of traditional teachers and elders on Indigenous governance and ethics. Senator Constance Simmonds, of the Toronto and York Region Métis Council, has provided the students with guidance and a sense of belonging.

“Students often come from northern communities and might be in shock, feel isolated and disconnected from tradition, ceremony and kin. I want to make sure students' personhood stays intact, inside and out.” As an elder at the Law Society of Ontario with a professional background in health and wellness, addiction and trauma, Simmonds does her best to offer students stability and connection. She conducts bundle and medicine teachings as rites of passage, gathering students in a circle to talk and see each other, recognizing that each of them has a right to that space, as an Indigenous person in the law school. “I help students understand that bundles represent our ancestors, ourselves and the generations ahead of us. And that they are the first piece in their bundles.”

But the IIO is not just for and about Indigenous students. Amanda Carling takes its work directly into the classrooms, [co-teaching a course](#) with Professor Kent Roach about the prevention and rectification of wrongful convictions in the Canadian criminal justice system. “We need to look at the outcomes for Indigenous people in this system. Indigenous students don't need this training because they are already living this and doing wonderfully in the program, but this is training for the settler students so that the institution can respond further in a meaningful way to the TRC's calls to action. If we create a faculty that is prepared and educated, then Indigenous students won't have to carry the load of educating other students and professors, which is often the case.” That, says Carling, is the type of education IIO programming is all about.

What does the future of the IIO look like? Biech hopes to see an even greater increase in Indigenous presence and visibility in academic and extracurricular settings throughout the Faculty of Law.

“The IIO's recent National Aboriginal Day celebration event was my favourite to date, as it involved great food, friends and community members from within and beyond the law school, and a great hand-drumming lesson.”

Adds Biech: “The student volunteers, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, bring great energy and enthusiasm to the project and show a strong and growing sense of community coming together around Indigenous issues. I hope to see more space made for a strong curriculum focused on Indigenous laws and legal traditions.” ↗

Information about the 2018-19 [Indigenous Initiatives Office Speakers Series](#) is coming soon. You can view videos of past events on the [IIO YouTube Channel](#).