

Next stop Nunavut for UVic law

S tudents in the remote new territory of Nunavut will be able to earn law degrees from UVic through a partnership program that's the first of its kind in Canada. Financial support from the federal department of justice and the Nunavut government has covered the expense of developing the program and UVic's law dean Jamie Cassels is hoping potential employers of the Nunavut law grads will provide the additional funding to cover the program delivery. The target start date is September, 2001.

"There is nothing like this in Canada, maybe even the world," says Cassels of the proposal to send UVic law professors to Nunavut's capital of lqaluit to instruct a cohort of 10 to 15 Inuit students over a four-year program.

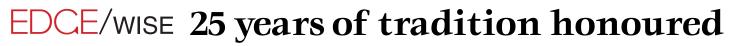
Nunavut's Premier Paul Okalik is currently the only Inuit lawyer in the territory. The Inuit, representing 85 per cent of the territory's population, want to increase their presence within Nunavut's emerging government structure and, since few are in a position to head south to law school, UVic will bring legal education up north.

Cassels estimates it will cost about \$30,000 per year for each student. He hopes to offer students the opportunity to receive a salary throughout the year whether they are studying or working. Cassels says about half the student costs will come from northern federal and Nunavut organizations with the remainder being sought from foundations and the private sector.

While admitting that UVic "is as far away as you can get" from Nunavut, Cassels says the territory targeted the university to be its partner. "They know we're small, student-centred and committed to Aboriginal legal education. They want the credibility and the legitimacy of a law degree from a southern institution and they really wanted UVic to do this."

The program's first year will prepare the students for the rigours of law study. Distance education through email and the Internet will be introduced as the program progresses. Cassels feels that using a cohort model (where a group starts and finishes a program together without the introduction of new students each year) will give the students additional support.

> Inuit culture and UVic law will soon merge in Nunavut. Law dean Jamie Cassels displays works of Inuit art.



Twenty-five years ago, 72 students crammed into a small classroom in UVic's McPherson Library and cracked open their law books for the first time. Since that intimate beginning, the university's faculty of law has built an enviable reputation as one of the best schools in Canada. In 1980, the law school moved into its own facilities, the Begbie Building, named after a pioneer of law in B.C. On Oct. 20, when the school celebrates its 25th anniversary, the building will be renamed the Murray and Anne Fraser Building, to honour the couple who pioneered law studies at UVic.

"The ideals and humane values that the Frasers brought to UVic still define and guide the faculty a quarter of a century later," says UVic law dean Jamie Cassels of the school's founding dean who died in 1997. Anne Fraser will attend the building dedication ceremony which begins at 2 p.m.

"Anne and Murray Fraser brought with them an unparalleled capacity for kindness and unselfishness. Their influence continues to be felt at UVic, especially their emphasis upon dedication to public service and the conviction that students are at the centre of life at the school," adds law professor Hamar Foster. UVic law has maintained the Fraser tradition of public service by being heavily involved in the community. The environmental law centre, the only one of its kind in Canada, gives students valuable experience conducting legal research for environmental and citizen groups. It recently launched a website and a guidebook *cleanair.ca:* A *Citizen's* Action Guide to assist citizens trying to make a case for cleaning up their atmosphere. The UVic business law clinic provides valuable business law information for a nominal fee to aspiring entrepreneurs, home-based businesspeople and small business owners thinking of expanding. The faculty's William R. McIntyre Award is awarded annually to a student who best combines academic excellence with community service and student leadership.

"The law school has always been student centred, innovative and committed to the excellence of education and the improvement of justice," says Cassels. "Over the years, every member of faculty has made a significant contribution to molding UVic law into a first rate academic institution."

The graduates agree. Three times in the past four years they voted UVic the top law school in the country in an annual survey by *Canadian Lawyer* magazine.



- UVic students will be able to study intellectual property law at Oxford University through a unique partnership among UVic, St. Peter's College at Oxford University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The program begins in Victoria in 2002, in Oxford in 2003, and will alternate between these two locations thereafter. Faculty, drawn from the three universities, will be the same in both Victoria and Oxford. Smart and Biggar, Canada's largest intellectual property law firm practicing exclusively in the field, has pledged \$75,000 over two years to support the program.
- UVic offers students the only law co-op program in Canada, integrating academic studies with relevant paid work experience.
 Since the number of qualified applicants always exceeds the available positions, law co-op positions are selected through a lottery.
- UVic law students produce the only law review in western Canada written, edited and produced by students, *Appeal: Review of Current Law and Law Reform.*

SHARPEN YOUR KNOWLEDCE

- Learn more about the services offered by UVic law's business law clinic and the environmental law centre at www.law.uvic.ca/
- Wondering how to co-ordinate efforts to improve the quality of the air you breathe? Check out the on-line citizens' action guide, managed by the students of UVic's environmental law centre, at **www.cleanair.ca**/
- Admire the stark beauty of the Nunavut landscape and learn more about Canada's newest territory at **www.arctictravel.com** with lots of photos and facts.

ON THE EDCE OF YOUR SEAT

Exile in the Hispanic & Italian World (Colloquium), 19 October 9:30 a.m.-4 p.m. 20 October 9:30 a.m.-noon Senate Chambers, University Centre A180

Politics of Cookies and Spam: Privacy and Surveillance on the Internet Provost's UVic Faculty Lecture by Dr. Colin Bennett (political science), 20 October 7:30 p.m. Centre for Innovative Teaching, room 105

Telling Stories: First Nations in Word, Text and Image

Centre for Innovative Teaching, room 105 *Readings* by Eden Robinson and Gregory Schofield, Oct. 27, 7:30-10 p.m. *Conference*, Oct. 28, 9 a.m.-6 p.m.

All events free and open to the public. For further information, visit the on-line events calendar at http://www.uvic.ca/events

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