

Brief history of the Faculty of Law's Common Law Section, 1957 to 1997

The University of Ottawa's Faculty of Law was founded in 1953. However, this new faculty offered only civil law courses because, in Ontario, common law was taught only at Osgoode Hall, in Toronto.

Created in 1957, the Common Law Section ended this monopoly that had been enjoyed by Osgoode Hall. In the early years, the section accepted only 44 students each year, compared with 180 in 1997. The number of professors grew as well during this period, going from 6 in 1957 to 32 in 1997.

From the beginning, the Common Law and Civil Law sections were separate administrative and academic units, although they shared the same physical space.

Until 1962, the Right Honourable Gérald Fauteux, justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, was dean of both sections. After Fauteux's death, the two sections were formally recognized as distinct units with the appointment of Professor Thomas Feeney as dean of the Common Law section and Professor Pierre Azard as dean of the Civil Law Section.

Another milestone was reached in 1977, with the addition of French-language common law courses. From the days when Upper Canada was first established,

English had always been the language of the courts. In 1976, however, the Attorney General of Ontario committed to ensuring francophones would be able to express themselves in French before Ontario courts. Thus, in September 1977, the Faculty offered the very first French-language common law course in Ontario, given by Professor Joseph Roach. The University of Ottawa and Université de Moncton, in New Brunswick, became the only two universities in the world to offer common law in French. The common law faculty now offered programs that would allow graduates to practise in French or in English, or for some—both official languages. The French-language program also contributed to meeting the University’s goal of serving the Franco-Ontarian community.

In the years since 1977, teaching in the common law field has changed considerably. However, during the early years, courses were designed mainly to prepare students for a traditional career of practising law. The program was very structured and comprised mainly a group of mandatory courses. Final exams counted for 100% of the final grade.

In the 1980s, the Common Law Section made changes to its policies and procedures in order to adapt to changes taking place in Canadian society at the time. For example, it changed its admission criteria in order to accept students from groups that had previously been ineligible for admission. Over the years, the Section also made changes to its teaching and evaluation methods to bring them into line with changes to various obligations arising in society, for example, those

resulting from the enactment of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* as well as those related to aboriginal rights. Finally, in 1987, the Section began providing students with choices in the courses they would take to fulfill their degree requirements.

Deans, 1962 to 1999

1962-1973 Thomas G. Feeney

1973-1981 Albert Hubbard

1981-1983 Alfred W. R. Carrothers

1984-1987 Albert Hubbard

1987-1994 Donald M. McRae

1994-1999 Sandra Rodgers