

Report of the Clinical & Experiential Education Advisory Committee

March 2019

Chair: Andrew Green

Members: A. Anand, A. Archbold, B. Bouwman, V. Chiao, L. Cirillo, C. Essert, S. Faherty, N. Gersh bain, C. Milne, S. Muscati, E. Satterthwaite, K. Snell, K. Wong

The Clinical & Experiential Education Advisory Committee has undertaken some significant work in recent years. The mandate of the Committee for 2017-2018 was to consider any new clinical opportunities and/or externships that come up over the course of the year. The Committee met twice. We considered the current challenges to and opportunities from existing clinical and experiential education offerings. In this report, we outline the nature of our offerings and then our recommendations.

Our clinical and experiential learning opportunities have grown in prominence and importance in recent years. For example, we have three in-house clinics: The Asper Centre for Constitutional Rights; Downtown Legal Services (with its six clinics); and the International Human Rights Program. The Asper Centre provides opportunities for about 10 students to be involved in cases and about 40-60 students in working groups on various issues. DLS has about 130 students per year participating in its programs while the IHRP provides opportunities for over 75 students. We also have about 40 students enrolled in externships with 15 partners, supported by an Externship Seminar. In addition, we have uncredited placements with different organizations as well as connections with organizations such as Pro Bono Students Canada.

One concern raised about the clinical and experiential education program was about how the program fits with the add/drop deadlines and attendance rules. The programs need to have certainty about the number of students participating as well as that those in the program are available when needed. There was concern that students would sign up for the programs and then drop several weeks later. Students, on the other hand, wish to be able to take advantage of the add/drop period to select their preferred array of courses. The Committee recommends that the clinics remain within the current add/drop deadlines but that clear language be developed to ensure that students are aware of the importance of their choice of participating in a clinic or experiential program and of their fulfilling their responsibilities within the program.

Given the nature of these offerings, the Committee discussed the need to ensure that first year students are made fully aware of the importance and breadth of these opportunities. There was some discussion of whether first year students did not fully appreciate the number of spots in these programs or the nature and value of participation in these programs. There is already discussion such as in orientation week, Welcome Day, a course selection session and a session run by clinicians by upper year students. However, the committee heard concerns about changes to Orientation Week programming that may have reduced understanding of the clinical and experiential education offerings. The Committee recognized

the need to ensure that the number and breadth of the Faculty's different opportunities are specifically highlighted such that students are able to make decisions based on consistent, accurate information. A commitment to such information dovetails with the clinic's need to achieve consistency in the add/drop context and helps promote the incredible value and learning opportunities the clinics and experiential learning programs provide. Methods of communicating this information could be a future objective for the committee.

Finally, the students on the committee raised some concerns they had heard of the need for greater feedback on their own performance. Clinical faculty agreed that feedback was a central feature of the clinical experience and outlined the nature of formative feedback provided to students in these programs.