

# WELDON

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*Dalhousie University sits on Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq.*





# What the heck is going on with our system of legal education??

Fabian Suárez-Amaya 3L

For whatever reason, I feel like I need to start this article with an apology. I want to be critical of our current legal education system. Yet this article would be much more forceful if I had given it its proper due.

This conversation deserves research.

Who are the biggest thinkers on pedagogy, and what the heck do they have to say about using standardized testing as the dominant form of assessment? Does standardized testing affect different kinds of learners differently? How many of our courses actually still rely on 100% exams? (Let's get some NUMBERS here, Fabian! Quit talking out of your ass!) Or perhaps, how many courses now include optional papers, but still include exam components of 70% or higher (which, for all intents and purposes, will be the determinative assessment)? Can we get some quotes from a prof or two? The Associate Dean of Academics? Maybe someone on the Faculty Council who sits on the curriculum committee? Hell, do we even HAVE a curriculum committee?

All of these questions are things I would have liked to have canvassed in this article. Unfortunately, I am a flaky 3L, and I will not answer any of those questions. But I'm writing this article anyways.

Why? Why do I besiege you with my uninformed and superficial analysis?

After five semesters of law school, I have now written 17 (seventeen!!) law school exams. 11 of them have been worth 100% of my grade. I don't think this is an effective system of assessment. The focus on learning to write for exams also raises the question of whether the system provides the best legal *education* it possibly can. I think it's worthwhile to add my voice to the critique of this flawed system, particularly as a graduating student. I hope to initiate some conversations, or to at least (temporarily) stave off the relentless, sludgy acclimatization that gradually

afflicts anyone who stays within an institution for any prolonged period of time. I would encourage others to pursue these conversations and inquiries further, or even to push back against these ideas.

I hope to do three things in this article. I'll first explain some of the flaws of exams as a final assessment. I'll briefly acknowledge some of the possible benefits of the exam-based system. Finally, I'll offer a scattershot offering of other various concerns I've considered over the past couple of years.

*“Exams don't work towards building a knowledge base.”*

Exams don't work towards building a knowledge base. Exams are a form of summative assessment. In “summative” assessment, the performance of the learner is evaluated entirely at the tail-end. In contrast, through “formative” assessment, the learner receives feedback on a performance or product, and demonstrates learning by incorporating that feedback. That's not to say summative assessment is evil or useless - it just needs support.

In a paper course, professors often require a research outline and a separate class presentation. The student receives a grade on their research outline, but also receives advice for what they can improve in their final paper, or “summative” assessment. For example, if you mangled your bibliography in your research outline, Professor Lazare will make it very clear. And then when you make the same mistake on your final bibliography, well, maybe that's on you this time. While helpful professors do go over hypos in class, that doesn't replace the actual process of receiving formative assessment.

Exams are an inherently unreliable form of assessment. They benefit those who are fast. They're more difficult for those who perform poorly under stress (and no, performing well under stress is not a requisite for all legal work). They don't account for illness or fatigue (yes, we're all tired during exam period, but the one person in the room who randomly woke up at 3 in the morning and then never fell back asleep will be hurt more than the rest of the group suffering from generalized exhaustion). Exams don't account for those who are thoughtful and critical, but aren't able to express it as rapidly. Further, for an individual who felt like they understood the course going in, but performed poorly, how do they evaluate their approach to the course?

They rely on an artificial time crunch. A friend of mine said it well, exiting a frustrating exam: "I think I just did a 2(a) analysis, a 2(b) analysis, and a section 7 analysis in like 35 minutes. Pretty sure each of those would be in court for about seven years in real life."

Which brings me to my next point. Exams don't *remotely* reflect realistic legal work. I have spent four months doing research for judges, four months working for a corporate law firm, and I am now closing up a four month placement at Nova Scotia Legal Aid. Beyond basic literacy, all of these positions asked me to use very different abilities. Whether writing a research memo, drafting pleadings (or simply reviewing massive amounts of discovery transcripts and document disclosure), or speaking for a client on a sentencing hearing, I'm never asked to transmit a maximum amount of information in a minimum amount of time. Even on time-sensitive items, the timeline is rarely so short as 3 hours - and when it is, the required product is rarely one where length and thoroughness are goals. On research questions with immediate turnaround, usually it's on a precise point of law.

“Exams don't remotely reflect realistic legal work.”

Exams have some strengths. Although exam season can turn the brain into a simmering stew of cortisol, it also forces many of us to dig deeper, work longer, and try harder than we ever have before. We can discover previously unknown reservoirs of resilience, energy and effort. However, I believe that final papers, or my first year memo, also pushed me in similar

ways, albeit in a less compressed fashion. There are also some (few, but some) areas of law which do require significant output in a time-sensitive fashion (insolvency law, privacy law "breach response", Crown-side cross examinations are three examples I can think of).

They're also practical. They provide *something* we can do to assess approximately how much students know about a course. If you come in knowing nothing, that'll be apparent. The difficulty is when many students know quite a lot, but have difficulty expressing it as well as they'd like.

I commend the professors who have started creating alternative options in their courses for students who prefer other forms of assessments. I do question the overall impact these alternative options can have when, as far as I have experienced, the amount of weight allocated to these alternatives ranges from 15% - 30%. In the 30% example, an A on your paper (wow great job!! Ya nice!!) and low C on your exam gives you a... C+. You just wrote a hella nice paper, but for all interests and purposes your understanding of the course is now "below average." I expect that faculty's hands are tied somewhat by national curriculum guidelines, and if so, I acknowledge the difficulty in creating change within a national body. I don't want professors to exclusively "teach to the exam", but I do appreciate that more and more professors are at least teaching students *how* to write law school exams. I have also been to several "faculty interview" meetings where I have seen professor candidates pluck the low hanging fruit of criticizing 100% finals, but without having particularly thorough or well thought-out plans for how they would assess in the alternative. I appreciate the efforts in this direction, but would simply encourage more.

Now I am left wondering the point of everything I just wrote. Suppose we do dramatically change our assessment? Does it really affect the culture of law school all that much? Does it really make any difference in making the world a better place? Is this a remotely worthwhile hill to die on?? I really have no idea. Law students might have better mental health. You might see different law students seeing success. You might see different kinds of people applying to law school. I am reluctant to make any actual assessment of the overall value of reform, but I also question why we would perpetuate a flawed system when we could also reform it. But perhaps I'm wrong - I can identify what I see as a flaw, but all the effort and time put into changing it could result in a new system whose overall outcomes (school culture, student body, knowledge

upon exit) aren't markedly different.

I commend the work of the students who have been working to shift the mandatory 2L moot course. I do think making the course optional is probably a good idea, but I am also just encouraged that students and faculty are motivated to be critical about the way that we do things, even if they have been ingrained for a long time. Similarly, the shift from one massive LRW class to three separate, smaller ones.

A few other thoughts. Has anyone ever made a really good case for the curve?

I think we should learn more practical skills. I appreciate and respect that law is a professional degree, but also a university discipline. Critical thought, theory and history are important. I'm also not suggesting that we force people to do "due diligence" contract review in Business Associations, or "doc review" in Civ Pro, although the schaudenfraude might be worth it. But when it comes to assessment, why not ask Business Associations students to draft a company's prospectus? Or draft a will in 1L Property? Or do a section 24(2) brief in Crim Pro? I hated the death-by-a-million-cuts assignments of Civ Pro at the time, but I appreciate that I actually learned how to draft a pleading and make a motion.

Why on God's good green earth do we not learn sentencing in Crim Pro or 1L Crim? Files rarely go to trial. Contested and joint-recommendation sentencings are a massive part of any criminal lawyer's job. I don't care if Jobidon vitiated consent in that parking lot - what subsection of 718 are we looking at, how can I use his pre-sentence report, and please tell me if the man has a prior and related record!

I also think students should be required to visit court and see it in action, early in the semester before things get too intense. Maybe make it a student choice: either civil or criminal. Or maybe require one matter at the NSSC/NSCA on Upper Water and one matter at Provincial Court. A brief descriptive reflection to follow up. Yes, trials constantly get adjourned and rarely go forward. But at the very least, students should go for an morning and actually SEE THAT IN ACTION. Attending a morning in Halifax Provincial Court and seeing 12 matters get adjourned would give pretty relevant context when learning about *Jordan*.

The "rite of passage" argument just does not hold any water for me. We should never maintain a flawed thing just because we've maintained it in the past, unless the rite of passage provides some *gain* or benefit to

those completing the passage! The argument that the curve "helps" is circuitous. The curve only increases grades if professors write exams so challenging that the class median is below 70% (shout out to my 1L Public Law midterm, where a 47% got you a "B"). The argument that we need the curve to tangibly stratify performance isn't persuasive. I don't believe in giving a universal "A for effort", but students could also be measured against each other without having a hard cap on the number of students who can achieve various grades.

*“We should never maintain a flawed thing just because we've maintained it in the past.”*

If you made it through this massive thought dump, you're either a champion or you're desperately procrastinating. I don't want to come across as bitter, although I'm sure I have. I'm someone who actually really enjoyed law school, although I was advised constantly in my first month that I would hate it. What bothers me is mid-April in second year when I'm oblivious to massive and important things happening in the news because I'm too locked in to cramming frameworks for Con Law. Or the massive, barren gap between my response to "How are you liking law school?" in September, October or November of first year versus how I answered that question in December or April of first year. Or when my burned-out brain decided in October of third year that I could put in way less effort, cram rabidly in December, and probably achieve comparable results - and that cynical hypothesis was vindicated. Idling, fairly clueless of what was going on, it was also far and away my least enjoyable semester. I don't really have any great answers. But I do have some critical thoughts and apparently a massive wordcount allowance from the editors, and I'd like it if we can try to create a version of law school that people can enjoy rather than endure.

*Fabian Suárez-Amaya is a law student in his final year of study. After graduation from Dalhousie, he will clerk at the Ontario Superior*



# Teaching to the Exam: Do It, Students Say

Reagan Seidler 2L

Come late March, the routine becomes the same in every class. Students ask how to apply a legal test in an exam setting, and instructors respond, “This is about more than the exam, but...”

There exists a stigma about openly teaching to finals. As Emmeline Reeves writes in the *Journal of Legal Education*:

“*Teaching to the test*. The phrase has become a largely pejorative label – synonymous with bad teaching – in virtually every academic setting. The notion is most often associated with teaching a scripted, narrowed and dumbed-down curriculum concentrated on memorization of facts and the lower-level thinking skills needed to pass standardized tests.

This perception is no less true in the context of the traditional law school education, where emphasis is on teaching students to “think like a lawyer.”

*The Weldon Times* reached out to see if students shared this cynicism. Perhaps unsurprisingly, those with grades and job prospects at stake welcome greater exam transparency.

“We all know how much the exam matters, so I think there should be heavy emphasis on what material will be tested and what professors want to see in an exam so we aren’t going in totally blind,” said Jackie Hartigan.

Feedback indicated a range of satisfaction with how professors currently handle exam transparency.

“I find a huge variation amongst professors preparing students for exams,” noted Ed Carmichael. “Some are amazing and others treat class less about a 3 month exam preparation course and more as an opportunity to dialogue about critical issues in law. Both approaches have their merits.

But of course, some professors don’t discuss exam content really at all, and that isn’t fair to students.”

The good news is that Dal boasts many professors celebrated for best practices in assessment. Students commended Rollie Thomson and Kim Brooks for

their use of assignments to give students a stream of feedback throughout the course. Professors Craig, Hadskis, Iftene, Metallic, and Shapiro were cited as doing an excellent job in making their expectations known, particularly through the frequent use of sample questions.

Student feedback also noted areas for improvement.

One suggestion is more forthrightness about what material is examinable. “Sometimes there is reluctance to discuss exactly what material will be tested,” Hartigan observes. “It can make studying difficult as you can go down a rabbit hole trying to understand a concept in depth and then not see any exam questions where you can apply that knowledge, making you wish you had allocated your study time elsewhere.”

Another is for greater use of in-class hypos. “The ideal method allows students to submit their sample answer before class for evaluation by the professor,” suggests Nick Foran. “Even if the answers aren’t marked, walking through the process allows students to understand how to properly conduct the analysis and apply the legal tests.”

Full-year classes like civil procedure are seen as particularly in need of early sample problems.

In the end, though, grades are curved – so does it matter? Definitely, says LSS President Ellen Williams.

“We talk a lot at Weldon about inclusion and wellness. This focus has to start in the classroom where students devote most of their time. I strongly encourage professors to be transparent about exam content. It’s a concrete way we can ease the stress of exam period, which can be overwhelming for many students.”

It’s also in line with Weldon values, Williams says. “Any unnecessary stress from the classroom will have its biggest impact on those already overcoming obstacles. Reducing that stress is key to making law schools more accessible.”

Of one thing, all professors are certainly clear: this year’s spring exams begin April 10.



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# The Kawaskimhon Moot

Maile Graham-Laidlaw 2L

From March 1st-3rd Schulich School of Law hosted the 25th annual Kawaskimhon Moot. It was the first time the moot has been hosted by Dalhousie since its beginnings at the University of Toronto in 1994. Kawaskimhon is Cree for “speaking with knowledge,” and this is part of what the moot encourages – coming together with different perspectives, experiences, and legal educations to try and reach a collective consensus. “Moot” maybe isn’t even the right word for this event; it is structured to incorporate indigenous customs of peaceful negotiation and traditional talking circles, rather than the standard structure of an adversarial moot.

There were six of us on the Schulich team, four 3LS and two 2Ls including myself. The extra-large team was one of the benefits of hosting. We engaged in consensus-based negotiations with students from 20 other law schools across the country, many of whom were Indigenous and all of whom were passionate about Aboriginal and Indigenous legal issues. We were split among five negotiating tables, and for the first time, one of the tables was bilingual. Each table debated the different aspects of the assigned problem: Indigenous child welfare, based upon the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal’s 2016 decision in the *First Nations Child and Family Caring Society* case (2016 CHRT 2), and Dr. Cindy Blackstock’s ongoing fight to get equitable funding and sufficient services to Indigenous children. The decision was released in 2016, and seven non-compliance orders have been issued against the federal government for failing to implement the findings and recommendations of the tribunal since that time. It was a topic that hit home for many, and which was perfectly timed given that Bill C-92, *An Act respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis children, youth, and families*, was introduced in Parliament the day before the moot began.

The problem is available online, but in short it was framed with two key issues: 1) what legal

mechanisms and frameworks are available to hold the government accountable to the CHRT decision and its obligations surrounding Indigenous and Aboriginal child welfare, and 2) what does long-term reform of Indigenous child welfare services in Canada look like. The CHRT decision regarded First Nations children on reserve, but there were representative parties with a stake in the proceedings that did not fit into that descriptor.

“*Kawaskimhon is Cree for “speaking with knowledge,” and this is part of what the moot encourages – coming together with different perspectives, experiences, and legal educations to try and reach a collective consensus.*”

Our team met with our coaches, Naiomi Metallic and Dana-Lyn MacKenzie, at least weekly starting in January. We discussed the issues broadly together, particularly the intersection of legal and extra-legal elements, and divided into three teams, each focused on a party. My partner, Natasha Schigas,



and I were representing the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), a representative organization for the four Inuit regions in the north that are party to modern land claim agreements. We researched and produced a position paper in response to the issues in the problem and made our best efforts to understand the overall position of the ITK in relation to the federal government, provincial and territorial governments, other Indigenous groups and parties, and the four Inuit regions. It was no small task.

At the moot, there were seven parties represented at our table, facilitated by Kristen Basque, a wonderfully kind and capable Mi'kmaq social worker from Eskasoni. She opened the first day of our negotiations by having all the participants sit in the centre of the room and engage in a talking circle, without desks or computers or other barriers. There were around thirteen hours of negotiation time from Friday to Sunday. At the closing ceremony, each table was to present their two best solutions on each issue, having hopefully reached a consensus.

One of the most valuable lessons from the experience was that no matter how much one prepares, you can't ever fully predict what will happen at a negotiation. When I say the subject hit home for many, I do not do so lightly. The standard challenges of a negotiation are further compounded when many of those around the table have the lived experience of being Indigenous youth in care. How do you try to quell someone's passion on an issue to reach a consensus when it is a critical element of their existence? How do you come to a consensus that works within existing legal orders when you are negotiating with parties that don't trust or want to work within them? Our table was unable to come to a consensus on a number of different points and concerns, but the discussions we had regarding the Canadian legal framework and experiences of Indigenous peoples within it were informative, valuable, and brought many different perspectives to the forefront.

I found, personally, that while negotiating around the table was difficult, negotiating and reconciling with myself was even more of an intellectual exercise. In law school, we are often entrenched in white, colonial legal orders and taught to operate within those structures. In order to perform the task at hand in this particular negotiation, you needed to work with thirteen other personalities and six other parties, bearing in mind the perspective of

the party you are representing and the history and context of Canada's Indigenous peoples, and mitigating your own visceral responses. As an Indigenous woman of Native Hawaiian descent whose family went to Kamehameha Schools, I understand some of the tensions and traumas of Canada's Indigenous peoples around child apprehensions and welfare, but I also fully accept that I don't have the lived experience in this legal context. It gave me grounding, but also highlighted tensions that I often feel in law school between bringing yourself and your perspective to the work, and being a good "law student." I found myself softening my approach and position often, and couldn't figure out why. It wasn't until I spoke with my father, David Laidlaw, who coaches the University of Calgary moot team, that I realized it was because we were hosting – I was being "too Hawaiian," as he joked, and focusing on welcoming.

*“Moot” maybe isn’t even the right word for this event; it is structured to incorporate indigenous customs of peaceful negotiation and traditional talking circles, rather than the standard structure of an adversarial moot.*

The overall experience of the Kawaskimhon moot was invaluable, and I'm sure my teammates would say the same. In bringing together students, coaches, Elders, and facilitators at a nexus between westernized legal structures and Indigenous law,

“In law school, we are often entrenched in white, colonial legal orders and taught to operate within those structures.”

the moot moves beyond the exercise of legal skill and creates a space for Indigenous perspectives. Many of the participants I spoke with mentioned that it was the most comfortable they had felt in their law school experience, which speaks to the importance of making space of Indigenous people and perspectives in the legal profession. There were frustrations, disagreements, and all the usual tensions you would experience in a negotiation, mixed with social interactions and a mutual recognition that everyone there cared deeply about these issues. It was one of the most empowering gatherings of Indigenous people I have experienced, and I am grateful for the opportunity.





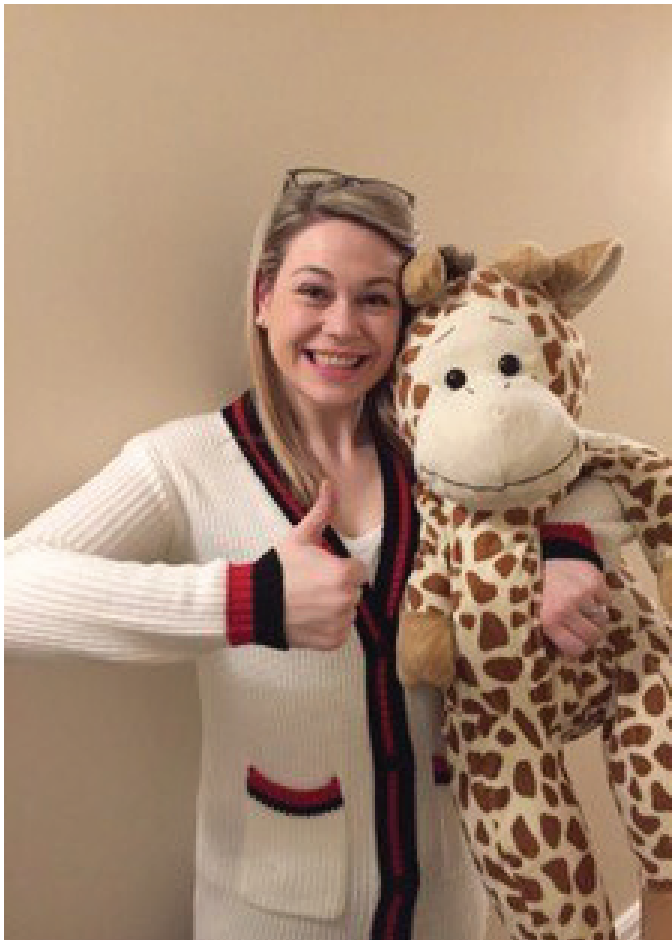
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# Candidate: Ellen Williams, 2L

Position:  
President (incumbent)

I believe our student groups – from DFLA to Law Games to the Black Law Students' Association – are a huge benefit to Weldon and deserve more recognition for the work they do.

I also believe Weldon will be at its best when all students, faculty, and staff know they are supported by one another.

My term-two priority is in building these relationships. For one, the LSS can do better communicating the information it has so students understand how and why decisions are being made.

The LSS can also do more to build bridges with and between societies. Much of what makes the Weldon experience so unique happens because student groups volunteer their time – SOCO's Law Ball, RAAD's Art Auction, even Orientation Week. The more the LSS can do to promote and support our student societies, the richer our time here will be.

Lastly, we need to keep up our advocacy to make sure Weldon continues reforms that improve the student experience. We've already had important discussions about better organizing the 1L curriculum and making civ pro more flexible for students with job interviews. These are big picture changes, but day-to-day concerns brought to us by individual students are just as important. I've always believed a focus on wellness starts at the foundation by making the daily pressures students go through as manageable as possible.

The work of the LSS is hard, but it's important.

As you look to the year ahead, I humbly ask for your support as we look to make Weldon its very best.

Serving on the LSS is not easy. Leading the LSS in 2L meant balancing the duties of President with civ pro assignments, recruitment interviews, and Pro Bono responsibilities. But the time crunch is true for many volunteer roles – one reason I admire so many of the student leaders we have at Weldon.

The true hardship of the LSS comes from the emotional toll it takes. The job often put us in a position where we need to make difficult decisions on issues where people can disagree. It sometimes meant standing up to the professors that taught our classes, or the staff we relied on to provide services. The hardest decisions came when student interests were themselves divided.

I am very proud of the LSS team we had this year. Each took their jobs seriously and weighed the information they had before them to make decisions they believed were in the student interest. As leader of that team, I am very confident that every decision we made was done to further the wellbeing of students, present and future.

My vision for Weldon is a positive one. I believe students deserve representation in every decision that affects the school and its reputation.



## Candidate: Daniel Roth, 2L

Position:  
VP Executive (incumbent)

Hi there! My name is Daniel Roth, and I'm running to be your Dal LSS VP Executive for a second year! I come to the east coast from Edmonton, AB, but as you might expect, I fell for the sea shortly after I arrived. Halifax has quickly become my new home, and I'm very pleased to be making plans to become a long-term Haligonian. I'll be heading into 3L next year, and I can't believe how quickly law school has gone by.

Before law school, I completed my Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Alberta. During undergrad I had the opportunity to do an internship on the Board of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, go on a study tour to China, and go on exchange to England for a semester. During the summers, I worked for a law firm in project management and had the opportunity to work on a variety of strategic, process management and client development initiatives.

This past year, my goal as Dal LSS VP Executive has been to lay the foundation to build a more engaged, more accountable, and more organized LSS. One of the main challenges student governments face is frequent turnover, which results in a loss of

institutional memory. This can be frustrating for each new team and the people they work with, as the new team spends much of their term working to 'reinvent the wheel.' Over this past year, I've been working to create processes to ensure smooth transitions, including holding debrief sessions with some of the major LSS committees after the conclusion of their events and developing a turnover template that's being rolled out as the year wraps up. My other major project this year has been updating and restating the LSS Constitution. The old document has served as a foundation for the new one, and I've drafted updates to ensure our Constitution reflects the realities of the current roles, responsibilities, and operations of the LSS. I've also worked to support the other VPs, helping with the LSS rebrand, working towards taking rolling evaluations paperless, and helping to support the growth or transition of various other initiatives. I've also been working to build strong relationships with members of our school's administration team so that we can work together to make your time at Weldon the best it can be.

If re-elected, my goals for next year are to continue to strengthen the LSS's governance structure to ensure clear communications and consistent expectations. I plan to do this by working with members of the LSS' executive team and committees to look for ways to streamline operations, and to employ the institutional memory we've developed this year. A lot of what I do is behind-the-scenes, but I've really enjoyed working with this year's team, and I hope to have the opportunity to keep #workingforyou next year. Let's see where we can go, together.

If you have any questions, feel free to send me an email at [daniel.roth@dal.ca](mailto:daniel.roth@dal.ca). I look forward to hearing from you!



# Candidate: Cydney Kane, 2L

Position:  
VP Student Life (incumbent)

**H**i everyone! My name is Cydney Kane and I am a second-year student seeking re-election as the Vice President Student Life for the Law Students' Society. I am from Bedford, Nova Scotia. I have a Bachelor of Science in Biology from Mount Allison University (wondering how I ended up at law school? Same!). I volunteer with the Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia through Pro Bono, and with several other local non-profit organizations. On weekends, I teach dance to kids.

The VPSL is responsible for running the LSS's online presence, overseeing student societies, and hosting laid-back events for the Weldon community. I love this position and want to hold it again, because it allows me to do what I love most about law school: work with all of you! In this role, I've been able to get to know so many of you that I otherwise might not have, I have shared in your exciting achievements and projects on our social media pages, and I have helped you enjoy law school outside of the classroom.

As your VPSL for 2018-2019, I have accomplished a lot of things that I'm proud of. These include:

- Expanding our reach on social media with 2 new social media pages (Facebook and LinkedIn) and acquiring over 400 new followers
- Leading a re-branding project for the LSS with a new logo, set of values, and list of services
- Renovating our website in line with accessible design principles, updating existing content, and adding 9 new pages to the site
- Building a new table booking and Square booking system that would both: meet our student societies' needs, and cost the LSS nothing
- Hosting a new Board Games Night event (in addition to coffeehouses) that I would like to see become an annual occurrence
- Creating a new society registration process for better oversight on our student societies to help them accomplish their goals in Weldon and beyond

If re-elected for 2019-2020, I want to continue to build on these achievements, refine them for continuation beyond my time here at Schulich, and come up with new ideas to improve your lives outside of the classroom. Please visit "Re-elect Cydney Kane for LSS VP Student Life" on Facebook to learn more or contact me at [cydneykane@dal.ca](mailto:cydneykane@dal.ca). Thank you!



# Candidate: Nicholas Foran, 2L

Position:  
VP Finance (incumbent)

record and receipts. These are organized and available to back up the data in the Society's budget.

**Accessibility** – Students should easily be able to access funding. I've redesigned the templates for LSS funding requests. These should more clearly highlight what is required for each type of grant, making it easier for the request to get approved. I also redesigned how the budget and general ledger look. This makes it easier to see where money has been allocated and spent.

**Efficacy** – We should be getting the best value for our money. I've worked hard with our Budget Committee to ensure we are moving resources to where they are most needed. I've also reinvested the security we have against the Society's credit card. While before it was earning about \$2 a year in interest, I moved it into a GIC. This will result in a \$500 payout in fall 2021.

**My Goals:** If re-elected, my goal is to accomplish the following:

1. Revise the Society's financial policies and regulations. In addition to needing some cleaning up, they lack detail in some critical areas. I want to ensure that the LSS remains a transparent and accountable organization.
2. Restructure our finances. Funding is one of the most frustrating things for students, societies, and even myself. We get our disbursement from the DSU each semester, but only after we pass an audit. This means we often wait until April to actually get our money for the year. As a result, I can't fund our grants. I plan to explore options so that the disbursement money is funding our next fiscal year, not the one just past.
3. Research a fee increase. Just hear me out on this one! The grant for the Burchell Award runs out in 2021. With a \$2-\$4 increase in fees per year, we could ensure the continuation of this award for the graduating class.

**My Experience:** I'm a member of the Canadian Armed Forces and have managed budgets of up to \$100,000. I've previously been the Treasurer for two student societies at Dalhousie: the Italian Society and Wellness at Weldon. Finally, I'm just wrapping up a year as your Vice President – Finance.

All of this has taught me skills I can put to use for the benefit of our students. I understand the importance of fiscal accountability and transparency. I know how to collaborate with others to draft and approve budgets. I'm familiar with how our society runs, and the relationship it has with other organizations, such as the Dalhousie Student Union.

**My Accomplishments:** I've been proud of my accomplishments during my term as Vice President – Finance. My goal was to increase the transparency, accessibility, and efficacy of our finances.

**Transparency** – You should know where your money is going. The Society's budget, general ledger, and bank reconciliations are now available on the LSS website. These are updates bi-monthly to ensure you can stay informed on how money is being used. Every Society transaction is now accompanied by a





# Candidate: Elizabeth Taylor, 1L

Position:  
VP Finance

As a 1L student, I recognize that my 3 years at the Schulich School of Law will go by very quickly. With that knowledge, I want to be involved in a way that uses my skills to contribute to the law school community. During my undergraduate degree, I started to develop an interest in finance and banking. I was reading a lot of finance books, blogs and watching personal finance tv shows. Some of you may remember the show, *Til debt do us part*. Even now, I get a lot of satisfaction from listening to finance podcasts and helping friends plan their budgets.

I think ultimately my role as VP finance (if I were elected) would be to use what I am passionate about to help the LSS and law students meet their goals. In the past I have been a part of budget planning for a research project where the goal was to make the project accessible to as many people as possible. Creating that financial plan allowed us to provide funding for aspects of the project that were most valuable to the team.

In addition to the regular duties of VP finance, I would like to bring more learning opportunities to the student body to aid in the development of personal and business finance skills. Speaking to recent graduates from law school, I have found that learning to manage personal and business finances after being a student is a challenge for many people that could be addressed prior to graduation. It is one of those things that at first can sound unpleasant but after you have the knowledge and confidence, it's a valuable skill that will help you in your personal and career goals. I hope that the Schulich school of law students will consider me to represent them as Vice President, Finance for the Law Student Society.



# Candidate: Meghan Faught, 1L

Position:  
VP External

My name is Meghan Faught and I am running for the position of Vice President External.

My motivation for running is very simple. I want to help! I want to make sure that all law students are informed about events happening outside of the law school that might affect them. Running for this position is not about me. It is about helping the student body to the best of my ability.

I will strive to incorporate an inclusive culture while representing the interests of the Society and its members to external organizations. I hope to continue the great work the former VP Executive has done, while making personal contributions. I can bring my own brand into the executive, and I think it would be great to have a second-year representative on the LSS. I can bring in a fresh perspective with a creative and collaborative approach that can be used to reach the goals of the LSS.

I have extensive professional experience coordinating teams of people. I also have experience in conflict resolution, mediation, and connecting differing opinions to reach a shared goal. I am confident in my ability to act as a liaison between the Society and various organizations.



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