



Letters from the LCC President

by Shauna Van Praagh

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As our four Law Commission of Canada summer students came to the end of their time in the Ottawa office, they were each handed tiny colourful squares of origami paper on which to write responses to the following prompts: What is something you helped “build” this summer? How do you see the Law Commission in “repair” mode? Do you have a “dream” for the Law Commission? Is there something special the Law Commission can or should “share”? Framed through the LCC’s overlapping vocations or four-point compass – Dream, Repair, Build, Share – the prompts invited our young jurists to tie together experiences, contributions, reflections and aspirations. What did they take with them after an intensive couple of months with the LCC? What did they leave behind?



Even if not articulated in the same way, the purposes and motivations of the members of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada (ULCC) can be mapped along the same four vectors. As they convened for their 107th annual end-of-summer meeting in Halifax, members of federal, provincial and territorial delegations enjoyed the opportunity to share ideas, build community, envisage repair, and do some dreaming. Everyone left with renewed energy, connections, and hope for a productive year ahead.



In the Criminal Law section of the ULCC, review and renewal happen through four days of focused conversation among prosecutors, defence lawyers, policy advisors and members of the judiciary. Recommendations for reform related to criminal law and procedure emerge by the end of the meeting, ready for further consideration in anticipation of formal revisions to the Criminal Code. In the Civil Law section, individuals from government, provincial law reform agencies, and the legal academy identify and delve into a



range of issues relevant to the daily lives of Canadians that might benefit from greater harmonisation and clarity across the country. Working groups reported on projects including the staying power of payment in cash for goods and services, effective procedures for class actions (for example in consumer protection cases), and revised approaches to defamation in the internet age.

The Law Commission of Canada is fortunate to be included as an observer in both the Criminal and Civil law sections of the ULCC. Being in two places at the same time provides a unique vantage point for appreciating the multiple ways in which change can happen and the diverse range of mechanisms available for directing the evolution of law. In the closing address of the Halifax meeting, the incoming president of the Uniform Law Conference of Canada, already looking ahead to next August, referred to the annual meeting as a *"tradition vivante"*. Participants in that living tradition - all of whom had demonstrated unflagging energy and goodwill over the week - took time at the end to review the progress they had made in what must feel like a never-ending building project. Then they waved a "next year in Winnipeg" goodbye to each other before heading home to prepare for September.

During a break in the five-day conference proceedings, I visited the tiny studio of Nova Scotia jewelry designer Dorothee Rosen. As expected, I found exquisite pieces of art in the shape of earrings and bracelets, rings and necklaces. Unexpectedly, I found a striking metaphor for meaningful engagement in law reform: a workspace characterized by dynamic innovation and improvisation, and filled with countless pieces and projects, ideas and influences. This is space that gives concrete form to imagination. It invites experimentation with tools of every shape and size, incorporates souvenirs and reminders of stories into the creative process, and displays evidence of day-to-day encounters and human interaction.



I returned to Ottawa struck by the ways in which the messy yet functional character of Dorothee Rosen's studio offers insight and inspiration. The Law Commission of Canada office doesn't quite look like a workshop occupied by a creative artist, but our summer students appear to have treated it as precisely this kind of space. This is where they exchanged stories, ate lunch together, read the news with an eye for law reform ideas, offered ideas for future projects, and delved into legal sources for projects already on the

go. The colourful squares with their handwritten messages have now been consolidated, leaving us with small, personalized and carefully designed pieces of a collection. Here is a small sample:

"I helped build a culture of learning and collaboration...I helped build the LCC's last What We Heard report...My dream for the LCC is that it continue to grow in its ability to reach and resonate with all

Canadians open to engaging with its work...The LCC could help repair artificial polarization and restore meaningful conversations about law...The LCC can contribute to rebuilding public trust...The LCC will continue to repair by daring to do things differently and to make the invisible visible...The LCC should share a love of law, the power of law for both stability and change, and a vision to inspire hope and interest...The LCC should share its ethos and reimagined view of law...I dream that the LCC becomes a fixture known by lawyers, judges, law students, and lay Canadians."

For the students, unlike ULCC participants, this was a once-in-a-lifetime experience. They won't be back at the end of this coming school year. One of the last things they did together was watch fireworks over the Ottawa River on a Wednesday night in mid-August. It was a special way to celebrate the end of a summer filled with hard work and unruly creativity and to look ahead and up with wonder and anticipation.

