



University  
of Victoria

JD/JID JOINT  
DEGREE PROGRAM  
IN CANADIAN  
COMMON LAW  
AND INDIGENOUS  
LEGAL ORDERS



# THE JD/JID—A UNIQUE AND TRANSFORMATIVE PROGRAM

*"We consider both of these initiatives (the JD/JID program and the Indigenous Legal Lodge) to be fundamental to the fulfilment of Truth and Reconciliation Commission Call to Action #50 and to the creation of the legal infrastructure of the nation-to-nation relationship in Canada."*

The Chiefs of the Assembly of First Nations, at their 38th Annual General Meeting in July 2017.

## JD/JID

The joint degree program in Canadian Common Law (JD) and Indigenous Legal Orders (JID) is the first of its kind in the world. Combining intensive study of Canadian Common Law with deep engagement with the laws of Indigenous peoples, students in the JD/JID will develop the skills needed to practice within Canadian Common Law, within Indigenous Legal Orders, and at the interface between them.

Students graduate in four years with two professional degrees: Juris Doctor (JD) and Juris Indigenarum Doctor (JID) and a rigorous understanding of Indigenous law and governance, the academic qualifications to pursue a career in Canadian Common Law, and the fluency to create and manage institutions functioning across both spheres.

## Indigenous Legal Lodge

The program will be supported and complemented by a new Indigenous Legal Lodge. The Lodge will be a national forum for critical engagement, debate, learning, public education, and partnership on Indigenous legal traditions and their use, refinement, and reconstruction. The Lodge will house both the JD/JID program and the Indigenous Law Research Unit, conduct research on Indigenous law, and stimulate discussion and engagement with Indigenous legal orders throughout Canada. It will serve as a global centre of excellence on Indigenous and customary law.



*"Indigenous law is the way that people make decisions in their communities and resolve their disagreements. The difference between Indigenous law and common law is that Indigenous people look to the land to find the principles for judgment, whereas the common law looks to old cases in libraries to decide how to act in the future."*

*"Indigenous law is about law and order, and creating peace between peoples."*

John Borrows, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law

## Learning in community

The JD/JID combines classroom learning with facilitated field studies conducted in collaboration with Indigenous communities. Students obtain the full content of UVic's Common Law degree (JD), together with greatly enhanced skills to work productively within Indigenous legal orders.

Important elements of the program, especially core first-year subjects, are taught transsystemically—through intensive comparison in courses that deal with Canadian law and one or more Indigenous legal traditions.

Upper-year courses, elective and compulsory, are drawn from the JD curriculum and newly-created specialized courses designed to complement the JD/JID.

A crucial dimension of the program is its field schools. Students devote one full term in each of their third and fourth years to study in Indigenous contexts. Under close academic supervision, students learn from community-based experts on a particular Indigenous people's legal order, observe the ways in which Indigenous legal processes are being employed today, and work with the community on law-related projects.

## Learning in relationship

The JD/JID program is made possible by our treasured relationships with the Songhees and Esquimalt peoples, on whose lands the University of Victoria is located, the WSÁNEĆ people, who have longstanding connections to this land, and Indigenous peoples across Canada. It builds upon our longstanding commitment to and international reputation in Indigenous law and Indigenous legal education.

The program was conceived by two of Canada's leading Indigenous scholars: John Borrows, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law, and Val Napoleon, Law Foundation Chair in Aboriginal Justice and Governance.

UVic Law is the home of the Canada Research Chair in Indigenous Law held by John Borrows; the Law Foundation Chair in Aboriginal Justice and Governance held by Val Napoleon; the Indigenous Law Research Unit (ILRU); LLM and PhD programs that have trained many of the next generation of researchers in this field in Canada and around the world; the Akitsiraq program, which delivered a full JD to a cohort of Inuit students in Iqaluit (2001-05); the Aboriginal Awareness Camp, which has introduced first-year students to Indigenous peoples and their legal orders for more than 22 years; some of the earliest and best-developed support systems for Indigenous students in the country; a consequent record of success in training Indigenous LLB/JD students (more than 200, many of whom hold leadership roles throughout Canada); and, in collaboration with the Gustavson School of Business, the National Consortium for Indigenous Economic Development.



*"There's a richness of history in Indigenous laws together with ways of managing that are thousands of years old. They not only help Indigenous peoples to govern ourselves today; they provide the foundation for a new relationship with Canada... and that matters!"*

Val Napoleon, Law Foundation Chair in Aboriginal Justice and Governance and Director of the Indigenous Law Research Unit



Photo credit: David Murphy

## A record of achievement

The graduates of our programs pursue the transformation of Canadian law through the practice of law and leadership in their communities. Consultations with potential employers make clear that the graduates of the JD/JID program are in great demand in:

- Indigenous governance,
- Federal and Provincial government agencies,
- Law firms that work with Indigenous peoples and Indigenous lands, and
- Business enterprises.

If you already have a JD, please consider one of our graduate programs. More than 20 percent of our LLM and PhD students have been Indigenous. Still more graduate students have worked on Indigenous topics.

Students of Indigenous law from our graduate programs have secured faculty positions at Dalhousie University, UNB, McGill, Ottawa, Osgoode Hall, Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig, Manitoba, Alberta, Calgary, UBC, and UVic in Canada; Otago and Victoria University of Wellington in New Zealand/Aotearoa; and Chiang Mai University in Thailand.

Our graduate programs are growing substantially to complement the JD/JID. If you wish to apply, please contact [gradlaw@uvic.ca](mailto:gradlaw@uvic.ca).

For more information, and to apply to the JD/JID, please see our website: [uvic.ca/law/jid](http://uvic.ca/law/jid) or email our Admissions team at: [lawadmss@uvic.ca](mailto:lawadmss@uvic.ca).

Cover image from Kokum Raven Series – Val Napoleon, Artist

## A program for our common future

Call to Action #50 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission reads as follows:

*In keeping with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, we call upon the federal government, in collaboration with Aboriginal organizations, to fund the establishment of Indigenous law institutes for the development, use, and understanding of Indigenous law and access to justice in accordance with the unique cultures of Aboriginal peoples in Canada.*

The JD/JID is a direct response to this Call to Action. As Senator Murray Sinclair, Indigenous leader, former judge, and Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, said with respect to the JD/JID program and the Indigenous Legal Lodge:

*“They are precisely what we had hoped would follow from the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and they promise to form the very best of legacies: a set of initiatives that reject and reverse the pattern of denigration and neglect identified in our report, and that establish the conditions for effective action long into the future.”*