FOLLOW-UP REPORT:STUDENT AND ATTENDEE REFLECTIONS ON DEAN'S FORUM

FROM THE SEVENTH ANNUAL DEAN'S FORUM ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE AND DISPUTE RESOLUTION

UNIVERSITY OF SASKATCHEWAN – COLLEGE OF LAW

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Introduction

This report collates reflections and feedback from the 2019 Dean's Forum on Access to Justice and Dispute Resolution (the Dean's Forum) students and attendees. Students were invited to respond to a set of reflective questions (see Appendix A) and attendees were invited to fill out an evaluation form (see Appendix B) following the Dean's Forum on March 13, 2019. The reflections and feedback from students and attendees could help to inform future iterations of the Dean's Forum initiative.

A) 2019 Dean's Forum Student Reflections

Dean's Forum students were asked to respond to a set of four reflective questions (see Appendix A), two of which responses are included below: (1) a reflection to share with the 2019 Dean's Forum attendees; and (2) a reflection to share with future Dean's Forum students.

1. Reflections from 2019 Dean's Forum Students for Dean's Forum attendees

As indicated in Appendix A, students were asked to identify what was impactful about the Dean's Forum initiative for them and what they personally 'got out of the day' that they would like to share with attendees. Based on their experience, students were also asked what they would like to encourage participants to keep thinking about beyond the Forum day. Their responses are below.

From Zoe Johansen-Hill, Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession Group...

It was an amazing experience to not just watch but also be a part of how the day unfolded. I loved seeing our topic come to life in the discussions both in small groups and as a whole. Some of the themes were expected while others were surprising. One unexpected theme was that of leadership. I had not thought of it in that way, but the concept of leadership captured the essence of many of the ideas in our paper: education, standing up for people facing exclusion, and taking responsibility and accountability for diversity and inclusion.

It was impactful for me to hear about some of the participants' experiences of seeing or facing exclusion themselves and of hearing what people thought might be useful moving forward. It was encouraging to see the participants brainstorm and work to find solutions to what I found to be an overwhelming issue at times. The interconnectedness of diversity and inclusion with culture makes it an intimidating topic to approach. I hope that participants maintain that sense of responsibility, motivation, and optimism moving forward. I hope that it will inspire some changes personally and organizationally. As we learned in our research, small changes can make a big difference when it comes to diversity and inclusion.

From Larissa Meredith-Flister, Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession Group...

The Dean's Forum initiative was very impactful. It was such a fantastic opportunity to be in the room with the movers and shakers of the legal profession in Saskatchewan. There are lawyers who practice for years and never get to meet some of the people that we met, such as the Deputy Minister of Justice and the President of the Law Society. I want to thank everyone for taking the time to engage with us on the Dean's Forum day. It was the best experience I've had in law school so far.

From Coleman Owen, Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession Group...

I would like to thank my fellow participants for a day unlike any other that I have experienced before. I hope that as I continue in my career, days like this one will not be rare.

You all know that I spent quite a bit of time with Dr. Brene Brown in preparation for the Forum. One of the major things that I took away from this experience was the feeling that she was right. I feel like I got much more out of this experience because of how much I put in of myself, and it was wonderful to feel a sense of personal and professional affirmation when we were applauded for our efforts. It is scary to be so open and vulnerable, but I think the results speak for themselves that what we did was effective.

I think it is because the structure of the course really emphasizes the idea that it is less about the individual contribution of each member but rather the collective contribution of the group. There was no sense of competiveness in the course; there was a mentality of "we all sink or swim together" and everyone appeared to approach the course with the willingness to be cooperative and adaptable. This might have been because it is not structured like a typical university course where the end goal is an exam; rather, the end goal is to work together to produce something that will be of value to other people.

From Melissa Craig, Meeting Saskatchewan's Justice Needs With Technology Group...

Dear Dean's Forum Attendees,

Thank you for embracing the adventure of March 13 and the concepts of design thinking wholeheartedly. Having the opportunity to work directly with leading justice stakeholders on critical issues that impact us right here at home was an invaluable experience. The Dean's Forum has expanded my awareness of access to justice, diversity within the legal profession and the exciting opportunities for change. This heightened awareness has inspired me to create change and I will carry this with me as I grow in my legal career. As we embark on the journey of developing technology to aid with access to justice in Saskatchewan, I would encourage us to always remember the design thinking principle that: "[t]o create meaningful innovations, you need to know your users and care about their lives" (Hasso Plattner, Institute of Design at Stanford).

Kind regards, Melissa

From Allyse Cruise, Meeting Saskatchewan's Justice Needs With Technology Group...

Thank you for your willingness to embrace cross-disciplinary techniques and move out of your (likely) comfort zone for this year's Dean's Forum. Science brings great joy to me, and it was amazing to see each of you engage so wholeheartedly in the process we curated for you. I'd like to summarize my thoughts on the day as only a true millennial could - with a meme (or, more realistically, an image with quote):

If you can't describe what you are doing as a process, you don't know what you're doing.

William Edwards Deming



Thank you again for your unbridled participation.
Allyse

From Jianna Rieder, Meeting Saskatchewan's Justice Needs With Technology Group...

As a student who is just starting out in their legal career, it sometimes feels as though breaking down the barriers to the legal system is an insurmountable challenge. It is very easy in law school to become disillusioned with the legal system and, conversely, become desensitized to the reality of how inaccessible the system is. However, the Dean's Forum day filled me with optimism about the legal community in Saskatchewan. To have various justice stakeholders come together and acknowledge access to justice problems and take responsibility for being the group that needs to fix those problems was inspiring.

There was a sense in the room that the Dean's Forum participants wanted to be proactive instead of reactionary and wanted to enact progress instead of merely acknowledging problems. Participants were willing to work together, to acknowledge problems in their own organizations, to listen to the concerns of others, and to use all that information in order to inform progress. Near the end of the day, the participants had imagined numerous solutions that would make online legal information more accessible. Having so many motivated individuals from various areas of the legal community in one room made it seem possible to actually enact those solutions.

Being able to be a part of that environment was extremely rewarding. In lectures and seminars, there is a lot of issue spotting and paper writing. But then the final happens and the semester ends and it becomes time to work on the next subject. The Dean's Forum initiative is special, because the work that was put into it does not disappear at the end of the day. The participants are all in positions where they have the power to enact change, and they all have the motivation to do so. It makes the barriers to the legal system seem a lot less insurmountable.

2. Reflections from 2019 Dean's Forum Students for future Dean's Forum students

Second, students were provided prompts for reflection and were asked whether they had a message they would like to share with future Dean's Forum students (see Appendix A for more information). Here is what they had to say to the Dean's Forum class of 2020, and onwards.

From Zoe Johansen-Hill, Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession Group...

I would recommend that you listen and gather all the perspectives you can but also do not be afraid to give your own opinion and personal insights, especially on the day of the Forum. Relating to people on a personal level can be a highly effective way to get your point across and start meaningful dialogue.

In terms of managing group work, I found it effective to have group meetings throughout the process to identify common themes and directions that everyone finds mutually interesting and important, and then divide up tasks to work through independently. Remember, you cannot likely solve or address every related issue to your topic and so it is helpful to decide how to frame and narrow your issue from the start.

From Larissa Meredith-Flister, Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession Group...

I wasn't sure what to expect from the Deans Forum prior to starting the course. It sounded like a great idea, but I was a bit skeptical about how seriously our proposals would be taken by stakeholders in the legal community. I quickly changed my mind once the course started and I saw how committed Brea is.

To me, seeing my instructor email helpful materials at midnight and then getting more emails from her at 7am made me realize that if she was putting such an incredible amount of effort into it, then clearly this was a unique opportunity to improve the legal profession. And indeed, it was. The stakeholders were very engaged

on Dean's Forum day. We had open and frank conversations, and many people seemed open to changing their minds (myself included!) based on the day's discussions. It was an amazing experience to have movers and shakers in the Saskatchewan legal community commit their organizations to increasing diversity and inclusion in the workplace based on the work that we presented. Being able to contribute to the legal profession in this manner has been the best experience I've had in law school so far.

From Coleman Owen, Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession Group...

Participants indicated that each year, the Forum gets better and better. You have quite a burden on your shoulders, but I am confident that you can carry it and make this the best Dean's Forum yet.

The Dean's Forum is a big commitment. It takes up a lot of your time and your friends and family will get tired of you talking about it non-stop for two months. It is a demanding experience, but it is among the most rewarding that you will have in law school.

I can assure you that all the work you put in to the Forum will be repaid in full. The passion we saw coming from participants was well worth the time spent preparing. I encourage you to be bold and to be unafraid to try something novel. It will contribute towards making the day unlike anything you have experienced before.

From Melissa Craiq, Meeting Saskatchewan's Justice Needs With Technology Group...

Dear Future Dean's Forum Students,

Welcome to an amazing opportunity to participate in a meaningful and inspiring journey! As for advice, I encourage you to embrace this adventure wholeheartedly.

Do not be afraid to try something new and push both yourself and the Dean's Forum participants out of their comfort zone – this is where the magic lies! I believe that our experimental workshop in Design Thinking worked well this year as it was something different that engaged people in new ways. Using methodologies from outside disciplines can bring a much needed "refresh" to how we approach problems within the legal system.

Although you may not feel as if you are the most "important" or "senior" person in the room, your opinions and valid and have value, and you should not be afraid to share them. People may disagree with you, but that does not mean that you are wrong. The law profession needs new and fresh opinions — especially from its future leaders.

The access to justice crisis may feel at times overwhelming, but we need people like you, who can make small changes that ripple and inspire others!

Kind regards, Melissa From Allyse Cruise, Meeting Saskatchewan's Justice Needs With Technology Group...

Dear Future Dean's Forum Student,

First of all, let me just say congrats! Brea doesn't pick people at random; so, whether you see your abilities to make a difference in the SK legal landscape or not, know that she does.

I find the habit of law students giving unsolicited advice a touch overwhelming at times, and I have the utmost confidence that my 2019 Dean's Forum colleagues will have far wiser words than I. So, I will keep my guidance minimal and open-ended: don't be afraid to use this opportunity to take a risk. The access to justice crisis existed far before you entered law, and will (unfortunately) likely exist long after you leave the field. There are no easy solutions; we all have been tasked with solving an immense problem. But with such a large problem comes endless opportunity. Do not be afraid to try something that the Dean's Forum has never done before or look at the problem in a unique and intersectional manner. People playing within the normal boundaries rarely make a step-change difference. So, be bold, what's the worst that could happen?

Best of luck. I hope you find great joy in this class. I know I did.

Allyse

From Jianna Rieder, Meeting Saskatchewan's Justice Needs With Technology Group...

One of most valuable parts of the Dean's Forum course was that it forces you to work collaboratively with other students throughout the process of researching, consulting, and preparing for the actual day. Working collaboratively involves some degree of vulnerability and trust, because it means that you must be open to ideas that might not work and hope that your groupmates will fulfill their responsibilities. However, the opportunity to practice working collaboratively was invaluable when it came to the actual Dean's Forum day.

The first thing that my group did together was meet outside class time and have an honest discussion about our conceptions of access to justice and our topic. I think this was an important discussion to have because it allowed us to understand where each of us was coming from, and gauge our strengths on the topic. It was key that it was an open dialogue where no one's opinion was dismissed without reason since everyone came to the initiative with a different opinion and constructive criticism allowed each of us to develop our ideas and make our final presentation stronger. Being honest, in my opinion, allowed us to trust each other and make sure that we were all conceptualizing the same end-goal.

Open dialogue was key in making sure that the group work went smoothly. I would recommend making sure there is a way for group members to contact each other and stay informed on what each member is doing. For my group, this involved a mixture of a group Facebook message, a collaborative Google drive account, creating deadlines for each other, and meeting outside of the scheduled class time. Our most productive times were when we could all meet for half an hour and update each other on our progress.

The actual Dean's Forum day invites chaos; but the process of learning to work with your groupmates and trust them makes it manageable. It was remarkable because the room was full of important justice stakeholders who were willing to listen to each other and openly criticize each other — not with the intention of holding back anyone, but rather to help ideas move forward. My message to future Dean's Forum students would be that it is important to be willing to be vulnerable about your opinions and ideas and be receptive to constructive feedback, because all the individuals involved in the initiative are passionate about the topic. All the feedback that I got throughout this course ultimately led to how successful the final project was. I found that I really enjoyed being forced to collaborate with other students more than I thought I would at the beginning of the semester. I found that interacting with the other participants allowed me to expand my

problem-solving skillset. Not only was I able to build off the other members' perspectives, I was also able to learn from their learning styles.

B) 2019 Dean's Forum Attendee Reflections

Dean's Forum attendees were invited to fill out a form to provide feedback on the 2019 initiative (see Appendix B). The responses of those who filled out the form are listed below.

1. Attendees' Reflections on "Transformative Scenario Planning" employed by Diversity and Inclusion in the Legal Profession Group

Attendees were invited to provide their **thoughts on the design and problem-solving model employed in the morning** (which used principles from "Transformative Scenario Planning"). They were asked what they liked or disliked about the method and whether this process is something that should be replicated in the future.

- I appreciated both models and would like to see both employed in the future.
- Providing the papers in advance was a good idea. I like the students' introduction followed by small group discussions with a facilitator. I think this process could be replicated with success.
- Worked quite well. Our group struggled a bit to follow the format and we tended to get off on tangents and have more general discussions and share stories. In the end we still managed to accomplish a fair bit I think.
- Yes, it was great.
- Good. Provided structure.
- Yes. I liked that the groups were small, diverse in terms of age, practice area and that there was actually a member of one of the equity-seeking groups participating.
- The process encouraged individual participating early on in the process.
- Effective and engaging.
- Enjoyed the morning. Great topic and really good discussion.
- Good session. Yes, it should be replicated in the future.
- Seemed effective do again.
- Students were professional, topic was well introduced.
- Very good, emphasized short term, personal (therefore highest control) solutions and invited long-term thinking. Could be used in a lot of situations.
- Loved it! Yes, re future.
- Think it's good that fact scenarios were used. Time was limiting. Would be good to have the scenario then maybe a briefing on something so that it can percolate. If want to talk about regulatory change then should be on the scenario perhaps more focused questions with spots for (1) concrete (2) lessons learned (3) pie in the sky!
- Students were well-prepared and presented well. Process was effectively explained and utilized.

2. Attendees' Reflections on "Design Thinking Methodology" employed by Meeting Saskatchewan's Justice Needs With Technology Group

Attendees were invited to provide their **thoughts on the design and problem-solving model employed in the afternoon** (which used a "Design Thinking Methodology"). They were asked what they liked or disliked about the method and whether this process is something that should be replicated in the future.

- Providing paper in advance was a good idea. The topic on Use of Technology was good. Process could be replicated with success.
- Very interesting.
- Liked it. Felt like an "active" participant. Engaging process.
- New and interesting process. Allowed all participants to contribute. Helpful to process to look at real issue.
- Exciting and interesting. Is better than sitting around a table all day.
- Loved it. I think it was effective and could be replicated.
- This is a useful process. Voting process did not work.
- It was interesting and useful. If repeated, it could probably be more efficient. It was a touch repetitive.
- Seemed effective. Do again.
- Enjoyed the hands-on activity and idea generation. Good process, I hope these ideas get momentum.
- Excellent. I've used it before. We need to work it into all we do.
- Loved it! Yes re: future.
- Excellent process. Really made us work to think about how others see the problem and where the weaknesses are so we can more effectively address them.
- It certainly focussed us on some specific things and delivered results. I wondered if we shouldn't have allowed a bit more time for a discussion of where we go from here. There's obviously a fair bit of enthusiasm and optimism around what we might accomplish, but some significant follow-up will now be required. Still, a very useful afternoon.

3. Attendees' Reflections on Dean's Forum Students' Delivery of Information

Dean's Forum students asked attendees how the students' **delivery of information** could have been made more effective. Attendees suggested the following.

- Perhaps providing info on design and problem-solving models in advance.
- A paper on Process Mapping could have been provided in advance.
- Somehow, I missed the info early on.
- Instructions can always be repeated.
- I think the delivery of information maximized the time that we had. It was also helpful to have received some material beforehand.
- It was good. Liked Tim Brown's summary. Papers were excellent.
- No suggestions it was great.
- Seemed effective prior delivery of papers was good for pre-thinking.
- Would enjoy hearing more of the students' thoughts.
- I have nothing critical to offer here. I'm always somewhat surprised and pleased that the participants, including the students, are such effective communicators. The two papers were very helpful in stimulating some preparatory consideration of the issues.

- It was good as presented.
- Materials distributed earlier in video/audio format.
- Example of use of brave space v safe wording a scenario?
- It was very well done. I liked the breakout sessions and the involvement of all participants.

4. Attendees' Reflections on Venue

Attendees were asked to rate their level of satisfaction with the venue. The results were:

• Consider a new venue: 2 respondents

Satisfied: 7 respondentsExcellent: 6 respondents

Attendees offered the following comments related to the venue.

- Too hot. Maybe Station 20 West? Free parking; University Engagement can get free space
- Too hot
- Room was a bit tight
- I like that venue. A slightly larger room might be easier, but I wouldn't move it from the law school in order to gain that. There's something very special about coming back to the law school for these discussions. Notwithstanding the sensitivities around some of the topics, the law school still provides a safe space to conduct them.

5. Attendees' Reflections on 'Hits' of the 2019 Dean's Forum

Attendees were asked what they enjoyed most about the 2019 Dean's Forum, and reported the following.

- Interactive aspect. You hit it out of the park this year. We should get "I'm with Tim" t-shirts.
- Exchange of ideas in a "non-threatening" environment.
- Students.
- As always, I was impressed by the work of the students. That might be central to the success of the forum.
- Group work.
- The wealth of knowledge at the table.
- The interaction in small groups.
- Group work.
- The student presentations, small groups and posters.
- Diversity discussion.
- Morning break-out session.
- Topics were edifying.
- The students were great, topics were interesting.
- Hearing the students.
- The engagement.
- Topics were timely and very interesting.

6. Attendees' Suggestions for Future Dean's Forums

Attendees offered the following **suggestions** for future Dean's Forums.

- Keep making it more interactive.
- None
- Include one or more members of the equity-seeking groups in the discussions.
- *Hmm....* topics to be thought of....
- More!!
- Include representatives of the "users" of the legal system.
- It would be great to have more students involved. This is such a wonderful opportunity for students.
- I'm going to park this question and give it some further thought.

7. Attendees' Reflections on Impact of Forum

Attendees were asked whether they were coming out of the Dean's Forum with **concrete, useful ideas that could result in change**, and if not, what the students/organizers could we have done differently, or could be done differently in subsequent years.

- Yes, in the sense the discussions produce ideas about what we might consider pursuing. I don't think we should expect the forum to deliver a well-defined product we can implement. It's part of a larger discussion, but it's proving to be an important part.
- Not sure.
- Yes.
- The discussion was in part theoretical but some ideas may have concrete application.
- Yes.
- Yes, I am.
- Yes, and lots to think about.
- A bit soft on concrete ideas. Lots of good thoughts. I hope this goes places/implementation.
- Yes. It is hard to get concrete commitments from network members. It would be great if the debrief also included a write-up of the suggestions and ideas from the day with these suggestions directed to other groups such as the CBA or Law Society Equity Committee etc.
- Yes issue is always funding and resources not a lack of ideas! Good to see potential for collaboration. Thanks.
- I think so. The students were all extremely impressive.
- Ves
- Yes definitely. Will be working on E-justice and this model was very effective to get this issue moving forward.
- Yes ☺

8. Additional comments

- I thought the forum overall was one of the best. Those of us who just read the papers and show up really appreciate the work all of you at the college do to make these events successful. Once again, please thank the students for their impressive contributions. BTW, the posters were really interesting.
- Whole system is made for men by men. If system we operate in doesn't change, it's hard for individual firms to change.
- The "Good Character" requirement for lawyers could reflect a lawyer's commitment to leadership, professionalism, authenticity and respect for diversity and inclusion.
- Not yet.



Completing Your Reflective Exercise

Please respond to each of the below four reflections. This exercise is intended to benefit you and the ongoing evolution of the initiative, so please do not feel restricted by having to meet a minimum or maximum number of words when completing your responses. For example, your responses to Reflections 1 or 4 may be two or three sentences, whereas your responses to Reflections 2 or 3 may be one or two paragraphs. Prompts are included in italicizes under each exercise as aids to spark your reflection, but again, please do not feel restricted by having to answer those prompts. Please submit your reflections electronically by Monday, March 18 at 5:00 p.m.

Reflection 1: For your future self to return to... Write a message to yourself to return to one, three, five, or more years from now that captures what you would like to remember and carry with you from the Dean's Forum experience.

- For example, does a quote, phrase, or moment during the initiative symbolize what you would like to remember? Feel free to write that down, with or without explanation.
- What are the most important learning moments you took with you from the Dean's Forum experience?
- How do you hope the Dean's Forum experience may impact your future academic, volunteer, and/or employment pursuits? Why?
- What skills do you hope to carry with you that you gained/enhanced during the Dean's Forum?

Reflection 2: For you to share with a future employer/supervisor... Imagine you are in a job interview or are writing an excerpt of your own employment or academic resume or reference. In a couple of sentences or in bullet-form, summarize the work you did through the Dean's Forum course and how you did it, but also describe what unique skills or insights you gained/enhanced during the experience and how such skills or insight make you a unique candidate for future academic and/or employment pursuits.

- You might consider incorporating reference to some aspect of the results of your Strengths Finder Assessment and/or to the Straus chapter on "Managing Meetings to Build Consensus" in your response, if those tools would aid in completing your response. For example, what role(s) did you endeavour to fill during the experience? Examples include leader, collaborator, challenger, creator, team-builder, innovator, etc. Were you effective within this/these roles?
- What new skills did you learn since beginning the Dean's Forum?
- Describe what you learned about yourself as a result of taking part in the Dean's Forum.

Reflection 3: To share with future Dean's Forum students... What message would you like to share with future Dean's Forum students? *Please indicate whether you would like your comments to be included with your name attached or anonymously.

- For example, what do you think you would replicate and/or what would you like to change about your experience, looking back?
- Upon reviewing the experience, identify and describe an example of a different approach (e.g. decision or action) you would have taken.
- How were you challenged through the Dean's Forum?

- What expectations did you have about the Dean's Forum initiative? Do you have a different picture of your experience now than you had before you began it?
- Do you have tips on how to complete the group work associated with the course?

Reflection 4: To share with Dean's Forum attendees... What was impactful about the initiative and what did you personally 'get out of the day' that you would like to share with attendees? What would you like to encourage attendees to keep thinking about beyond the Forum day? *Please indicate whether you would like your comments to be included with your name attached or anonymously.

- For example, you might consider whether this experience changed you? If yes, how?
- Take some time to consider what exactly you liked about your experience. Was it a good experience based on your own approach, caused by the environment, or both? What was it about the environment or the work that was meaningful? What lessons did you learn?
- How did interacting with Dean's Forum attendees impact you?

Appendix B – 2019 Dean's Forum Attendee Feedback Form



7th ANNUAL MEETING – MARCH 13, 2019

WE'D LIKE YOUR FEEDBACK:

1. Please provide your thoughts on the design and problem-solving model employed in the morning (which used principles from "Transformative Scenario Planning"). What did you like or dislike about this method? Do you think that this process is something that should be replicated in the future?				
2. Please provide your thoughts on the design and problem-solving model employed in the afternoon (which used a "Design Thinking Methodology"). What did you like or dislike about this method? Do you think that this process is something that should be replicated in the future?				
3. How could our delivery of information have been more effective?				
4. Please circle your level of satisfaction with the venue :				
Consider a new venue	Satisfied	Excellent		
5. What did you enjoy most about this year's Dean's Forum?				
6. What suggestions do you have for future Dean's Forums?				
7. Are you coming out of the Dean's Forumental what could we have done differently, or compared to the could we have done differently.				