

Prospectus for
Programme in International and Comparative Labour Law
Osgoode Hall Law School

Background

It is widely recognized that the globalization of the world economy has significant implications for the relationship between management and labour, including issues such as wages, workplace conditions and workers' rights. Indeed, the connection between globalization and labour regulation is reflected in initiatives by the ILO and other organizations to ensure the protection of the fundamental rights of workers in an era of rapidly growing international trade.

Moreover, changes are occurring in the nature of the Canadian workplace, in the demography of the workforce, in the regulatory environment and in public policy which are transforming the labour-management relationship within Canada as well as internationally.

However, interest in labour law among Canadian legal academics and law students has failed to keep pace. There has been little, if any, growth in the number of full-time labour law academics, and in many cases, there has been an actual decline. Moreover, course offerings at both the LL.B. and graduate level have remained relatively constant over the past decade, and relatively little teaching or research focuses on international developments, such as globalization, or the other significant influences which are transforming the field.

As a result, a need is perceived by government, academe, management, labour and the labour bar to enhance both teaching and research in labour law, with special emphasis on emerging labour law issues, not only from a domestic, but also from a comparative and international perspective.

The Programme

Osgoode Hall Law School is committed to the establishment of a Programme in International and Comparative Labour Law at Osgoode Hall Law School, which is intended to fill this need. The Programme will have three primary objectives. First, it will undertake comparative research on the relationship between globalization and the management-labour relationship. Does globalization, as some have argued, promote a "race to the bottom", in which the mobility of capital and the relative immobility of labour induce governments to lower labour standards in an effort to influence capital investment decisions? Or is the increasing globalization of the world economy consistent with the maintenance of robust labour standards and improved working conditions? Second, the program will create and foster connections among management, labour, domestic and international governments and agencies, the professional legal community and the academic community, with a view to stimulating vigorous public debate and



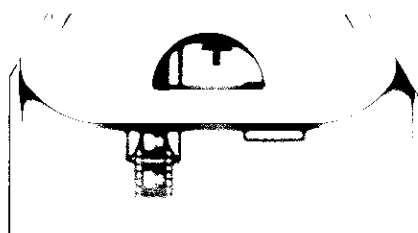
discussion of these important issues. Third, it will help to prepare the next generation of academics, policy analysts and practitioners to address the issues raised by the new labour law landscape.

The key elements of the program are as follows:

- The Programme will be directed by a full-time member of the Osgoode Hall Law School faculty, with the requisite knowledge and expertise in domestic, comparative, international and transnational labour law;
- The Programme will sponsor an annual international conference, involving leading experts, policymakers, jurists, lawyers, and representatives from the business and labour community in both Canada and elsewhere, to explore emerging issues of significance in international and comparative labour law; the papers from the conference will be published, either in a law review or in a separate stand-alone volume;
- The Programme will sponsor annually a Visiting Scholar, who will be one of the world's leading experts on labour law, who will teach a course at Osgoode Hall Law, and deliver a public lecture on an issue of emerging significance;
- The Programme will provide scholarships for LL.B. and graduate students to undertake academic research on the relationship between globalization and labour regulation; and
- The Programme will develop an international exchange program, whereby Canadian students have the opportunity to study at recognized centres of academic excellence in other jurisdictions, and students at those centres have the opportunity to study here in Canada.
- The Programme will offer graduate courses which address transnational, international and comparative labour law/
- The Programme will seek funding to support these initiatives as well as the establishment of a website to disseminate research findings and other information of interest to labour law academics and professionals, and the broader labour and management community.

Resources

The extent to which the activities of the Programme can be undertaken depends upon the availability of resources to support it. Osgoode will contribute the salary and benefits of a Programme director, associated support services, the development of library, technical management of the website and other services. In addition, the director and academics associated with the programme will seek funding to support these activities, as well as research and research assistantships, from members of the profession represented by, among others, the Canadian Association of Labour Lawyers, the Association of Counsel to Employers, the Labour Law Section of the Canadian Bar Association. It is understood that Osgoode's capacity to carry forward the Programme (other than the teaching of



courses and research funded by SSHRC or other granting agencies) depends upon the availability of additional funds.

The Advisory Committee

Osgoode will establish a committee comprising leading academics, policy makers and professionals to provide advice concerning the development of the program, the establishment of partnerships with domestic and international partners, the maintenance of linkages with the labour law community and the raising of resources to support the program.

Decisions on staffing, academic standards and course content will be made in accordance with normal academic procedures.

