

**2012-2013 OCUFA TEACHING AND
ACADEMIC LIBRARIANSHIP AWARDS
CITATION FOR WINNER PROFESSOR STEPHEN PITEL**

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CITATION FOR PROFESSOR STEPHEN PITEL

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The OCUFA Teaching and Academic Librarianship Awards Committee is pleased to present a 2012-2013 Teaching Award to Professor Stephen Pitel, Associate Professor at the Faculty of Law at the University of Western Ontario.

Professor Pitel's nominator asserts, without reservation, that "Stephen Pitel has transformed legal education in Ontario." As is clear by the numerous letters of support, this is a view that is shared by Professor Pitel's colleagues, peers and current and former students. Indeed, whether in the areas of curriculum and course development, educational planning and policy making or instruction and consultation, it is easy to talk about Professor Pitel's impact on legal education in superlatives.

Professor Pitel's contribution to curriculum and course development at the Faculty of Law at Western and beyond has been immense, especially in the field of legal ethics and professionalism. Professor Pitel's nominator alludes to a "Pre-Pitel" era in legal education in Ontario where the study of legal ethics was, at best, a marginal endeavour. Professor Pitel sought to transform this. In short order, he helped rewrite the first year curriculum to include a full-term mandatory course in legal ethics, implemented a "Legal Ethics Moot" that confront students with simulated trials that highlight issues of legal ethics and professionalism, and created a database of legal ethics teaching materials to extend the teaching of legal ethics across the province and country.



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In large part through Professor Pitel's determination in transforming legal ethical education, first at the University of Western Ontario and then across the province, law schools in Ontario are now required to offer focused instruction on the topic of legal ethics. Or as one of his colleagues points out, "before Stephen, few Ontario students left law school with any meaningful exposure to the ethical rules that govern the legal profession. After Stephen, all students must study these rules as a precondition to holding a law degree." This, I think, is something we can all be grateful for.

Equally astonishing is that none of this has come at the expense of a dedication to teaching. Indeed the same commitment to excellence in course and curriculum development can be found in his approach to teaching and to his students. "Stephen Pitel is the best and most passionate professor at Western Law," writes a former student – a sentiment that is made even more remarkable by the number of times it is repeated in student testimonials.

Professor Pitel is known as a demanding teacher with high standards. Just as his peers speak of a "Pre-Pitel" era in legal education, so his students talk of making their work "Pitel-proof" to meet the high standards set out for them. Yet despite the difficulty of the subject matter and the academic rigour demanded of them, students speak in superlatives about Professor Pitel as an instructor and a mentor.

He is praised for his outstanding lecturing style, charisma, humour and "impeccable level of preparation." Several former students note his ability to seamlessly combine the academic with the practical, while others laud Professor Pitel's ability to present complex subject matter in thought provoking, easily digestible and often entertaining ways.

Outside the classroom, students know Professor Pitel as someone who goes out of his way to make them comfortable as they become acclimatized to life as law students and helps them navigate through the



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myriad course and career options. Whether through his open door policy, his organization and attendance of numerous social events, or his willingness to provide considered and frank advice on academic, professional and personal matters, Professor Pitel's mentorship role is widely appreciated as a facet of his excellence as a teacher.

A former student notes that Professor Pitel "continues to go above and beyond to help his students improve in all areas of law and life, works unfailingly hard to try and improve Western Law to make it a top tier school, and is intelligent and committed to developing new initiatives in teaching and academics." This dedication to all aspects of teaching excellence is commendable and well deserving of a 2012-2013 OCUFA Teaching Award.

Congratulations.