



Nikos Harris

Instructor (Tenure-Track)

One of the Allard School of Law's most well-loved and respected teachers, Nikos Harris has been recognized for his enthusiasm in the classroom and dedication to the Faculty on three occasions—a Killam Prize for Teaching Excellence in 2008, the Marilyn MacCrimmon Faculty Scholar Award in 2013 and the Indigenous Law Students Association's Courage in Law Award in 2015. And, after more than fifteen years of teaching law, he continues to be inspired by his students.

"Each year students will point out new arguments and analysis on a case which I have taught for over a decade. It's that perspective that makes the classroom so dynamic," he says.

Harris articulated with the British Columbia Attorney General and clerked at the Court of Appeal following his law degree and spent ten years working at a boutique criminal firm focusing on appellate litigation before transitioning to teaching. What began as teaching an evening seminar as an Adjunct Professor, transitioned to a full-time lectureship, and finally to a tenure-track Instructor position last year. He looks forward to drawing on his extensive classroom experience to provide leadership for the Faculty's educational mission, and has already served for several years as the law school's Director of Experiential Learning.

Crediting Dean Catherine Dauvergne and her predecessor, Professor Mary Anne Bobinski, with their vision for experiential learning, Harris remarks on the unique nature of this increasingly important aspect of legal education.

"Experiential learning is partly learning through doing, but it is also a critical part of our academic program," he says. "Students learn a vast amount of substantive law in our experiential programs, including our competitive moots and clinics, and also have the chance to deeply engage in policy issues."

Harris also says that the Allard School of Law's expanding clinical programs are essential to providing access to justice. "We have a crisis in access to justice in this country," he laments. "Our clinical programs not only provide legal services to hundreds of people every semester who would otherwise be without representation, but the students' experience in our clinics often leads to a commitment to pro bono work throughout their careers."

In the more traditional setting of the classroom, he works to engage his students by making the law meaningful to them. In fact, he finds it helpful when students bring some understanding of the law from TV and media because it can be a great way to start a discussion. For the most realistic representation of the criminal law, his main area of teaching, he recommends the original *Law and Order* series. "It actually engages many of the issues that arise in trials," he says, "albeit at warp speed and with submissions with a little more flair than you might want to use as a first year lawyer."