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**UNIFORM LAW CONFERENCE OF CANADA
CIVIL SECTION**

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PROJECT DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT
REPORT**

PRESENTED BY

Gregory G. Blue, K.C.

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August 2025**

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Advisory Committee on Project Development and Management Report

August 2025

[1] I am pleased to provide the report on behalf of the Advisory Committee on Project Development and Management (ACPDM). This is the first such report I have had occasion to present since becoming Chair of the Committee. The ACPDM has met each month since the previous Annual Meeting to monitor the progress of the current projects, evaluate proposals for additional projects, and form recommendations on projects. These are the primary functions of the Committee.

[2] I express my thanks to all the members of the ACPDM for their dedication and for providing the ULCC, and to me especially in this first year of being in this role, the benefit of their knowledge and experience in the selection, oversight and management of the ULCC's projects. I also thank my exceptionally long-serving predecessor as ACPDM Chair, Peter Lown, K.C. for his advice and assistance during the transition. I am extremely grateful for the constant assistance of the Legal Project and Research Coordinator, Christina Croteau. Christina and I work as a team, and I could not fulfil my role without the benefit of her skill, insight, and diligence. Christina carries out innumerable tasks of research, correspondence, volunteer recruitment, meeting co-ordination and vital support of the ACPDM and the Working Groups on a day-to-day basis.

[3] Following normal practice, the ACPDM budget proposal was prepared in November and December 2024 with the invaluable advice and assistance of Michelle Lemieux, Executive Director, and Christina Croteau. The proposal was presented to the Budget and Finance Committee in January 2025, where it was approved without change. One of the decisions made regarding the budget proposal for fiscal 2025/26 was to increase the estimates for translation of Working Group reports and draft legislation. The cost of translation has notably risen. Adequate provision also had to be made in this year's ACPDM budget for the travel expenses of Working Group Chairs to attend the Annual Meeting to present their reports. The geographic location of the Annual Meeting has an impact on these expenses. They will tend to be lower in years in which the Annual Meeting is held in central Canada, and higher when it is held in provincial and territorial capitals on the east and west coasts and in the North.

[4] In alternate years, the ULCC receives surveys of significant law reform initiatives in jurisdictions of the civil law and common law worlds from the Institut québécois de réforme du droit et de la justice (IQRDJ) and the Alberta Law Reform Institute (ALRI), respectively. This year we received the IQRDJ survey. These surveys inform us of trends of reform in similar legal systems and aid the ACPDM to identify areas in which the potential may exist for future ULCC activity.

[5] There are currently eight active Civil Section projects involving nine Working Groups. There is also one joint project of the Criminal and Civil Sections underway, that being the Joint Project on the Treatment of Animals in Canadian Law.

[6] Two of the eight Civil Section Projects that appeared to be on the verge of faltering at the time of last year's Annual Meeting for various reasons have been revived. The Working Groups have been re-populated, and the projects are now fully underway again. These were the Charities Project and the Defamation Project.

[7] The Charities Project was narrowed to two subject areas by a resolution of the Civil Section at the 2024 Annual Meeting. One area was the definition of charity, and the other was hybrid organizations. Two new Working Groups were recruited in the autumn of 2024 and began meeting in January 2025. Their membership includes some participants from the original Working Groups and also new personnel. Prof. Mark Gillen generously volunteered to chair both Working Groups.

[8] As of the 2024 Annual Meeting, the project on defamation had been in abeyance for about two years to await clarification of federal government intentions regarding legislation to prevent online harm. In the meantime, subject-matter expertise within the original Working Group became unavailable to the ULCC. When it became apparent that federal legislative intervention in the area would be quite limited, a decision was reached to reactivate the project to overhaul the 1994 print-oriented *Uniform Defamation Act* to address the challenges posed by the internet and other new technologies. This required recruitment of new leadership and subject-matter experts.

[9] Thanks entirely to Christina Croteau's efforts, a new Defamation Working Group was recruited quickly in the autumn of 2024 and was able to hold its first meeting well before year-end. Its Chair, Prof. Hilary Young, and several of its members also participated in the Law Commission of Ontario project on online defamation that was an impetus for the current ULCC project. The new Working Group is fully engaged in a reform of the *Uniform Defamation Act* to address the digital environment and post-1994 developments in the general law of defamation.

[10] We had hoped that draft uniform legislation on joint ventures and non-disclosure agreements would be ready in time for consideration by the Civil Section at the 2025 Annual Meeting, but unfortunately that did not prove possible despite best efforts on the part of the respective Chairs and members, because technical and policy issues still remain to be resolved in both projects.

[11] We have several proposals for new Civil Section Projects under consideration. One that was discussed at the 2024 Annual Meeting concerns uniform legislation to prevent the enforcement of coerced debt from human trafficking. Another is for the updating of the *Uniform Contributory Negligence Act*, principally to deal with the effect of partial settlements on rights of contribution amongst concurrent tortfeasors. A third relates to uniform age of majority legislation. We have also received a suggestion originally made to

the Criminal Section for a project to harmonize provisions in human rights legislation prohibiting discrimination in employment and accommodation on the basis of a criminal record. We anticipate a proposal will be forthcoming soon from a group of legal counsel to Canadian Ombudspersons for a project on uniform legislative provisions that confer protection for whistleblowers.

[12] None of the project proposals waiting in the wings have advanced yet to the stage of an imminent go/no-go decision, but there should be a well-stocked inventory of ideas for future ULCC projects at all times. I encourage the Jurisdictional Representatives and delegates to pass on to us project suggestions year-round.

It is an honour and a pleasure to serve in the role of ACPDM Chair, and I am grateful to the ULCC for giving me the opportunity.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory G. Blue, K.C.

ACPDM Members in 2024/25

- Gregory G. Blue, K.C. (Chair) (BC)
- Maria Markatos (President) (SK)
- Chloé Rousselle (Vice-President) (CA)
- Tyler Nyvall (Chair, Civil Section) (BC)
- James Meloche (Chair, Criminal Section) (ON)
- Peter Lown, K.C. (Chair, International Committee) (AB)
- Laurence Bergeron (representative from the Government of Quebec) (QC)
- Michelle Cumyn (QC)
- Michel Deschamps (QC)
- Manon Dostie (CA)
- Darcy McGovern, K.C. (SK)
- Valérie Simard (CA)
- Elizabeth Strange (NB)
- Christina Croteau (Legal Project and Research Coordinator)
- Michelle Lemieux Wilkinson (Executive Director and Administrator)
- *To be confirmed* (representative from the Government of Canada; expert in private international law) (CA)

Active Civil Section and Joint Projects

1. Reform of General Partnership Law / Joint Ventures Project

Chair of Working Group: Prof. Maya Cachecho

2. Enforcement of Foreign Judgments Project

Chair of Working Group: Prof. Geneviève Saumier

3. Charities Project

Definition of Charity

Chair of Working Group: Prof. Mark Gillen

Hybrid Organizations

Chair of Working Group: Prof. Mark Gillen

4. Cash Payments Project

Chair of Working Group: Prof. Michelle Cumyn

5. Non-Disclosure Agreements Project

Chair of Working Group: Jennifer Khor

6. Class Proceedings Act Project

Chair of Working Group: Prof. Jérémy Boulanger-Bonnely

7. Treatment of Animals Joint Project

Chair of Working Group: Nadine Nesbitt

8. Intestate Succession Project

Chair of Working Group: Prof. David Freedman

9. Defamation Project

Chair of Working Group: Prof. Hilary Young