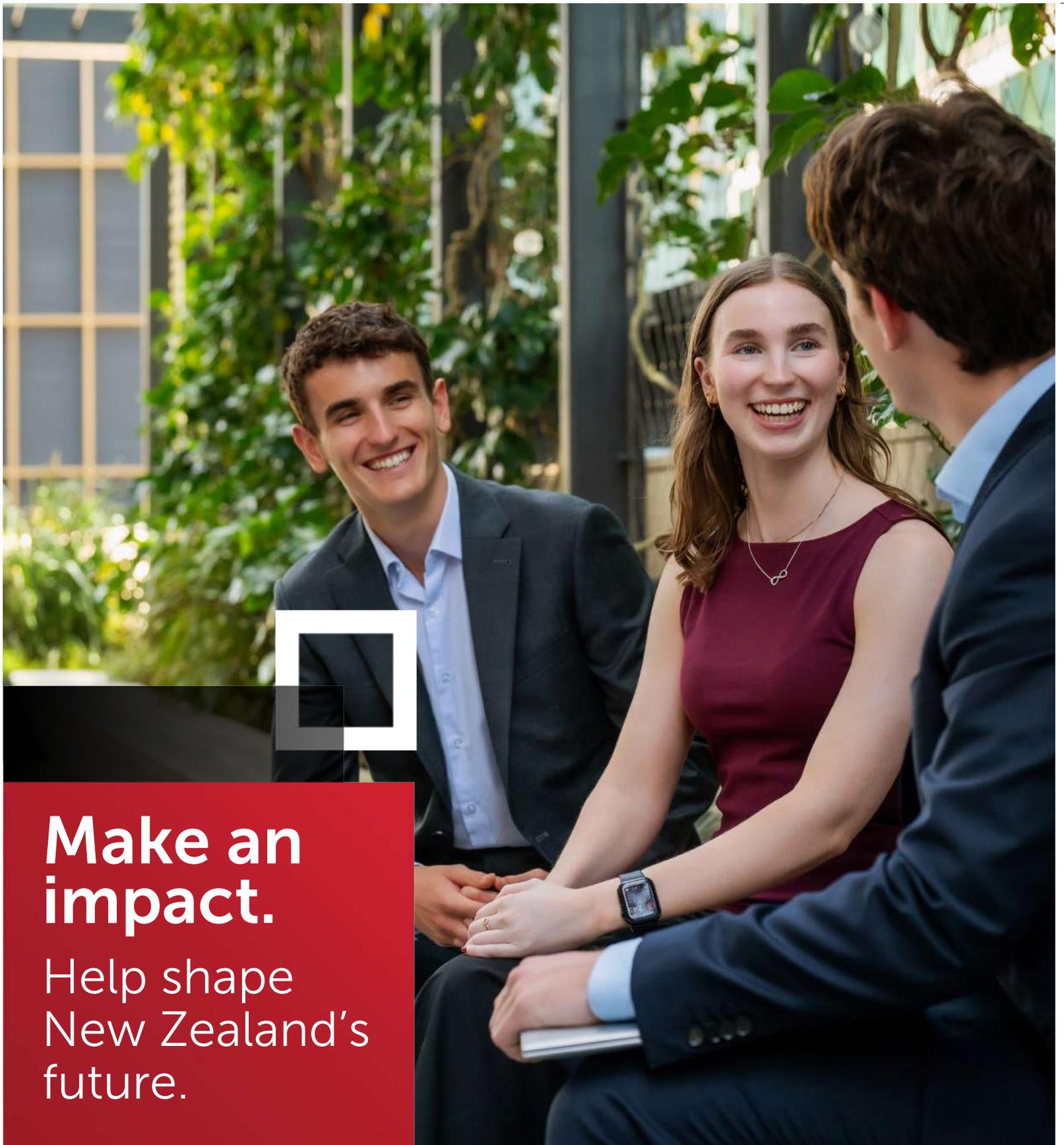


Karl Popper

THE UNIVERSITY OF CANTERBURY LAW STUDENTS' SOCIETY MAGAZINE

OBITER

2026



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Follow us on our socials!



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lawsoc_uc



lawsoc_uc

Say goodbye to FOMO – stay updated here!

Meet your *Obiter* Officers!

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Janre Lim



Helen Lim

And just like that, *Obiter* is back again for another edition!

For most of us, conversation is what keeps us going: the friendly debrief after class, spontaneous coffee mission, and the post-exam talks where everything suddenly feels lighter. These are some of the moments that shape our university experience, so why not bring that attitude to *Obiter*?

This year, we're bringing you a magazine grounded in insights, conversations, and people!

Connection is the core of this issue. We have invited two experts in their respective areas to share their perspectives and journeys. And the best part? They were once exactly where we are now.

To those who are returning, you've heard from Helen and I, the Lim duo (not related, we promised) in the Newsletter at the end of last year. And to our freshers: picking up this magazine is just the beginning of what we hope will be a fun, full, and memorable university experience. Follow us on our social media (conveniently listed beside this text)!

We would like to extend our appreciation to our contributors: Lana Paul, Miranda Gray, Petra Butler, and Georgie House.

Thank you to Georgie House and Antonio Sidonio for their invaluable support.

Ngā mihi nui,
Janre and Helen

Kia ora!

Welcome (or welcome back!) to what promises to be another unforgettable year at UC.

Ahh the best part of the university year. The sun is shining, everyone's back in the beautiful O3, and Electric Ave is just around the corner! No looming assignments, exams are a later problem, and you're still clinging to that illusion that this year will be your academic comeback...

So how do you hold on to that glimmer of hope when suddenly it's not summer anymore, you're behind in lectures and telling yourself that if Elle Woods can do it, so can you (what, like it's hard?). Simple. Join LAWSOC (duh).

If you're reading this because you grabbed a copy of Obiter on Clubs Day, pakipaki. If you stumbled upon this some other way, and have finally seen the light and want to become a member – check out our Linktree or slide into our DMs and we'll point you in the right direction.

It's never too late to join the... community. (Disclaimer: LAWSOC is not a cult, I promise.)

Still not convinced on why you should join LAWSOC? Where do I even begin...

We run just about every event a law student could dream of. From our legendary Law Ball and Cocktail Night providing the chance to dress up and have a night you won't forget (or at least Snapchat won't..), to our famous exam tutorials and assignment workshops that have saved more GPAs than we can count (it's okay, me too). We've got competitions for days – Negotiations, Witness Examination, Paper Presentation, Client Interviewing, Mooting – even a chance to take your skills across the ditch.

Into wellness or staying active, but can't afford that Les Mills membership? We've got you covered. Networking events before recruitment season? Absolutely. Annual law show? Naturally. Recruitment prep like professional headshots and CV check-ins? Of course.

President's Address



Sports more your thing? We have netball AND football. Heck, we even have an exchange down to Dunedin for a weekend of competitions (sports only, of course...)

I could go on, but the point is: our calendar is more full than Puaka James Hight during exam season. So, whether you are someone who enjoys sinking pals with your pals, or if a cup of tea's more your cup of tea, LAWSOC has a little something for everyone.

Our first event? A Summer Soirée. Think of a summery vineyard in France (Mona Vale Homestead), bubbles in hand (or a sprite if that's what you fancy), snacking on fresh local produce (who doesn't love a charcuterie board). Doesn't matter if you're only going to be 5 days into your law degree, or 5 years - we would love to see you there. Plus, who doesn't love a chance to dress up, take cute piccys with your friends and enjoy a cold glass of sauv on a Thursday arvo? Thursday 26 February. See you there!

Here's to an unforgettable year ahead, from an exec more hyped than freshers before toga.

Georgie House
2026 LAWSOC President

DEAN'S • ADDRESS

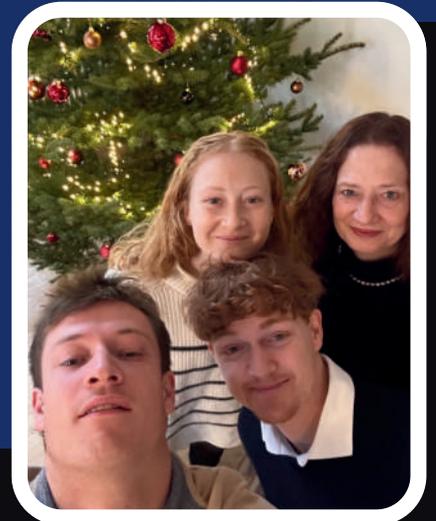


A warm and heartfelt welcome to the 2026 academic year at Te Whare Wānanga o Waitaha | University of Canterbury's Faculty of Law | Te Kaupeka Ture. Whether you are returning to the Faculty or joining us for the first time as you begin your studies in the LLB, the BCJ, or one of our postgraduate programmes, we are delighted to have you as part of our Faculty whānau. I am immensely proud of the strength, diversity, and dedication of our students and staff. This year, my academic and professional colleagues and I look forward to meeting you in our lecture theatres, across campus, and at the many events, moots, and competitions hosted by our eight vibrant law and criminal justice clubs. These activities are at the heart of our Faculty culture, offering invaluable opportunities to connect and be inspired.

I hope you had the chance over summer, hopefully finding a few sunspots along the way, to relax and spend time with friends and whānau, returning refreshed and ready to immerse yourself in the study of law and UC life. If you are new to Christchurch, the University campus, or the Law School, and it all feels a bit overwhelming, please know that you are not alone. Everyone here is incredibly friendly and always willing to help—so do reach out if you need support or guidance. The Faculty has a proud history dating back to 1873, the year the University was established. Today, it is recognised for its innovation and dynamic approach to legal education, and for its leadership within the University, the wider community of Ōtautahi, and the legal profession across Canterbury and Aotearoa.

This year will be an exciting one for the Law Faculty:

- We are delighted to welcome Dr Jessica Peterson, who will join the Criminal Justice programme at the end of June. Dr Peterson brings valuable expertise in policing, discretionary decision-making, and rural crime, and we look forward to the contributions she will make to our teaching and research community.
- Since early February, Jess Maclean, who joined us from Aotahi, has been strengthening the Criminal Justice programme with lots of energy and enthusiasm.
- We are immensely proud of the achievements of Andrew Blake and Cameron Dick, whose outstanding performance as runners-up in the Moot at last year's New Zealand Law Students' Association (NZLSA) Competition has enabled UC to qualify for the Jessup International Law Moot for the first time in nearly 20 years. The team, Andrew, Cameron, Sophie Lumb, Jessica Pope, and Thomas Kamo, have worked tirelessly over the summer and are preparing to compete in Washington at the end of March.
- Last year's NZLSA competitions were a real highlight, with Toby Spackman winning the Witness Examination and the UC team receiving the Spirit of the Competition award in addition to Andrew's and Cameron's success. These competitions are fun, challenging, and incredibly rewarding. Beyond NZLSA, students can also participate in prestigious international competitions such as the Vis Moot, the Sports Arbitration Moot, and the International Humanitarian Law Moot.



The Faculty will host a number of visitors and events this year, and you are warmly encouraged to attend. We begin the year with a visit from Judge Kimberley Prost of the International Criminal Court, who will deliver a public lecture on 26 February. On 12–13 March, we will host the Christchurch Conference on International and Transnational Legal Frameworks.

Please keep an eye out for the Student Newsletter, published four times each year. It contains important updates and guidance from our student advisors, the Assistant Dean Students, and the Associate Dean Academic. I wish you every success for the year ahead and encourage you to make the most of the academic, professional, and community experiences that await you at Te Kaupeka Ture.

To an interesting and fun-filled 2026!
Kei ōu ringaringa te ao —
The world is yours.

Petra Butler
Executive Dean of Law

Make it Real.

Real Work.
Real People.
Real Growth.



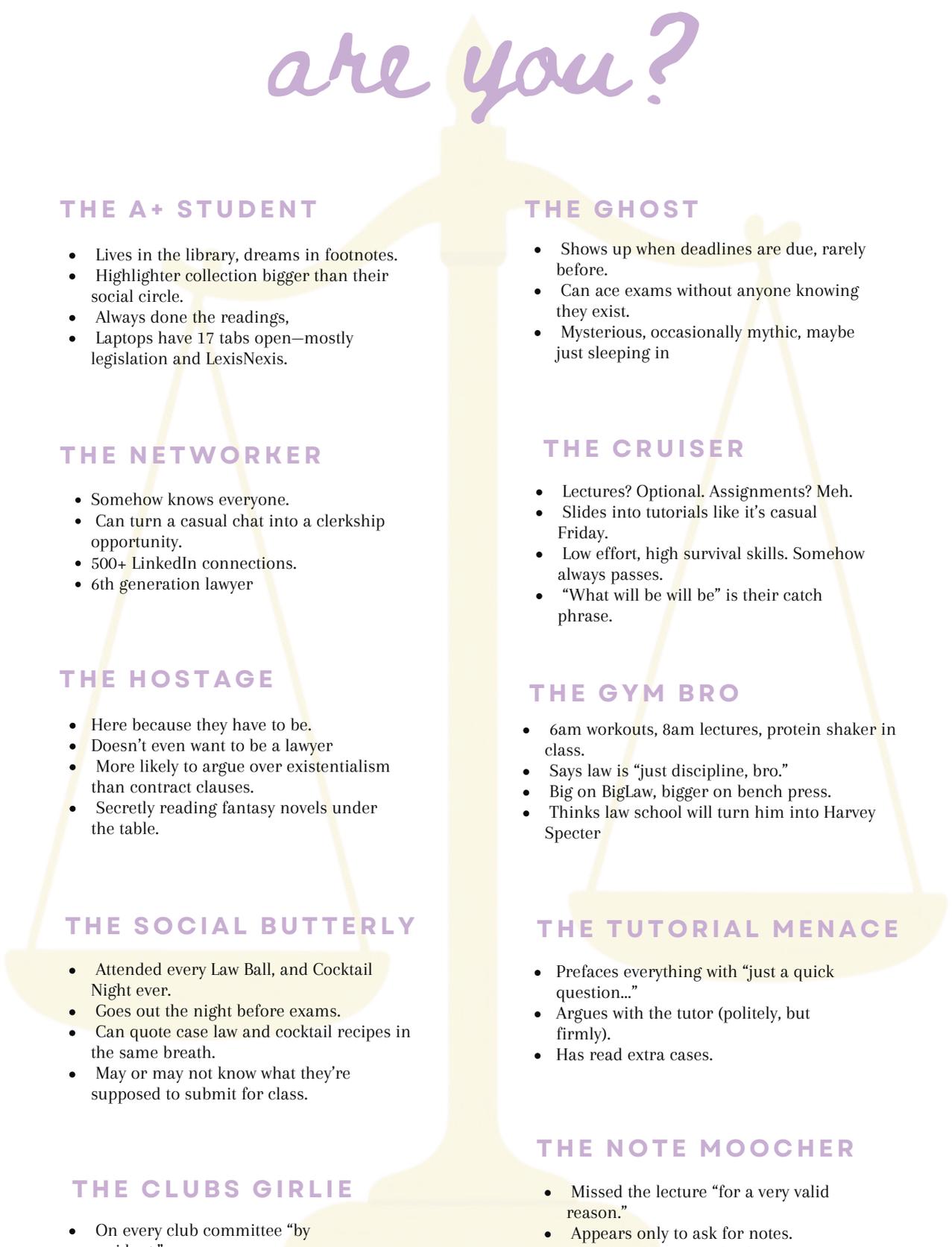
Applications for our Summer Clerk Programme are open from:
2-29 March 2026



**anderson
lloyd.**

WHICH LAW STUDENT STEREOTYPE

are you?



THE A+ STUDENT

- Lives in the library, dreams in footnotes.
- Highlighter collection bigger than their social circle.
- Always done the readings,
- Laptops have 17 tabs open—mostly legislation and LexisNexis.

THE NETWORKER

- Somehow knows everyone.
- Can turn a casual chat into a clerkship opportunity.
- 500+ LinkedIn connections.
- 6th generation lawyer

THE HOSTAGE

- Here because they have to be.
- Doesn't even want to be a lawyer
- More likely to argue over existentialism than contract clauses.
- Secretly reading fantasy novels under the table.

THE SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

- Attended every Law Ball, and Cocktail Night ever.
- Goes out the night before exams.
- Can quote case law and cocktail recipes in the same breath.
- May or may not know what they're supposed to submit for class.

THE CLUBS GIRLIE

- On every club committee “by accident.”
- Colour-coded calendar.
- Carries the group assignment.
- Always has a coffee in hand.

THE GHOST

- Shows up when deadlines are due, rarely before.
- Can ace exams without anyone knowing they exist.
- Mysterious, occasionally mythic, maybe just sleeping in

THE CRUISER

- Lectures? Optional. Assignments? Meh.
- Slides into tutorials like it's casual Friday.
- Low effort, high survival skills. Somehow always passes.
- “What will be will be” is their catch phrase.

THE GYM BRO

- 6am workouts, 8am lectures, protein shaker in class.
- Says law is “just discipline, bro.”
- Big on BigLaw, bigger on bench press.
- Thinks law school will turn him into Harvey Specter

THE TUTORIAL MENACE

- Prefaces everything with “just a quick question...”
- Argues with the tutor (politely, but firmly).
- Has read extra cases.

THE NOTE MOOCHER

- Missed the lecture “for a very valid reason.”
- Appears only to ask for notes.
- Promises to return the favour (never does).
- Still passes. Infuriating.

Hear it from Lana Paul

This year, we sat down with Lana to talk about life after law school, tracing a journey from private practice to being a barrister, and now the role of Family Court Associate.



Could you walk us through a usual workday of a barrister?

My main areas of specialty were complex relationship property, trust and estates disputes. I was also a youth advocate and really enjoyed advocating for young people in the criminal justice system. For those who admitted the charges or the charges were proved, my goal was to support them and get support put in place for them, such as education, counselling, mentors, sports to reduce the risk of them re-offending and preferably to leave Youth Court with a clean record. Everything is based around court appearances, court deadlines and out-of-court deadlines. Most court days start at 10.00 am. It was an unusual week for me, if I was not in court.

In terms of a typical day for me, first check emails and messages and do final preparation for anything in court that day and attend to any urgent matters. Meet clients and appear in court. When not in court, analysing clients' legal positions, advising clients, drafting court and other documents, communicating with clients and other lawyers, preparing for court and negotiating settlements to save people from going to court.

What did the transition from practicing in a law firm to becoming a barrister look like?

At first, it was terrifying – Am I going to have enough work to make enough money to pay the bills let alone pay myself? When you are in a firm and you are on a wage or salary you get paid regularly, often irrespective of whether your clients pay the firm. The firm pays the work bills, including IRD, practicing certificate, rent and continuing professional development. As a barrister, you must wait until your bill is paid but still pay all your own work bills. I relied on work being referred to me from other lawyers, agencies, clients and friends.

Balancing taking on new work is something I did not master. It was hard for me to say “no” when people have been referred to you. I wanted to help clients and I worried that that person might not refer more work to me if I said “no”. I did learn (slowly) that it was okay to say “no” and I did not run out of work.

What is a common misconception about being a barrister?

That a barrister wants all clients to go to court and for the court to determine everything. Court is an option, but one that should only be used when other options are not working. I am comfortable and confident in court. However, I know that for clients, court comes with significant costs, not just financially but also stress and anxiety. My goal was to try and resolve matters early, preferably before it went to court. But, if it did go to court, then I was comfortable being there and representing my clients.

In your experience, is the decision to become a barrister something that should be made early or can it develop over time?

It is a decision I took a lot of time to consider. I talked to family, friends, colleagues and an accountant. I attended the law society's stepping up course. I had nearly 20 years in practice before I became a barrister, so had a solid foundation of legal experience and a wide range of colleagues. Having a good professional and personal reputation is vital to getting work. I had built up and fiercely protected my reputation.

The best part about being a barrister is that you are your own boss. I only had myself to report to. No one tells you off for coming in at 9 am or praises you for working till 10 pm. As long as my bills were paid and my work was under control, it did not matter if I worked all week or took the week off. You do not have to wait 20 years like I did, but I do suggest you take time to carefully consider whether it is the right move and time for you.

As we found out recently, you have started working as a family court associate. Could you please tell us what the role entails?

A Family Court Associate is a judicial officer in the Family Court. There are 13 of us sitting in courts from Whangārei to Invercargill. Our role is to reduce the high administrative workload of Family Court judges and reduce delays for Family Court participants. The Family Court has a huge number of cases each year and there can be long delays for parties to have their cases determined. We are not Family Court judges and there are limits to our jurisdiction. However, within our jurisdiction we do have powers to assist parties to resolve matters by consent, determine interlocutory applications and prepare cases for a Judge to determine.

In the area of family law, which part do you find most rewarding?

It is definitely helping people to resolve matters. Family Court Associates preside over many judicial settlement conferences. Family Court proceedings are usually the result of the end of close personal relationships whether by separation or death. Emotions run high and people can get stuck in conflict and focus on the problems from the past and not see solutions or the future. In childcare cases, helping parents and caregivers, who know the children far better than anyone else, focus on and make good decisions about their children's future care arrangements and end their court proceedings is gratifying.

How can students develop advocacy skills while still at university?

I have had the privilege of judging a few of the recent UC moots, so I know there is a high caliber of mooting here. If you are too nervous to moot, go and watch. That may inspire you to give it a go. This is the place to learn.

One thing that I did, even while I was studying, was to go to court and watch hearings and trials. I watched some wonderful, and not so wonderful, advocacy over the years and I learnt so much from other counsel. The way questions were phrased, how counsel moved, used their voice or used silence. Listening to counsel explain their case and see how the Judge or jury was persuaded or watching a juror fall asleep. If you know somebody who appears in court, maybe ask to buy them a cup of coffee and then ask them if they have a case coming up that you could watch and if they have time to explain what their case is and then go to court and watch them. They may have time to give you debrief at the end.

What is one thing students should stop worrying about?

It is hard to stop worrying about things. I would suggest that rather than worrying about the perfect job, keep your options open because having a law degree opens so many doors.

If you miss out on the big law firms or firms in the main centers, think about taking opportunities in smaller firms or areas outside the main centers. I started with a sole practitioner who provided me with careful supervision and opportunities to learn with her support and guidance. Within my first 6 months, I had juniored on a manslaughter case, met with clients and regularly appeared in court.

On top of what you mentioned before, do you have any advice for law students starting in their career or at University?

I have three. One, your reputation is everything. Sometimes you might be tempted to take a shortcut, but if you lose your reputation, people will not trust you. If you have a bad reputation, it is really hard to rebuild, so hang on to it.

The second is connection. In Māori, we talk about whakawhanaungatanga. 'Whaka' to make, 'whanaunga' family, 'tanga' the process. Whakawhanaungatanga, the making of family like connections. Some people call it networking, but I would prefer to call it connections, a two-way street. Not just receiving but also giving and sharing your knowledge and experiences.

Being part of a collegial community, so you have someone to ask questions, refer work to and have people refer work to you.

Lastly, look after yourself. Make sure you have a positive outlet. Whether that is walking, running, playing rugby, music, hanging out with friends and family – anything that brings you joy. It is hard to look after others if you do not look after yourself.



DO NOT BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP. THAT TOO IS PART OF LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF.



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Kōhiti Whakamanawa



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+ counting**

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Skills focused

We teach practical skills using realistic client-focused scenarios that are directly applicable to the workplace.

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Our experienced Instructors stay by your side throughout the course, providing feedback and support at every stage.

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MEET THE EXEC

These are the faces you'll be seeing a lot, so we asked them the questions that really matter:

1. What's something you're oddly confident about?
2. Your Roman Empire?
3. Go-to comfort activity?



Georgie House
President

1. THAT THE HOUSE ALWAYS WINS
2. COFFEE
3. SKYDIVING

Toby Spackman
Treasurer

1. HURRICANES BECOMING THE 2026 SUPER RUGBY CHAMPIONS
2. ANYTHING TO DO WITH THE TAB
3. GYM (EXCLUDING LEGS)

Andrew Blake
Vice-President / Secretary

1. I HAVE AN ODD AMOUNT OF CONFIDENCE IN THE KITCHEN, CONSIDERING I HAVE LITERALLY NO REASON TO BE AND RARELY COOK.
2. THAT PHOTO OF DEMI LOVATO (IYKYK)
3. WATCHING MOVIES. I AM A NETFLIX ADDICT.

Antonio Sidonio
Social Officer

1. I ALWAYS HAD A FEELING I COULD SOLVE A MILLENNIUM PRIZE PROBLEM.
2. THE ROMAN EMPIRE.
3. I LIKE EATING A FAMILY BAG OF SWEET THAI CHILLI DORITOS - BUT NOT WITH MY FAMILY. YOLO!

Lane Foster
Social Officer

1. DRIVING #LEARNERS
2. HOW HAIRLESS CATS GET BULLIED BY HAIRY CATS BECAUSE THEY LOOK DIFFERENT
3. IPAD GAMES 😊





Coco Pett
Education and Welfare Officer

- 1. MY CARTWHEELING ABILITY
- 2. THE TWILIGHT SAGA #TEAMEDWARD
- 3. GOING FOR A MORNING BEACH SWIM



Will Smallwood
Education and Welfare Officer

- 1. THAT I WILL BE THE FASTEST TALKER YOU WILL EVER MEET.
- 2. GREEK MYTHOLOGY.
- 3. PLAYING VIDEO GAMES IN BED ON A RAINY DAY.



Helen Lim
Obiter Officer

- 1. LAST-MINUTE ALL NIGHTERS
- 2. HOW EVERYONE HAS THEIR OWN LIVES AND WE'RE ALL JUST SIDE CHARACTERS IN THEIR WORLD
- 3. ONLINE SHOPPING IN BED



Janre Lim
Obiter Officer

- 1. KARAOKE SING ALONG
- 2. HOW THE WINNERS TAKE IT ALL
- 3. EXPLORING



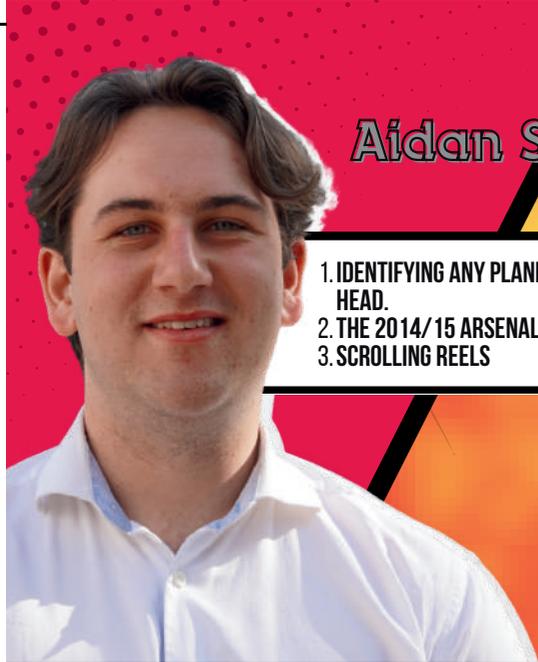
Thomas Kamo
Competitions Officer

- 1. MY BALANCE. I'M LIKE A ROLY-POLY DOLL. NO DOUBT IN MY MIND I COULD WALK A TIGHTROPE NO PROBLEM RIGHT NOW.
- 2. JOSEPH ON CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE LAW 5TH ED
- 3. MICROWAVING LEFTOVERS



Portia Houston
Competitions Officer

- 1. MY DRIVING
- 2. ANCIENT GREECE
- 3. WATCHING TV SHOWS I'VE ALREADY WATCHED BEFORE



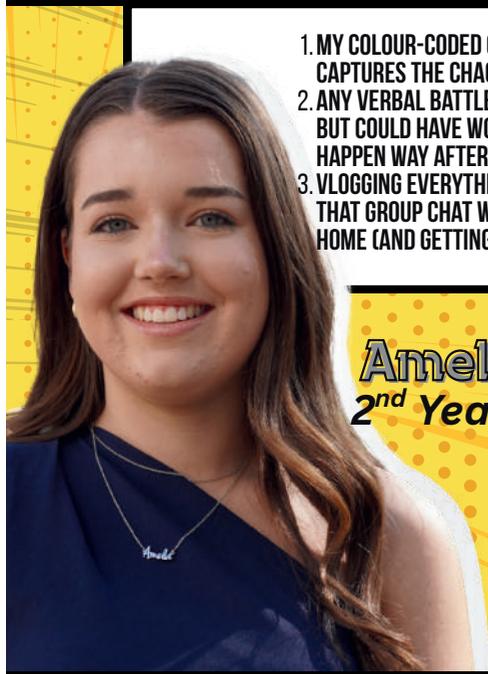
Aidan Soper
Law Show Producer

1. IDENTIFYING ANY PLANE THAT FLIES OVER MY HEAD.
2. THE 2014/15 ARSENAL SEASON
3. SCROLLING REELS



Clara Hadlow
Sports Officer

1. BACKING A TRAILER... MY DAD THOUGHT OF THIS FOR ME
2. WORKING OUT THE RIGHT TIMINGS FOR BAKING SOURDOUGH THINGS.
3. HAVING A GLASS OF WINE AND WATCHING THE GREAT BRITISH BAKE OFF.



Amelia Davies
2nd Year Rep

1. MY COLOUR-CODED CALENDAR WHICH IS INSANELY EXCESSIVE BUT CAPTURES THE CHAOS IN MY HEAD PERFECTLY
2. ANY VERBAL BATTLE WITH SOMEONE THAT I WON (OR DIDN'T WIN AT ALL), BUT COULD HAVE WON BETTER - LIKE WHY DO THE BEST COMEBACKS HAPPEN WAY AFTER
3. VLOGGING EVERYTHING THATS HAPPENING IN MY LIFE AND SENDING IT TO THAT GROUP CHAT WITH THE WEIRD NAME FULL OF MY FRIENDS FROM HOME (AND GETTING THE SAME BACK, CURES THE HOMESICKNESS FR)



Issy Hughes
2nd Year Rep

1. QUIZ NIGHT. I GO WITH FRIENDS EVERY WEEK, AND I THINK I'LL BE MORE USEFUL THAN I AM.
2. THE FACT THERE WAS ROOM FOR JACK ON THE DOOR IN TITANIC
3. WATCHING REALITY TV

Promotions Officers

1. MY CHOC CHIP BICCY RECIPE :)
2. STEVIE NICKS' 1997 LIVE PERFORMANCE OF SILVER SPRINGS.
3. GOING FOR A BEACH DIP 🗨️

1. GUESSING THE TIME
2. HOW SPACE GOES ON FOREVER
3. BEING IN THE MOUNTAINS!!

1. THAT I HAVE A HIGHER SCREEN TIME THAN YOU
2. THE THRONE OF GLASS BOOK SERIES
3. WATCHING A COMFORT SERIES (FRIENDS OR BROOKLYN 99) WITH SNACKS



Sammie Fowler

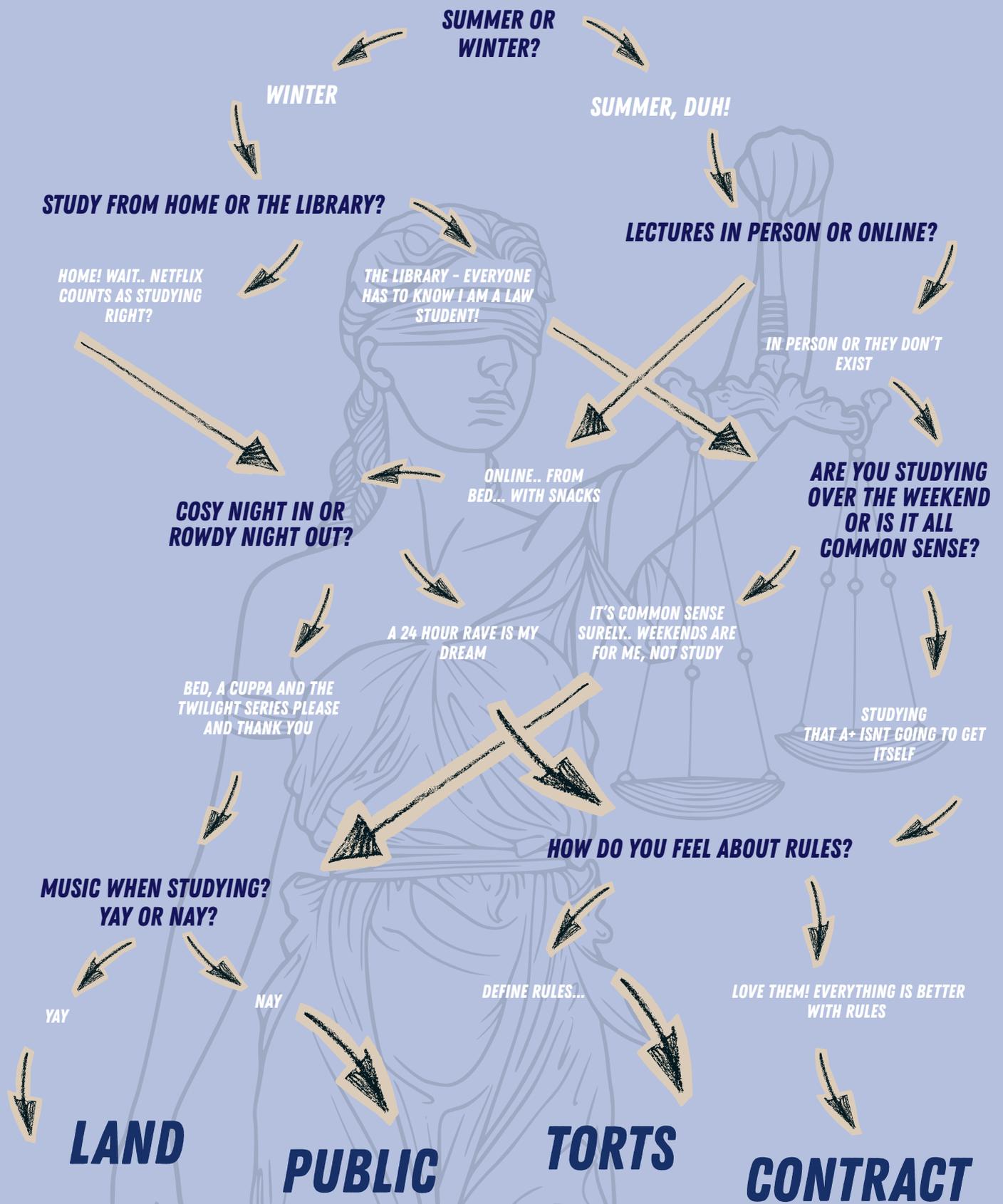


Scarlett Gordon



Neve Korregast

WHICH 200 LEVEL COURSE ARE YOU?





LAW SCHOOL LEGEND - MIRANDA GRAY



Our Law School Legend for this edition is Miranda Gray, Partner at Tavendale & Partners. A highly respected litigator, Miranda pairs professional excellence with meaningful community involvement, especially within UC. She serves on the committee developing the UC Pacific Implementation Plan, mentors law students, plays an active role in our university, and is an advocate for Pacific students and communities.

Thinking back to your days at UC, what experiences or moments stand out as particularly memorable for you?

This is a bit hard to reflect on, since I finished my law degree in 2006, so that's actually 20 years ago! During that time, I got involved in a few competitions, including client interviewing, which took me to Hamilton and Melbourne — that was a lot of fun. I also remember lots of days and evenings in the law library, and taking really long, extended study breaks with my friends.

Can you share what initially drew you to pursue a career in law?

After high school, I began studying for a science degree at Otago. Halfway through, I realised that science wasn't the path for me. After I finished studying for my science degree, I knew I wanted to study English literature because I liked reading books. However, I thought I needed to be a bit more practical and study something that had wider employment prospects at the end of it. At the time, I was volunteering at a community centre, focusing on welfare and employment advocacy. That experience prompted a new thought: "Maybe law would be a better fit than English literature." So I did, and the rest is history.

What motivates you to remain engaged with the University of Canterbury community?

I'm really proud to be a UC alumna. Christchurch is where I grew up, and it's where I've raised my children, who are still in high school, so I want to contribute wherever I can. There are so many amazing people at UC who are deeply committed to creating a supportive environment for students and providing a first-class education, particularly a top-notch legal education. I just want to do my part.

What inspires you to continue mentoring and contributing to initiatives that support minority representation in law?

That was a tricky question. I've had to become comfortable offering my services, putting myself forward to mentor and contribute. It's gotten easier with experience, but for a long time, I felt a bit like a fraud saying, "Yes, I'm happy to help." What inspires me is the importance of visibility. It might sound cheesy, but you do need to be the change you want to see. Even though I sometimes think, "Gosh, no one needs to see me," I know it helps people to see that experienced lawyers come in all shapes and sizes. I think I'm much better now at holding space. I don't have a fixed idea anymore of what a "great lawyer" looks like. I'm more comfortable just being myself, and that took a long time to get to. I also think it's important to pay it forward. I wouldn't be where I am today if others hadn't given their time and advice, listened, and helped me stay on track.

Beyond traditional study, what opportunities would you encourage law students to pursue to broaden their skills and networks?

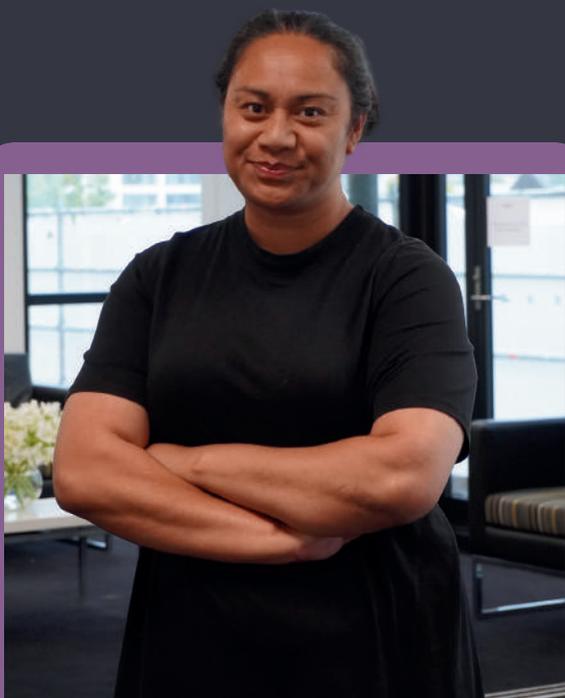
I thought that was an interesting question. A lot of students want jobs, summer clerkships, or graduate roles, and they want to know what they should be doing. From my experience conducting summer clerk interviews, one key thing stands out: the ability to juggle competing commitments. That's the reality of working life, especially in private practice. Working is one way to show that, but it's not the only way. If you can't work, you might be heavily involved in sport, community work, mentoring, tutoring, caring for family, music, or acting. Those all count. What matters is doing things that genuinely interest you, not just ticking boxes.

Employers want to see that you can manage multiple commitments, work effectively in teams, and serve others. Law is a service industry, and you need to get used to working with all kinds of people and communicating well. Even in sport, think beyond playing: refereeing, coaching, or managing all demonstrate valuable skills.

There's no one perfect way to be. It's important to show that law isn't the only thing in your life, that you can work with others, and that you do things that enrich you. If you're at your best, that shows in your work. I guess the simple way to put it is: keep your bucket full.



Law is a service industry, and you need to get used to working with all kinds of people and communicating well.



You contribute significantly beyond practice through roles like trustee of the Canterbury Law Review. Why is engagement beyond day-to-day practice important for lawyers?

Culturally, it's important for me to give back. We have a responsibility to use our skills beyond our day-to-day jobs, and it's an easy way to contribute. It also fosters a sense of belonging. Many of us come into law wanting to change the world, and it's easy to feel like you're just on a treadmill. Doing this work keeps you grounded and helps you avoid living in a professional or virtual bubble. I get a lot out of these roles, including being a trustee of the Canterbury Law Review and serving on the board of Burnside High School.

In your experience, how respected and enforceable are wills in New Zealand, particularly in complex family or trust situations?

One thing students need to remember is that when you learn law through cases, you're seeing where things went wrong. Straightforward matters don't end up in court.

Wills are enforceable and important documents. If someone dies intestate, someone has to apply to the court to administer the estate. However, modern life is complex—blended families, longer lives, multiple relationships—and wills are really just one document in a suite. It might also include trusts or contracting-out agreements.

Problems often arise not because of one document, but because documents don't align or because people haven't had conversations with those affected. In the past, people might have written a will without discussion, but now we're seeing that open and ongoing conversations matter. The issues we see are often symptoms of complexity in modern life, and they show that we need to plan ahead and communicate better.

Legal structures bring us back to the need to challenge how we talk about death and planning. We may not want to talk about it, but we will die, and it's important to think about fairness and impact.

Last question—are there any messages you'd like to leave for students and young lawyers?

It's important to have an open mind about your first few years after law school. You'll learn a lot, and life is very different from studying.

Try to take the gold from the feedback you receive, even when it's hard to hear, and let go of the rest. That will help you grow sustainably. The mindset outside law school is different—you're not graded anymore. Success is measured differently, through service and advice.

Don't seek perfection. You'll make mistakes repeatedly, and that's normal. The goal isn't to know everything, but to build skills to solve problems and help people. Lastly, have fun. Don't take everything to heart or take yourself too seriously. Keep your bucket full, because work alone won't do that. If you look after yourself, you can do your job well, and live a full, balanced life.

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NEW ZEALAND LAW STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Kia ora koutou! On behalf of the New Zealand Law Students' Association (NZLSA), we'd like to wish all law students at the University of Canterbury a happy new year and welcome you back for another year of study. If you're not familiar with NZLSA, we hope your first LSS magazine issue gives you a sense of who we are and what we do. If you'd like to learn more, be sure to check out our social media pages.

The NZLSA student council is comprised of the NZLSA executive, three ex officio members, and the president of the Law Students' Society (LSS) of each university. The primary function of the NZLSA is to enhance legal education and act as an advocate for law students throughout the country.



NATIONAL COMPETITIONS

MinterEllisonRuddWatts Witness Examination: Students step into counsel roles and put their advocacy to the test through direct and cross-examination. Competitors receive a case brief and examine witnesses based on the agreed facts, going head-to-head against opposing counsel.

Buddle Findlay Open Negotiations: Teams of two work through a client-based negotiation problem using a mix of shared and confidential information. It's a hands-on way to sharpen a skill that's central to legal practice (and plenty of other careers too!).

LexisNexis Paper Presentation: Competitors write a 3,000–5,000 word legal paper on a topic of their choice (from law reform to recent cases and beyond) and then present their work to a judging panel. You can write something new or adapt an existing assignment.

Bell Gully Open Mooting: Mooting recreates the courtroom experience - you'll prepare written submissions and then argue your case orally before a panel. It's widely regarded as one of the premier advocacy competitions for law students.

IPLS Client Interviewing: This competition is all about meeting with a "client," asking the right questions, and drawing out the key facts, while also giving some initial, practical legal guidance.

NZLSA CONFERENCE

Each year, NZLSA hosts its annual conference, with the location rotating between New Zealand's six law schools. This year Victoria University will be hosting the annual NZLSA conference. The key focus of the conference is the national legal skills competitions. Taking out a national final is a huge achievement - winners earn the title of New Zealand champions and may also get the chance to represent Aotearoa overseas against top competitors from around the world. The conference is always a standout event of the NZLSA calendar, and we'd love to see plenty of new faces there this year.

Keen to go? To attend, you'll need to qualify by winning one of the LSS regional competitions outlined above. For details, get in touch with your LSS competition officers.



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