



NATIONAL JUDICIAL INSTITUTE
INSTITUT NATIONAL DE LA MAGISTRATURE

ANNUAL REVIEW

2025-26



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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF JUSTICE OF CANADA



The strength of Canada's justice system is grounded in the independence of its judges and the depth and breadth of expertise they bring to their work. The National Judicial Institute, which I have the privilege of chairing, plays a critical role in supporting both. As a cornerstone of continuing judicial education, the NJI ensures that Canadian judges remain knowledgeable about the latest legal developments, skilled in the craft of judging, and attuned to the lived realities of those who appear before them. Designed and delivered under the guidance of the judiciary, the NJI's programming supports every judge in Canada, regardless of language or legal tradition.

Each year, the NJI deepens and expands its educational programming. This year saw the NJI launch additional resources and programming on topics including intimate partner violence and coercive control, developments in criminal law and family law, mental health and wellness, Indigenous-led justice initiatives and artificial intelligence.

The NJI also continues to strengthen its commitment to judicial mentorship and peer-to-peer exchanges across the country. From the national Justice in Motion seminar - which fostered dialogue between judges from common law and civil law jurisdictions on the judicial role in criminal proceedings - to the Judging in the Digital Age seminar examining the impact of artificial intelligence on the justice system, and its online hub for judicial educators promoting pedagogical best practices, opportunities for judges to learn from one another continue to grow. The NJI's work is made possible by a community of dedicated judicial educators across Canada. To the many judges, educators, community leaders, Indigenous partners, and all those who contributed to this vital work, I extend my deepest appreciation.

Finally, it is my great pleasure to welcome the Honourable J.C. Marc Richard, Chief Justice of New Brunswick, as the NJI's new Chief Judicial Officer in 2026. I look forward to working closely together in the years ahead. On behalf of the Board, I also extend my sincere gratitude to the Honourable Justice Crabtree for his tireless leadership over the past five years, during which the organization has reached new heights in judicial education excellence.



**The Right Honourable
Richard Wagner, P.C.**

Chief Justice of Canada
Chair of the NJI Board of Governors

Welcome to

NJI'S ANNUAL REVIEW 2025-2026

I am delighted to share the NJI's Annual Review for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2026. Within these pages, you will find highlights of our extensive in-person programming and rich array of digital learning resources, all designed to support judicial excellence across Canada.

As NJI's impact continues to extend beyond Canada's borders, 2026 also marked an important milestone in our international engagement, where the NJI assumed the role of corporate headquarters for the International Organization for Judicial Training (IOJT). I am honoured to serve as Secretary General, working closely with IOJT President and CJO Emerita Adèle Kent to support and foster collaboration across the international judicial education community.

Along with the NJI team, I join Chief Justice Wagner in expressing our sincere gratitude to Justice Crabtree for his extraordinary contributions to judicial education and to NJI throughout his tenure. His leadership, vision, and dedication have left a lasting impact on our organization and the broader judicial community. We are also pleased to welcome Justice Richard to his new role and look forward to working together to advance NJI's mission in the years ahead.

We hope you enjoy reading about the latest developments in our education programming in this our 2025-26 Annual Review.

Danielle May-Cuconato

Chief Executive Officer, NJI



FROM THE CHIEF JUDICIAL OFFICER



Justice Tom Crabtree

Outgoing Chief Judicial Officer (CJO) and
incoming CJO, International

By the time you read this, the sun will have set on my term as CJO. It has been a profound privilege and honour to serve in this role over the past five years. Succeeding my predecessor, the Honourable Adèle Kent, was a daunting task given her remarkable leadership through the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. Working together with CEO Danielle May-Cuconato under a new leadership model, she helped position the NJI for continued success. I was the fortunate beneficiary of their hard work, enabling me to step comfortably into a role that had been so carefully and thoughtfully crafted.

The NJI is the gold standard for the design, development, and delivery of judicial education, not only in Canada but around the world. Over the past five years, I have come to appreciate that this reputation is built on the contributions of so many: our Board members, who exemplify the importance of judge-led education; our planning committee members and faculty including our indigenous partners, whose countless hours of service help shape exceptional programs and resources; and the Canadian Judicial Council and the Canadian Council of Chief Judges and Chief Justices, whose collaboration advances our shared goals of judicial excellence. Finally, it reflects the work of our exceptional NJI team, who bring expertise, energy, and innovation to the development and delivery of world-class judicial education through both in-person programs and digital resources.

Judicial education is a cornerstone of maintaining public confidence in our judicial institutions and providing an accessible system of justice. The contributions of so many enable judges across Canada to devote time and energy to professional development, refine their skills, remain current on legal developments, and deepen their understanding of the communities they serve. In doing so, they strengthen both public confidence and access to justice.

To the incoming Chief Judicial Officer, Justice Marc Richard, I offer my warm congratulations and full support as he assumes this role. To Danielle May-Cuconato, thank you for your leadership, partnership, and inspiration throughout our journey together. As the sun rises on a new chapter in the NJI's story, I take comfort in knowing the organization is in strong and capable hands.

To all my colleagues throughout the country, I extend my deepest thanks and gratitude for your contributions and support. It has been my true privilege to serve as the CJO over the past five years. I look forward to continuing my work with the NJI in a new capacity and remain profoundly grateful for the opportunity to be part of this remarkable organization.



Justice Marc Richard

Incoming Chief Judicial Officer, August 2026

It is with deep pride and a profound sense of responsibility that I take up the role of Chief Judicial Officer of the National Judicial Institute this August. My association with the NJI reaches back many years - as a judicial educator, a frequent lecturer, and a member of its committees and Board of Governors. To now be entrusted with leading an institution I have long admired ranks high among the great honours of my career.

I follow in the footsteps of Justice Tom Crabtree, whose leadership has left the NJI stronger, broader in its reach, and more responsive than ever to the needs of judges and the communities they serve. His contributions to judicial education in Canada - particularly in advancing Indigenous law and legal perspectives, deepening community engagement, and building international partnerships - have been extraordinary. I am honoured and committed to building on that legacy.

I come to this work from the Court of Appeal of New Brunswick, Canada's only officially bilingual province, where serving our English and French-speaking communities in both official languages is not an abstraction but a lived, daily reality. That experience has shaped my deepest conviction about the NJI's purpose: that every judge in this country - in every province and territory, in both official languages, and across the common law, civil law, and Indigenous legal traditions - deserves access to judicial education that is second to none. Equal access to excellence, across our bijural and bilingual system, is not merely an aspiration. It is a cornerstone of justice.

It is also a foundation of public confidence. A judiciary that is competent, independent, and ever-learning is the surest guarantee of the trust Canadians place in their courts. That trust is not given once; it is earned continually, and judicial education is central to earning it. The NJI's work has never been more important, and the years ahead holds real promise.

The challenges facing the justice system are significant, but so too are the opportunities for innovation, collaboration, and learning.

I look forward to working alongside the Board, the NJI's dedicated staff, and our many partners - within the judicial community and well beyond it - to advance judicial education that is rigorous, relevant, and deserving of the confidence Canadians place in their courts.

THE NJI BOARD OF GOVERNORS



CHAIR

The Right Honourable Richard Wagner, P.C.
Chief Justice of Canada

Margaret Biggs

Matthews Fellow in Global Public Policy
Queen's University

The Honourable Justice Tom Crabtree

Chief Judicial Officer, NJI
Supreme Court of British Columbia

The Honourable Melissa Gillespie

Chief Judge, Provincial Court of British Columbia

The Honourable Jean-François Michaud

Associate Chief Justice, Superior Court of Québec

The Honourable Martel D. Popescul

Chief Justice, Court of King's Bench of Saskatchewan

OFFICER TO THE BOARD

Danielle May-Cuconato

Chief Executive Officer, NJI

VICE CHAIR

The Honourable Justice Nicholas Kasirer
Supreme Court of Canada

The Honourable J.C. Marc Richard

Chief Justice, Court of Appeal of New Brunswick

The Honourable Judge James F. Rybchuk

Provincial Court of Saskatchewan

Professor Sophie Thériault

Dean, Faculty of Law (Civil Law Section),
University of Ottawa

Professor Jeremy Webber

Faculty of Law, University of Victoria

Honorary Board Member

The Honourable Frank Iacobucci

Retired Justice, Supreme Court of Canada

Secretary: Daniel Byma

Executive Legal Officer and Chief of Staff
Supreme Court of Canada (SCC)

OUR EDUCATIONAL MODEL



JUDICIAL LEADERSHIP

Under the leadership of NJI's Chief Judicial Officer, judicial planning committees guide the design and development of NJI educational resources and programming. These committees work in close collaboration with subject matter experts inside and outside the legal profession to develop educational content that is timely, relevant and responsive to the learning needs of their peers. NJI's internal teams, composed of staff lawyers who are experts in adult education, and professionals specialized in event-planning, operations, and project management, work alongside planning committee members to create meaningful learning experiences for judges.

A METHODOICAL PROCESS THAT FOSTERS EXCELLENCE

The NJI's professional development planning follows a systematic approach. The process begins by identifying educational needs and articulating specific learning objectives. These objectives then guide the development of learning content, with topics and issues carefully selected to support their achievement.

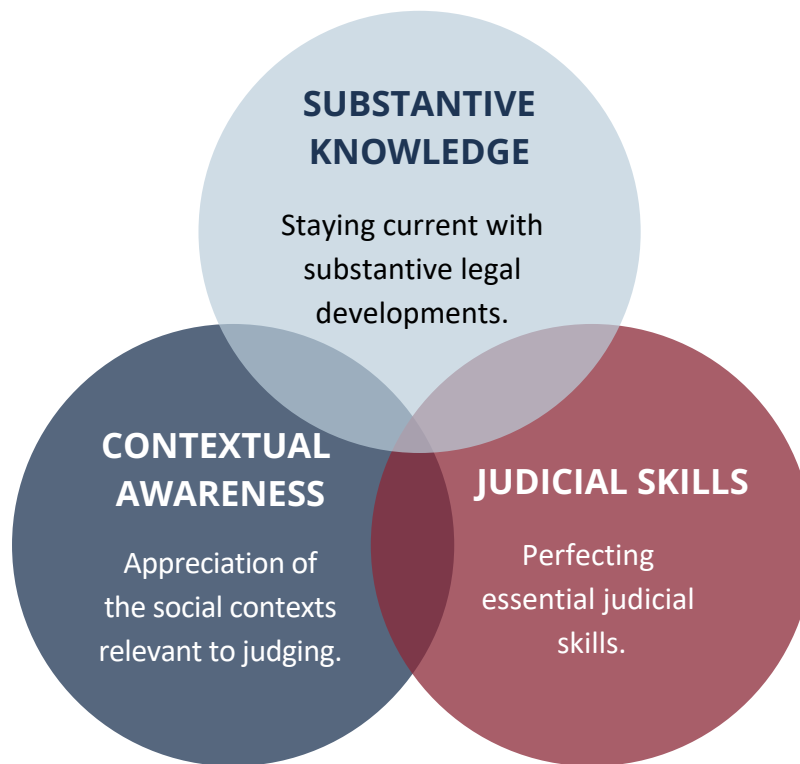
Each resource and seminar element is organized and designed to support the day-to-day work of judges, and to maximize engagement and knowledge retention. After delivery, programs and resources are evaluated to identify improvements and lessons learned, and the cycle begins anew.



OUR EDUCATIONAL MODEL

The National Judicial Institute's professional development curriculum comprises three core dimensions of judicial education, forming an integrated continuing education experience that addresses the different aspects of the judicial role.

THE 3 DIMENSIONS OF JUDICIAL EDUCATION



COMPLEMENTARY ONLINE, COURT-BASED AND NATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The NJI supports Canadian judges through the design and delivery of court-based education programs, specific to a court's jurisdiction and context, national programs open to any Canadian judge, and online resources designed to be relevant and accessible for judges of all courts. As a multi-jural, bilingual organization, the NJI provides programming for judges in common law and civil law jurisdictions, in English and French, and on Indigenous law and legal practices.

LIFELONG LEARNING

The NJI curriculum is designed to support judges throughout their careers, providing timely and relevant learning opportunities, regardless of a judge's level of experience. From foundational advice for the first days on the bench, to on-demand resources to assist mid-trial, to essential updates on substantive law and advanced seminars for experienced judges, NJI education supports Canadian judges throughout their careers.

OUR EDUCATIONAL MODEL

INTEGRATED DIGITAL AND IN-PERSON PROGRAMMING

NJI education serves judges from coast to coast and across multiple time zones, through a range of formats from intensive in-person programming to self-directed online learning modules. Our in-person programs provide judges with immersive education in which they can engage directly on-site with leading experts, participate in interactive workshops and breakout sessions and discuss challenging issues in small groups, learning directly from the experience of other judges. This live, on-site programming is combined with a robust digital learning environment that offers flexible, on-demand access at any time to podcasts, self-study courses, jury instructions, bench books and more. Whether judges participate in in-person education or flexible digital learning, the NJI delivers indispensable, high-quality education that adjusts to each judge's schedule, professional development needs, and learning preferences.



GUIDED BY BEST PRACTICES IN ADULT EDUCATION

The NJI is committed to developing and offering judicial education programming that embodies best practices in adult education. Adult learners bring a wealth of life experience to the learning environment and tend to engage most deeply with education that they can directly relate to their personal and professional circumstances.

Drawing notably on the work of adult education experts Malcolm Knowles and David Kolb, NJI judicial education is designed using an experiential learning model, which incorporates elements of experience, reflection, conceptualization, and application. Judicial learners are encouraged to draw on their personal and professional experiences, think about them in new ways, and apply their newfound knowledge and skills to real-world problems and situations. This approach places the judicial learner at the centre of the educational experience: posing questions, solving problems, constructing meaning, practicing skills, and receiving feedback.

BY THE NUMBERS: NJI EDUCATION STATISTICS

In the calendar year 2025, the NJI's in-person education seminars amounted to almost 200 distinct days of programming, with these seminars rated as either "excellent" or "very good" by 95% of participants. Our impactful in-person programming was complemented by the release of a wide range of high-quality digital education offerings, including updates to the NJI's Sexual Assault Law Judicial Toolkit, Criminal Law Fundamentals and Sentencing Black Offenders courses, additional programming on intimate partner and family violence and a dedicated resource page for judicial educators.



199 days of
in-person education

95%

Share of judicial participants
who rated NJI's programs as
excellent or very good

Extensive
new and updated
digital education
resources



NJI'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The NJI operates under a multi-year strategic plan that provides a comprehensive framework to guide the Institute in achieving its key goals. Our current plan runs from 2024 to 2027 and sets three core priorities for this period:

Our Strategic Plan 2024-27

Priority 1: Excellence in Judicial Education  Outstanding judicial education evolves to support the realities of modern judging. Through readily adapting, innovating, seeking new perspectives, and engaging with courts, we will ensure high-quality and responsive educational content that meets judicial needs.	Priority 2: Reconciliation  Flowing from the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the NJI is committed to contributing to the process of Canadian reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples through institutional awareness and judicial education.	Priority 3: Evidence-Based Decision-Making  The administration of justice requires informed and engaged justice stakeholders and a judicial education curriculum that adapts to feedback, emerging needs, and evolving contexts. We will ensure excellence through fostering strong and open communications with justice stakeholders and developing internal systems that ensure agility and responsiveness.
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ANNUAL PROGRESS:

"The 2025-26 fiscal year marks the second year of our three-year Strategic Plan, and a year of which I am immensely proud. Across all three strategic priorities, the organization has demonstrated remarkable momentum: from the development of responsive educational content on critical topics such as artificial Intelligence, intimate partner and family violence, and judicial wellbeing, to the launch of the Judicial Educators Hub, shaped by the insights gathered through our comprehensive curriculum review in 2023. This year has also been defined by meaningful and deeply valued collaboration with Indigenous peoples across Canada, advanced through productive on-the-land meetings from coast to coast to coast. As we look ahead to the final year of our current plan, we do so grounded in the significant progress achieved and the continued commitment of everyone who drives the NJI's mission forward."

Justice Tom Crabtree
Chief Judicial Officer, National Judicial Institute

INDIGENOUS LAW & EDUCATION

The National Judicial Institute's programs and resources on Indigenous law equip judges with a deeper understanding of legal pluralism, the diversity of Indigenous laws, legal traditions and practices across Canada, and their integration within the justice system.

NJI programming also engages with the social context and distinct experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada, dimensions that are critically relevant to the justice process. Key new releases in 2025-26 include self-study modules on Indigenous women's experiences of intimate partner violence, as well as targeted resources on Indigenous legal pluralism, including a case study of the Duncan First Nations Court. These additions complement NJI's suite of in-person and online offerings, including the multi-day Indigenous Law Seminar and online resources addressing the overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples in the criminal justice system, reconciliation in Canadian courts, and Indigenous-led justice initiatives.

These programs and resources reflect the sustained commitment and collaboration of Indigenous leaders across Canada. NJI is deeply grateful to its Indigenous partners for their expertise, time, and guidance in supporting these initiatives over the past year, and for their continued involvement in the development of future resources for the Canadian judiciary.

RECENT PLANNING MEETINGS



Meeting with the Wendat Nation,
Wendake, Québec 2026



Meeting with the Kainai First Nation, Blackfoot
Crossing Historical Park, Alberta, 2025



Meeting with the Duncan First Nation, the Duncan
First Nations Court, British Columbia, 2024



Meeting with the Wagmatcook First Nation,
Wagmatcook Provincial Court, Cape Breton,
Nova Scotia, 2025

FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES TAILORED TO THE NEEDS OF FRENCH-SPEAKING AND CIVIL LAW JUDGES



NJI's national education programming and resources are provided in both official languages, and this fiscal year was notable for the launch of additional online civil law resources, as well as criminal law programming focused on French-language case law and commentary.

The NJI was also proud to successfully deliver the third annual edition of its flagship national French-language program, Justice in Motion, in June 2025 in Montréal. The 2025 edition focused on criminal law issues and was jointly organized by the NJI and the Court of Québec as a collaborative undertaking. The program was designed to allow judges across Canada to engage with French-language case law and doctrine on criminal law issues of national relevance.

In addition, the NJI released two new online courses, the first on Québec family law reform, addressing Bill 12 and Bill 56 and their implications for judges, and the second, a subject collection on Québec civil law. This digital resource collection brings together the NJI's most relevant content on Québec law, particularly regarding the Civil Code of Québec and the Code of Civil Procedure of Québec. These materials complement our existing online self-study modules on Québec family law, which support both Superior Court of Québec judges and Court of Québec judges sitting on the new unified family tribunal.



FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

INTIMATE PARTNER VIOLENCE SELF-STUDY COURSE

Judges occupy a critical role in addressing the profound impacts of intimate partner and family violence on individuals, families, and communities. The NJI provides a wide range of education on this topic, from its Judging in Your First Five Years criminal and family law programs, to dedicated components within national family and criminal law seminars, to extensive online resources.

For example, the NJI's self-study course on intimate partner violence equips judges with a strong understanding of the legal landscape of IPV, informed by current research. Regularly updated, this course examines how IPV and family violence are addressed under the *Divorce Act* and provides a comparative overview of provincial and territorial legislative frameworks, including parenting legislation, child protection statutes, provisions on exclusive possession of the family home, and relevant *Criminal Code* offences.

The course also covers:

- The nature and dynamics of coercive control;
- Definitions and forms of intimate partner violence and abuse;
- Myths and stereotypes surrounding IPV, as recognized in Canadian family law jurisprudence;
- The distinct experiences of Indigenous women, who are disproportionately represented in statistics related to intimate partner violence, including the complex historical origins of this reality and the experiences of Indigenous individuals who appear before the courts;
- Technology-facilitated gender-based violence, including how technology may amplify coercive and controlling behaviours such as surveillance and manipulation; and
- A first-person account of living in an abusive relationship, including the complex barriers to leaving a violent partner.



"These chapters by the NJI provide excellent, easy to read and understand, foundational information on which judges can build competence in IPV."

The Honourable Justice Michelle A. Coady, Supreme Court of Newfoundland and Labrador

FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

JUDGING IN YOUR FIRST FIVE YEARS (FAMILY LAW AND CRIMINAL LAW)

These in-depth programs for recently appointed federal judges are mandatory under the Canadian Judicial Council's Professional Development Policies and Guidelines. The criminal law iteration of the program uses sexual assault fact scenarios to anchor the issues and allow participants to hone relevant skills. The family law iteration focuses on providing judges with practical strategies to address complex parenting issues, child and spousal support claims, and the impacts of intimate partner violence.



SEXUAL ASSAULT LAW JUDICIAL TOOLKIT (ON-DEMAND RESOURCE)

This online toolkit is a resource hub on the law and social context of sexual assault for judges. Chapters are kept current with emerging jurisprudence and legislative developments and include:

- Social Context;
- Substantive Law;
- Interpreters & Testimonial Accommodations;
- Other Sexual Activity & Private Records;
- Decision-Making; and
- Sentencing.

"The best resource I've come across in 30 years on the law of sexual assault."

Justice Michael Brown

"This NJI resource makes a huge difference for me, and I expect, all of our colleagues."

Justice John M.L. Gibb-Carsley

FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

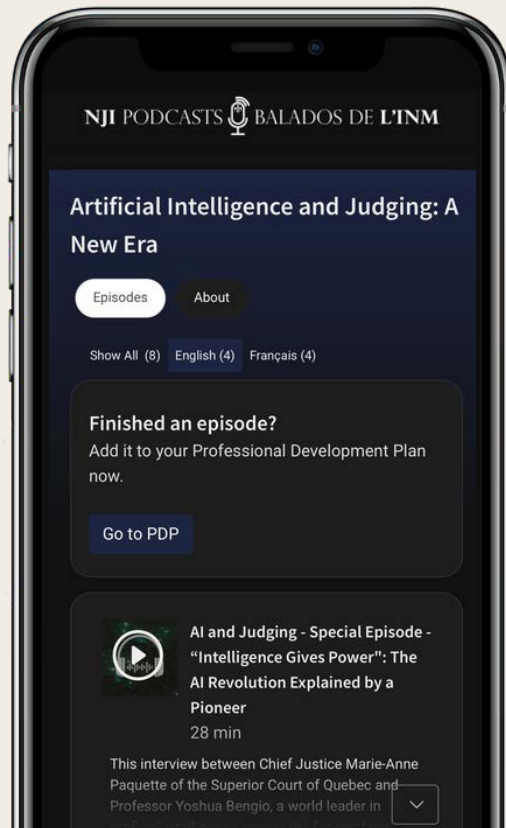
NJI PODCASTS

The NJI's bilingual podcast series features leading subject matter experts discussing topics such as judgment writing, judicial ethics, intimate partner violence, and artificial intelligence.

Designed for learning on the go, these episodes offer engaging and insightful conversations on issues of importance to the judicial role.

"NJI's digital resources provide on demand and up to date learning opportunities that meet the needs of judges and their unique and challenging schedules. The variety of resources, including videos, podcasts, blogs and written resources ensure that these unique resources are available to judges in whatever format meets their needs. An added benefit is that these resources are available in both official languages of Canada."

**Chief Judge Melissa Gillespie,
Provincial Court of British Columbia**



"We are indeed fortunate to be able to rely on such a first-class organization. I understand that NJI is held in the highest esteem by not only Canadian judges but by judges throughout the world. I can understand why!"

Judicial participant, 2026

FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

HEARING AND DECIDING *CHARTER* ISSUES

This program allows participants to acquire the knowledge and skills needed to effectively decide *Charter* cases including:

- Procedural and evidentiary issues with claims of *Charter* breaches;
- Search and seizure;
- Detention and the right to counsel;
- Sentencing;
- *Charter* values and the role of the judge in deciding *Charter* issues; and
- Remedies for *Charter* breaches.



CRIMINAL JURY TRIALS

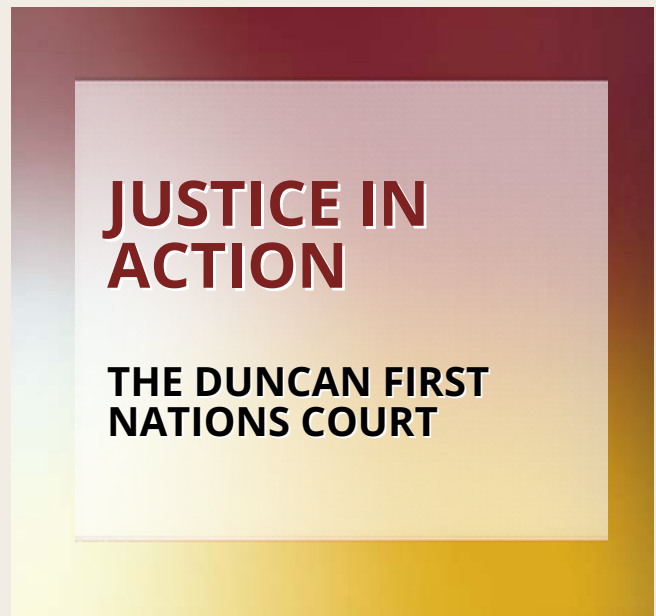
Criminal jury trials pose unique procedural, evidentiary, and substantive law challenges. This seminar focuses on aspects of criminal jury practice and law, from pre-trial conferencing to taking of the verdict, as well as a variety of evidentiary and substantive law issues trial judges will likely encounter in these cases. Recent legal developments and best practices are highlighted throughout the program.



FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

JUSTICE IN ACTION

This course immerses judicial learners in a sitting of the Duncan First Nations Court, a specialized sentencing court in the British Columbia Provincial Court focused on rehabilitation and healing. Participants gain insight into the non-adversarial process of the court, the central role of Elders, and the collaborative process through which clients develop and complete a healing plan.



JUDGING IN THE DIGITAL AGE

Judging in the Digital Age is the NJI's flagship annual program on technology and the law.

For the 2025 edition, the NJI partnered with experts drawn from Mila, the internationally-renowned Québec-based artificial intelligence institute, to organize a full day of programming devoted to artificial intelligence and justice inspired in part by UNESCO's AI and the Rule of Law initiative.



FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

THE JUDICIAL EDUCATORS' HUB



This year, in response to a recommendation flowing from the 2023 NJI Curriculum Review, the NJI developed and launched a new Judicial Educators' Hub, a rich repository of high-quality, user-friendly pedagogical resources for planners and faculty members working in judicial education. Resources include:

- Best practices in judicial education design and delivery;
- Innovative program formats and ideas;
- Archive of program and session topics;
- Advice for integrating NJI's digital education resources; and
- Guidance on how to become involved in judicial education.

The Judicial Educators' Hub is a complement to NJI's in-person Judicial Faculty Development and Provincial and Territorial Education Chairs' in-person seminars, focused on effective judicial educational planning and design.

FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

ORAL JUDGMENTS

In this hands-on seminar, judges are provided with practical tools and strategies to use when preparing for, developing, or delivering oral rulings and judgments.

Participants work with experienced faculty to learn how to determine when oral judgments are appropriate, how to prepare to render and how to structure an oral judgment, and best practices for clear communication.



SENTENCING BLACK OFFENDERS

This interactive course explores the use of social context evidence in sentencing, including Impact of Race and Culture Assessments (IRCAs) and Enhanced Pre-Sentence Reports (EPSRs), explaining their purpose, content, and how they can inform sentencing decisions. Featuring engaging videos, real-world scenarios, and expert guidance, this course reflects emerging jurisprudence across Canada.



FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

JUDICIAL FACULTY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Focusing on best practices in judicial education design and delivery, this seminar is designed for judges who are involved in or interested in becoming involved in judicial education planning committees.

Participants develop skills that help them create engaging and effective presentations, sessions, and programs.



HAGUE CONVENTION BENCH BOOK

Designed to support judges in cross-border child abduction matters, this Bench Book provides practical assistance to judges in applications for the return of a child pursuant to the Hague Convention. This recently updated resource examines case law developments and introduces streamlined resources to support requests for inter-jurisdictional judicial communication.

Hague Convention:
International
Child Abduction
Bench Book

GATEKEEPING AND ASSESSING EXPERT EVIDENCE

This two-and-a-half-day program examines the scope and limitations of judges' gatekeeping responsibilities under contemporary Canadian case law and court rules, and provides practical tools to assist them in assessing and weighing the reliability of expert opinion evidence.



FEATURED PROGRAMS & RESOURCES

EMERGING ISSUES ONLINE SEMINAR: JUDICIAL WELLNESS

As recognized by the UN Nauru Declaration, judicial wellbeing plays a fundamental role in maintaining the rule of law.

Drawing on cutting-edge empirical research and integrating the personal perspectives of Canadian judges, this 2.5-hour online seminar examined various psychological stressors specific to the judicial role and strategies to maintain well-being under pressure.



TRANSITIONING TO THE APPELLATE COURT

Being an appellate judge requires different skills and ways of working than trial judging. This education seminar is designed to offer newly appointed appellate judges the opportunity to explore the work that appellate courts do, learn about best practices for working on a collegial court, and examine some of the ethical and legal issues that arise specifically for appellate judges.



YOUTH CRIMINAL JUSTICE

These tutorials provide critical guidance on the key differences between adult and youth criminal proceedings. NJI's concise, self-study modules cover critical topics including:

- Youth sentencing and guilty pleas;
- Case management;
- Bail hearings; and
- Youth records.



INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The NJI's primary mandate is the design, delivery, and coordination of continuing education for the Canadian judiciary. That expertise, built over decades, has earned the NJI recognition well beyond Canada's borders.

For over 25 years, the NJI has been invited to share its domestic expertise in support of judicial education and the rule of law worldwide. At the request of international judicial institutions, we have worked in partnership with host countries' judiciaries and judicial institutions across the globe. The NJI now maintains a dedicated International Education Department focused on global collaboration and engagement.

OUR APPROACH

The NJI engages internationally by invitation from host countries or implementing agencies, with a focus on;

- Curriculum development and instructional design;
- Skills development programs;
- Social context education;
- Creation of online learning resources;
- Judicial reform and institutional strengthening; and
- Access to justice initiatives.

Canada's bilingual and bi-jural legal system, rooted in a multicultural society, provides a strong foundation for collaboration with judicial counterparts worldwide. Our approach emphasizes mutual respect, knowledge exchange, and sustainable capacity-building that supports judicial independence and the rule of law. We take pride in sharing Canadian judicial education expertise with the global community while learning from our international partners. These collaborations enrich both our domestic and international work, strengthening judicial systems and advancing justice worldwide.



The NJI has partnered with countries as diverse as Ukraine, Mexico, Ghana, Vietnam, the Philippines, Cambodia, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, Singapore, France, and Mongolia on international judicial education and justice reform projects.

INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENT

Collaboration is central to how the NJI advances its mandate, both domestically and internationally. The Institute maintains a strong and ongoing presence within the global judicial education community, regularly welcoming international delegations and sharing its expertise with partners around the world.

The NJI is also proud to serve as the headquarters of the International Organization for Judicial Training (IOJT), a global network that brings together 125 judicial training institutes from 77 countries, fostering the exchange of diverse perspectives and innovative practices, and strengthening judicial education worldwide.

“In 2026, the NJI was proud to assume the role of corporate headquarters for the IOJT, reinforcing our longstanding commitment to international partnership and excellence in judicial education. With this appointment, I have the privilege of serving as Secretary General, working in close collaboration with NJI’s CJO Emerita Adèle Kent, to support a global community of judicial training institutes and advance shared standards of judicial learning.” **Danielle May-Cuconato, CEO, NJI**



Visiting judicial delegates from Nigeria, 2025



Visiting delegates from the Judicial Academy of Latvia, 2025



NJI presentations at the Commonwealth Judicial Educators Conference in New Delhi, India, 2026



CURRENT INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

JUDICIAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECT, VIETNAM

The NJI was pleased to launch the “Vietnam-Canada Judicial Capacity Development Project” in 2025, a multi-year initiative aimed at improving equal access to justice for all in Vietnam through judicial education, with funding from Global Affairs Canada. This project led by the NJI, in partnership with the Supreme People’s Court of Vietnam, focuses on:

- Increased use of practices that promote equal access to justice, especially for women and youth;
- Improved provision of gender-responsive and rule-of-law focused judicial education by the Supreme People’s Court of Vietnam and the Vietnam Court Academy; and
- Fostering leadership and mentoring opportunities for women justices in Vietnam, to increase representation in the Vietnamese judicial system.

"This collaboration represents the best of what international partnerships can achieve. By combining Canadian expertise with Vietnam's commitment to judicial excellence and UN sustainable development goals, we are working together to ensure that justice systems serve all members of society equitably and effectively. The Judicial Capacity Development Project demonstrates the power of international cooperation in advancing shared values of fairness, equality, and the rule of law."

Justice Tom Crabtree, Chief Judicial Officer, NJI



In partnership with
Canada



NJI | INM



NJI's leadership and Canadian judges attend project meetings at the Supreme People's Court, Vietnam, 2025



Judges of the Supreme People's Court attend the NJI Judicial Faculty Development Seminar, 2025



Judges of the Supreme People's Court of Vietnam attend the Supreme Court of Canada, 2026



Judges of the Supreme People's Court attend the NJI Provincial and Territorial Education Chairs Seminar, 2026

CURRENT INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

EQUAL JUSTICE FOR ALL IN MONGOLIA PROJECT

The NJI is pleased to be collaborating with the Judicial Training, Research and Information Institute in Mongolia, and Federal Judicial Affairs, to support ongoing training on judicial education best practices. Initial programming in early 2026 focused on training judicial faculty, with presentations from NJI's Chief Judicial Officer Justice Tom Crabtree, Chief Justice of New Brunswick and incoming Chief Judicial Officer Justice Marc Richard, and NJI's International Education department. Sessions covered:

- Judicial Education as a Pillar of Judicial Independence;
- Judicial Education Pedagogy;
- Digital Resources;
- Social Context Education; and
- Making the Most of Judicial Education: Elements of Program Design.

The seminar was attended by Mongolian judges specializing in family law, as well as those involved in leadership roles at Mongolian courts.



Equal Justice for All in Mongolia, "Train the Trainer" sessions, 2026

SINGAPORE JUDICIAL COLLEGE, JUDGMENT WRITING SEMINARS

Judgment writing lies at the heart of judicial excellence. Clear, accessible, and logically structured judgments are essential to the rule of law: they guide future courts, inform litigants, and contribute to the coherent development of jurisprudence. The craft demands precision of thought, clarity of expression, and a deep understanding of both the law and the human realities at stake.

Since 2024, the NJI has been proud to partner with the Singapore Judicial College to deliver training on judgment writing best practices to key members of the Singaporean judicial community, drawing on Canadian expertise in this area. The first Judgment Writing Clinic was successfully delivered in 2024, and planning is currently underway to deliver a second engagement in 2026. The NJI looks forward to continuing to build on this important international partnership.



OUR TEAM

The programs, resources, and partnerships highlighted in this Annual Review are a testament to the exceptional and dedicated people that make up the NJI. The organization is home to over 70 professionals across two offices in Montreal and Ottawa. From lawyers and educators, to legal translators and IT specialists, event planners, project managers, a librarian and operations staff, the NJI team brings together a remarkable breadth of diverse expertise. Their collective commitment to judicial education, the justice system and the rule of law is reflected in everything we do. To the NJI team: we thank you and look forward to continuing to work together to drive excellence in judicial education, both in Canada and internationally.



International Women's Day activities at the NJI



NJI Digital Education, International and In-Person team members attending the Judicial Faculty Development Program



NJI's In-Person Education Department Annual Meeting



NJI's Senior Management Team

LOOKING AHEAD

As we look to the year ahead, we do so with a strong sense of purpose and momentum. Judicial education continues to evolve alongside the legal, social, and technological changes shaping our world. This dynamic context challenges us not only to respond, but to lead by anticipating emerging needs and ensuring that the judiciary is equipped with the knowledge, skills, and perspectives required to serve the public with confidence and integrity.

The strength of the National Judicial Institute lies in its people and its partnerships. The dedication of our faculty, the engagement of the judiciary, and the commitment of our staff and collaborators create a vibrant and forward-looking community of learning.

As we move ahead into the next fiscal year, we warmly welcome the Honourable Justice Marc Richard as NJI's incoming CJO, who will join us in guiding the organization through the next stage of its development. We also look forward to the Honourable Justice Tom Crabtree's upcoming role as CJO International. Together, we will continue to expand our programs and resources, deepen our impact, and foster innovation in how judicial education is delivered across Canada and beyond, guided by the principles that have long defined our work: excellence, independence, inclusivity, and respect for the diverse experiences that shape the administration of justice - we look forward to the year ahead.

JUSTICE MARC RICHARD

Incoming Chief Judicial
Officer

DANIELLE MAY-CUCONATO

Chief Executive Officer

JUSTICE TOM CRABTREE

Chief Judicial Officer,
international

National Judicial Institute
275 Slater Street, Suite 2000
Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5H9,
Canada

Montreal office
485 McGill St., Suite 600
Montreal, QC H2Y 2H,
Canada

Website: www.nji-inm.ca

Email: info@nji-inm.ca

 [national-judicial-institute](https://www.linkedin.com/company/national-judicial-institute)