Student Views

The following are extracts from student letters of support. They have been abridged to meet the page limits of this application.

“Constitutional Law 2 has been a highlight of my university studies to date ... The opportunity to use advocacy and teamwork skills, and hear from accomplished and inspiring people working in the field of Constitutional law in Australia, was unique. At a small university, UTAS students are sometimes inclined to feel ‘cut off’ from the profession. The opportunity for interaction with members of the profession, while learning, allowed us an insight into the real-life operation of the law in Australia and stimulated our interest in the subject area. The incorporation of skill development into the course has been of great value to me in my ongoing studies, and has helped in applying for jobs and completing internships” Lisa Pennington, former President of Tasmania University Law Society, 2012 graduate.

“I particularly enjoyed how as a group we produced a final product — in the form of a moot and written submissions — each fortnight. While this helped cement our knowledge of constitutional law, it also improved our practical skills: working in groups and solving a legal problem from start to finish. I think that this component of the court was especially important because much of the law curriculum does not have a strong emphasis on either group-work or oral advocacy.” Sam Thompson, Former Editor of the Tasmania University Law Review, 2012 graduate.

The reward for me was the relevance which Constitutional Law has on so many current affairs issues. I am addicted to news and current affairs and issues such as the potential impact on the implied right to political communication or recommendations in The Finkelstein report and the Convergence Review ... Constitutional Law is obviously foundational and the course has provided some familiarity with the principles underpinning our representative democracy; may it flourish!” Kelvin Markham, 2012 graduate.
“Constitutional Law 2 was in many ways my favourite subject in my five years of Law School. Not only did it open up opportunities for me to participate in one of the best experiences of my academic life — the 2010 Jessup mooting competition — it was a real test of my legal thinking, writing and advocacy skills ... Lectures were to-the-point and very often inspiring — with celebrity guest speakers such as the Speaker of the Australian Parliament, Justice Kirby and former Chief Justice Anthony Mason gracing our humble lecture theatre. The weekly/fortnightly drill of having to conduct extensive legal research, sifting through my research to extract the core points, translating those points into legal argument and having then to frame those arguments in terms of oral submissions ... proved to be an invaluable and practical lesson in legal research and analysis. ... I am currently undertaking my Practical Legal Training at the Leo Cussen Centre for Law in Melbourne as part of my seeking legal practice admissions in Victoria. My Constitutional Law mooting experience has proven to be an invaluable asset even now ... The process I go through in preparation for each exercise is exactly the same as the one I undertook in Con 2.” Daniel Teoh, 2011 Graduate.

I'm a fully-fledged lawyer now, working in the city in Melbourne ... the experience in Constitutional Law 2 was a very positive one for me. I really enjoyed it. For my first court appearance I was given a family law case ... I managed to do it well because of the training that I received from the (Constitutional Law 2) moots. ... having done the moots, I was confident that if I could get through the questioning then, I surely could represent a client in court. I find myself still using the stuff that I learnt at the moots up to now, there isn't a lot I could change about how I was taught ... because all of it is so relevant in real life. The way the course was delivered those skills the most relevant now, especially for students who are interested in advocacy and litigation issues. Martha Banda, international student alumni, 2011 Graduate.

“Constitutional Law 2 was one of the most interesting modules in my law degree. ... Since graduating from law school in December 2009, I have returned home to Maldives and have been working as a public prosecutor in the Prosecutor General's office. ... I believe the mooting component in Con 2 has taught me to approach cases by applying the facts of a problem to the law and presenting complex legal arguments logically,
persuasively and concisely. It has also pushed the need to develop legal research skills and to refine and perfect my written and oral communication skills. ... In Maldives, the lack of a practical training requirement to be admitted as a lawyer means that you jump into the legal career straight out of law school. I am grateful for the practical knowledge I have gained while studying Con 2 (particularly mooting), because when I stepped into court as a prosecutor for the very first time, I was surprisingly confident. Two years on, I love my job and I love the courtroom. So thank you, Anja, Brendan and UTAS!” Aishath Lua Shaheer, 2009 graduate.

“Initially when I first enrolled in Constitutional Law 2 I was somewhat nervous about mooting, but when it came down to my Faculty Moot in final year I was significantly less anxious. Simple things such as court etiquette and speaking style, answering questions from the judge, writing submissions and structuring of arguments were all entrenched in me by the completion of Con 2. ... The skills I learnt and developed from Con 2 have definitely greatly assisted me in my court appearances at [legal] prac, especially with the Supreme Court exercises .... I would definitely agree that the assessment of Con 2 helps to hone your speaking and reasoning skills both in terms of preparation and impromptu as well. Personally I feel that there's no point in having a law degree and being a lawyer if you are unable to voice your arguments and reasons with confidence.” Bhavani Ananda Kumar, 2011 graduate.

“I particularly liked the presentations and mooting as it gave me a chance to build my confidence with public speaking and now hopefully the moot in final year won't be quite as daunting. It was also the best experience I've had working in a group, especially as none of us knew each other before hand. Anja was really approachable and always made time to clarify things and was able to explain the same information in different ways which was vital. It was great having the guest speakers as well and hearing their different points of view and their first-hand accounts of important events. That was perhaps the best part of the course as it made the law seem more real and not just words on paper.” Stephanie Gleeson, 2011 Graduate.
“I found Constitutional Law 2 to be the most enjoyable, informative and engaging subject I have studied ... [it] is unique in that it is structured to reflect real-world legal practices. ... The subject also gave me a firm appreciation of the need for accountability and honesty in time keeping: a concept which I have since been exposed to in work experience, and which is fundamental to legal practice ... Constitutional Law 2 also offers the rare and valuable opportunity for students to engage with eminent guest speakers. These speakers are experienced and respected professionals, and I count myself very fortunate to have had the experience of hearing them speak and being able to ask them questions. Having this exposure to speakers who practice in Constitutional Law enables students to draw important links between the theory of the unit and the application of that theory in real life situations. ... the presence of guest speakers helps to make the subject matter more engaging, enjoyable and easier to understand. I cannot stress highly enough how thoroughly I enjoyed the Constitutional Law 2. The subject is a credit to Dr Gogarty and Ms Hilkemeijer, and I very much hope that students will have the benefit of undertaking the in the same format in future. Amelia Higgs, Family Lawyer — Previously Education Officer and Vice President of the Tasmanian University Law Society, 2012 graduate.