

BCLIP

THE

2019



WELCOME

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

As our time as interns wraps up, during the warm and sunny days of June, it is still hard for us to fully grasp everything we have learned and how we have grown personally and professionally from this whirlwind experience.

Between the 12 of us, we have visited 25 constituencies across the province ranging from Mid-Island-Pacific Rim, to the North Coast, to Kootenay West. We have travelled from British Columbia to Ontario and experienced the Legislature of our neighbours down south in Washington State. Through it all, we have shared countless experiences which have enriched us all and made us grow closer as a group thanks to our good humour and light-hearted personalities.

This *Gazette* contains, within its pages, the thoughts and experiences of the 44th cohort of the British Columbia Legislative Internship Program. You will find the usual suspects – articles reflecting on our ministry placements, our time in caucus, and our constituency visits. However, you will also find a few gems that are ours alone.

We hope you enjoy,

Jess + Allison

Jess and Allison



**The last six months have been a complete privilege,
and we cannot believe it's already over.**

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It is always a little sad to write the Program Director's article each June for the impending end of another great year with B.C.'s remarkably intelligent, driven and talented young interns. I appreciate the ingenuity, enthusiasm and deep passion that you have brought to the 2019 program. I am never disappointed.

This year was no exception. With 12 of you forging friendships and constantly challenging yourselves and each other it has been a wondrous year of learning. Orientation in January feels like way more than five months ago when you were nervously listening and soaking up all that was on offer from B.C.'s Independent Officers and Legislative staff. Our two educational sojourns to Olympia and Ottawa gave you ample opportunity for questions, and question you did. Almost every presenter commented on the calibre of your questions and thoughtful comments. You are a curious batch of interns for sure!

I know that you will all move forward with a unique perspective on our provincial governance - how it works, who works within it and how you can make it better. Some of you will become lawyers, some of you will become excellent bureaucrats pushing the buttons and questioning the rationales. You will all make British Columbia better.

I thank you for your energy, kindness, friendship and humour. You have made 2019 a joyful program. I was especially pleased to receive my own list of "Most Likely To's" - definitely a first. All the best to you and your futures and please remember to visit as my door is always open!

- Karen

Program Director



2019 served well as the 44th anniversary of Canada's 'best' Legislative Internship program; and 12 interns served 2019 exceedingly well in turn. The traditional gift for a 44th anniversary is electronics and the modern one is - wait for it - 'groceries'. Not to be outdone, the 44th anniversary stone is 'sardonyx'. According to those who consider such things, the 44th anniversary stone promotes integrity, friendship, good fortune and lasting happiness.

As I reflect on the 2019 program year, I saw a strong and kind bond develop and a cheerful joy as all proved their talents in the various BCLIP elements, and in their duties in ministries and caucuses. As a program in which easily half will continue to directly contribute to the public life of B.C., 2019 will be well represented. You have carried the torch with honour, optimism (that sardonyx again!) and good humour and I look forward to each of your 'what nexts'.

Each year, the program thrives through the energy and camaraderie of the new year's cohort. It also rolls due to the support of the Speaker, Lieutenant Governor, Clerks, Members and a host of House staff, ministry mentors, caucus staff and colleagues; it is also blessed with the contributions of our Independent Officers. Over many years, that has included the engagement of Paul D.K. Fraser, Q.C., B.C.'s late Conflict of Interest Commissioner. Paul's passing during 2019 is memorialized in the Talking Stick Mace for the BCLIP model Parliament, which he contributed to and helped initiate. He is much missed. The strength of the BCLIP is due much to the many who continue to contribute to its unfolding.

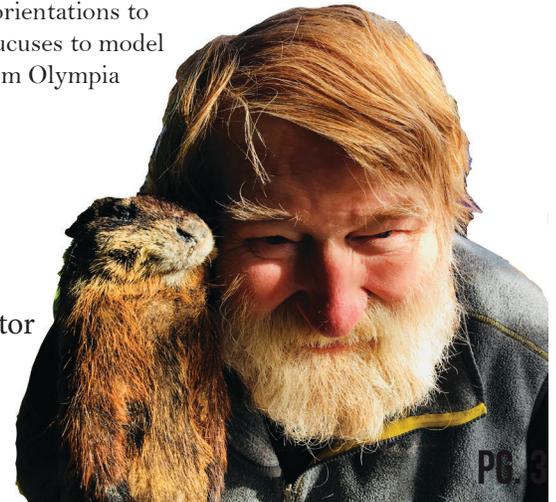
As my last year serving as Academic Director, I would add that my own 36-year stint with the BCLIP has been one full of joy and friendships; it has also been a highlight of my more than 40-year academic career - indeed it has been inextricably interwoven. Simply put, it has been an honour and a privilege to share so much with the BCLIP, not least due to the graceful, thoughtful stewardship and friendship of Program Director, Karen Aitken, her wonderful staff, and family.

To the Class of 2019, you have taken a robust program legacy and now hand it on in good shape due to your efforts, individually and collectively. From orientations to ministries, from caucuses to model Parliament, and from Olympia to Ottawa.

Jobs well done!

- Paddy

Academic Director



THANK

Dearest Paddy,

Though the previous iteration of the *Gazette* may have indicated otherwise, the BCLIP 2019 interns were most fortunate to stall Dr. Patrick Smith - better known as Paddy - from his much deserved retirement. Anyone who has been ushered through the BCLIP in the last 15 years (and beyond) undoubtedly have cherished memories involving the wise Paddy, with his unwavering kindness and sense of humour.

Amid his role as Academic Director for the BCLIP, Paddy has also been the Director of the Institute of Governance at SFU, balanced a teaching and research career, mentored many graduate students, led a world renowned political science department, authored countless articles and even co-authored a book. His dedication to the program while balancing a demanding career and other passions is inspirational.

So Paddy, we want to thank you for your support and dedication not only during our time as interns, but to the Legislative Internship Program as a whole. You never fail to take an opportunity to challenge all of us, to expand our thinking and to ensure that we are critical and engaged. All interns are better off for having exposure to your mind!

Paddy once said: "Any given day in the Legislature can roam from the mundane to the profound; yet it is seldom dull, seldom without real meaning". We will hold memories of your wisdom, character, and sneakers close to us as we all move onto the next phase of our academics and careers.

Thank you Paddy!

- Kenya Rogers + the 2019 Interns

YOU

Dearest Tracy,

There are few people that come into our lives and truly change them for the better—but for many people, that’s exactly what Dr. Tracy Summerville has done. I met Tracy during my last year as an undergrad at the University of Northern British Columbia (UNBC). She taught an incredible upper level political science course that was challenging and demanding in the best possible ways, leaving me a better writer and overall student.

What came across quickly upon meeting Tracy was her passion for teaching and the sincere personal investment she makes in the success of her students. It hadn’t been long before Tracy was asking me what my plans were after graduation and if I had ever heard of the BCLIP. She actively encouraged me to apply to the program, and, despite my reservations about whether or not I was a strong enough candidate, I did. If it had not been for her support—I simply would not be where I am today.

If you speak with any of Tracy’s colleagues or students, they will tell you very similar stories. She is an advocate for students at all stages of their education, and has been an integral force behind the success of Montessori programs in Prince George and political science at UNBC.

Moving forward, with Dr. Patrick Smith (Paddy) looking to retire, there simply wasn’t anyone more well-suited to represent the internship program as the academic director. But, with changing personal circumstances, and a daughter going to school in Nova Scotia, Tracy and her husband have made the difficult decision to retire from careers with UNBC and move out East.

We the interns, Karen Aitken, academic advisors, and the hundreds of intern alumni, would like to wish Tracy and her family the absolute best on their new adventure and to thank her for her commitment to this program. Her contributions as a BCLIP academic advisor, educator, mentor, and community leader have left all those lucky enough to know her in absolute awe.

We are forever grateful - Thank you Tracy!

- Talia Bleiber + the 2019 Interns

A TRIBUTE

Sadly, on March 29, 2019, B.C.'s Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Paul D.K. Fraser, Q.C., passed away. He is remembered as a man whose commitment to ethics earned him the respect of the many MLAs from all stripes who have served in the Legislature.

Fraser had served as B.C.'s Conflict of Interest Commissioner since 2008, having been unanimously endorsed during all three appointment processes and was in his third term at the time of his passing. On April 1, 2019, the Legislature rose for a moment of silence to pay their respects to his legacy. The three party leaders remembered Fraser as a gentleman, a kind spirit and for his dedication to public service. Many members of Fraser's family and office staff were in attendance for the touching tribute.

Prior to his role as B.C.'s Conflict of Interest Commissioner, Fraser was a well-known and highly accomplished lawyer. He had served as President of the Canadian Bar Association, the Commonwealth Lawyers Association and the Canadian Section of the International Commission of Jurists.

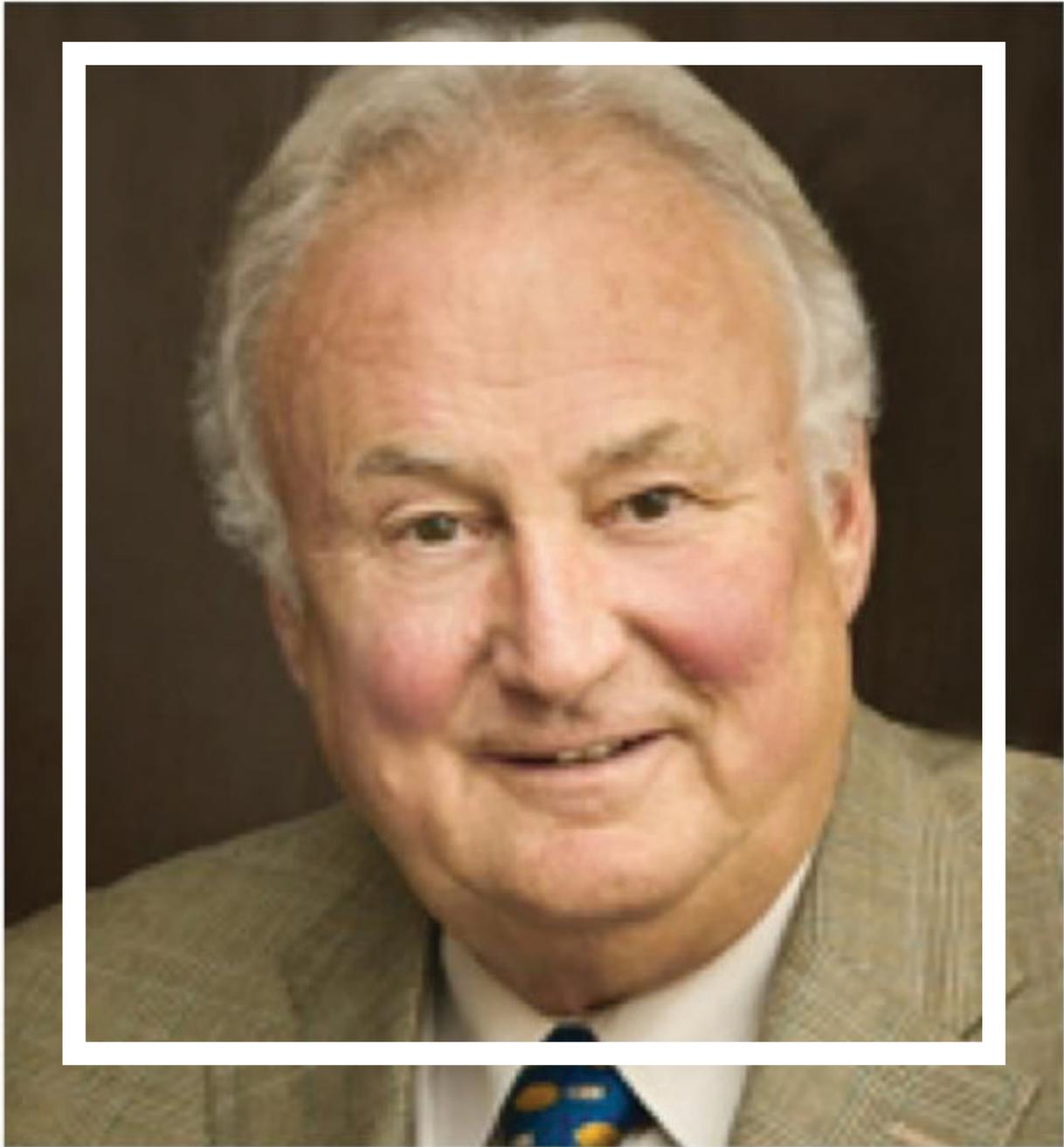
Many will dearly miss his wise counsel, patience and passion for upholding the confidence and accountability of publicly elected provincial officials.

While the Legislature, MLAs, staff, former and current interns mourn the loss of Mr. Fraser, we are also guided by his memory and kindness as we move forward in our lives and careers. We are ever grateful for his donation to the BCLIP and rest assured, future interns will continue to learn about his legacy to our program.

Moreover, his passing also marks the loss of a dear supporter and friend of the BCLIP.

Fraser always had time for the new crop of interns during orientation each January. He would enjoy sitting down to answer a plethora of questions offering valuable insights into the Legislature and MLAs. Furthermore, it was Fraser who generously donated a Talking Stick to the BCLIP's Model Parliament. His charitable donation stands as a testament to his kind character and genuine respect for the BCLIP. He even invited the 2016 interns to his office's 25th anniversary celebratory lunch at Government House.

We were honoured to be the last cohort to have had an opportunity to learn from Mr. Fraser. We so appreciated hearing his thoughts and candid stories of his long-standing professional career and time as the Conflict of Interest Commissioner.



PAUL FRASER

TO: *January me*

Dear January Kim,

I know you've just finished your first week of orientation and you're feeling overwhelmed. I'm here to tell you not to worry. You've just met some incredible people that you might find intimidating now, but over the months you will realize that while they are still incredible they are also funny, humble, and genuine. You will eat lunch with them every day and celebrate so many birthdays and important events. You will form a close bond with these people as you navigate the next six months together.

I know how nervous you felt going into this without having any formal political science training. I know during orientation when presenters said "you probably already know this," that you definitely did not already know, but trust me you'll learn so quickly. You'll finally understand the political memes and you'll even start making jokes about provincial politics! On a more serious note, you'll learn so much about politics, bureaucracy, and democracy that you'll be better prepared for your future.

You'll get to meet so many great people from the staff at the Ministry of Children and Family Development, to Ministers and MLAs from government caucus, to all of the wonderful Legislative staff. I know it sounds wild right now, but occasionally Ministers will walk into the "intern den" where you will be working, and share personal and insightful stories with you. You'll soon realize that they are people too, as cliché as that sounds.

I think you'll be excited to know that you will get to spend a week in North Vancouver and a week in Port Alberni for your constituency visit. You'll get to hang out with a very cool MLA and a very fun Minister. I know you've never been to Port Alberni, but you're going to love it; it really is so beautiful. I know you'll be thankful for all the opportunities that you come across during the next six months.

My final advice to you is don't be nervous and make the most of every day.

Sincerely,

Future Kim

WITH LOVE &



Dear January Talia,

Congratulations. You've accomplished something that many doubted you would: land a job with a liberal arts degree. Your days of pouring coffee at Starbucks are behind you (for now). Put your Prince George winter gear in storage—you certainly won't need it in Victoria.

The internship will be an incredible experience for so many reasons. Your fellow interns are some of the most undoubtedly brilliant, talented, and lovely people you will ever meet. Their friendship and support will make your transition to life in Victoria an easy one.

You will learn so much from the countless number of public service employees, caucus staff, MLAs, folks from the press gallery, and other professionals who will generously share their time and wisdom with you.

The intern halo—a term used to describe the unusual level of access and allure we appreciate as interns—is real. Everyone will be invested in what your thoughts and opinions are regarding issues of the day.

Here are some other irrefutable facts about the internship: Karen Aitken has your back in any and all circumstances; what you get out of your time as an intern equates to what you put in; and, for the first time in your life, you will get a bit sick of talking politics.

Although six months seems lengthy, before you know it, it will be June and you'll be suffering an existential crisis about what comes next. So, my advice to you is: take advantage of this time behind-the-scenes; ask the intimidatingly successful ministry executive to get coffee; attend all the press conferences; ask to be involved in the major projects; be nosy; and be curious.

You can thank me later.

Sincerely,

Your wiser, more confident, post-internship self.

INSIGHT

MEET THE
2019
INTERNS
FROM A-T

* All comments in brackets are the interviewers'.

ADAM DONALDSON

BY: JESS NEILSON

HOMETOWN:

Victoria, B.C.

EDUCATION:

University of Victoria, Bachelor of Arts in history, and a minor in philosophy.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

Probably working at the Legislature, just in the building. Seeing that everything that happens in the executive is here, the centre of it all. It's an unbelievably cool building to work in, so I was excited to just be a part of that.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

My ministry placement with the Attorney General. It was my favourite because you got a very first-hand view of all sorts of different things, and we got to go to court every day. It was sort of everything I was interested in - [it] fully met and exceeded my expectations.



WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

I like to play hockey. (Adam's dream is to play in the NHL and currently plays on Team Orange). I read - and like to spend money on unnecessary food when I have it at home. My recommended reading would be "*A Matter of Confidence*" - especially for where we're working, and "*Becoming*" by Michelle Obama.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

"Ringo isn't even the best drummer in the Beatles."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

Don't be afraid to advocate for yourself. I can't stress that enough, stick up for yourself and be yourself.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

I am going to law school, at Osgoode Hall in Toronto. I'll be specializing in surviving first year law school.

ALLISON GONZALEZ

BY: MYIM BAKAN KLINE

HOMETOWN:

I was born in Bogota (Colombia), and I spent some time in Powell River when we first moved to Canada. However, I have spent the majority of my life in South Surrey.

EDUCATION:

Kwantlen Polytechnic University, Bachelor of Arts in political science and a minor in policy studies.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

My ministry placement. I was actually quite hesitant about the caucus and constituency placements.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I had three favourite parts. The first was my time in the ministry which exceeded my expectations despite having worked in a ministry before. The second best was my constituency placements (Cariboo North and Surrey-White Rock). I learned a lot about how politics works on the ground and how it impacts British Columbians. My third was walking the halls (at the Legislature), feeling the energy of the building, and witnessing some historic events in B.C. politics.

PG. 12



WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

Spending time with all of the interns, getting to explore Victoria, and trying things I've never done before (Pro-wrestling in Juan de Fuca being Allison's favourite highlight).

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

"Always sit at the table, always put your hand up."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

The internship is not as scary and stressful as you might think – so do your best to enjoy every second – take full advantage of all of the opportunities that arise and don't hesitate to tell people what your goals are.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST - INTERNSHIP?

I will be starting (four days after internship ends) in the Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General as a policy analyst at Emergency Management B.C. (Because Allison told people what her goals and plans were, she was told about an opportunity at the ministry).

BEN FOSTER

BY: KENYA ROGERS

HOMETOWN:

Richmond, B.C.

EDUCATION:

University of British Columbia, Bachelor of Arts in political science.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I think above anything else, I was really excited to be surrounded by a bunch of other young people who are excited and interested in politics. I think it was about creating those connections and building friendships.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I think I dramatically underestimated how much experience we would actually get as interns. It's been really incredible. But I think that my answer to this question is quite similar to the first one: the best part about the internship has really been about meeting people and making lasting friendships. All the interns are such cool people (Kenya would like to clarify that this includes Ben), and the biggest take away from this experience are the friendships I have made along the way.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

Playing guitar, running, just hanging out. In terms of community work and things like that, I really want my career to encompass the changes I want to see in the world. I think we can work for what we want to help.



PG. 13

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

I think it's important to focus on growing your internal balance. Overstretching and doing things last minute can take its toll on your body and mind. So routine (within reason) is important to me. Prioritizing taking care of yourself is crucial. When you are in a good place, you are better equipped to help others.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

Ask for advice and work hard. There are people in this building and in your ministry that have been around for generations. Seek out these people and get their thoughts on things that pique your interest. Maybe something like "Hey, how about them floppy discs?" And of course, work hard at what you do. That stuff won't go unnoticed and will open up more potential opportunities that way.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

Law school at Dalhousie.

ELLA CHAMPION

BY: TALIA BLEILER

HOMETOWN:

I am from East Vancouver, but more specifically Hastings Sunrise. (She assures me that this is a distinct place, worthy of recognition). In more recent years, I fled that backwater for the bright lights of Quesnel, B.C.

EDUCATION:

University of British Columbia, Bachelor of Arts in international relations.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I was most excited for the opportunity to be a part of the weird bubble that is provincial politics in B.C.—something that has fascinated me from afar.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

My favourite part was walking around the Legislative grounds in a blazer with important people; all the while passersby naturally assume that I too am important. I enjoyed the conversations I had with staffers and Legislature employees while lingering and loitering (which the interns do a lot of).

PG. 14



WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

I enjoyed running along picturesque Dallas Road, going to the gym, going for bike rides—(basically she's really fit).

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

I don't have one, but if I did, it wouldn't be appropriate for this publication.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

I don't really know—I think it depends on what you hope to get out of your time as an intern. If I could impart some wisdom, it would be to look into subscribing – maybe through the Legislative Library soon?- to *B.C. Today* (shout out to Shannon Waters) or another publication that allows you to start your day by reading up on daily events at the Legislature.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

Retreat into the woods. (She means this quite literally. Ella is going to be fighting forest fires for her fifth season. Following fire season, she hopes to return to Victoria to look for more regular work).

BY: SCOTT TAKENAKA

HOMETOWN:

Abbotsford, B.C.

EDUCATION:

Simon Fraser University,
Bachelor of Arts in political
science, and a minor in
communications.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I really looked forward to just being in the Legislature, and meeting important people who had important things to say about politics.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

It was 110% constituency visits. It was really cool to have one on one time with an MLA and build a relationship with them. Also, it's always fun to be in a new place!

**WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?**

What don't I like to do? Volunteering with the fire department and the police. Going for runs. Cooking. Hitting the beach. And of course, doing social stuff.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

"Prevention is the Key to Survival."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

The program is really busy, so be careful to take care of both your physical and mental health. Self-care is really important. Also take time to reflect on the program and how it can shape you as a person.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

I am going to be a fire and crime fighting journalist, who does all this as a way to build up my run, first, for Parliament, and then for the Iron Throne.

ILIANA TURNER

BY: KIM CHHINA

HOMETOWN:

Moosejaw, Saskatchewan, but let's just say Victoria.

EDUCATION:

University of Victoria, Bachelor of Arts double major in political science and gender studies.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I was most excited about getting to work in the Legislature. I've lived in Victoria for most of my life and always wanted to be able to work in this building.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

The intern birthdays.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

Grad school applications and walking my dogs by the ocean.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

"The sky is the limit when you don't give a [redacted]." – Scott Takenaka, 2019.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

Effective communication is an important part of your professional life.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

Running away to Turkey or maybe moving to Ottawa.



JESS NEILSON

BY: ADAM DONALDSON

HOMETOWN:

Various “bays” in Victoria, B.C.

EDUCATION:

University of Victoria, Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in political science, and a minor in public administration.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I’m not sure what I was getting myself into. I was excited for working in my ministry [Tourism, Arts and Culture], especially with my sports background. I was really excited to work with Parliamentary Secretary for Sport and Multiculturalism, Ravi Kahlon, and working in the building, given how historic it is.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

Working at my ministry was my favourite. Working at the two different branches was unique, and of course, all the great people I got to meet working along the way.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

I like to workout - a lot. Usually running, I’ve been getting into 5kms lately, and rehab for my shoulder after my labral repair in February. I also enjoy going down to the water, and getting good coffee on the weekends. Also watching a lot of Super Rugby. I also love grocery shopping; my step dad instilled this love for walking up and down every aisle. I just love buying food. Who doesn’t love food?



WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

“What defines you is how you rise after falling.”

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

Don’t be afraid to ask; there is no harm in asking people what you want, or for a meeting. People will want to help you however they can, and learning to overcome that fear of asking will help you go a long way in this internship. You’ve got nothing to lose.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

I’m running away and going to Europe with my partner. I guess I can expand on that: I’m going to England because I’ve got family in London (let’s hope they have coffee and rugby too). Then I’m going to Amsterdam; from Amsterdam we are going to Nice; and after Nice we are going to train to the Italian Riviera to a town called Albisola. From Albisola we are going to Rome, and then we are going to Munich and Bavaria in general, for the last bit. Then I’m starting a new job as a Project and Public Engagement Coordinator in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in the Community Policy and Legislation Branch.

KENYA ROGERS

BY: BENJAMIN FOSTER

HOMETOWN:

Penticton, B.C.

EDUCATION:

University of Victoria, Bachelor of Arts (Hons), currently completing her Master's in political science.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

Finding a cohort outside of an academic setting to nerd out with about politics. Also, being able to get hands-on practical experience. Also, I was hopeful that I would get a chance to work on the sexual violence file.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

The people. The only comparable experience I've had is going on exchange to Peru, finding a group, and instantly gelling as a social unit. This group is specific because we can delve into the minutiae of politics and policy and not be out of place. The experience of the internship is nothing without the people.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

Live music, sexualized violence advocacy, public education, chilling with the buds, pumping iron.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

Caring for each other in a world that doesn't give enough space for the practice can be itself an act of resistance. Taking action on this front can make your community a better place.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

Don't be afraid to be upfront with what you are interested in working on. The best work you do will be the work you enjoy doing. Push your skill sets.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST-INTERNSHIP?

Busting out a thesis; but before that, a wee bit of travel.



KIM CHHINA

BY: ILIANA TURNER



HOMETOWN:

Mission, B.C.

EDUCATION:

Simon Fraser University,
Bachelor of Science in health
sciences.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

For me, it was kind of like a blank canvas since I didn't know too much about politics or even what goes on in the Legislature. So I was really excited to be given this access and to dive right into it.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

Meeting with different ministers, MLA's, and staff members. Getting to hear their personal funny stories, advice, and enjoying the snacks they gave us.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

I waste a lot of time on social media (Instagram memes) and I like going for walks.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

"Always keep it 100."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

Always keep it 100. But for real, don't be afraid to put yourself out there and take on any opportunity that will help you further your knowledge.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

I want to go back to working in a community setting, because I miss working with kids especially. Ideally I would like to work with a Health Authority on women's or children's health.

MYIM BAKAN KLINE

BY: ALLISON GONZALEZ

HOMETOWN:

Vancouver, B.C.

EDUCATION:

University of Victoria, Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in political science.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I thought it would be very neat and interesting to work in the Legislature building itself. There's no better way to understand a place than to be at that place.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

My favourite part was my trip to Skeena and the fact that it exposed me to parts and people of the province that I would never have visited and met. With that being said, my time in the Ministry of Health taught me a lot about the process of crafting law and my time in caucus taught me first-hand how representative democracy works in a way I could not have learned anywhere else.

WHERE WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PLACE TO GET FOOD DURING THE INTERNSHIP?

The Legislative Dining Room – thank you Amanda!

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

I like to play music! It's a good way to unwind from all of the brain-work that goes on during the internship. Not that music isn't brainwork, just a different sort. (He also likes to think that he actually makes time to read for pleasure).

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

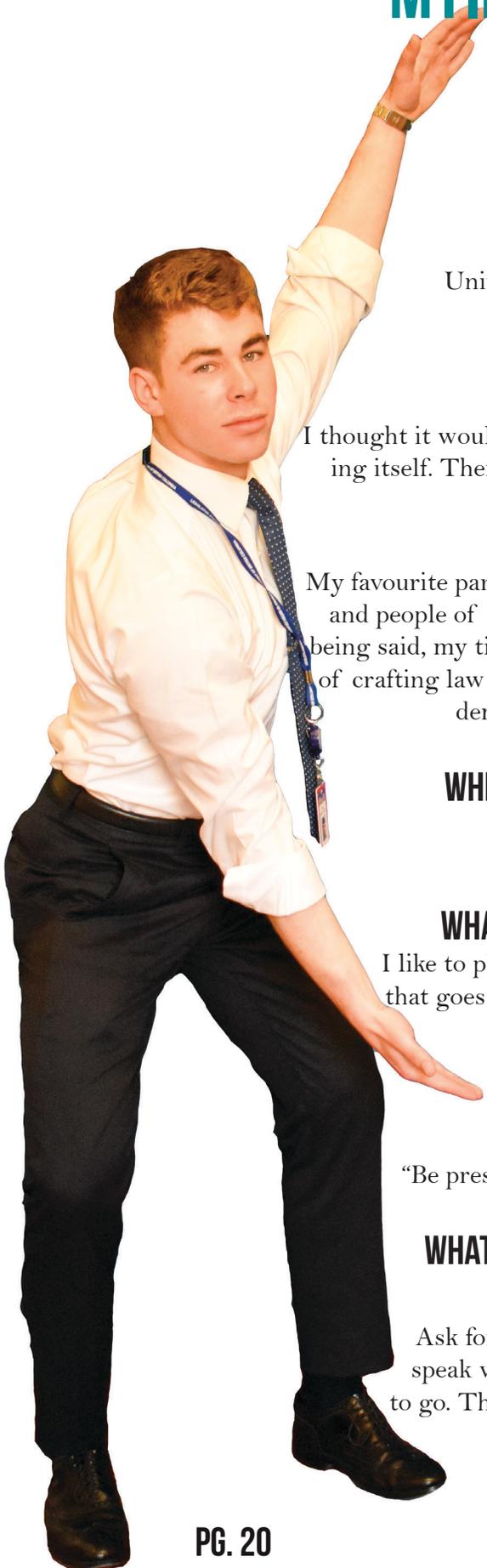
"Be present, be attentive, and be sure to acknowledge those who assist."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

Ask for meetings. Ask to speak with anyone and everyone you want to speak with and don't worry about telling those people where you want to go. The people you meet are what's truly lasting from this experience.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

I am going to law school at the University of Toronto.



SCOTT TAKENAKA

BY: GAGAN LIDHRAN

HOMETOWN:

Elkford, B.C.

EDUCATION:

Simon Fraser University,
Bachelor of Arts in history with a
focus on populist politics and
religious history.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I was really looking forward to my ministry placement. I didn't really have any specific expectations going into the program. I was open to what it had to offer.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

Well, all the wonderful interns I got to meet. I also really liked caucus, especially later into it when I had built relationships with the staff and MLAs. For that reason the May constituency placement was really fun because I had already worked for MLA Dan Davies and had a good relationship with him before going to his riding. It made the experience a lot better.



WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

My favourite thing is to go for a walk and explore the city. I am always looking for an adventure. Also, I write a bit and like to read books and movies.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

"Can I get back to you, I need to think about it."

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

Don't be afraid to shape your own experience. If you want to do something ask to do it. Be open-minded and talk to as many people as you can.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

I see myself living in a reclusive mountain cabin, writing pulpy B.C. politics-influenced science fiction novels.

TALIA BLEILER

BY: ELLA CHAMPION

HOMETOWN:

The George. “The Peege”. The one and only Prince George (PG).

EDUCATION:

University of Northern British Columbia, Bachelor of Arts in political science.

WHAT WERE YOU MOST LOOKING FORWARD TO BEFORE THE START OF THE INTERNSHIP?

I was looking forward to the opportunity to meet politicians, leave behind the bitter PG winter, and travel with the intern group.

WHAT WAS YOUR FAVOURITE PART OF THE INTERNSHIP?

Getting to know the other interns was a central thing. I really enjoyed working in the opposition communications office - there's nothing like getting to hear something you wrote get read out loud in the house. I really liked taking advantage of all the behind-the-scenes access, like watching media scrums in the hallways.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE TO DO OUTSIDE OF THE INTERNSHIP/WORK?

I spent a lot of time with the other interns, because I arrived not really knowing anyone else in Victoria. (Aw!) I spent a lot of time exploring Victoria, its beaches, and its culinary offerings.

WHAT IS YOUR MOTTO?

“The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” - Eleanor Roosevelt.

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE TO SHARE WITH OTHERS AFTER THIS EXPERIENCE?

Definitely don't be afraid to ask to be included in things that are interesting or exciting to you, and take advantage of the access you have while you're here. The 'intern halo' is 100% real, and it gives you an excellent opportunity to be included in really neat things, and meet and speak to some amazing people.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS POST INTERNSHIP?

Throw my heart and soul into preparing for the LSAT in the fall, and preparing to write it as many times as I have to. (Talia is very, very smart and also self-deprecating).





The Entertainers **INTERN**

Coming from a high performance sport background, team-building activities geared towards understanding one another more easily have become a common exercise in new environments. With multiple personalities, people can clash, or decisions could be made and others wouldn't understand why that decision was made, or how.

Doing personality exercises is one way of understanding how we each individually tend to think and operate. They often result in "aha" moments when you finally understood another teammate. Exercises such as the 16 Personalities Test (or more formally known as the Myers-Briggs Test) have led to interesting discussions with each other.

For those not familiar with the Myers-Briggs Test, it is an introspective self-report questionnaire with the purpose of indicating your psychological preferences in how you perceive your world around you to make decisions. The premise of the test is that we all have a preference in how we construct our experiences, react, and behave. While no one can be confined to four letters, it can be helpful in understanding group dynamics.

Saying that, I asked all the interns this year to complete the 16 Personalities Quiz online and we all had some fun learning about each other. Once I had received everyone's results, I compiled an "intern personality" for our cohort based on the average answers that were received.

Our 2019 personality was ESFP. Which stands for Extroverted, Sensing, Feeling and Perceiving, otherwise known as "The Entertainer".

ESFPs tend to be the life of the party, they love people, love to have fun, are warm and generous with their friends and truly have a lust for life. There are no other personality types as generous with their time and energy as entertainers when it comes to encouraging others.

Entertainers love the spotlight and their social networks, as they are utterly social beings. They are not all about the spotlight, though; entertainers are also observant and are sensitive to the emotions of others, being the first to offer a hand or help someone work through problems. Entertainers can chat for hours - and if anyone has had the pleasure of meeting with us, you'll know there was never a short supply of questions.

On that note, have a fun time learning a little more about us with our personalities mapped out on the diagram .

PERSONALITIES

- Jess Neilson

Jess & Myim

ISTJ

Responsible, sincere, analytical, reserved, realistic, systematic. Hardworking and trustworthy with sound practical judgment.

ISFJ

Warm, considerate, gentle, responsible, pragmatic, thorough. Devoted caretakers who enjoy being helpful to others.

INFJ

Idealistic, organized, insightful, dependable, compassionate, gentle. Seek harmony and cooperation, enjoy intellectual stimulation.

INTJ

Innovative, independent, strategic, logical, reserved, insightful. Driven by their own original ideas to achieve improvements.

ISTP

Action-oriented, logical, analytical, spontaneous, reserved, independent. Enjoy adventure, skilled at understanding how mechanical things work.

ISFP

Gentle, sensitive, nurturing, helpful, flexible, realistic. Seek to create a personal environment that is both beautiful and practical.

Kim

INFP

Sensitive, creative, idealistic, perceptive, caring, loyal. Value inner harmony and personal growth, focus on dreams and possibilities.

INTP

Intellectual, logical, precise, reserved, flexible, imaginative. Original thinkers who enjoy speculation and creative problem solving.

Kenya & Allison

ESTP

Outgoing, realistic, action-oriented, curious, versatile, spontaneous. Pragmatic problem solvers and skillful negotiators.

ESFP

Playful, enthusiastic, friendly, spontaneous, tactful, flexible. Have strong common sense, enjoy helping people in tangible ways.

Talia & Adam

ENFP

Enthusiastic, creative, spontaneous, optimistic, supportive, playful. Value inspiration, enjoy starting new projects, see potential in others.

Scott

ENTP

Inventive, enthusiastic, strategic, enterprising, inquisitive, versatile. Enjoy new ideas and challenges, value inspiration.

Intern Cohort

ESTJ

Efficient, outgoing, analytical, systematic, dependable, realistic. Like to run the show and get things done in an orderly fashion.

ESFJ

Friendly, outgoing, reliable, conscientious, organized, practical. Seek to be helpful and please others, enjoy being active and productive.

ENFJ

Caring, enthusiastic, idealistic, organized, diplomatic, responsible. Skilled communicators who value connection with people.

ENTJ

Strategic, logical, efficient, outgoing, ambitious, independent. Effective organizers of people and long-range planners.

Ella & Gagan

Ben & Iliana

**BECOMING
TEMPORARY
PUBLIC
SERVANTS**

MINISTRY PLACEMENT REFLECTIONS: MAKING THE CASE FOR PASSION PROJECTS

- Kenya Rogers

The Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training (AEST)—notably located directly across the street from Café Tré Fantastico—retains a simple, yet ambitious mission statement: that every British Columbian reaches their full potential through access to post-secondary education, skills and training.

During my ministry placement, I was fortunate to spend four short weeks learning, listening and assisting as the Systems Policy and Liaison Branch, where they incorporate this mandate into all facets of their work.

AEST was my top choice for many reasons. A prior history with student politics, working upwards of three jobs throughout my undergraduate degree, and more recently being an underpaid masters student, all piqued my interest in the post-secondary file. However, the underlying force driving me towards this ministry was my prior advocacy work related to on-campus sexualized and gender-based violence.

Naturally, I was excited to hear from Karen in December that I had received my top choice. My mentor, Dean Goodman, was eager to hear more about me and asked that we connect by phone prior to my placement. This is something I would suggest every intern make an effort to do as having a chance to chat with Dean about what I was most interested in guided the entirety of my experience at his branch. He let me know that there was a small team working on the sexual violence and misconduct file, and if I was keen, I could jump into that work upon my arrival.

As a fresh face to the office, I was nervous about how I would find my place in such a short amount of time. However, with the assistance of my fantastic mentor, I launched into exciting meetings, confidential conversations and senior level projects that aligned with my passions.

Because of the openness of staff around me, I found that there were opportunities for me to share information about my skills and knowledge. Among other exciting tasks, I was asked to facilitate a consultation session with students at the University of Victoria, and a workshop on sexualized and gender-based violence for my entire branch.

So what's the moral of the story? Perhaps what I want to illuminate here is that this internship is, for the most part, what you make of it. Which means in order to have the best experience possible, be really open about what you are interested in, how you would like things to go and where you want the placement to take you.

But, I also think that if you have something that drives you in all areas of your work, something you are truly passionate about, don't be afraid to let that drive shape your time in your ministry as well.

I got to work on something I was passionate about for four weeks, and in that time I accomplished more than I would have thought possible. Every day, I walked to work excited and driven to use my time at the ministry to assist in positive changes for my community and communities across the province.

To me, that's magic.

The implementation of the ministry's mandate is only useful insofar as students on campus are safe enough to reach their full potential in the first place. I am grateful for the work I got to be a part of, and excited for the future as the ministry continues to tackle this difficult and integral file.

My ministry placement was a stark reminder that culture shifts emerge in many intersecting and complicated ways. Thank you to all the movers and shakers I got to meet along the way.



A JACK OF ALL TRADES APPROACH TO JOBS, TRADE AND TECHNOLOGY

- *Scott Takenaka*



I have never been very good at committing to a particular area of expertise. I mostly meandered through my undergrad taking courses that were of interest to me instead of developing a solid research focus. For this reason, I genuinely had no idea which ministry would be a good fit for me, as my previous work experience spanned a variety of unrelated areas.

Ultimately, I was placed with the Ministry of Jobs, Trade and Technology (JTT), which tackles most of the policy related to business development and technology in B.C. This proved to be the perfect fit for me, as JTT's mandate provides opportunities to work with almost every other ministry to some extent.

At first I was nervous. I did not have much in the way of an economics background, which I assumed would be important for the ministry in charge of economic development in B.C. However, I am happy to say that any apprehensions I had evaporated as soon as I got to work on the first day.

JTT does everything from grants, to tax credits, to forging partnerships with other government organizations, and I had the opportunity to dip a toe in every single one of these different areas. Owing to the large scope of technology policy, my role had far more to do with strategy and logistics than number crunching.

The bulk of my work for the month would be helping to develop partnerships between the provincial government and municipalities, private companies, universities and other parties to use tech for better natural disaster management.

This role provided me with my first opportunity to travel for work, attending the B.C. Natural Resources Forum in Prince George to hear about how technology is changing resource industries, from mining to forestry, in B.C. While there, I also took part in meetings with UNBC about a research center they are currently developing, and helped facilitate a workshop with a variety of public sector partners to determine what kind of technologies and strategies they need to better manage forest fires and flooding.

Although we were constantly on our feet throughout the month, my mentor made sure that I also had time to meet with some of the people who I did not directly work with, but who dealt with projects of particular interest to me. I even got a chance to meet with the Deputy Minister, the second in command for the entire ministry, and have a fairly informal conversation about areas of particular interest to me, such as data sharing and privacy policies. The access that the internship gave me to these opportunities and the willingness of these senior bureaucrats to meet with me has been very helpful in terms of setting a path for myself after the internship.

The sheer size of JTT's portfolio and the range of different roles that you can fit into provide a constant learning experience. There is always something cool happening somewhere in the department. I felt lucky that my position as an intern rewarded me for being interested in a variety of different areas instead of focusing on one.

There is always something new to learn about if you are willing to take the initiative. If you share that same drive like me, and still looking for the right fit in terms of where you want to go with your career, I highly recommend JTT.

BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY: MY MONTH AT THE MINISTRY

- Allison Gonzalez

When faced with the daunting task of submitting my top three ministry choices, I quickly realized that selecting them would be no easy task. I love policy, and I love learning, however, there is not a single ministry where I wouldn't get to do both. I decided that I would work out what I wanted to get out of the placement to help me narrow down my options. I came up with three criteria:

- 1) I wanted to work in an area or field I had never worked in before;
- 2) It was policy work related to our changing climate; and
- 3) It would impact more than just people as I had previously worked in the areas of education, advanced education, and economic immigration—all of which were 'people' focused.

As I worked to narrow down the options, one area kept jumping out at me – emergency management. As I imagined being able to work in an area that is continually developing innovative and world-leading ways to protect all of the things that make this province great—the people, the environment, the animals, and everything in between—it made it easy to list Emergency Management B.C. (EMBC) as my top choice.

My first contact with my ministry was a call to my mentor Erin a few months before the internship even began. We discussed how I could contribute to the team while I was there and what goals I had for my time in my placement. From that first conversation, I knew I had made the right decision and was exactly where I was meant to be.

Although there was plenty of learning in my placement, one thing that constantly surprised me was the range of expertise that filled each and every room – ham radio operators (*see picture below), firefighters, army logisticians, the navy, policy experts plucked from all areas of government, and an incredible team working with First Nations to develop partnerships and co-ordination. (As a side note, it is not every day you walk out of a meeting and into a group of over 20 folks wearing army greens).

My days never looked the same, and they were always jam-packed as Erin ensured I would get as much as possible out of my time under her mentorship. She assigned me two long-term projects, which kept me busy on calls and in meetings, as well as regularly inviting me to shadow her. She connected me with folks all over the ministry including all of the executive directors in the branch and even related stakeholders she thought could provide me with knowledge and insights (both concerning my work as well as for my personal development as someone at the beginning of her career).

Through all my learning curves, with Erin's unwavering support, my interest in emergency policy was cemented. In the end, I was placed in exactly where I needed to be, and post-internship, I will become a permanent part of the EMBC team.



THREE AND A HALF WEEKS IN THE MINISTRY OF FUN: A SHORT BUT SWEET RIDE

- Jess Neilson

They say that time flies when you're having fun. Well, whoever said that is correct! My ministry placement was with the "fun" ministry - Tourism, Arts and Culture (TAC). **However, it was not the typical internship placement. I say this because instead of the typical one silo approach, I was able to experience a short stay in two different branches within TAC; the Multicultural (Multi) Branch and the Sport Branch.**

These two branches literally could not have been a more perfect fit for my background and passions, both academically and athletically. Academically, for my undergraduate thesis, I researched the New Zealand All Blacks national rugby teams' use of the haka (an Indigenous war ritual) before international rugby matches and how it has been used to build national identity.

Athletically, I represented Canada for several years internationally playing rugby, after coming through the B.C. development pathway. Needless to say, I am very familiar with the sport structure set up in the province and the services the provincial government provides to athletes and coaches, having benefitted from the wonderful services throughout my career.

MULTICULTURALISM BRANCH:

My first two weeks of the new year began in Multi where right on day one, I quickly became extremely appreciative of the art of binder making. My "administrivia" task was painstaking, but I wanted to prove I was game to help this small branch however I could. I had to print off 202 grant applications, each well over five pages in length, for three binders. It took me the whole day, but I can now appreciate how much effort goes into binders.

One major event the Multi Branch is tasked with each year is awarding the Multicultural Grants. The Multicultural Grant Program is to help organizations foster intercultural interaction, build trust, promote anti-racism and systems change, and reduce barriers and discrimination in order to create a more inclusive province.

Although I was only spending two weeks in the branch, I got to be a member of the grant application assessment and review team. There were many applications from many non-profit organisations around B.C. pitching their ideas that encompassed those inclusive values. It was truly eye-opening to read about numerous cultural organisations that I had never previously heard of.

It was through assessing these grants where I learned about the difference between program delivery versus policy which was a key distinction for me to understand as I continued throughout the internship.

I also learned about the process of reviewing grant applications and how the criterion were set and approved along a chain-of-command, which is ultimately signed off by the Minister.

It is intern folklore that there is such a thing as the "intern halo", a phenomenon whereby people of any level of the public service and Legislature will clear their schedules for you at a moment's notice, and where you get invited to multiple meetings you do not feel remotely worthy of attending.

I can confirm that the "intern halo" is indeed real.

I was fortunate enough to meet multiple executive directors, executive leads, program advisors and the deputy minister. Additionally, I got to sit in on an executive committee meeting, divisional meetings, cross-ministerial meetings and special presentations from the B.C. Arts Council, Amplify B.C. and the Creative Branch.

Overall, my two weeks in Multi came to a quick and abrupt end, and it was hard to leave as I'd become close with my tiny office of two in Victoria. I ultimately helped review 66 applications before moving on, and it was exciting to think that there were multiple organisations that were going to benefit from the grants to provide services for British Columbians. The direct effect each event would have on a potential person was a special feeling. The folks in Multi are doing some pretty special things! Look out B.C.!

SPORT BRANCH:

Sport has been a part of my whole life and has absolutely helped shape the person I am today. I can't stress enough how important I think physical activity, games and sports are for the long-term development and health of everyone – not just kids. This deeply held belief in the power of sport and my passion for it can easily explain why I was excited to dive into the Sport Branch.

Right off the bat, I got to meet with each of the sport consultants where I got to know more about them and their respective portfolios. Each sport consultant was in charge of a range of items including:

- Event Hosting;
- Athlete Development;
- The High-Performance Pathway, Canadian Sport Institute Pacific, Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence (PISE), viaSport, ISPARC, the B.C. Games Society, Team B.C.;
- Female Participation in Sport;
- Concussion in Sport; and
- Programs like the After School Sports and Art Initiative (ASSAI).

This list is not exhaustive and only provides a ballpark snapshot of what the team in Sport works on during their day-to-day tasks. While I was there, the team was doing some heavy lifting for the estimates process. I was assigned to go through the questions document from the previous year for the Budget and update the table to make it relevant for 2019.

Some other neat things I got to partake in including watching a Federal Parliamentary Sub-Committee on Sports-Related Concussions where Rugby Canada was answering questions. I also got to listen to a Women on Boards conference presented by the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (CAAWS), and sit in on a Sport Canada presentation on the Commonwealth Games. I also got to learn about the amazing ASSAI program and how TAC works across ministries to achieve goals in multiple areas through shared funding.

While at Sport, I also enjoyed learning about other areas like the B.C. Arts Council, and the creative sector which includes the film, book and music industry in B.C. To finish off the whirlwind week, I got to work on a research project about helping get newcomers into sport in B.C.

Overall, it was a month that flew by too quickly and a month that I will be forever grateful for.



THE IMPORTANCE OF MENTORSHIP AND ITS ROLE IN THE B.C. LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

- Adam Donaldson

To O. Azim, A. Van Schothorst, E. Gunnarson, P. Pearson, and all the other wonderful mentors I have had the privilege of learning from.

There is an implicit significance contained within the idea of mentorship. A significance that is not commanded by synonyms like teaching or guiding. Almost as if the word itself is reserved only for special cases where the bond between mentor and mentee cannot accurately be reflected unless the word mentor is actually used.

The value of mentorship should come as little surprise upon tracing the origins of the word. The word itself is found among one of the first ever written texts: Homer's *Odyssey*, the ten-year chronicled return of the Greek warrior Odysseus from the battle of Troy. Before leaving for war, Odysseus entrusted the care and upbringing of his son, Telemachus, to the Greek God Athena, who uses the name "Mentor" to conceal her identity. It is here the word, in its first use, was created to describe the type of person who would raise your child in your absence.

To say that this is the goal of assigning each of the B.C. interns to a "ministry mentor" at the beginning of our program may be a stretch, but there are some basic principles that remain. For context, all 12 interns spent their first week in orientation, before being dispersed throughout the vast executive branch for a month.

The ministry mentor becomes our buoy in the ministry; they are the navigation marker, pointing us in the right direction, helping us make connections, and hopefully giving meaningful work during our short month with them.

But without fail, each year the relationship between some interns and mentors goes beyond the basic program requirements and closer to – while hopefully not fully achieving – Homer's vision for the word.

It is not uncommon for this to happen in the BCLIP. Each year interns are often offered longer-term positions with their former ministry upon completing the program. Furthermore, interns and mentors often remain in contact long after the end of the first month. But what allows this type of relationship to take place after just one month of work together? What gives us the privilege of using the word mentor after just one month?

My first interaction with my mentor came weeks before the program started. I walked into the coffee shop where we were to meet, looked around puzzled before locking eyes with

with someone who said: "We're both trying to decide if we match the photos of each other we've looked up on the internet." By the end of our initial meeting I had an idea of the environment I would be placed in, the type of work I would be exposed to, but most importantly, my mentor, from the beginning, took the time to listen to what interested me.

"Even before I started the internship my mentor and I were talking to each other; he was very open and expressed a lot of excitement," said Kenya Rogers, who had the opportunity to significantly contribute at the Ministry of Advanced Education, Skills and Training based off of her previous work in a specific field.

"Connecting with my mentor prior to the internship was a big thing, it gave me an opportunity to talk about what I was interested in. He knew parts of my experience already; it was clear he had carefully considered my CV before and directed me to projects that were relevant to what I wanted to do."

Kenya's experience shows mentorship as a two-way street, and for it to be successful, it must work both ways. Like any successful working relationship, mentorship is based on trust. For some, that trust takes much longer than a single month to cultivate, but for Kenya, that trust seemed to come naturally and early with her mentor. "Dean had taken the time to tell the team 'we have this new person coming in, here is her background and here is her knowledge.' I was locked into meetings from the first day, allowing me to hit the ground running. I was treated as someone who is coming in to be a part of the team, and not just to be an observer. He put a lot of trust in me to be a self-starter."

There is a certain level of vulnerability between both parties required to develop trust within such a short time frame. And while it is the intern's job to navigate the tasks given to them, perhaps the more challenging job lies with the mentor. There is a fine balance every good mentor must walk when deciding what work to place in the hands of their mentee.

The work must be challenging enough that it stretches the intern in ways they might not have thought possible, or challenges their thinking in a beneficial way, while simultaneously not being too high-level that it discourages their gumption. Not challenging enough, and the work becomes remedial and uninteresting.

This is no easy task. For a mentor, they must quickly size up the capabilities of an intern and present work that meets the above criteria.

Once work is bequeathed to an intern, the application of these principles begins. The placing of work in the hands of an intern is not a sink-or-swim moment, or at least it should not be. Successful mentors understand how to shepherd; nudging gently in the right direction, as if by the end of the process, the intern feels as though they arrived on the basis of their own capabilities.

Kim Chhina, who interned at the Ministry of Children and Family Development, shares a similar story. “My mentor would guide me in the right direction. I felt I could go to her with any question and her feedback would be critical, but not harsh.”

Teaching and guidance are practices intertwined at the core of mentorship, but both imply a departure from an existing set of norms – synonymous with the idea that true learning begins outside of our comfort zone. Allison Gonzalez worked for Emergency Management B.C., part of the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General. “When you try something outside of your comfort zone, you are walking on a tightrope,” Allison explained when debriefing her ministry placement.

“...If you have mentors, they’re like people on the ground, ready to catch you or stabilize you. My mentor was able to listen to where I wanted to develop, and where I was uncomfortable. She pushed me outside of my comfort zone, while making sure I was supported in doing so.”

In so many ways, mentors often exemplify the ubiquitous quote. “Treat someone as they are, and they will remain as they are. Treat someone as they can be, and they will become what they should be.” Positive mentors believe in a version of ourselves that we are not yet, and their task is to support us in achieving that vision.

There are several qualities interns must also possess for the mentorship experience to be effective. For mentorship to be successful, the mentee must have a willingness and vulnerability to have their beliefs and abilities put on display.

Primarily, interns must feel relatively safe to trust being properly challenged. Often the catalyst for trust comes in the form of admiration. Mentors are often people we look up to; we identify with their values and thus it becomes easier to place our trust in them. Historically, this has been the case for Allison. “Most mentors have been in roles that I really look up to. They all exemplify values that I like – honesty, reliability and trust.” These are the sort of values that differentiate mentors from other types of teachers. It is this sharing of common values that forms the basis of the bond for mentorship – this is why mentors are influential.

There are certain qualities and values we get through mentors

that simply cannot be found elsewhere, utilizing a social media that other sources simply cannot rival. For Benjamin Foster, this was no different. “The values you get are from your role models, teachers and coaches, those are the ones that influence you the most. You do learn stuff from books, but your values are a physical practice.”

So, what does all of this mean within the limits of a one month program?

To each individual, that question will mean something different. The ministry mentorship relationship is entirely what both parties are willing to make it.

For some, the mentor appreciation meeting at the end of the program will be the last time intern and mentor may speak; for others, it could be a lifelong connection – or anywhere in between.

But herein lies a broader narrative around the importance of mentors in general that cannot be lost. In his ministry debrief, Ben summarizes this notion eloquently. “Having a mentor overall is massively important in my life. How do you know what kind of person you want to grow into? It is much more challenging to go through life living without someone who has done it before. If you go through it by yourself, you make a lot of mistakes because you don’t have the accumulated knowledge of the humans who have gone before you.”

Reflecting back on the idea of a mentor, perhaps it is no coincidence the word mentor emerges from a Greek culture revolving around ideas like legacy and the portrayal of timeless heroes. Perhaps Homer’s intention for the word was farther from the type of person who might raise your child, but closer to the type of person a child would look up to as a hero – parent or not.

In this case, maybe the word has not changed much from its original meaning. But regardless of intention, there is an admiration implicit in mentorship that will likely never change. After all, the first mentor was a God.



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GAGAN LIDHRAN: MINISTRY OF MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS AND HOUSING

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MYIM BAKAN KLINE: MINISTRY OF HEALTH

Thanks: Katherine Thiessen-Wale, Andrew Cuddy, Will Ying-Udomrat, and Kevin Samra.

CAUCUS

FIVE IN GOV

FIVE IN OPPO

TWO IN THIRD

NOTES FROM THE GIRL CAVE

Ella Champion, Jess Neilson, Kenya Rogers, Kim Chhina, and Gagan Lidhran

This year, the government caucus intern “den” was occupied by (as far as anyone in the building is aware of or talked about) an all-female five-intern cohort. In concluding our time, we never reached consensus on which of us was which Spice Girl (other than Jess being ‘Sporty’), but we did agree on a few other things.

One was that our all-female status was actually pretty cool. Our gender commonality was noted very positively by everyone in caucus and MLAs who came to visit our office, and also negatively in the comments sections of certain group ‘welcome’ photos of us posted by different Ministers. However, unbeknownst to the world of internet trolls, we were actually a very diverse group in many different respects, with a really interesting variety of perspectives and life experiences.

This variety of perspectives and experiences in the government intern room made for much better conversations amongst ourselves, better quality work produced, and made interactions more meaningful with the wide variety of visitors we hosted in our intern den.

And host we did. Another thing that we all agreed on was that the unparalleled access to very different, very interesting, and high-level people was probably the most valuable part about being in government caucus. As with years past, we created a leaderboard to document the number of visits to the den by government MLAs and Ministers (back by popular demand actually—MLAs are a competitive bunch). Almost every MLA came to visit us at least once, and a few became regulars.

Minister Robinson came by regularly to ask us what we’d learned since her last visit, Minister Fleming brought us chips, and the roving dynamic duo of MLA Kahlon and MLA Simons showed up on multiple occasions with cookies, and again later with the suggested accompanying glass of milk. We met staffers, guests of MLAs, and even personages of the West Annex. As the session went on, we slowly got over being a little starstruck and became more relaxed at having the Minister of Something-Important walk through the door. We found that we often ended up acting as a sounding board for politicians, caucus staff, and others who wanted

to chat with a group of people who had context without too much investment.

At the end of session, the leaderboard was conquered by defending champion MLA Rice, (who defeated close runner-up MLA Leonard by a hair with a couple last-day visits).

Oh, and we did work as well. Along the way, we learned about the nitty-gritty of government communications, and the different types of writing involved. All of us, at one time or another, got to work on projects related to topics we were passionate about, from sexualized violence to search-and-rescue. Occasionally seeing things we had written published as government communications or read in the House and into Hansard was especially gratifying (and a classic BCLIP experience).

We would like to thank everyone in government caucus for making us feel most welcome during our four month stint in the intern den. Your knowledge of the intricacies of this institution will be missed, as well as each individual personality.

You may now have the den and accompanying napping couch back, that is, until next year’s interns roll around.



LIBTERNING IN THE OFFICIAL OPPOSITION

Scott Takenaka, Allison Gonzalez, Talia Bleiler, Adam Donaldson and Myim Bakan Kline

When we first started at the Legislature in February, the Premier himself told us that regardless of whatever political leanings we may or may not have, we should hope to be placed with the official opposition caucus. Not only would opposition provide more opportunities to work one-on-one with MLAs, but was said to be more fun.

The five of us were placed in opposition with the B.C. Liberal caucus and thus became known as the “Libterns” – three of us in communications and two in research. Once we began, we found that not only were the Premier’s words more accurate than we could have imagined, we also had the opportunity to provide support for the largest opposition caucus B.C. has ever seen, experiencing its internal mechanics first-hand.

With 42 MLAs, the B.C. Liberals are two Members away from being able to form government, which also means that government is one vote away from falling. This reality meant that both the opposition communications and research offices were in constant overdrive, trying to win over the hearts and minds of British Columbians. Being in opposition during this time gave us insight into the in-depth strategy behind politics, and we would all be lying if we did not find the constant energy and buzz in the air to be a lot of fun.

This atmosphere provided a dynamic and exciting environment for us. In communications, we were immediately thrown into writing comprehensive budget speeches for MLAs. While the responsibility of having your writing aired on television and shaping the opinions of citizens was a little intimidating at first, it also posed a challenge like none of us had experienced before. While some days were pretty hectic and busy, it was incredibly satisfying to see your work spoken in the House and then transcribed as a part of history in Hansard.

Over in research, the fast-paced and unpredictable estimates schedule ensured we were always on our toes, as we quickly moved from topic-to-topic, doing the research and coming up with questions that would hold the government to account. We also supported policy research and analysis of important files from domestic violence to CleanBC.



However, what really made the experience worth it was the team we got to work with. Our co-workers, in both communications and research, always made for great company, whether they were cracking jokes or providing feedback on work. They are some of the most passionate and tenacious people we have ever come across who provided advice and insight based on the plethora of personal experiences that had brought them to where they are today.

We want to thank the opposition caucus staff for all their help and support over these past few months. It was a great experience, and there was always something to learn, whether it was obscure details about parliamentary procedure, or funny behind-the-scenes anecdotes. We are all incredibly grateful for our time in caucus—we will not forget it.

THIRD PARTY REFLECTION

Iliana Turner and Ben Foster

The running joke before learning of our caucus placements was that the two interns going to the third party would increase their staff by 20 per cent. It is funny because it is true! With less staffing than the other two parties, we were offered the opportunity to cut our teeth on projects that might not have come our way in a different caucus.

On the first day of caucus the green-terns (a self-declared title of the “Green Interns”) were thrown into researching estimates questions. More importantly, these were questions that needed to be done in a few days because the ministry was going to be up for debate by the end of the week. Once we had finished writing the estimates questions, we were able to draft Question Period questions too. It was surreal to see our preambles and questions (understandably with some MLA modifications) spoken in the Chamber.

During our time, we were also able to work on Member statements, bill briefings, research projects, sit in on strategic policy meetings, and help draft support letters. From this internship, we have learned an array of new skills, a significant number of them coming from the work given to us during our time in the third party caucus.

Lastly, we cannot overemphasize the amount of commitment and sheer hard work that goes on in the third party caucus. The staff arrive to work before us, they leave long after us, and they have several time sensitive assignments that are constantly ongoing. Despite the workload and hours, the atmosphere is wonderfully cheerful and supportive. Most importantly, we were extremely fortunate to be placed with each other. We taught each other a lot and were only mildly disruptive with making each other laugh.



THE ART OF ASKING: A TALE OF A FIRE WARDEN

- *Gagan Lidhran*

One of the most common pieces of advice we heard coming into this internship was that if you wanted to do something and were interested in it, just ask.

Simply come into the experience knowing what you are interested in and then find the right person to direct you to how you can learn more about your passion. Don't give up because you asked someone and they never got back to you or didn't really know what you were talking about. It is always worthwhile to ask yourself, "have I done enough and am I okay with the outcome?"

For example, coming into this internship, I wanted to make sure that I had an opportunity to learn as much as I could about emergency preparedness. I have a strong interest in the area as a volunteer with the Abbotsford, and now Victoria, Fire Department as an Emergency Support Services (ESS) member. In this role, I assist evacuees of fires, floods and other disasters for up to 72 hours.

I was interested to know what plan the Legislature had in place in case a disaster struck and, if possible, how I could be involved in increasing the safety of Members and staff in the building.



I soon learned of the fire warden position. Specific Legislative staff are assigned as fire wardens to be in charge of ensuring the safety of their colleagues in the vicinity that they are working in during an emergency situation.

Once I was placed in my caucus, I was able to be appointed as fire warden for the interns in the East Annex. The process was easier than I expected after finding the right person to direct me. Taking part required me to send out an email to the Sergeant-at-Arms Training Officer, appoint a deputy fire warden (thanks Ella Champion!), and attend a safety training session.

The session was an overview of safety protocols in case of emergencies in the Legislature and the role of the fire warden in these situations. It also included a walk through of our working area, being familiar with the closest fire extinguishers, safety exits and location of the backpack with the fire warden gear.

I learned that not only are you in charge of evacuating your colleagues in your working area during an emergency, but you are also responsible for anyone in the vicinity. In the event of an emergency, with limited time and high stakes emotions, having walked through the protocols beforehand is always well advised.

Despite my training, we were fortunate not to have had anything happen during our time in government caucus. Being provided access to training, monthly safety sessions and a broad understanding of safety protocols for the working area was also extremely valuable and as an extra plus, as a fire (or deputy) warden, you also receive special access to first aid training if you wish.

Knowing that I could be there, equipped with my knowledge to help my friends and colleagues get out of harm's way was reassuring. Especially because I got to combine the two things I am most passionate about; emergency preparedness and B.C. politics.

The point is, don't be afraid to get out there and ask to do or be a part of something you are interested in.

If you are unsure how or if there is a channel or avenue for you, ask Karen, or if you're in your ministry, ask your mentor. One question could lead to a host of amazing opportunities. So get out there, learn and do as much as you can.

After all, you only get to be in the BCLIP once.

THANK YOU

BENJAMIN FOSTER AND ILIANA TURNER

THIRD PARTY CAUCUS

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ADAM DONALDSON AND ALLISON GONZALEZ

OFFICIAL OPPOSITION RESEARCH

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MYIM BAKAN KLINE, SCOTT TAKENAKA, AND TALIA BLEILER

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**DISCOVERING
BEAUTIFUL
BRITISH
COLUMBIA
CONSTITUENCY VISITS**

A PEACE-FULL MOMENT IN FORT ST. JOHN

- *Scott Takenaka*

For my constituency placement, I wanted to go somewhere unlike anywhere I had been in B.C. before. Having done some communications work for Peace River North MLA Dan Davies at the Legislature, I figured that his office in Fort St. John would be perfect. An extraordinarily fast growing and wealthy, but still noticeably isolated, part of the province, the North Peace has a number of issues that are unique to it, and provided an interesting learning experience.

Peace country is one of the most beautiful parts of B.C., and taking a drive down the Old Alaska Highway is an excellent way to take in the unique environment and history of the region. Fort St. John was the first white settlement in B.C., even predating Victoria, and although nothing of the original fort remains, there is an excellent museum that showcases the region's long history and the families that settled there. Many of their descendants still live in the area. Today, it is mostly known as the center of B.C.'s oil and gas industry and it is definitely infused into the culture of the area. The geography and culture seem more to me like that of Alberta than other parts of B.C.

The major news item in the Peace is the Site C Dam, which I was not able to get a formal tour of due to some last minute changes to the schedule. However, even observing the project from the lookout, and driving by the camp where many of its workers live, gives one an idea as to the massive scale of the project.

I was very lucky to be in town at the same time as a number of other opposition and government MLAs. MLA Davies was hosting Opposition Leader Andrew Wilkinson in his office for the Wednesday and I had the privilege of sitting in on some of the meetings that MLA Davies and Opposition Leader Wilkinson held with stakeholders. I was also able to attend a lunch for the Fort St. John Chamber of Commerce where Opposition Leader Wilkinson, MLA Davies and MLA Mike Bernier spoke to the city's business community.



Despite “the boss being in town” and being otherwise incredibly busy, MLA Davies made a great effort to keep me busy throughout the week. I had the opportunity to put together a mailer for his office to be sent to constituents, attended a meeting with the Seniors Advocate alongside MLA Davies and MP Bob Zimmer, and got to sit in on a number of meetings with constituents.

Even outside of work, MLA Davies was happy to take me on a tour of the southern part of his riding into Taylor and out to the gas fields, have me over for dinner at his house, and take me out to Fort St. John's two craft breweries: Beards Brewing and Mighty Peace.

I should also shout out MLA Davie's constituency assistants, Tamara Wilkinson and Jaime Ross, who were always happy to chat about the Peace, the news of the day, or even the best restaurant in town (if anyone is planning to go up there next year, it's Sushi Heaven).

This constituency week was a great experience, made even better by getting to work with an office full of great people. If you are looking for an experience widely different from anywhere else in B.C., I would highly recommend it either for work or travel.

MLA SHIRLEY BOND CONSTITUENCY VISIT

- Adam Donaldson and Talia Bleiler

If you leave the Legislature's upper rotunda through the Attorney's General corridor on the second floor, and follow the faces of those who have held the office, there should be two things that catch your eye.

The first is a black-and-white picture of D.B. Ring, who is pictured in 1863 with his dog splayed across his lap. The second photo stands out more than the first, and that is exactly its intention: The first woman to hold the Attorney General's office wore the brightest – pinkest – blazer she could find, to stand out in a hallway saturated with black-and-white photos of men. The person wearing this blazer, veteran MLA Shirley Bond, was mine and Talia's host in Prince George – Valemount for our constituency visit.

For anyone tuned into Hansard during a Parliamentary session, it is not uncommon to see MLA Bond up in the House asking questions in Question Period, debating the points of a Bill in the Douglas Fir Room, or engaged in the estimates process in the Birch Room. And at the end of a long day in the office, you might even glance up at the TV and think you are seeing her in two different houses at once (this means it's time for you to call it a day). But the reason MLA Bond finds herself locked into each debate is because of the way she represents her constituents. It is a tireless effort to advocate on each of her constituents' behalves that landed her in the House, and during our visit, Talia and I were able to see that first-hand.

Our week in MLA Bond's riding was jam-packed. Shortly after arriving on the Tuesday morning, we found ourselves in a car headed to the Robson Valley with MLA Bond, her husband Bill, and her constituency assistant Dorothy. Our first stop along the way was in the small town of McBride, where we debriefed about the black bears, moose, and various other animals we had spotted. MLA Bond doubled as our tour guide for our entire trip. As we continued towards our terminus, she told the story of various communities in her riding, the struggles they faced, and how she had played a role in helping them secure what was necessary for their communities.

But to MLA Bond, the larger the boundaries of her constituency in that part of the province only means the more beautiful places she gets to travel – and she travels them. By the end of our first day, Talia and I had seen the iconic Mt. Robson, the Prime Minister Mountains, Mount Terry Fox, and plenty of other sights that weren't just mountains. After a night in Valemount, where we met various mayors, counsellors, and prominent members of the Robson Valley, we made our way back to Prince George. The black bear count on the way back reached as high as 12.

Back in the city, events looked much different than those in the valley, encompassing what life is like for an MLA who serves both rural and urban constituents. Events in Prince George ranged from university program unveilings to street barbeques, and MLA Bond attended them all.

That was the standard she held herself to; if she was going to be a representative of her community, she planned to do exactly that. In fact, it was usually at events where MLA Bond would be told about other upcoming events. The process was largely the same when this happened – a promise she would do her best to attend, a turn to Dorothy, her assistant, where the details were entered into her calendar, and if it didn't conflict with anything, you could bet she would be there.

By the end of our week in Prince George, Talia and I had met what seemed like the majority of Prince George, and had seen just about everything there was to see, with one exception: Mr. PG. So, as one of our last tasks, we rushed to see the giant wooden man. It was a Friday afternoon, and a group of high schoolers were standing in front of Mr. PG holding signs about climate change and our future. While we took photos, the group of students couldn't help but watch us. We debated whether or not we thought they recognized MLA Bond, but they promptly turned around and returned to their demonstration.

As we took our final photos with MLA Bond – the former minister of jobs, labour, learning and early literacy, advanced education, health services, the former deputy premier, and the first female attorney general – on the side of the highway, with a group of protesting students in front of us, We thought to ourselves, democratic representation in this part of B.C. could not be more accessible.



THANK YOU

TALIA BLEILER

Surrey South - Stephanie Cadieux, Lucy Redies, and Anisha Virk.
Prince George-Valemount - Shirley Bond, Bill Bond, Krystine Iley, and Dorothy Titchener.

BENJAMIN FOSTER

Cowichan Valley - Sonia Furstenu, Tricia Datene, and Maeve McGuire.
Saanich North and the Islands - Adam Olsen, JoJo Beattie, and Ryan Clayton.
Oak Bay-Gordon Head - Dr. Andrew Weaver, Allie DeLarge, and Judy Fainstein.

ILIANA TURNER

Cowichan Valley - Sonia Furstenu, Tricia Datene, and Maeve McGuire.
Saanich North and the Islands - Adam Olsen, JoJo Beattie, and Ryan Clayton.
Oak Bay-Gordon Head - Dr. Andrew Weaver, Allie DeLarge, and Judy Fainstein.

JESS NEILSON

Delta North - Ravi Kahlon, Kiran Sidhu, and Balkaran Singh.
Victoria-Swan Lake - Hon. Rob Fleming, Christine Rousseau, Sheridan Hawse, and Sylvan Lutz.

KENYA ROGERS

Prince Rupert - Jennifer Rice, Joseph Jack, and Joshua Mcleod.
Vancouver Mount Pleasant - Hon. Melanie Mark, Seamus Wolfe, Diego Cardona, Hana MacDonald, and Amy Ryder.

SCOTT TAKENAKA

Chilliwack - John Martin, Montana Armstrong, and Hank Pilotte.
Peace River North - Dan Davies, Jamie Ross, and Tamara Wilkinson.

KIM CHHINA

North Vancouver-Lonsdale - Bowinn Ma, Mack McCorkindale, and Shawn Vulliez.
Mid Island-Pacific Rim - Hon. Scott Fraser, Andrea McDonald, Patty Edwards, and Jolleen Dick.

ELLA CHAMPION

Stikine - Hon. Doug Donaldson, Tristan Jones, Julie Maitland, and Shelley Worthington.
North Island - Hon. Claire Trevena, Mary Carstairs, and Sandra Doran.

ALLISON GONZALEZ

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Surrey - White Rock - Tracy Redies, Anne Bonner, and Effie Psiharis.

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Kootenay West - Hon. Katrine Conroy, Angelika Brunner, Cyra Yunkws, and Elaine Whitehead.

MYIM BAKAN KLINE

Skeena - Ellis Ross, Gina Versteegen, Gareen Ball, and Peter Versteegen.
Vancouver-Langara - Michael Lee, Christina Yan-Lee, Zoe Ferry, and Eileen Lao.

ADAM DONALDSON

Prince George Valemount - Shirley Bond, Bill Bond, Krystine Iley, and Dorothy Titchener.
Kamloops-South Thompson - Peter Milobar, Todd Stone, Becky Blixrud, Shelly Frost, and Leah Caldwell.

LEARNING
FROM COAST
TO COAST
& BEYOND

PART ONE: OLYMPIA HEADS NORTH

- Talia Bleiler

The Washington - B.C. Intern exchange is a newer tradition that has become a huge selling point for the BCLIP, and rightfully so. Every year, if our respective schedules allow it, the Washington Interns visit Victoria for a day, and the B.C. interns visit Olympia for a day. The exchange allows interns from both jurisdictions to see the Legislatures and hear from key political figures.

We welcomed the Washington interns from March 3-4. They arrived Sunday afternoon and were treated to a high stakes scavenger hunt. The “high stakes” being B.C. pins and bragging rights. This gave us an opportunity to show off our beautiful Parliament Building and discuss the differences in politics and culture across the border as well as connect with our American counterparts.

After most of us threw the towel in early, and those more strongly-willed groups had completed the scavenger hunt, we met at the Sticky Wicket Pub. We shared and appreciated the common experiences we all have had as interns navigating work in our respective partisan and political environments over dinner.

The next morning, we welcomed back the Washington crew to the Legislative Assembly. We enjoyed hearing from the Honourable Darryl Plecas, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Christopher Gilmore from the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy, Quinn Yu from Treasury Board Staff, the Hon. Selina Robinson, and the Hon. Adrian Dix. Interns heard about everything from electric vehicles to gender-based-analysis plus, to housing crisis strategies.

The Washington interns also had the opportunity to visit the Speaker’s office, where Mr. Speaker elaborated further about his role in the Legislative Assembly.

In the afternoon, the Washington group joined us in attending Question Period (QP). We hoped that the House would show our American friends how theatrical this British tradition can be—and they were certainly not disappointed. Topics covered in QP were largely focused on relations between B.C. and the United States with the Leader of the Official Opposition directly addressing the interns in his opening question; “Well, we’re glad to welcome the Washington state interns here today, but we must advise that we’ve got a bone to pick with their federal government.”



After taking in the drama of QP, it was time to debrief and say goodbye to our Washington compatriots. However, it would not be long before we were together again, because soon it was our turn to visit them.

After taking in the drama of QP, it was time to debrief and say goodbye to our Washington compatriots. However, it would not be long before we were together again, because soon it was our turn to visit them.



PART TWO: VICTORIA HEADS SOUTH

On March 19th, we travelled from our home base in Victoria to Port Angeles on the Coho ferry. The rest of the trip was made by car (more specifically our Ford Flex vans), with Karen and David behind the wheels.

Our first evening in Olympia was spent exploring their incredible Legislative campus where we were led through a scavenger hunt by the Washington interns. We were enamored with the sheer size of their buildings, and with the Tiffany chandelier that hangs in their main rotunda. We capped-off the first night with dinner and drinks at the Well 80 Brewpub in downtown Olympia.

The following day was a whirlwind of presentations and learning about the American system of governance. Our first stop was a Supreme Court of Washington hearing and debrief with Laura Anglin, Law Clerk to Justice Steven Gonzales, and Robert Mead, a Supreme Court Law Librarian. Their expertise and passion for law was infectious and we loved having the opportunity to ask about the American legal system.

We were privileged to hear from a long list of experts and key figures from Forest Management in the Department of Natural Resources, the Elections Division of the Office of the Secretary of State, the State Department of Health, and the Office of the Attorney General. They were generous with their time, and tried their best to answer all of the questions we threw their way.

Our remaining time at the Legislature was allotted for presentations made by both the Washington and B.C. interns. The presentations highlighted the characteristics of our respective governments as well as current events and issues. Given that the House and Senate were not sitting during our visit, we were given a greater look at the public service and legal system in Washington.

We are tremendously grateful to all of those who took the time to share their expertise with us, and to the Washington interns and their supervisors for hosting us.

We were lucky enough to have a second night in Olympia, which we used to explore some of the locally-owned stores and restaurants. We also enjoyed having dinner as a group before hitting the road back to Victoria early the next morning.

It was a short but incredibly rewarding trip, and I am sure I speak for the group when I say it was a highlight during our time as B.C. interns.



INTERNS ON THE HILL

- Kim Chhina

Following the end of our caucus placements, we had the opportunity to visit Ottawa from June 3-7, and learn about life on the Hill. We had a packed three days organized by the Parliamentary Internship Program (PIP) and not a moment to waste.

DAY ONE

On the first day, we had the pleasure of meeting the Honourable Russell Brown, Supreme Court Justice, who is also a BCLIP alumnus (1988). He shared with us his movie recommendations and offered advice for those going into law school. The meeting was followed by a tour of the Supreme Court that ended in many photos.

After a quick snack break, we met with MP James Bezan, Conservative Shadow Minister for National Defence. He shared with us his journey into politics and touched on life in rural Manitoba. We were able to ask for his insights concerning national defence and he was happy to answer.

Next, we met with MP Sean Fraser, Parliamentary Secretary for Environment and Climate Change. As this is a topic that several interns are passionate and curious about, we were able to have a conversation that gave us valuable insight into his daily work.

Afterwards we had a meeting with Zi-Ann Lum (Journalist for the *Huffington Post*) where we were able to ask her about how she landed in journalism and her favourite MPs to cover. Meeting with Zi-Ann Lum made one thing clear; she is a fierce reporter with no interest in conformity or joining an old boys club.

We ended the day with a B.C. MP Panel. The PIP interns were able to secure one B.C. MP from each party, including Elizabeth May, Wayne Stetski, Ed Fast, and Terry Beech. It was so fascinating to hear the perspectives of each MP on the same topics and it was vital in understanding the role of partisanship and relationships across party lines.

DAY TWO

Day two started off with a tour of the beautiful Rideau Hall which included the history of Canada's Governor Generals. The next stop was the U.S. Embassy where we met with a panel of diplomats working in various capacities. We were able to ask questions that took a deep-dive into the relationship between Canada and the United States and uncovered many differences and similarities.

We were extremely grateful to have an opportunity to meet with MP Jody Wilson-Raybould. We met in her office where she had Tim Hortons coffee and cookies waiting for us, but we were mostly interested in her story and journey into politics.

We next had the pleasure of meeting with the Honourable Geoff Regan, Speaker of the House of Commons, where we were able to draw parallels and differences between the Legislative Assembly of B.C. and the Lower House of Canada's Parliament. When asked how he remembers the name of all 336 MPs, he pulled out his phone and showed us the flashcards app which he uses to practice.

We then had the opportunity to attend question period and immediately drew comparisons with question period in our Legislature. When the MPs started asking questions in French many of us reached for the headset beside the seat to listen to an English translation.

We ended the day with a meeting with MP Nathan Cullen who gave us tips about public speaking and highlighted the challenges MPs from B.C. and other rural areas face traveling back and forth from home and the Hill.

DAY THREE

To start the day, we met with Charles Robert, Clerk of the House, and discussed the ways in which the House of Commons is striving towards being a more accommodating workplace for MPs and their families.

We then walked across the bridge to Gatineau and to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to talk about media and broadcasting. We discussed the future of the industry and uncovered some interesting facts about the consumption of Canadian media.

Afterwards, we got a chance to meet another BCLIP alumnus, Faizel Gulamhussein (2007), who works in the office of the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Multiculturalism. We talked about how he got to where he is today and he gave us each a copy of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms (yay!).

From Gatineau, we quickly made our way to the Senate and met with Senator Yonah Martin who provided us with many words of wisdom and encouragement. On our way out we ran into the Usher of the Black Rod and even got the chance to hold the Black Rod.

After a quick lunch, we attended a Government Relations Panel and talked with lobbyists from several groups dedicated to shifting the narrative around lobbyists.



Next we met with MP Matthew Dubé, NDP Caucus Chair and were curious as to his experience starting out as a very young MP. We ended the day meeting with MP Rob Oliphant, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He shared his experiences of introducing private members bills in the House of Commons and the dilemma of voting against your own party.



Although we only spent three days in Ottawa, we were able to meet with an incredible amount of individuals and had numerous fruitful conversations. We would like to thank the PIP interns and Director Dr. Anne Dance for coordinating our meetings and making sure we were on time for each of them.



A special thank you to Eleanor Davidson and Emma Lodge for their extra hard work in planning the three days. Lastly, a huge thank you to everyone who took the time to meet with us. Your time and valuable insights were appreciated beyond words.

STUDENT EDUCATION DAY: 2019

- Ben Foster

“If a political party hired Danny DeVito to say, ‘vote for this party’, millions of people would vote for that party – I guarantee it” – Participating Student.

As interns we were lucky to host 38 students from Mr. Barwin’s and Mme. Challies’ grade eight class and 17 students from Mme. Martin’s grade six class from Central Middle School on June 13. Iliana and Kim designed a curriculum which focused on the topics of political advertising during campaigns and the budgeting process.

The first activity saw Kim help students analyze the themes, messages, and symbols of political advertisements that ran during the 2017 election campaign. In addition, students also discussed the usage of advertisements in their daily life – especially with the rise of streaming platforms and services.

Feelings toward the ads varied as some students found some of them to be genuine and inspiring with appealing images, while others found them to be disingenuous, staged, and lackluster. After watching the ads, the grade eight group noticed that the types of people in the ads were a reflection of the demographics the party was trying to communicate with. On the other hand, the grade six group noticed that the more interesting advertisements were the ones that were most dramatic.

The second activity saw Iliana help students unpack the budgeting process. Students argued that the budget reflected the party’s values, trying to show that they want to address issues that British Columbians are concerned about. After viewing part of the budget speech and the budget highlights, the students broke down the major theme of affordability that the government focused on.

Each student received ten coins that they could spend on ten different sectors of the budget. Both the grade eight and grade six students’ top three sectors were environment and climate change, health, and education. Both groups had environment and climate change as their ministry with the highest investment.

Individual students from both groups also had a noticeable investment desire for mental health and addictions, noting that mental health was important to living a healthy life. Interestingly, many students didn’t invest much money in transportation and infrastructure, citing that they thought British Columbia already has good transportation systems currently and that infrastructure is a large contributor to greenhouse gases.

Overall, the day was a success as the students kept all of us on our toes with their thoughtful, genuine, and hilarious answers and quips. Both classes were knowledgeable about the political system in B.C., disabusing us of the common misconception that young people are ignorant to the political process. Furthermore, it was encouraging to see the understanding that the students had about the challenges climate change will pose for the foreseeable future. All sides left with a greater understanding of the Parliamentary system in which our government operates as well as a deeper appreciation of how decisions are complex and difficult to make.

It was another fantastic student education day for the books!



REYNOLDS SECONDARY MODEL PARLIAMENT

- Gagan Lidhran

In recent program years, the Legislative Interns have partnered with the Reynolds Secondary School Flexible Studies Program to help facilitate a Model Parliament exercise for the students.

This year, Talia and Kenya, under the guidance of Parliamentary Education Officer Adriana Ayers, took the lead on organizing the students and assisting them with questions related to parliamentary procedure.

The students worked hard in their Flex class to draft bills, create their own parties, platforms, speeches and proceed through first and second reading. Kenya and Talia were the main points of contact, aiding them with any questions or concerns they had and visiting them frequently throughout the internship. These efforts culminated in a full-day Model Parliament exercise in the Legislative Chamber.

Watching the students bring the process to life was awe-inspiring. In high school, many of us were not as well-versed or as interested in politics as these students have proven to be. To see such brilliant young minds come together and pass bills on issues as complex as universal basic income, lowering the voting age and child care regulation was amazing. They certainly had a vision for legislative change.

Speaking to some of the government, opposition and third party members from Reynolds after the Model Parliament, it was clear that they left the experience with a new-found understanding of B.C.'s political processes. For most of the students, the exercise gave them valuable insights into how the parliamentary process works and how a bill becomes a law.

I personally think many could be aspiring political scientists or parliamentarians. However, for some Reynolds students, their ambitions lie elsewhere. Others stated they will always remain civically engaged, and expressed an interest in taking up activist roles on issues such as climate change and lowering the voting age.

Rest assured, regardless of what the Reynolds students decide to do, our future is in good hands.

To quote Kenya: "the kids are alright."



MODEL PARLIAMENT: A BIT OF A STRETCH

- Myim Bakan Kline

Welcome to a very different British Columbia. A recent recession devastated our economy and toppled the previous government. A profoundly polarized electorate propelled the Movement for Equal Treatment (MET) to power with a plurality: five of 12 seats. It would be an understatement to say that the MET leans left. Rather, their platform called for the implementation of comprehensive social programming developed around a keystone British Columbia Basic Income (BCBI) policy.

In opposition is the Personal Responsibility Party (PRP) solely focused on dismantling and individualizing the collectivist MET agenda. Through the eyes of the PRP, the operations of government are in immediate need of simplification and disruption; economy is best organized strictly market forces and individual decisions. The PRP occupies four of 12 seats.

Finally, the Agrarian Populist Party's (APP) unexpected electoral success granted both third party status and the all-important balance of power in the Legislature. In contrast to the MET and PRP, the APP is a much more ideologically diffuse coalition of rural MLAs focused mainly on decentralizing government and local issues such as farming. They now hold three of 12 seats.

Taking a step back, it's important to recognize that none of these parties were designed, and nor should they be interpreted to correspond with any aspect of B.C.'s real-life political landscape. With no real-life ties, interns were free to make the parties and characters their own. The 'model' component of model Parliament concerns procedure and setting, but nothing else.

This, briefly, is the story of the MET, the PRP, and the APP.

First, the Member for Death Valley graced the assembly with a moving prayer, followed by introductions by the Members for Freedom-Calls, Winterfell-South, and Spinach-North. The assembly then set out to debate a budget, entitled Giving BC A Fair Shake, which passed unopposed after vigorous debate.

The entire APP voted in favour, while members of the official

opposition, all of whom had expressed an explicit intent to vote against the Bill, found themselves asleep at the wheel at the exact moment they needed to call for division. This was for the best, as the model Parliament was perhaps not so robust as to be able to handle the loss of a confidence vote.

The passed budget made law the BCBI scheme, funding to house every single British Columbian, \$300 million in funding for B.C. Rugby, and so much more.

The MET government introduced two Bills. Bill 1, the Resource for British Columbia Act would nationalize the entire forestry industry in B.C., bringing all related operations under a newly formed Crown corporation. With the support of the entire APP, this Bill passed third reading. Bill 2, the Environmental Bill of Rights Act was introduced to imbue various environmental features with a set of legal rights. Bill 2 would also give the Minister of Environment the power to veto any project, even those already having received a permit, that they felt would unduly impact the environment. At third reading the house was tied 6-6 requiring a deciding vote by Mr. Speaker, which was cast in favour of the government on the grounds Bill 2 had passed first and second readings with a clear majority.

With that, the debate was adjourned and the 2019 intern model Parliament concluded. So much of the proceedings couldn't be thoroughly captured in this article – like when the Member for Surrey-Suburbia passionately advocated for the separation of education and state, or when the Member for Bella Bella Bella Coola composed and recited a poem written à la The Honourable Rodger Cuzner, MP.

Every member fully embraced and committed to the exercise, making for a fantastically enjoyable but also informative experience. It wouldn't be a stretch to say that this was some of the best training our cohort had on the Standing Orders. With luck, one day, one of us could put them to use in real life.



OUR DAY IN COURT: JUDICIAL DAY

- *Scott Takenaka*

The BCLIP focuses heavily on the legislative branch of government, with one month in the executive through our ministry placements. However, with the judiciary, most of our experience was limited to tours we took of the Canadian Supreme Court in Ottawa and the Washington State Supreme Court in Olympia. While these visits were great, neither quite compared to the immersive experience that we received on June 24th, the last Monday of our internship, when we went to Victoria's courthouse for a deep dive into B.C.'s judicial system.

The day was filled with all kinds of speakers, broken up by time spent in courtrooms watching proceedings. To start the day, we met with Supreme Court Justice Geoffrey Gaul, who took time to discuss his experience and thoughts on changes occurring in the judicial system. After this discussion, we got to see Justice Gaul work on a criminal case. Other speakers included two law clerks who discussed their experiences going through law school and the options available once you graduate. Finally, we heard from a constitutional law and civil litigation lawyer who engaged us in a fascinating discussion about the philosophical underpinnings of Canada's judicial system and democracy.

While watching actual court proceedings, it was very interesting to watch the lawyers work and see how the justice system works in B.C. It also has to be said that some of the cases could be quite intense. It certainly provided a human dimension to these scenarios that one does not get from the paper or TV. This was both fascinating and a little disturbing.

Yet, the main event of the day was our own mock trial. Taking on a scenario based on a high-profile murder case from the 1980s, Talia and Myim, two of our future lawyers, took on the tough jobs of defense and prosecution, while the rest of us played a number of witnesses and judges. Instead of focusing heavily on procedure, everyone was encouraged to get into their characters and make it difficult for our judge panel, led by Chief Justice Iliana, to come to a conclusion. Ultimately, our court's verdict was quite different than the finding in the actual case.

All in all, Judicial Day was a fascinating look at a part of government we had little exposure to over the past six months. While it was easy to get caught up in the hustle and bustle of the legislative branch and the complex policy minutiae of the executive branch, both are kept in check by our judicial system. For the future lawyers in our group, the day provided important insight into the careers they are hoping to pursue. For the rest of us, it provided an excellent primer on a crucially important, part of our government in B.C.



AS PROMISED
A FEW GEMS
OF OUR
OWN

A PROFESSIONAL LEGISLATIVE BODY: DRESS CODE IN THE LEGISLATURE AND THE #RIGHTTOBAREARMS

CAMPAIGN - *Miana Turner*

I woke up on March 28th thinking I was heading into a normal work day. Little did I know, I would later end up on the news amidst a controversy that led to online debate about what I chose to wear that day.

The Legislative Assembly is housed in a beautiful building full of interesting traditions and rules, and one of those rules pertains to dress codes in certain parts of the building. There are rules for all genders, including wearing a suit jacket and having covered shoulders in the Legislative Chamber, gallery, and hallways. However, staffers have complained that these rules had been inconsistently enforced, especially towards women and femmes. After an NDP staffer had been told to exit a hallway by Sergeant-at-Arms staff unless she covered up, women members of the press decided to post a photo baring their arms on Shannon Water's Twitter. The response began the #righttobarearms.

The third party caucus was quick on the uptake, as it resonated with our mostly women staff. One staffer cited an experience where she was told to wear a slip under her dress so it wouldn't "cling to her legs." MLA Furstenu asked if I wanted to be in the photo they wanted to post in solidarity.

That morning, instead of opting for the button-up sleeveless blouse I often wear, I grabbed what was drying on my laundry rack as I ran out the door. I happened to grab a grey drapery sleeveless shirt, that I paired with a long cardigan and a huge blanket scarf.

When asked to be in the photo, I had a moment of hesitation and decided to do it based on my very wrong assumption that, although it was something I cared about as a (temporary) member of the Legislative staff, I didn't think it would get that much attention outside of the building. I removed my cardigan and scarf for the photo, as I thought it was more in line with the message of #therighttobarearms.

After the photo was posted to MLA Furstenu's Twitter, the story blew-up. An hour later she was being scammed in her office and getting a lot of attention on Twitter. MLAs from all sides of the House took to Twitter or were interviewed in support of the #righttobarearms and the need to modernize the Legislature dress codes. The overwhelming sentiment from the MLAs and those showing support was that women and femmes are tired of having our professionalism debated while trying to work, and we are more than capable of deciding for ourselves what constitutes professional attire.

The story continued to be picked up by media outlets, and by that evening the photos were featured in a news segment on CBC's *The National*. As I got to watch this story unfold, I also had to watch debate about the professionalism of my body unfold online.

Shortly after the photo was posted on MLA Furstenu's Twitter, there was an influx of comments singling me out as looking particularly unprofessional. Commenters discussed how my tattoos and "tank top" were disrespectful to the institution, and speculated about whether or not I was wearing a bra.

The professionalism of my body has long been up for debate. From dress codes in school, to sports, to other jobs, rules about what I could wear projected ideas of sexuality or "appropriateness" onto my body well before I could consent to it. I had been worried about my body fitting into this building since I applied for the internship program. I had gotten my tattoos when I thought I would never work in government, and I wasn't sure if they would be okay in this space.

Leading up to the program, I struggled to build a professional wardrobe, as it felt like nothing was meant to fit the proportions of my body. There was one instance when I was shopping and my mother commented that a particular shirt would "minimize my chest." It shot me back to everytime my body felt like it was too big, too unruly, too "inappropriate" to exist in public space. Throughout the internship I struggled with feeling like I didn't have a proper professional style compared to other staffers and interns, like my body would never feel quite right in this building.

This experience also gave me insight into what it was like to be a woman politician online. I was aware of how women are treated on Twitter in particular, and how women politicians can be targeted specifically. Although I had experienced some light meninist trolling in the past, I had never been exposed on a platform that resulted in the same volume of strangers feeling comfortable enough to comment on my body and character. Thinking about what it would be like to experience that level of exposure on a regular basis made me seriously reconsider any vague inclination I had of running for office one day.

As an intern, I feel lucky to have been part of a political moment that resulted in an update to the dress code in the Legislature. I'm also glad that in a way I got to externalize how I had been feeling about my body in this building since the beginning of the internship. The experience helped me realize that my body isn't inherently unprofessional, but that I had been made to feel that way. I am happy there are people in this building who understand how rules like this do nothing more than contribute to the policing of femme bodies in professional spaces. I hope the new dress guidelines continue to reflect that.

THE MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE CIVILITY

- Benjamin Foster

“If there is to be any chance of success, there is only one way to strive for decency, reason, responsibility, sincerity, civility, and tolerance, and that is decently, reasonably, responsibly, sincerely, civilly, and tolerantly.” - Vaclav Havel

One of the most exposed functions of the Legislature, for better or worse, is Question Period (QP). Cue the lament over the incivility, the name calling, interruptions, and the negative effect on school children that come through the public gallery.

Question Period is the time of the day in the House which hyper-emphasizes that politics is indeed, in some respects, a sport. There are teams, leaders, an umpire, a pursuit of victory. However, the clashing of teams does not necessarily need to be uncivilized. Uncivil behaviour in the form of nastiness, obfuscation, unwarranted conjecture and unfounded cynicism corrupt a delicate ecosystem of public discourse. This ecosystem is an essential mechanism for the competition for power in our system. It helps frame the issues we debate, and how we debate them.

I am here to argue that the laments of QP are well founded and that those who stand in positions of power have a responsibility to shape debate that is grounded in fact and civility.

Don't get me wrong, banter and heckling in QP is something I deeply enjoy when its content is reasonable and without detriment to the institution itself. The imbedded confrontational aspect of the Westminster system is something to be celebrated - a system that acknowledges that a competition for power is healthy for the stewardship of the body of power.

I am of the mind that QP is made better by the tradition of heckling. But it depends on how you do it. There needs to be loud and impassioned criticisms communicated, but these should be done respectfully, substantially, and fairly. Snappy quips, bashful banter, wisecracks and wordplay are the best practices of QP as long as they are based in reality and don't prevent the function of QP from occurring. I am not concerned with teasing, emotional interjection and satirical humor filling the chamber as long as it allows for a reasonably unobstructed chance at communicating an answer or question.

In the words of Vaclav Havel, “those who find themselves in politics bear a heightened responsibility for the moral state of society, and to develop and strengthen it.”

In his reflections after becoming the first president of Czech Republic through helping topple a communist regime, he argued that those in positions of power had a higher responsibility to reflect to the public a genuine and moral politics. Acknowledging that practice's tactical limitations he argued that pursuing good culture was still as important as stimulating an economy.

When fewer eyeballs are looking, we have a genial political culture in the Legislature. Now, it's not that all MLAs regardless of party are best friends, but for the most part MLAs carry with them a good-natured respect for those they oppose. Unfortunately, the public is not as privy to this side of the House as they are to QP. When the most exposed part of the day comes around, the signals sent out to the public are that of a spiteful disagreement.

My qualm is with language that misrepresents reality.

Just as important as the details of the policy of the day is the quality of debate that is upheld around the institution itself. Without highlighting healthy norms and practices sustained by MLAs respecting those practices, the quality of our democratic system is undermined. I am concerned that this lack of civility is damaging the health of a public debate around issues that need to be solved.

Some might argue that the inflated framing of a government provides a heuristic (a value-shortcut) for some who are not as politically literate as others. While this may be an efficient means of communication, any manipulation of reality abdicates the responsibility that political leaders wield in their ability to shape the public debate. Only a select few people have the time and resources to digest the nuances of policy. Society is in part guarded by truth seeking journalists, but political leaders wield massive influence over how politics is perceived.

We rely in-part, on politicians' good judgement to provide us with reasonable debate. Politics has the power to set the agenda around the dinner table, persuading us of which idea is good and which is bad. Unfortunately for some, QP has become the boy crying wolf, turning them away from the potential beauty of politics; for others it fundamentally shift their understanding of the impact legislation is having on their communities.

Moreover, I reject the principle that the bombastic style of QP is the best political strategy. That argument assumes that the framing of a party, despite its truth or not, is the most efficient way of holding them to account.

I argue that there is political value in asking tough, honest questions, and letting a government's success stand on the actions and words they choose. People are smart enough to know when a party doesn't answer a valid question about a reasonable concern.

My concern over how QP undermines public debate is rooted in the belief that public record is one of the most powerful accountability mechanisms in our system. We have a system of governance with an entrenched expectation of public consent to power. How governments are perceived shape their platforms, their spending, and potentially course corrections during their governance. Any distortion filters down into how everyday people think about politics and politicians overall.

The potential to have a civil debate rests within the MLAs of the House. It is not to be blamed on the Westminster system itself. It is not to be blamed on the political environment of the time. It is not to be blamed on the idea that there is a desire of the people of British Columbia to see 'exciting politics'. A tone is a conscious choice that each party sets.

I know that MLAs are capable of a healthy QP. I've seen them practice it. We've had genuine back and forth on measles outbreaks, hospital cases, infrastructure projects, and money laundering to name a few. Also, MLAs are positively cordial during estimates. In both situations, real concerns are raised and presented with civility.



The answers the government gives to tough questions provide an opportunity for the public to judge their competence, if they were ever exposed to it.

A civil QP is not a big ask. It can be politically advantageous to practice. It is the higher responsibility that comes with the public concession of power. At the very least, I ask for a QP that doesn't make me feel bad that there are children in the audience.

SO... WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

- Ella Champion

Intern-hood is an interesting place to be. Surrounded by government but not really a part of it, you have the advantage of context without investment. So you observe, you take it all in, and you evaluate how the environment measures up to what you expected it would be like, back in the days when you were a regular person outside of the bubble.

Observing 'the system' personified, you see the flaws, and learn why they exist and what perpetuates them. You see the positives, and wonder why they don't get more airtime. The logical gloss of poli-sci theory is replaced by a building full of normal-ish people trying to keep things running, do what they believe is the right thing, and bumping into each other in the course of their efforts.

What was one thing each of our interns learned about politics, democracy, and how our system of governance really works?

One lesson was about how personal it all is.

"I had an assumption that the Legislature would have a deep feeling of being self-consciously a centre of power, but it hasn't been nearly as intimidating or filled with that sense at all. It's a lot more human and friendlier than I expected."

"It's easy to forget that the people elected to this place may, at times, withhold from partisanship and its rhetoric. Glimpses of compassion, sincerity, and introspection are so compelling."

"I'm less cynical than I was coming in. I've learned to have a little more faith in the people we elect - because I've seen that they all have legitimate issues they care about that go beyond any ideology. I think that if you're going to run for office, you should have a reason to that's grounded in your experience."

And, with things being as personal as they are, individual voices and smaller-scale issues can actually pack a much stronger punch on political behaviour than one might think.

"I used to think of electoral politics as more of a 'set-it-and-forget-it' model. You elect your representative, they go off and represent you, and there wasn't much more you could do between elections. But I've seen how politicians are constantly reacting to realities shaped by people on the outside."

In and around the push and pull of party politics, and despite how inscrutable the institutions of law-making can seem from the outside, the system of local representation that is designed to bring these individual voices forward really can and does do just that.

"I've learned how accessible our politics is. I think a lot of people think of these things as immutable, but the reality is that your voice can carry extremely well in this province."

“Our democracy only works if we have politicians who are willing to get out and reach to the far corners of their constituencies to connect with and represent people who exist at the intersection of innumerable complex identities and experiences. I realized just how much of this does happen and how vital it is.”

Things being personal means that they can also be very personality-driven. While political science teaches about the role of systems, procedures, and party ideologies, when looked at up close, things tend to look a lot less systematic and a lot more determined by the day-to-day ins and outs of ‘the game’. All of a sudden, the way journalists talk about things, focussing on the particular influence of certain people within different systems at different times, seems to explain how things work a lot better than the way they’re taught in POLI 101.

“The influence of staffers was something that I underestimated. Policy is not usually made in a straightforward, scientific way. It’s very fluid, and influenced by the people around decision-makers.”

“I think I learned how to reign in unrealistic expectations. Everything here is a lot more random, chaotic, spontaneous, and reactionary than people think.”

And the less-than-systemic partisan element is often very central to why things turn out the way they do.

“I came to appreciate the responsibility that parties have with regard to framing the issues and the impact that their framing decisions have on public discourse. Often there’s a much smaller distance between parties’ positions than the inflated framing makes it appear.”

“I was surprised at the amount of time and energy that goes into issues, and damage control.”

“Before, I thought of electing an MLA as being primarily a choice of representative for local issues, and that the representation of local voices was the most important influence on MLA’s behaviour. Here, I’ve seen how the influence of party politics and internal hierarchies ultimately determine how things are decided.”

But that doesn’t mean it’s always as partisan as most people might think.

“Despite the very obvious party differences there’s a lot more consensus and cooperation in the House and other spaces than watching Question Period would suggest. There’s a lot of situations where people really do have to agree on government or direction for these things to move forward.”

Suddenly finding oneself up to one’s ears in this formally distant world, all the ways in which it’s messy, precarious, and determined by the issues and characters of the day become - sometimes shockingly - clear. But the thing is, none of it is distant anymore. Once you’ve seen how it works, it’s in many ways right there for the taking. Kind of makes you want to write to your MLA more often.

IN CONVERSATION WITH KEITH BALDREY

- Benjamin Foster

“One of the lessons learned is that just because you have seen it and heard it before doesn't mean that everyone else has too.” - Keith Baldrey

Keith Baldrey has been around the block. He started covering provincial politics full time in 1984. Since then, he has covered nine premiers, nine provincial campaigns, and seen the day-to-day operations of a province's politics for 35 years. What is more impressive than his resume is his willingness and ability to share this province's history. Keith was kind enough to sit down with me to talk about his past and B.C.'s political history. The conversation has been edited for length and clarity.

BEN: YOU WERE A CARNY (CARNIVAL) WORKER BEFORE?

KEITH: I worked at the Pacific National Exhibition (PNE) for ten summers, starting when I was 13. It was a great way to make money. I also went on a travelling carnival across Western Canada for about four years in the late seventies. I worked in the games. My first game at the PNE, which I worked with my uncle, was guessing people's ages and weights. People's ages were easier to guess because their eyes give them away. This enhanced my observation powers which came in handy later noticing little things about how people walk around in the Legislature.

B: DID YOU ALWAYS WANT TO GO INTO JOURNALISM?

K: I wanted to work at the *Vancouver Sun*. I would race home from school to read the *Vancouver Sun*, Paul St. Pierre, Jack Wasserman, who were the major guys. I did part time work for the *Daily Columbian* newspaper in New Westminster, which is actually the oldest daily in Canada. I got the *Columbian* to send me to Ottawa to cover the 1983 Federal Progressive Conservative leadership election which elected Brian Mulroney. It was the richest and most extravagant thing I could possibly imagine. You could not buy a drink or food because everything was free. There were about a dozen candidates who had their own tent and bar. That was where you ate and drank. I was there as a starving student with no money, but I didn't need any because everything was free.

The convention was in the old civic arena in Ottawa in July, it must have been 105 degrees. It was so hot, and jam packed with people. You were literally rubbing elbows with Brian Mulroney. At one point I found myself dancing with Mila Mulroney. She grabbed my arm and said, “blondie, my favourite”, and I'm thinking what am I doing dancing with Mila Mulroney?

After the Mulroney leadership convention, in 82-83 the SoCreds were re-elected. In 82', B.C. was hit by a really big recession, way worse than the 2008 one. Interest rates were around 20 per cent, there were tons of layoffs, and government revenues plummeted. In 83' after the election, the SoCreds brought in a hard edge restraint budget which paved the way potentially to lay off thousands of people and close down a bunch of offices, all these measures were breathtaking in how deep the cuts were.

This caused this huge protest, the likes of which we've never seen and probably won't see again, where organized labour worked with community groups to come together in what was called Operation Solidarity (which took its name from the protests that were occurring in Poland at the time in the solidarity movement against the communists). This giant umbrella protest group came together, it was thousands, there was a huge rally here, about 30,000. Stan Persky, who was a well-known college instructor and poet and author, pitched the idea of starting a newspaper for the movement Solidarity. He phones me and Tom Hawthorne, and put together a staff right away. We put out the *Solidarity Times* which has now been digitized.



B: SO, IT IS STILL RUNNING?

K: Oh, no. At that time the atmosphere in this province was unbelievable because it was cascading towards these confrontations with the government. This house used to sit 24 hours a day as the NDP tried to do everything to stop the bills. It was getting to a crisis point, in fact, there was talk of a general strike. People were so romantic about what was going on. But even as young journalists we saw this thing was headed towards a disaster. But tell that to 60,000 people marching in the street. There was this intoxicating feeling, but we knew where this was heading. In the end there was a compromise, so it ended. We did nine issues [of the Solidarity Times].

B: DO YOU HAVE ANY GUESSES AS TO WHY B.C. IS SO ALL OVER THE PLACE POLITICALLY? WE HAVE ELECTED REFORM, LIBERAL, PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES, CONSERVATIVES, NDP, SOCREDS, GREENS. WE'VE HAD ALMOST EVERYONE EXCEPT FOR THE BLOC IN B.C.

K: B.C. over the years has become a fairly polarized province. It's becoming less so because there are younger voters now. When the boomers were the dominant generation, this was a 50-50 province. The Reform party was a unique anti-government party which there has always been an anti-government sentiment in B.C. Particularly in the rural areas, and that is where the Reform was most prevalent. There is this detachment in the outlying regions that they are far away from the centre of power, so they are mad at the centre of power – at least federally. Then you've got the Green party which is an urban party which is tapping into some values that weren't there 15 years ago.

Everyone says B.C. is the most left leaning province. It's not a left-wing province. There is a big element of left-wing politics, but it is not a dominant. When I say it is 50-50, it's more a 55-45, 55 centre right, 45 centre left. The only reason the NDP won in the 90s was because there was a split. Just like Notley won because there was a split.

Horgan, and Farnworth, and Dix were in the 90s government, and they know the mistakes they made, and they don't want to repeat them. One of the mistakes they made, Dix said back in 2013, was that they tried to rewrite the world. They had so many bills in the 1990s it was ridiculous. That is why you don't see a lot of legislation from these guys. They pick and choose their spots. There is a couple of controversies, but they aren't changing the rule book and they're not doing much to upset people. Whereas the 90s was always "change this, change that".

B: DO YOU HAVE ANY MLAS THAT HAVE DONE PARTICULARLY WELL OR PEOPLE THAT HAVE STOOD OUT AS INTERESTING CHARACTERS SINCE YOUR TIME HERE?

K: Bill Vander Zalm was Mr. Chaos. He had so many scandals in his government. He tore his coalition apart. But he was also this charismatic figure. He really was something else - a compelling figure to cover because it was unpredictable, chaotic, destructive and exhausting. You had to be around him all the time because you didn't know what he was going to say.

I would throw pebbles at his office window at night, and he would lean out and say "what do you want Keith?" and I'd interview him, and you could talk to him about anything.

The next day everyone would wake up to a Vancouver Sun headline, "Vander Zalm says this". You couldn't leave him alone. You had to be at that scrum every day at 8:50. He would give a 40 minute scrum, all over the map, no press secretary, just us media deciding how long we were going to question him. He was never exhausted, it was all talk-talk-talk.

Grace McCarthy was the Minister who took him on and she was royalty in the SoCred party because she came up under WAC Bennett. She had a major role in putting the party back together under Bill Bennett when they were in opposition and brought it back to power. [She was a] major minister under Bill Bennett. She built the convention centre, brought Expo in; she was formidable. She was so sunny and optimistic to the point of caricature. You would say, Good morning Grace, and she would say, "isn't it a good morning, isn't it a fantastic morning?" She also realized Vander Zalm was taking the party down a dark hole mixing religion with politics. Also the development of the Expo lands which was False Creek, she thought it was a corrupt process, blew the whistle on him and quit out of protest.

She then ran for leadership of the SoCreds against Rita Johnson. We called anyone who supported Vander Zalm "Zalmoid". So the leadership race in 1991 pitted Grace, the old SoCred, against Rita, who was the Vander Zalm, and it was this bitter contest. Grace won that. You saw on display, the party that ruled B.C. for so long, almost 50 years, just fracturing in front of your very eyes. Vander Zalm, Grace, and Rita were the interesting characters of that time.

Then NDP came in during the 90s so you had Harcourt as the leader, but it was clear that he wasn't the leader. He was the Mayor of Vancouver, but he won the leadership with no one running against him. So he didn't go through that leadership process that you really have to go through to establish credibility. He had this young cabinet made up of Glen Clark and Moe Sahota, and Dan Miller. Moe had a pension for getting into trouble. Clark was super smart. But they had this immaturity because they were young. But those three were the dominant people in the 90s.

Harcourt ended up resigning because his government got caught up in this "Bingo-gate" scandal that no one wanted to take responsibility for. Harcourt eventually said, fine I'll quit. We had 20 minutes notice to get into the press theatre. Glen Clark took over, and if he became premier today he'd still be premier. Smartest politician that I've met here.

B: HOW OFTEN DO YOU FIND THAT GOVERNMENTS THAT ARE YOUNGER SEEK OUT STAFFERS THAT ARE OLDER THAN THEMSELVES? IS THAT A COMMON THING? SAY IF A PREMIER IS FORMING A GOVERNMENT THAT IS YOUNGER, THEY GO OUT AND GET SOME PEOPLE WHO HAVE SEEN MORE THAN THEM.

K: Usually governments come in and all the staff are young, and I think that can lead to problems. If you don't have good staff giving you good advice, you're not going to perform well or you're going to get into trouble. I think there is a problem with this government as there was with Campbell back in 2001. Campbell in 2001, he had all these really young staffers, but because they had 77-2 they could get away with anything. By 2005, and 2009 those staffers were more experienced.

This new crew by-and-large are young and inexperienced staff, but where the NDP made a good move was to hold on to most of the deputies. The deputy ministers are extremely important to a minister. If you have a strong deputy you have the potential to be a strong minister. To the NDP's credit, Don Wright, as the head of the civil service said these guys are all pros, they can work with anyone. So with the exception of two or three, they kept them all. I think that allows some of these ministers to withstand some of the problems that could be created by inexperience.

In Campbell's era, the dominant people were Campbell, and Carole Taylor who was his finance minister. She was very smart. She left because she got tired of this place operating the way it does. Rich Coleman was a dominant personality because he was the house leader, and the energy minister. Shirley Bond and Mike de Jong were the big players. Christy Clark was for awhile, but then she left, then came back, then became dominant because she became premier.

Dix, Horgan, and Farnworth were the dominant people on the NDP side. Now, James for sure. Horgan thinks very highly of James, rightly so. But because those first three went through all the stuff together in the 90s, they're a bit closer. There are still some scars leftover from the Carole James takedown. The NDP historically always devours itself. Grudges that go on for decades, there's factions, but so far these guys have held together pretty good. No sign of dissent or internal problems.

Contrast now to the 80s. Bill Bennett was very tight in control. Vander Zalm came in and there was a civil war internally. Harcourt came in almost the same fighting, but a different level. It split into factions aligned for and against Harcourt. Clark held together well internally until the mounties came to his door. Campbell held it together for a decade until the Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) debacle. Then Christy, she had caucus unity after the 2013 election.

B: ALL OF THESE STORIES ARE GREAT. THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO DO THIS.

K: My pleasure, anytime.



OUR ALUMNI

RENAE SNELL BCLIP' 2014

It is hard to believe five years have passed since my BCLIP experience. I will be forever grateful to the Internship Program for launching me into the true start of my career; I am working in the same branch I had my ministry placement with as a senior legislation and policy analyst, and I still love what I do. I am often called upon for my knowledge of procedures in the Legislature, so those months watching house proceedings in my caucus placement were well worth it.

Life outside of my career has changed a lot since the internship. I am now enjoying semi-rural life in Central Saanich with my family of three. My one year old daughter keeps me busy on the home front.



TRACY TANG, BCLIP' 2001

I'm an alumna from the BCLIP Class of 2001, originally from Vancouver and a graduate of UBC with a major in English. Following the Internship, I remained in Victoria working in various ministries in communications roles.

I returned to Vancouver in 2005 and continued to work and do post graduate education in public relations and communications. I was an instructor at UBC and taught in their digital content and communications program.

In 2017, I moved back to Victoria for a job with Island Health where I'm currently the leader of digital engagement. I'm also an instructor at Camosun College where I teach digital communications strategy. I perform stand-up comedy at open mics when I have time (and new material).

It's funny how things come full circle. My Vice President at Island Health was one of the caucus researchers I worked for when I was an intern. When he joined Island Health in 2017, we realized we met 16 years' previously working at the Legislature.

Being an alumna of the BCLIP is an honour. I feel fortunate to have had these experiences. The internship may have been six months, but my memories will stay with me for years to come.



OUR ALUMNI

JOANNA HARRINGTON, BCLIP' 1991

After leaving the BCLIP, Dr. Joanna Harrington went on to complete a J.D. from the University of Victoria, and then a Ph.D. in Law from the University of Cambridge. Dr. Harrington was called to the bar of B.C. in 1995 and the bar of Ontario in 2002. More recently, Dr. Harrington was appointed a part-time member of the Canadian Human Rights Commission in November 2018.

Currently she remains a full-time professor of law at the University of Alberta, where she specializes in matters of international and constitutional law, including human rights law.

In addition to being appointed at the University of Alberta, Dr. Harrington was the Scholar-in-Residence with Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs, she also participated in the negotiation of new international instruments at the United Nations, the Organization of American States, and the Assembly of States Parties to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Dr. Harrington's teaching and research activities focus on topics at the intersection of constitutional law and international law, with her published work examining matters of foreign relations law, the law of international organizations, the interplay between national bills of rights and international human rights law, and the issues of international and transnational criminal law. Her efforts were also honoured in 2018 with the award of the Canadian Association of Law Teachers Prize for Academic Excellence.



ROBERT HILL, BCLIP' 2016

I was part of the 2016 cohort. After I finished my internship, I took a job with the BC NDP opposition caucus as a Legislative Assistant. After the BC NDP was successful at forming government (I worked on Mitzi Dean's campaign during the election), I continued on as a Legislative Assistant in government caucus until I was hired by the government to work for Minister Mungall as her Executive Assistant.

This job required that my family and I move to Nelson B.C. There, I worked for Minister Mungall for roughly a year until we decided to move back to my hometown of Powell River, where I took a job as the constituency assistant to MLA Nicholas Simons.

This is where I am today -- with three kids and a soon to be puppy!

Not everyone continues on in education! I took the political route!



OUR ALUMNI REUNION

- Matt Dell

The BCLIP Alumni Association hosted the third annual Victoria Pub Night on Saturday May 11th at the Bard and Banker, in downtown Victoria. Nearly 50 alumni came out to see old friends, meet other alumni, tell stories of political events from their internship year, and make insider predictions of upcoming election results.

We were fortunate to have two alumni out from the inaugural 1976 year (Dr. George Abbott and Dr. Michael Shoop), and a few familiar faces from the 80s and 90s. Other well attended years were nine out of ten interns from 2016, and half of the interns from 2011. We want to especially thank all the people that travelled over from Vancouver for the event.

The Alumni Association plans to hold a third annual summer beach BBQ in Victoria, and second pub night in Vancouver in October or November 2019. If you would like to be updated on events, join the “BCLIP Alumni Association” on Facebook. We are still working on a public website to share events and other news for non-social media users. Those on email can send updates and address changes to BCLIPPAA@gmail.com.

Please remember to update your contact details in order to continue to receive the annual magazine and to be invited to future reunion events.

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BCLIP 2016

THANK YOU

Thank you so much to the wonderful front of house and back of house Parliamentary Dining Room Staff and Dominique Boutin who kept us fed and happy on many occasions.

Thank you kindly to the staff in Hansard who we're sure got some good laughs out of our Model Parliament as they filmed it for our future reference one day.

Thank you to the warm and welcoming Sergeant-at-Arms Gallery Staff who were always waiting with a smile and ready to answer any questions.

Thank you to Stephanie Raymond for providing us with all of your best stories and insights into this great building.

Thank you to the Press Gallery for being our official photographer on special occasions.

Thank you to the Legislative Security Services for always providing good jokes, happy smiles and for showing us around the building.

Thank you to Karen Aitken, David Nicholls, and Jennifer Ives-Fournet for all of your constant answers to questions and for being our rocks throughout this entire process. You each cannot be thanked enough!

Last but not least, a massive thank you to Kate Ryan-Lloyd for your continuous support of our internship program. You always go above and beyond to support our learning and growth as interns and individuals as we move through the program and onto new adventures. Thank you for everything that you do!

A MODEL PARLIAMENT POEM

- Adam Donaldson

Mr. Speaker – twas the week before our last, in this great hallowed place.
So let me recap the last six months, before we walk out that mace.

I thought I would take this time, to tell a few jokes.
Perhaps as many times, as Kenya says folks.

It feels like we started just yesterday, but that’s how time does fly.
I hope by the end, Scott will have figured out how to fix his tie.

We first learned the ropes in a week-long orientation,
But with Gagan’s endless questions, I wished I was back on vacation.

But once that first week had passed – to get into our ministries, we were all quite
keen.

That is, for some of us, until we got on the scene.

Myim and I had an office, we were both quick to tout.
But after only a month, we had both been kicked out.

It was back to the Legislature, a building quite old.
For what would make for an interesting session, and so we were told.

Mr. Speaker.

There was so much to talk about from our 41st session.
Which allowed Kim to wear socks with her heels without even a question.

We were all split into caucuses, making for a bit of a twist.
Two interns to the Green party? They don’t usually make the list.

Five were sent to the party with powers.
And from the basement, spent their time, staring at flowers.

But they got to spend a lot of time with lobbyists, doing all of the “greeting”,
I think that’s what made them late, to that 8:30 meeting.

But Mr. Speaker, don’t you worry, in opposition research, the real work was being
done.

Being placed in the basement, we never even saw the sun.

And what went on in communications, I only had a hunch.
Most of the time, Myim was out getting lunch.

But Mr. Speaker, despite all of these jokes, when I look back at how far we’ve come
since the fall,
I think of what an amazing time I have had with you all.

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2019



LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY
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