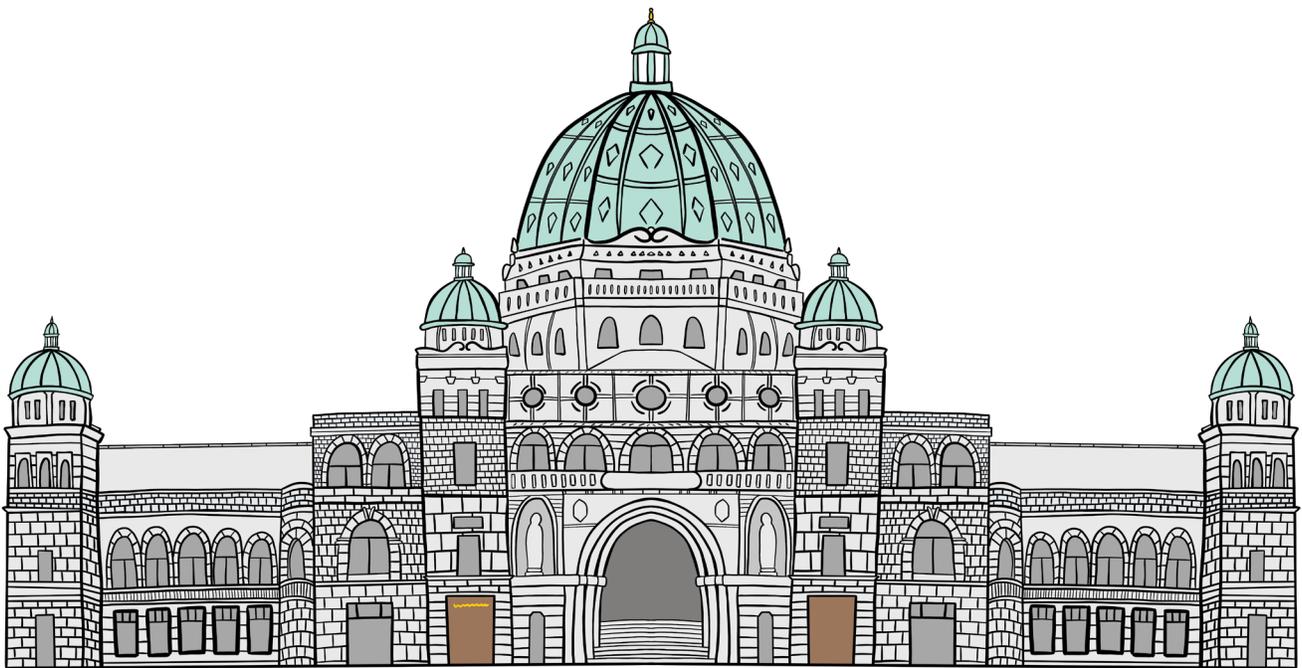


2021

THE GAZETTE

B.C. LEGISLATIVE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM



Illustrations by Abby Koning

LETTER FROM THE EDITORS

By Moira Louw and Abby Koning

The 2021 B.C. Legislative Interns are the first - and hopefully last - cohort to experience the entire internship during a global pandemic. When we accepted our offers to the program in March 2020, we could not have anticipated that our experience would be so changed by hybrid work set-ups, travel restrictions, and continually-changing health orders.

As we reflect on the past six months, it is impossible to ignore our collective disappointment at all the things we missed out on. Trips to Washington and Ottawa, receptions at the Parliament Buildings, in-person constituency visits... the list goes on. This has truly been an internship like no other.

While we recognize the hardships and obstacles encountered through the pandemic, it is important that we acknowledge the immense resilience and adaptability of everyone in our cohort. We came together in spite of it all, through virtual hangouts, outdoor picnics, ocean swims, hikes, and bike rides. While the circumstances weren't always ideal, we wouldn't have wanted to experience the internship with anyone else.

We know we are extremely privileged to have had this opportunity and we are so grateful to everyone who made it possible. To Esther, Karen, Jamie, and Jen: thank you for your guidance, support, and hard work to ensure we were still able to enjoy all the fantastic experiences that we could.

To Kala, Camille, William, Michael, James, Gabriel, Rachel, Kate, Gabby, and Arian: thank you for being amazing colleagues, and even better friends.

Our time as interns has flown by, and we are so excited for the chance to share a taste of our experience through this Gazette.



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MESSAGE FROM THE SPEAKER

By Hon. Raj Chouhan

It gives me great pleasure to offer my congratulations to the 2021 Legislative Interns. With this being the forty-sixth year of the Internship Program, you are part of a longstanding tradition that we at the Legislative Assembly all take great pride in. You've also participated in a most unique experience of supporting your Members during the hybrid Sessions. Your skills and creative energies have been exercised in new ways as we've all tried to do the same work under the most trying of circumstances.

In the past forty-five years it's been a tribute to the Internship Program to note that interns have returned to the Parliament Buildings as Members. The thought that their experience in this program had inspired and equipped them to enter the political arena is remarkable. It is my hope that some of you will follow that example, that your dedication and enthusiasm will again be an asset to the province and this building. No matter the path you choose to take into your futures, I have confidence in the contribution that you will make.

Congratulations to you all.



Interns with the Speaker

DIRECTORS' CORNER

Life is cyclical. While we hope that does not apply to pandemic times, I am very happy to have returned to the Legislative Assembly for a couple more cycles with BCLIP. From Intern to Program Manager, and I still learned so much from the 2021 interns (including the merits of TikTok!). This group is kind, smart, hard-working and learning resilience during an exceptionally difficult time. Within their broader and personal pandemic experiences, they also graduated from a program very different from many of ours—Zoom seminars, everchanging pandemic policies, no travel, and limited ability to mingle with colleagues and develop the lifelong friendships that make this internship program so special (aka why you're still reading this newsletter!).

Nonetheless, 2021 still offered many highlights, including: greater connections with other internship programs and speakers located elsewhere (thank you, Internet!), many lunches on the back steps, an amazing Model Parliament, the first placements with the Independent Offices of the Legislative Assembly, and more impressive intern artwork (kudos to Abby Koning).

I hope that 2022 looks a little more familiar for all of us, including the 2021 interns as they go on to interesting jobs and further education. Many thanks to them and to my wonderful colleagues, Karen Aitken and Dr. Jamie Lawson, for brightening this strange year. And thank you to all of the Legislative Assembly (to both MLAs and staff!), as well as BCLIP's other collaborators and hosts for supporting such an important educational program in its 46th year.



Esther Rzeplinski
Program Manager



Dr. Jamie Lawson
Academic Director

Something peculiar goes with stepping into well-established roles in unprecedented times. Many activities and expectations carry over; but others don't, or can't happen the same way. Unprecedented times breed both nostalgia and "next-yearism": that recurrent feeling that whatever is happening, isn't quite happening as it should. But these are also times for exciting innovations – often of necessity.

The cohort of 2021 have done their whole internship under such conditions. In smaller terms, so have I. They have "travelled" (online) with Ottawa, Washington, Ontario, and Manitoba interns, and shared more events with them than most of us anticipated. But climbing the Peace Tower or gazing out over Budd Inlet had to wait. In this newly elected, "hybrid" Legislature, they have done a brilliant job, like other cohorts. But they have done it on specially issued laptops with new security rules.

As before, the 2021 interns met people, daily and at special events, who gave generously of their time and wisdom. Like previous cohorts, but in their own way, they have been resilient, professional, curious, fun. We all owe a debt to their mentors and supervisors in ministries, caucus offices – and now, independent offices. Interns rose to meet unexpected challenges. So some things haven't changed.

People who know the place better than I do sometimes mention signs of a partial return to normalcy – majority government, less turbulence, more certainty. Sometimes, they hint some things may have changed for good. Navigating my first year as Academic Director would have been unthinkable without Karen Aitken, Esther Rzeplinski, and the wider team under Speaker Raj Chouhan. We have all borne witness to the potential and limitations of doing BCLIP differently. And we know in our guts that this year, this cohort, has been special.



Karen Aitken
Program Director

What a year of transition and change! I am so pleased that we were still able to offer this incredible learning opportunity to our 2021 Legislative Interns during these unprecedented Covid times. It has certainly not been a typical year and no doubt (we are all feeling a bit of Zoom fatigue) but there have been so many amazing guest speakers! I would like to thank this year's cohort for their flexibility and maturity in responding to uncertainty with a positive attitude. Working in a Ministry and for some, in an Independent Office, provided them with a brief glimpse of the importance of the public service. Working in caucus, both remote and on precinct and even remotely in a constituency office, has provided an insider's view into the daily life of an MLA and the incredible hard work and determination of caucus staff to ensure as smooth a ride as possible.

I would like to welcome and thank Dr. Jamie Lawson for taking the helm as the new Academic Director, bringing with him a wealth of contacts and wisdom to the program. I would also like to thank and acknowledge the support and commitment of our Academic Steering Committee, namely Dr. Gerald Baier, Dr. Boris DeWiel, and Dr. Sanjay Jeram. And a special thank you to Esther Rzeplinski who joined the program in late February covering Jennifer Ives-Fournet's maternity leave (beautiful baby boy, Edmund). Esther, herself an Intern Alumna, has fit right in and has managed the 2021 year with professionalism, care and enthusiasm. I wish all of the 2021 Interns the very best as they embark on law school, master's programs and employment opportunities where they will no doubt make B.C. proud.



Jennifer Ives-Fournet and Family

MEET THE 2021 INTERNS





Get ready to meet Kala! She always brings so much energy and effervescence to our cohort. Kala watches TV shows and movies at 2x speed and speaks very fast. Every conversation with her is a thrilling rollercoaster that takes you from intense debates about electoral reform and feminism to the virtues of sparkling water and earthquake preparedness in less than a minute. The force of her passion and the sharpness of her intellect make her a lifelong friend and a young leader who is not afraid of confronting complex socio-political challenges. Through her volunteer and professional background in legal aid and access to justice, Kala has developed a sense of devotion to the common good. Her public spirit is best summed up in her motto: “Plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit.”

Hometown: Born in Kelowna, B.C. but grew up in East Vancouver

Education: Political Science (Honours), University of British Columbia

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing

What was your favourite part of the program? A big highlight was my ministry placement because I found the work really fascinating. Also, the level of access and genuine engagement I received while there was an excellent first-hand experience that complemented my undergraduate education. It also solidified my faith in our public service.

What was your favourite intern activity? I really enjoyed in-person interactions during the internship. Our intern chats on the back steps, conversations with the MLAs, and post- Question Period debrief in the rotunda were all my favourites.

What advice do you have for future interns? Approach every interaction with humility to take advantage of the fact that you can learn from the people you are talking to. When you are in conversation with MLAs, public servants, and invited guests, it is important to recognize that it is unlikely that you are the smartest person in the room, and that is totally okay. That helps you to remain open and able to learn from them.

What are your post-internship plans? I am going to pursue my studies in Law at the University of Victoria’s JD program.



Originally from South Africa (but quick to highlight her roots in Abbotsford), Moira is one of the most hard-working and grounded people I have ever met. Moira regularly challenges herself with difficult projects and quickly becomes extraordinarily well-informed within days – sometimes even hours – on some of the most difficult issues of the day. Not only does she produce comprehensive and insightful work, but she manages her schedule so well that she can also book meetings for other interns, network like crazy, and still find time to enjoy the world around her. Moira is an avid camper, hiker, and sailor with a love for the natural world. But above all else, Moira is a loyal friend with the ability to genuinely connect with people on their level, which in my mind makes her one of those people that really makes the world a better place.

Hometown: Abbotsford, B.C.

Education: Political Science, University of Victoria

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Office of the Seniors Advocate

What was your favourite part of the program? The other interns. They have been an incredible source of inspiration and support, and although I will miss a lot of things about the program, I will miss them the most.

What was your favourite intern activity? Picnics! From the beach to Beacon Hill Park to the backsteps of the Legislature, we took full advantage of the beautiful spots Victoria has to offer.

What advice do you have for future interns? Ask questions! The people working at the Legislature are incredibly passionate about what they do, and you will learn a lot by listening to them share their experiences and insights.

What are your post-internship plans? I'll be working in Vancouver until the summer of 2022, when I'll be doing a study tour and internship with the European Union.



Over the past couple of months, I've had the privilege of getting to know Gabriel. Known for his levity and kindness, Gabriel has been a beacon of pragmatism throughout the internship with one of his greatest strengths being his ability to see things from other perspectives. Within the first couple of days of our internship, we were all quick to learn about his piano talents thanks to a spare piano in the Ned DeBeck Lounge; however, over the course of this internship, I've learnt that being a pianist is only one of Gabriel's many talents, as he is also a skilled sailor, poet and competitive amateur boxer! When asked what his personal motto was, Gabriel responded that it was "to be, rather than seem," and from what I've learnt about Gabriel these past couple of months, that is a motto he lives up to every day of his life!

Hometown: North Vancouver, B.C.

Education: History with Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies Minor, and Minor in Political Science, McGill University

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation

What was your favourite part of the program? Exposure and level of access to information during my ministry placement and getting to spend time with fellow interns!

What was your favourite intern activity? Visiting Butchart Gardens with the government interns.

What advice do you have for future interns? Begin every conversation like the person you're talking to has something to teach you.

What are your post-internship plans? I will be attending UVic Law in the fall.

CAMILLE HAISELL

By William Kelly



Camille's dedication to social justice and positive change is nuanced yet unapologetic. She is open-minded to new places and things, willing to face a challenge, and provides sound insight to those who seek it. We know Camille for her green thumb, and it is emblematic of her personality; she is a caring, thoughtful, and considerate individual. The Interns have been extremely lucky to have Camille join us, and I am grateful to have become her friend. Wherever Camille goes next, she will stand by her values, work with integrity, and I have no doubt that she will make the world a better place.

Hometown: Victoria, B.C., Lekwungen and WSÁNEĆ territory

Education: Double Major in Cultural Anthropology and Comparative and Global History, University of Victoria

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Office of the Police Complaint Commissioner

What was your favourite part of the program? Meeting such a smart and supportive group of people, especially at a time like this, was invaluable. Even if we're not around as much as we would all like to be, having a support network of friends to talk to is great.

What was your favourite intern activity? Intern 'Among Us' games during our virtual hangouts were shockingly fun. As well as capitalizing on the beautiful spring weather and going to the beach after work -- it felt like a weight was lifted off our shoulders.

What advice do you have for future interns? If something hasn't worked out as you'd hoped, or you're particularly disappointed by something, allow yourself time to be bummed out, but ultimately open your eyes to the good. Adjust your expectations and be optimistic. COVID has presented us with challenges as well as expanded opportunities; we're seeing the wheel turn at 10x speed, and for government that is a huge deal.

What are your post-internship plans? Camille is very excited to begin at a job she has lined up in the B.C. public service!



Hailing from the Okanagan – Lake Country, B.C. to be precise – William brings energy and enthusiasm to the internship. He also brings plenty of insights into the Agricultural Land Reserve, which he will jump to share if someone says the word “agriculture” (much to the benefit of all who do not know much about the ALR, such as myself). Will is also a biker, often encouraging the interns to join him on his long bike rides to farms and lakes. Those who worked with Will also know that he loves the Parliamentary Dining Room, often ordering breakfast and lunch there a few times a week. William is a very kind-hearted co-worker and friend, providing support to fellow interns, and quick with a joke to lighten anyone’s mood. You can always count on Will to bring a smile to your face, even if you’re having a difficult day.

Hometown: Lake Country, B.C.

Education: Political Science (Honours), UBC Vancouver

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner

What was your favourite part of the program? My favourite parts of the program have been the friends and connections, and the fascinating learning opportunities.

What was your favourite intern activity? Weekend bike rides exploring Victoria and post-work beach days with the interns!

What advice do you have for future interns? Try to take some breaks during the workday to explore the buildings and grounds. You never know who you might run into!

What are your post-internship plans? No idea... *panic mode* In all seriousness, I may be pursuing a Master’s or try to work for the Public Service. There are just so many interesting opportunities out there.



Kate is a bright and passionate individual whose warm and energetic disposition is matched only by the depth of her commitment to her values. She was drawn towards the political sphere for all the right reasons, motivated by the realization that many of the problems that she and others face are a product of systemic and institutional factors outside of their control. As an immigrant from the Philippines, Kate is personally familiar with this reality. However, she is proud of the virtues that the challenges of life have instilled in her: a strong work ethic, a deep sense of gratitude, and a call to meet the world with compassion and kindness. To be “unapologetically led by my heart” is an axiom that guides Kate, which can be seen in her work, her commitment to helping others, and the way she treats all those around her.

Hometown: Burnaby, B.C.

Education: Political Science (Honours) with a Minor in English Literature, Simon Fraser University

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Elections BC

What was your favourite part of the program? The opportunity to be passionately curious, and to have that enthusiasm be encouraged and well received.

What was your favourite intern activity? Getting to speak with elected officials and government/public service representatives candidly – to see them let their guards down and be accessible as human beings. Across the board, going through the program as a collective experience with fellow interns, as a team.

What advice do you have for future interns? Look after the other interns, you are in this together. If you are struggling with something you can bet that another intern is as well. Check in on and support each other.

What are your post-internship plans? Hoping to eventually go on to Grad school, but in the meantime will be pursuing opportunities to stay in politics, ideally as a Constituency Assistant. The motivation to be a CA comes from being drawn towards being on the ground helping people with their problems, and to be able to have a tangible impact on people’s lives.



Rachel is an intern with many superpowers: her dedication to gender equity is concrete and inspiring. She embodies a true commitment to sustainability, and she can bake a healthy, yet delicious cake like it's nobody's business. She rocks up to the Leg with the most iconic mask-outfit combos. She has taught me how to speak to people with care and with grace, a trait that I will carry with me long after the internship. But above all, her most otherworldly superpower is her ability to leave people calmer, safer, and more comfortable than when she first meets them. Whereas other people flash and strike their intelligence like a white-hot thunderstorm, Rachel's brilliance is a warm hearth that invites people in. I am stoked to see what she does next. I intend to keep basking in her light, witnessing all the ways she'll work her magic on the world.

Hometown: Kelowna, B.C.

Education: Political Science (Honours) with a Minor in Applied Ethics, University of Victoria

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Gender Equity Office (under the Ministry of Finance)

What was your favourite part of the program? It was getting to know the other interns. We were all thrown into this crazy situation, and we tried really hard to make the most out of it. Because of that, these are friendships I'll have with me for life.

What was your favourite intern activity? My favourite memory was spending an afternoon with all the interns at Beacon Hill Park. It was really a transition from being co-workers to friends, and it was when everyone was able to open up and lean on each other for support. I remember Moira's lemon bars and putting on Camille's sunscreen—though it failed to save me from a sunburn. It was a real shift in our group, and a very happy memory.

What advice do you have for future interns? If you're doing your internship in a post-COVID world, you better knock on every door, go to every house, attend every happy hour, hug each other as much as you can, and take every opportunity to experience your internship in real-life. Do it for our sake, when we couldn't get that chance.

What are your post-internship plans? Hopefully taking advantage of being fully vaccinated and attending the Joint Juris Doctor/Master of Public Administration Program at Dalhousie University.

A portrait of Abby Koning, a young woman with long, wavy, light brown hair and black-rimmed glasses. She is wearing a dark blue blazer over a white top and a thin necklace with a small gold pendant. The background is a grey stone wall. The photo is framed by a white border with rounded corners.

ABBY KONING

By Moira Loun

The world's greatest West Wing fan, Abby is kind, creative, smart, and funny. She is also one of the hardest-working people I know. As the only intern working for the BC Green Caucus, Abby has demonstrated an enormous capacity to handle major responsibilities. She commits herself fully to every task she takes on and will go above and beyond what is required to ensure that her work is the best it can be. And no matter how busy she is, Abby will never say no to the opportunity to learn something new. In the fall, Abby will begin her studies to become a high school teacher. I have no doubt that she will be one of those teachers that students talk about decades later for inspiring them to do great things. I think I speak for every intern when I say that Abby is already an inspiration to us all.

Hometown: Victoria, B.C.

Education: Political Science with a Minor in the Human Dimensions of Climate Change, University of Victoria

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Ministry of Education

What was your favourite part of the program? Honestly, it's impossible to choose! The work I was able to do both at the Ministry of Education and in caucus was interesting, engaging, and challenging in all the best ways. And everyone I had the opportunity to work with in each of my placements was incredibly welcoming and inspiring.

What was your favourite intern activity? I loved every weekend bike ride (especially visiting Jag's famous asparagus farm) and any time a collection of interns was able to meet together outside.

What advice do you have for future interns? Say yes to things that scare you and know that six months is going to go by really fast, so try to be as present and engaged as you can be. It's really true when people say you will get out of an experience what you put in. Also, don't ever be afraid to ask questions, or at least don't let that stop you!

What are your post-internship plans? Going back to school for my Bachelor of Education to teach high school!



Burnaby's biggest fan, Michael knows how to make anything sound fun with his joy, enthusiasm, and pure "yes" energy. He can often be heard saying things like "Estimates is my jam!" and "LET'S GO!!!" when it comes to budgets and all things bureaucratic and regulatory, which is strange and frankly quite contagious. Michael always brings a keen eye for details, a quick wit, a kind listening ear, and a shocking amount of energy everywhere he goes. When he's not hitting research projects out of the park at work, he spends his time playing Dungeons and Dragons (currently as a human paladin) and reading fiction (currently reading Seven Sacred Truths by Wanda John-Kehewin). We're all very lucky to know him.

Hometown: Burnaby, B.C.

Education: Political Science, Simon Fraser University

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

What was your favourite part of the program? My favourite part of the program was my time with my Ministry.

What was your favourite intern activity? Lunch on the back steps of the Legislature.

What advice do you have for future interns? Say yes to even the smallest of tasks because you never know what they may lead to.

What are your post-internship plans? I'll be moving back to Burnaby to work for MP Terry Beech.



Gabrielle Parent (“but most people call me Gabby, so feel free”) is exactly the kind of person you want on your team. She is as equally warm and friendly as she is witty and intelligent – which is to say very much so! Gabby is fluent in French, fun facts, and encouragement, and she is always ready to lend a helping hand if you need it. When she’s not enjoying a post-work swim in the ocean (or persuading other interns to join her on said swim), you can find Gabby leading lost interns around the halls of the Parliament Buildings, utilizing her many years of knowledge as a parliamentary tour guide. I know that Gabby will go far in life, and she’ll do so without leaving anyone behind. Her passion for the causes she cares about is infectious, and all those who are fortunate enough to know her are better off for it.

Hometown: My dad was in the military, so I grew up everywhere and nowhere. But I was mostly raised in Victoria and southern Ontario.

Education: Anthropology (Honours) with a Minor in Greek and Roman Studies, University of Victoria

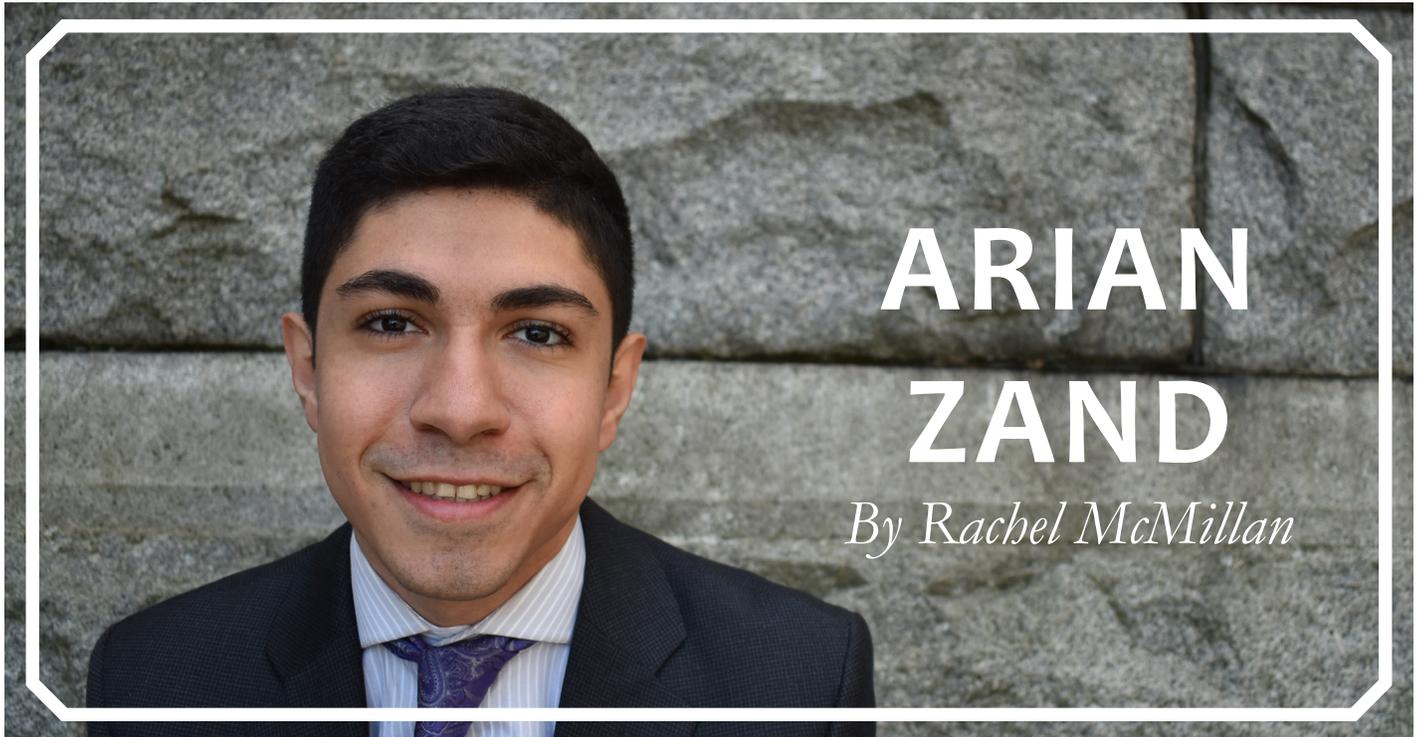
Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Ministry of Mental Health and Addictions

What was your favourite part of the program? Some of my favourite parts of the program have definitely been bonding with the group and having our intern lunches together on the back steps. Being able to walk the halls of the Leg during Session and watching the MLAs go about their business is really interesting and cool – really just seeing the behind-the-scenes of it all!

What was your favourite intern activity? I loved going to the beach with all the interns, especially when we were celebrating the end of Session.

What advice do you have for future interns? Try to not to limit yourself by having specific expectations, because you never know what kinds of opportunities the program will present.

What are your post-internship plans? I’ll be working at the Office of the Seniors Advocate as their Communications Manager. Then I’m sure at some point I’ll go back to school!



Meet Arian! To know him is to regularly think to yourself, “Wow, this must be the smartest human I’ve ever met.” He is truly a joy to learn with, and more often, learn from. Arian can explain the intricacies of fiscal policy, perfectly balance a meal, and recite the works of Renaissance thinkers and Persian poets, all with great thoughtfulness and purpose. He’s also ready and willing to swim in a fountain or chase down peacocks in Beacon Hill Park at a moment’s notice. I have no doubt that one day the whole world will know the magnitude of his mind and his heart, and I’ll just try to convince all those who will listen “I was an intern with him once!”

P.S. If you ever see him walking along a highway in the middle of nowhere, pull over and ask what’s on his mind.

Hometown: Born and raised in Iran, current hometown Coquitlam

Education: Before my family immigrated to Canada, I received a diploma in Mathematics and Theoretical Physics in Iran. At UBC, I studied Political Science (Honours) with International Relations and a Minor in Economics.

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Ministry of Jobs, Economic Recovery, and Innovation

What was your favourite part of the program? My favourite part was meeting the other interns and learning from them. I also really enjoyed my time with JERI; I felt like my work really mattered, I had an excellent mentor, and I learned so much from everyone I met during my placement about the role of the public service in democratic governance.

What was your favourite intern activity? I always looked forward to our daily lunch on the back steps.

What advice do you have for future interns? This program offers a lot of opportunities, but it’s up to you as an individual to seize them. The same is true in life, and it’s especially true during a pandemic. It’s your drive, your passion for a particular topic that’ll make the difference. As Da Vinci said, “People of accomplishment rarely sat back and let things happen to them. They went out and happened to things.”

What are your post-internship plans? Starting in September, I’ll be attending the University of Chicago for a Masters in International Relations, specifically International Political Economy. Beyond that, my plan is to not plan.

JAMES ANDERSON

By Camille Haisell



James is an avid trekkie and more generally a massive fan of science-fiction - his favourite genre of literature and TV. A life goal of his is to one day travel to space (and hopefully come back!), and he hopes to live until 2100, by which point if humanity hasn't colonized the solar system he'll be very disappointed. Outside of work you can find James playing a game of Go or Civilization VI, watching period dramas like Babylon Berlin or Boardwalk Empire, jogging along the river Mersey, and despairing at the state of his home country, the United Kingdom. Fun fact: He was born three months premature and was so small he could be held in one hand! But he has since made up for it in spades. James will no doubt go on to do incredible things in this life, and although we were sad that he could not join us for the entire internship, we feel very lucky to have crossed paths with such a thoughtful and brilliant individual. Space would be very lucky to have him.

Hometown: London, UK

Education: Political Science, UBC Vancouver

Ministry/Independent Office Placement: Ministry of Environment and Climate Change Strategy

What was your favourite part of the program? If not being in “the room where it happened”, then at least in the building where it happened! Gaining tons of knowledge about climate policy and the variety of tools governments can use to reduce greenhouse gas emissions was a particular highlight.

What was your favourite intern activity? The online drinks and games nights we had in the first few months of the internship, in lieu of being able to hang out in person, were lots of fun and a great way to get to know each other a little better.

What advice do you have for future interns? Don't hesitate to reach out to past alumni, BCLIP staff, or your fellow interns for help/advice if you're struggling, unsure about something, or just want to chat! Everyone will be more than willing to assist in any way they can.

What are your post-internship plans? To work full-time for a year or two in Vancouver, ideally in a research, policy, political, organizing, or public service role, before moving to Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, or Quebec City to pursue either a Master's or a law degree.



**MINISTRY AND
INDEPENDENT
OFFICE
PLACEMENTS**



Steller's Jay

MAKING JUSTICE WORK

A GLANCE INTO THE INNERWORKINGS OF THE MINISTRY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL

By Kala Bryson

On my first day at the Justice Services Branch (JSB) of the Ministry of Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing (MAG), I was met with strong winds and torrential rain. This forecast stood in stark contrast to what I had expected my first day at the office to look like, and in doing so, set the stage for much of my placement, where my expectations of the Ministry and its work ended up being far from reality.

Entering the JSB, I had anticipated the branch would be focused on reacting and responding to the issues and needs of the justice system. Put differently, I expected the branch to be focused on the present, rather than the future. There were certainly work units within the branch that met this expectation, like the Family Justice Services Division and Maintenance Enforcement and Locate Services which both largely focus on the immediate needs of British Columbians. However, there were other divisions within the branch which strayed from my expectations. For example, work units within the JSB like the Family Policy, Legislation and Transformation Division and the Indigenous Justice Strategy Secretariat both focus on transformation and reform, rather than the day-to-day operations of the justice system. Indeed, although the JSB provides and supports front-line services that facilitate the smooth functioning of the justice system, a large component of its work is also focused on innovation and transformation of the justice system.

I had also expected the JSB to be concentrated on the more “institutional” components of the justice system, like the courts and court rules, but was surprised to learn that there was a separate branch dedicated to the handling of the courts (the aptly named Court Services Branch) and that court rules constitute a fraction of the work that the JSB handles. The vast scope of the branch’s mandate and duties are exemplified by the branch’s Policy and Legislation Division’s (PLD) responsibilities, which include providing policy support for a range of matters and issues, including the Independent Investigations Office and Gladue Reports and overseeing more than 135 statutes – the largest legislative program in government! These statutes include legislation like the Election Act and the Public Guardian and Trustee Act, neither of which have an intuitive connection to the PLD but are nevertheless managed and maintained by the staff within the division. Given that the JSB hosts over 10 work units like the PLD, you can imagine the breadth of topics, problems, and legislation managed within the branch!

“I went into this internship knowing that there would be an educational component to our experience, but I was nevertheless shocked at how much I learnt during my time at the MAG.”

I was also surprised by the amount of flexibility and innovation within the JSB. In university, the public service had been characterized to me as an extremely competent but fairly cautious and conservative entity. As a result, I had expected staff within the Ministry to work within predetermined constructs and stick to processes and projects that had already been tried elsewhere. Thus, hearing staff talk about past and present projects by the JSB like the Civil Resolution Tribunal (Canada’s first online tribunal!) and the novel Early Resolution and Case Management Model was a surprise for me.

I went into this internship knowing that there would be an educational component to our experience, but I was nevertheless shocked at how much I learnt during my time at the MAG. Although I was placed with the Policy and Legislation Division, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the support of the other work units who supported my learning – namely, the Family Justice Services Division; the Family Policy, Legislation and Transformation Division; the Priorities, Initiatives and Corporate Support Office; and the Indigenous Justice Strategy Secretariat. Additionally, I am thankful for all of the support provided to me by other branches within the MAG, like the Legal Services Branch, the Court Services Branch, and the Government Communications and Public Engagement Branch.

LESSONS IN PUBLIC POLICY

SIX WEEKS WITH THE MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

By Michael Kurliak

Before the internship kicks off, all interns are asked to submit a list of preferences on which ministry we would like to work with. From the get-go, I knew exactly where I wanted to do my placement: the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction (also known as SDPR). My reason for this was very personal. Both of my parents have spent their careers providing community-based supports to people with disabilities, and since I grew up seeing what their side of the social services sector looked like, I was curious how things operated on the government's end.

I knew coming into my placement that the work of SDPR goes far beyond just funding support programs. Income assistance, the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and most recently the Expert Panel on Basic Income are all great examples and topics that generate a lot of hype from the public. I will always remember my first day when one of my mentors handed me the Expert Panel on Basic Income's final report before it had been released and being told that I was getting to see it in advance. Quite an exciting experience for a political science graduate!

What I did not expect though was how fascinated I would be with all these different areas that SDPR handles. My mentors wanted to make sure I got involved in as many parts of the Ministry as possible to maximize my learning experience. This resulted in me getting involved with three areas of the Ministry: the Research, Innovation, and Policy Division; the Corporate Services Division; and the Accessibility Secretariat. In each of these areas, I was able to learn about the work of a policy analyst and how the Ministry manages its relationship with stakeholders such as community organizations, businesses, and other government agencies.

With the Research, Innovation, and Policy Division, I was able to learn about the different categories of assistance that are offered to people and how much work goes into even the smallest changes to their policies for front line staff. I was also introduced to many different resources for understanding how the programs designated in Acts operate in communities across the province.

The Corporate Services Division invited me to attend several meetings between directors, assistant deputy ministers, and representatives from various community organizations. This was very exciting for me as Corporate Services is responsible for funding the crown corporation Community Living British Columbia which in turn distributes funds to service providers such as my mum and dad's respective organizations. These meetings gave me a level of insight and exposure into a field I am passionate about that I did not expect coming into the program, and I had a blast getting to sit in and listen to these discussions.

The Accessibility Secretariat offered me projects that interested me because I was less familiar with their work at the start of my placement. By the end of my time there, I was hooked. Helping with this team provided me with experience doing the work of a policy analyst and really fleshed out my whole learning experience with SDPR.

Overall, the experience was an invaluable one and I cannot thank the people I worked with enough for their generosity sharing both their time and knowledge with me. I have learned more about the public service in my six weeks at SDPR than I ever could have expected, and I now find myself determined to get back into that environment as soon as possible.

"These meetings gave me a level of insight and exposure into a field I am passionate about that I did not expect coming into the program, and I had a blast getting to sit in and listen to these discussions."

MAKING IT COUNT

MY PLACEMENT WITH ELECTIONS BC

By Kate Olivares

Like any good political science graduate, I am obsessed with elections. I love the drama, the coverage, the platforms, the gaffes, the whole she-bang. But beyond the sound bites and the controversies, my favourite part is actually walking to the polling place with my family, ticking the ballot, and dropping it in the box. And what makes all of this possible? The wonderful, fabulous world of election administration.

So when I had the chance to intern at Elections BC with Corporate Planning and Strategic Initiatives – just weeks after the final count of a snap pandemic election – I was just a little bit excited.

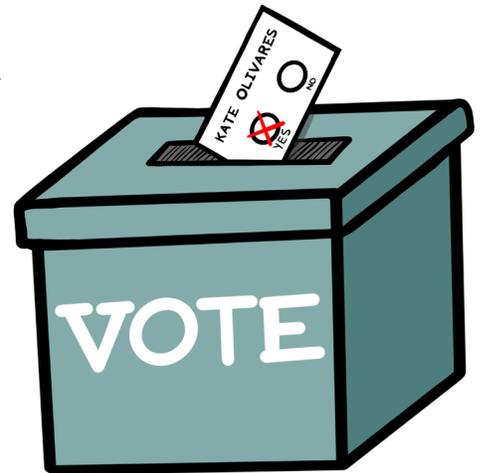
But very quickly into my short tenure, I realized something crucial: for all my enthusiasm about elections, I knew next to nothing about how the legislation, operations, and everything in between functioned. And you know what? This is a great thing! This is a muscle that I'm flexing all throughout the internship: realizing you are always the least smart person in the room and accepting this as a beautiful thing.

In the spirit of learning opportunities, I now have the great pleasure of sharing my key projects.

During my placement, I had two independent projects. The first was to assess the outreach and communication programs across other election management bodies across Canada, as well as offer recommendations to the Communications team on how to better engage underrepresented folks in the electorate. Increasing turnout, especially among young people, is one of my life's missions, so doing this project meant a lot to me.

My second and heftier project was on researching the disinformation and cyber threats in elections, specifically in B.C. To give more context, in May of 2020, the Chief Electoral Officer released *Digital Communication, Disinformation, and Democracy: Recommendations for Legislative Change*. By all accounts, this report is a big deal. It acknowledged emerging concerns about regulating deceptive online practices. My job was to provide a gap analysis: what has changed in the disinformation landscape since May 2020? It's only been eight months since the report came out, but a few small events popped up during this time: The "leader of the free world" getting his account banned from all major social media platforms, just to give an example. After a couple weeks of research, numerous drafts, and lots of self-doubt, I managed to finish my report and give a briefing to senior management, including the Chief Electoral Officer himself. With the help of my mentors, this ended up being the highlight of my placement. It was so thrilling to do research on this current pressing issue among democratic societies. What is the government's place in regulating online platforms? Will conspiracy theories continue their exponential growth? Will political candidates exploit current disinformation trends at the expense of truth and objectivity? I may not have the answers, but I enthusiastically stay up at night pondering these questions.

Overall, I walked away from this experience with deep gratitude, a full heart, and immense pride for the people who work at Elections BC. There was a lot of contention and politico musings surrounding the October 2020 particular election, and rightfully so. But in my book, there's nothing more newsworthy than the folks behind the scenes making all the nuts and bolts happen. From now on, with every provincial general election, local government election, every initiative, recall, or petition, I will think about the people who have worked to make it happen. And I hope you will, too.



UNCHARTED WATERS

NAVIGATING POLITICAL CURRENTS IN THE MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

By Gabriel Martz

One of the most striking revelations of the first segment of this internship was of the true size, scope, and importance of the public service. Outside of government, this reality is scarcely discussed and seldom understood, and yet it is of fundamental importance. Elected officials and their staff may direct the cart of government, but it is public servants who pull it forward.

Ideally, there exists a symbiotic relationship between the two: public servants work in the interests of the population without political affiliation, and politicians are empowered to determine what those interests are by virtue of being electorally bestowed with the will of the people. It is a beautiful system, but not without its challenges.

In my time with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, I had the opportunity to observe one of the core challenges that face public servants and the laudable way in which some public servants overcome it.

To maintain the non-partisan nature of the public service, it must be disconnected from the world of partisanship to a degree. As a result, the public servants of a ministry are not necessarily privy to the dynamic attitudes or targets of a party, nor the specific goals and desires of their Minister. Public servants will receive broad policy mandates and with them an understanding of what the Ministry wants to accomplish, but not necessarily clear directives on how to achieve them. This presents a dilemma: to await direct instruction or get to work on one's own initiative and therefore risk embarking in the wrong direction. In my ministry placement, I had the opportunity to learn that dealing with this dilemma is as much an art as it is a science.

I spent the summers of my childhood sailing, where I encountered a similar dilemma: What do you do when there is no wind? You may know your desired destination but are momentarily bereft of any means of getting there. There are two responses. The first, and easiest, is simply to wait. This is a blameless choice, but not one that good sailors should make. The second is active preparation. One can study the patterns of wind in the distance by observing the broken surface of the water, look at the clouds to see what clues they might hold, scan surrounding vessels for ideas, and use the time of leisure to prepare your ship for when the winds will blow strongly again. Vitally, one must also lean on the intuition that comes from experience and wisdom.

It is this mixed art and science of active preparation that I witnessed in my Ministry placement. In a moment lacking direct instruction, my mentor chose active preparation. She undertook and later passed on to me a task that was begun without receiving a specific directive. The day after I completed a rough draft of the assignment, a senior member of the Ministry asked my mentor's team if they could produce exactly what she had anticipated would be needed. When the wind blew, she was ready.

Was it simply luck? Doubtful. Rather, it was the result of my mentor's active preparation. It was her ability to study the waters surrounding us and draw from experience which allowed her to prepare for the moment when direction came. Although they work behind closed doors, in anonymity and deferring public attention and acclaim to partisans, this and many other vital acts of competence are performed by public servants every day.

I learned this and much more in my time at the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation, and I am full of both gratitude and admiration for those I had the pleasure of learning from.

"I had the opportunity to observe one of the core challenges that face public servants and the laudable way in which some public servants overcome it."

THANK YOU TO OUR MENTORS

ARIAN | MINISTRY OF JOBS, ECONOMIC RECOVERY AND INNOVATION

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GABRIELLE | MINISTRY OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTIONS

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KALA | MINISTRY OF ATTORNEY GENERAL AND MINISTER RESPONSIBLE FOR HOUSING

Alayna Van Leeuwen, Nancy Carter, Lisa Nakamura, Andrea Buzbuzian, Heather Langton, and Alexander Stirling

WILLIAM | OFFICE OF THE INFORMATION AND PRIVACY COMMISSIONER

Ethan Plato, Caitlin Lemiski, and Jeannette Van Den Bulk

MICHAEL | MINISTRY OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT AND POVERTY REDUCTION

Shannon Pendergast, David Galbraith, Brynne Langford, Suzanne Christensen, Sam Turcott, Jonathan Dube, Gail Treharne, Cary Chiu, Jayne Ducker, Michael Ross, Ross Turner

CAMILLE | OFFICE OF THE POLICE COMPLAINT COMMISSIONER

Amie Foster and Alix Hotsenpiller

GABRIEL | MINISTRY OF INDIGENOUS RELATIONS AND RECONCILIATION

Melissa Grimes

ABBY | MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Tracey Van Dam, Nick Poeschek, Alex Bomphray, Ana Ver, Devon Macdonald

MOIRA | OFFICE OF THE SENIORS ADVOCATE

Janice Chow, Isobel Mackenzie, Rob Cowan-Douglas, Carin Plischke, Heather Trottier, Caroline Macey-Brown, Margaret Kun, Jane Caspick, Vicki Swan, and Nora Huber

KATE | ELECTIONS BC

Daniel Posey, Aidan Brand, Treava Kellington, Andrew Watson, Melanie Callas, Melanie Hull

RACHEL | GENDER EQUITY OFFICE, MINISTRY OF FINANCE

Anika Sparling

JAMES | CLIMATE ACTION SECRETARIAT, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY

Hurrian Peyman



CAUCUS PLACEMENTS



Dogwood Flowers



Despite operating in a pandemic for over a year, despite successfully transitioning to hybrid work, and despite taking countless Zoom meetings, one government intern proved early on that they had yet to master a key skill: keeping themselves on mute when entering a team call. On that fateful day, staff in the NDP Research and Communications department tried to warn her of the workplace err, but to no avail, for she had also taken her headphones out. The RCOs had no choice but to listen to her describe her accommodations, the humble Admiral Inn, with its nautical theme and loose-lipped building manager. Eventually the meeting came to order with a shout from Ed May: “Live from the Admiral Inn, it’s Kala and the Interns!!!” and the Admiral Inn-terns were born.

No naval operation is possible without a good crew, and the same can be said for the caucus portion of the internship program. Luckily, the Admiral Inn-terns each brought special strengths to their ranks. Kala, the admiral herself, took the helm of our calendars by sending many much-appreciated cold emails to MLAs and Ministers. Kate, our ship’s commander, exhibited bravery by asking the necessary questions at the end of each caucus meeting. Arian, the lieutenant, could be counted on to engage in thoughtful conversation on topics ranging from poetry to foreign policy. Gabriel, the midshipman, kept the crew entertained with his comedic and musical stylings. Finally, Rachel, the chief petty officer (yes, that’s a real naval rank), did her best to ensure days of significance in the Legislature still felt significant during a pandemic.

Together, our crew embarked on many adventures. We watched government livestreams in the media room and even lucked our way into the Premier’s office, where we walked on the plush blue carpet of the West Annex, met the Premier’s staff, and saw the famous lacrosse stick and basketball net that accompany one of the highest offices in the land. We dutifully continued the long-standing tradition of tallying Member visits to our office, but this time awarded extra points for gifts. We received many treats from this open invitation, but of course the real treat was getting the chance to connect with so many Members—each with their own stories and passions. The Admiral Inn-terns would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Minister of Finance Selina Robinson for her landslide victory. Each of her visits to our office was an absolute pleasure.

The adventures didn’t stop there. We travelled on the treacherous vessel that is the internet to work at our virtual constituency placements in the ridings of Vernon-Monashee, Mid Island - Pacific Rim, Powell River-Sunshine Coast, North Island and Courtenay-Comox. During this time, we got a taste of life as a Constituency Assistant and made grand plans to visit when health restrictions lift.

This experience would not have been as meaningful without the people who guided us along the way. We would like to thank Ed May, Torey Kesteven, Maddie Field, Arjin Toor, Chelsea Williams, Anmol Swaich, Sophia Brownsey, Jesse Gervais and Devon Leathwood for their support and mentorship.

As we sail off into our futures, we will look back at this experience fondly and with gratitude. Through rough waters and clear skies, the five of us got through it together. The Admiral Inn-terns may soon be scattered all over, but as they say: once crewmates, always crewmates.

Fair winds and following seas!



Opposition Interns had a wealth of opportunity and faced a significant set of challenges. We were immediately introduced to the Opposition caucus staff, brought into (digital) meetings, engaging with MLAs, and beginning projects. As Moira said, “From the beginning, the staff made us feel like we were part of the team.”

Three of the Opposition interns — Camille, Moira, and Michael — worked in research. Research in Opposition was intense. In Michael’s words, it was every bit as challenging and demanding as it was informative and rewarding. The workload of the internship program varies widely by placement and tasks, and the interns in Opposition research were among the busiest. Research Interns quickly became an integral part of the Opposition, offering valuable insights, creating datasets, and beginning work on high-profile files. Their work undoubtedly left an impact in Hansard; “there’s nothing quite like doing research and then seeing it used by an MLA in Question Period or Estimates debate,” said Moira. Estimates were an important time for the Research interns, as they were heavily involved in this crucial work of the Opposition. It gave them an invaluable insight into a variety of ministries and an appreciation for the evolution of government policy. As Camille put it, “Comms is the glory, research is the guts.” She also noted that she intends on applying her newfound love of spreadsheets at home by creating a catalogue of her pantry. Research interns were supported by the incredible research staff. They would like to thank Derek Cummings, Ryan Mitton, David Decolongon, Karen Bill, and Jennifer Wizinsky. They provided them with the opportunity to work on research files that they were interested in and were always willing to answer questions and provide support. Additionally, they were a constant source of interesting B.C. political trivia.

Within a week Gabby and I were included in many responsibilities as communications interns, including writing our first Private Member’s Statement. We both went to the Chamber to listen to the speech leave our first imprint on Hansard, completely unaware that having our content read into Hansard would become a very common occurrence. Gabby describes working in Opposition communications as “the busiest you will ever be. Your job is essentially running around, putting out small fires, and simultaneously writing three speeches.” In the following months, Gabby and I wrote countless statements, notes for debate, editorials and articles, as well as a myriad of tweets and Facebook posts. For me it was an unparalleled opportunity to leave a mark in the House, and Hansard. We would like to extend our gratitude for Stephanie Marshall-White and Abigail Uher. They were helpful, knowledgeable, and kind mentors, and engaged us in great conversations and enjoyable debates. We would also like to thank Sean Roberts, Andrew Reeve, Doug Secord, Sam Arno Burgess, and Tracy Grimsrud for their help and for placing such confidence in us.

During the digital constituency placements interns were given an opportunity for behind-the-scenes access to meetings, community outreach, and constituency reports. Interns were given research tasks, communications work, and exposure to meetings and stakeholder events. It was an excellent insight into the valuable and busy work of a constituency office. Three of the Interns had constituency placements in the interior — a valuable insight for those raised on the coast — and two were in the Lower Mainland. All of the interns had enjoyable experiences with their Constituency Offices, and we all look forward to one day visiting the places we would have otherwise been able to if not for the pandemic.

We have all had a remarkable time in the Official Opposition Caucus, one which we would be hard pressed to change. Throughout these past months, the interns have forged deep connections with one another, staff, and MLAs. We will value these connections for decades to come. Thank you to all!



THIRD PARTY

By Abby Koning

The caucus placements are often the most anticipated aspect of the program. The opportunity to work in the Parliament Buildings alongside MLAs, diving deep into world of hands-on parliamentary work, is unlike any other.

Interns in each caucus will have their own unique experiences. For interns in the BC Green Caucus (or Greenterns as they have been affectionately named over the years), the experience often feels like anything but an internship – on day one you are brought right into the fold and given responsibilities that all at once feel daunting and exciting.

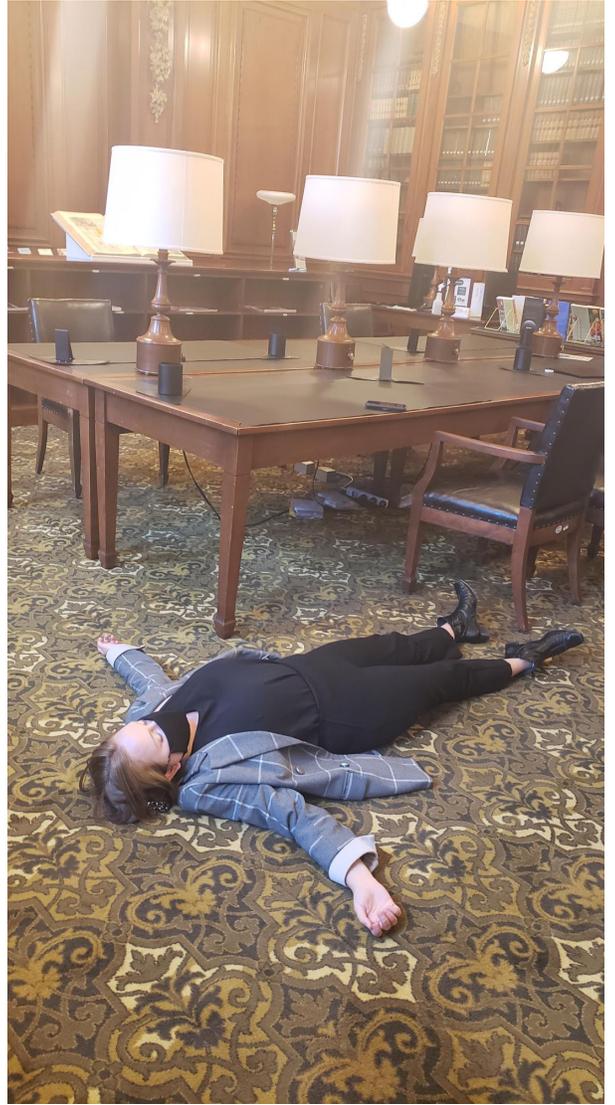
I was able to do a little bit of everything working for the Third Party. For the first half of my term, I joined the communications team. Here my days were primarily filled with writing social media posts, compiling media briefs and backgrounders, meeting with constituency office staff, searching out stakeholders, and being the unofficial MLA photographer. After two months, I made the shift to the policy side, which was a steep but rewarding learning curve. The main work here included writing some statements and questions for Question Period, taking the lead on bills – which included writing briefing notes and speeches – and taking on the world of Estimates.

Although we were limited to virtual visits, we still had the opportunity to do a constituency week. I spent four fantastic days working with the staff at MLA Furstenau's office and despite our physical distance, I felt like I received an intimate understanding of what the work here can be like. I was able to attend meetings, do research for casework, and even chat to a number of constituents over the phone. I finished the week with an even greater feeling of respect and gratitude for the constituency staff and volunteers in every riding (but a big thanks in particular to Cole, Maeve, Tricia, B, and Kate).

The level of responsibility can be slightly overwhelming at first, but the feeling of being trusted to take on these tasks truly inspires one to do their very best to rise to the occasion. And whether you are writing a tweet or a question for Question Period, the feeling of seeing your words being put out to the public by an MLA is kind of unmatched.

While the pandemic undoubtedly altered the regular caucus experience, I still feel like I've been able to gain so much. The dedication, energy, and passion of the MLAs and staff alike are still palpable through a computer screen, and in some ways, it made those in-person moments that much more special. I'll miss walking the hallways of the Parliament Buildings, watching Question Period from the gallery, and working in my bright and spacious office (thanks Karen!), but everything about my time here will stay with me. Working in a building surrounded by such enthusiastic individuals who are dedicated to making their province better – in whatever way that means to them – it's impossible not to be both humbled and motivated to continue to strive to be better.

I was a solo Third Party intern this year, but I felt far from alone. I want to extend a heartfelt thank you to all the interns for always keeping me in the loop and to everyone in the BC Green Caucus – thank you to Federico and Hailey for the intern wisdom, tirelessly answering all of my questions, and giving me some much-needed reassurance; to Sarah, Kaylea, Jojo, and Claire for your support, advice, and endless guidance; to Judy for being my partner in Estimates and keeping us all organized; and to Adam and Sonia for your inspiring leadership, kindness, purpose, and joy. And to everyone else I got to meet along the way, I'll always feel fortunate to have had the chance to work with you.



CAMILLE'S RESTAURANT MAP

By Camille Haisell

Eating lunch together as interns was one of our favourite collective activities. As our resident foodie, Camille knows a lot about Victoria's restaurant scene, so we asked her to share a few of her personal favourites. While we were unable to visit all of these places in person, we hope this inspires future interns to continue the tradition of bonding together over lunch.

1 – Ayo Eat

This is possibly my all-time favourite place in Victoria. It has the tiniest kitchen you'll ever see, and Chef Bana serves up a select few mind-blowing Indonesian and Malaysian dishes to a steady flow of reggae music.

2 – Whistle Buoy Brewing Company

Lots of local craft beers in the middle of Market Square. Try their fresh oysters or bring food from any restaurant to accompany your drinks! I suggest grabbing some chicken satay from Ayo Eat and then wandering down to Whistle Buoy's outdoor heated patio.

3 – Green Cuisine Vegetarian Restaurant

A classic Victoria hippy spot with an all dairy-free and gluten-free pay-by-weight buffet. My favourites are their soups, corn bread, and salad bar.

4 – John's Place Restaurant

An eclectic and somewhat chaotic Victoria breakfast staple.

5 – Il Terrazzo

A fancy Italian place. I suggest the butternut squash-stuffed cannelloni with crab cakes all in a coconut curry sauce. Covered outdoor seating available here!

6 – Ferris' Grill & Garden Patio

The fried oyster burger and yam fries are my ultimate favourites.

7 – Sizzling Tandoor

Best Indian food in town!

8 – The Joint Pizzeria

My absolute favourites are the Thai Peach pizza and the Pesto Pear.

9 – Tapa Bar

Busy and upbeat vibes with a nice atmosphere. The sangria is excellent. Located in Trounce Alley, with lots of outdoor seating.

10 – Little Jumbo Restaurant and Bar

They have the best cocktails in town -- bar none.

11 – Red Fish Blue Fish

Right on the water, this is a super popular spot in the summer. I love the fried oysters, but there's literally nothing bad on this menu.

12 – Chocolats Favoris

Ooh la la...the soft serve here is DECADENT -- dipped in lusciously thick chocolate and your choice of elaborate toppings.

13 – Ebizo Japanese Restaurant

Best sushi in Victoria, hands down. Secret menu faves: Ricky's Roll and Chop Scallop Roll (the Tuna Tataki is bomb as well).

14 – Pagliacci's

Unlimited focaccia bread! But be sure to save room for pasta and cheesecake... My recommendation: mango curry prawn pasta aka "The Prawn Broker."

15 – Nowhere *A Restaurant

A fancy-pants restaurant with a very kind, genuine chef and staff! I recommend sitting at the bar where you can watch the kitchen do their fancy thing.

16 – The Courtney Room

Quality happy hour classic cocktails. These go well with fresh-shucked oysters and crispy fires -- and a great view of the Legislature to boot.

17 – Uchida Eatery

Simple, clean, real Japanese food of the highest quality. Supplied by a local, organic, Japanese farm. The fish quality here is the freshest in Victoria. Very reasonably priced, too!

18 – Deadbeetz Burgers Food Truck

House-made beets on burgers. Honestly, the best.



INTERN LEADERSHIP PROJECTS

VISIT TO WASHINGTON

Gabrielle Parent and Michael Kurliak

STUDENT EDUCATION DAY

Gabrielle Parent and Camille Haisell

ACADEMIC SEMINARS

Gabriel Martz, Arian Zand, and James Anderson

CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARY REVIEW ARTICLE

Abby Koning and Rachel McMillan

RESEARCH PAPER

Kate Olivares

JUDICIAL DAY

Rachel McMillan and Gabriel Martz

MENTOR APPRECIATION

Gabriel Martz

MODEL PARLIAMENT

Arian Zand with help from William Kelly,
Kala Bryson, and Rachel McMillan. And a thank you to
Hansard for filming!

REYNOLDS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

William Kelly and Kala Bryson

VISIT TO OTTAWA

Kate Olivares and Camille Haisell

GAZETTE

Abby Koning and Moira Louw



B.C. Flag

VIRTUAL VISIT TO WASHINGTON

By Michael Kurliak and Gabrielle Parent

Since 2004, the BCLIP interns have visited our American counterparts at the Washington State Capitol in Olympia. Sadly, this year with the ongoing pandemic, we were unable to make the journey to visit in person. But thanks to the app that everyone has become all too familiar with – Zoom – our interns and the Washington state interns were able to do two virtual visits. Two BCLIP interns were asked to prepare a presentation on British Columbia that would be shared with the Washington State interns in late February. It was a slightly nerve-racking task, especially considering the presentation would be quite early in the program. Yet, we (as in Gabrielle Parent and Michael Kurliak) enthusiastically volunteered since we are self-described nerds who adore talking about Canadian politics!

The presentation began with Gabrielle providing an overview of B.C., its history, the systems of government at the federal and provincial level, and the role the monarchy plays in our country and province. Unsurprisingly, our American counterparts had quite a few questions about Her Majesty and B.C.'s relationship with the Crown, as the concept was quite new to them. After a short question period, Michael began the second portion of the presentation which covered Indigenous Peoples in B.C., the history of discrimination against First Nations, and ongoing reconciliation efforts. The final portion of the presentation addressed current pressing issues, specifically the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the overdose crisis in B.C.

Throughout the presentation, the Washington State interns were very engaged and asked incredibly insightful questions!

Following a lunch break, the large group was separated into breakout rooms so that our interns could answer more questions and engage in a dialogue with a smaller group of Washington interns. Overall, it was a successful first exchange and we managed to forge connections with the Washington interns.

In fact, before we had our second day with the Washington interns, we received a unique opportunity to have lunch with the WA LGBTQ+ Intern Cohort. Given that we were unable to do an in-person visit, this was a great opportunity for many of us to meet outside of a work setting and develop a more personal connection with one another. Some of the topics we covered included our respective political leaders and a comparison of our internship programs. It was a very enjoyable virtual lunch!



Our final visit with our Washington counterparts was in mid-March and consisted of a few presentations. First, we were introduced to the history of Washington state and given an overview of their political system and processes by the Washington interns, which included some interesting trivia. Did you know that Washington was originally supposed to be named Columbia? Well Michael certainly did not, and he loves bits of trivia like that!

We then received two other presentations – one on the Governor's climate policy and another from the Assistant Secretary of State on elections. Both presentations gave us a great insight into the workings of the state's government. On climate policy, we heard about some of the initiatives that Washington has been implementing and what other work is happening throughout the United States on climate change. With the Secretary of State's office, we learned of the different functions that the office handles and what measures the state has implemented to ensure the security of ballots in elections as well as improve confidence among voters in the electoral process.

Despite the challenges our internship programs are facing this year, we still managed to connect and have an exciting and educational exchange between our two programs. Since we were unable to meet face-to-face this year, the offer to visit the Washington State Capitol buildings was generously extended to our cohort of interns for "a post-pandemic future" (an offer that our program also happily extended as well). We want to thank all who facilitated and organized these presentations, and we look forward to staying connected with the WA interns in the years to come!

REYNOLDS HIGH SCHOOL

By Kala Bryson

During non-pandemic years, Legislative Interns partner with Reynolds Secondary School's Flexible Studies Program to hold a Model Parliament. This project gives interns an opportunity to connect with younger generations, and the students a chance to learn more about the Legislature and its parliamentary processes.

Due to the uncertainties associated with bringing students into the Legislature this year, Will and I (as the interns responsible for the project) alongside Brad Cunningham (the Flexible Studies Program Head), came up with the ingenious solution of having the students create petitions as a substitute for the annual Reynolds Model Parliament.

Given that it was the first time the Legislative Interns and Reynolds had embarked on a petition-making process together, we had a significant number of decisions to make – could the students petition all forms of government, or just the provincial government? Would the students do the petitions themselves, or in groups? If they were in groups, how big would they be? In the end, we took inspiration from the name of the high school's program and decided to be flexible – allowing the students to petition whatever level of government interested them the most, either independently, or in groups.

The amount of imagination and learning these petitions instigated in such a short amount of time was nothing short of remarkable! During the project we all quickly learnt the value of understanding governmental responsibilities, as well as the importance of researching what the government was up to. There were numerous instances where petition brainstorming sessions ended with an exclamation of “oh! It looks like the government is already working on that – never mind.” The students, however, took these setbacks in stride. They created 12 petitions in total, including one to limit the purchase of caffeinated drinks to everyone under the age of 17 and one to make period hygiene products free to everyone who menstruates. One petition even made it to the Legislature! The petition focused on reinstating the E&N Rail Corridor as a low-carbon transportation alternative and was presented by Minister Rob Fleming during the last week of session. All of the interns, Brad Cunningham, and the student behind the petition watched from the Gallery - an exciting day for all!

Although we don't yet know where these petitions will lead, I can say with certainty they've made an impact on all of us who had the privilege of working on this project, exposing us to a side of our democracy we rarely get to interact with.



“Oh! It looks like the government is already working on that.”

VIRTUAL VISIT TO OTTAWA

By Camille Haisell

Like most everything this year, the usual PIP Exchange had many modifications. We did not get to travel to Ottawa due to the pandemic as all non-essential travel was banned in B.C., and in particular, case numbers in Ontario were very high. For interns of the future reading this: pandemics suck. But against all the odds, and with the help of the fantastic interns in Ottawa, Sam and Hanna, we pulled together a wonderful and diverse list of speakers and had so many interesting meetings over Zoom from the comforts of our own living rooms, kitchens, and sunny patios.

Our first day we met with the Honourable Russell Brown, Speaker Anthony Rota, Senator Kim Pate, and a team from Health Canada including Dr. Supriya Sharma, Canada's Chief Medical Advisor. The Honourable Russell Brown is a former BCLIP intern and a Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada, so it was interesting to hear from someone whose career started exactly where we are and is currently sitting on the Supreme Court bench! Speaker Anthony Rota was kind and generous with his time and the interns appreciated hearing about his empathetic approach to the value of immigration in Canada. Our meeting with Senator Pate was energizing and full of fascinating conversation around legal system reform and incarceration. Given the context of COVID-19, having a direct meeting with Health Canada was an unbelievable opportunity for insight into national decision-making over the course of the pandemic.

Our next day of meetings we spoke with Parliamentary Secretary Rob Oliphant, Dr. Heather Lank, and MP Brad Vis. We had lots of laughs with MP Oliphant but also received some engaging insight into controversial contemporary legislation on the national level. Dr. Heather Lank is the Parliamentary Librarian who provided a comprehensive presentation on the many fascinating elements and functions of the Library of Parliament, including historic book restoration! We look forward to a future trip to see that beautiful dome one day. Representing a B.C. riding, MP Brad Vis thoroughly answered all of our questions surrounding housing and other issues our province is facing from a federal perspective.

Our final day on the PIP virtual exchange and study tour, we met with MP Leah Gazan and Mme. Marie-Claude Landry, Chief Commissioner of the Canadian Human Rights Commission. We all greatly appreciated MP Gazan's candor as she outlined her family background and how that informed her journey into politics. Our conversation with Mme. Marie-Claude was outstanding – we discussed constitutional tensions and what access to justice really means.

The speakers on this study tour provided us with some truly illuminating advice and inspired us all to be the most mindful, kind, brave, virtuous, and yet humble versions of ourselves. We thank them all for taking the time to speak with us, and hope to be able to meet them in person some day soon.



MODEL PARLIAMENT

GOVERNING A DYSTOPIAN UTOPIA: A PARLIAMENT IN SEARCH OF MEANING

By Arian Zand

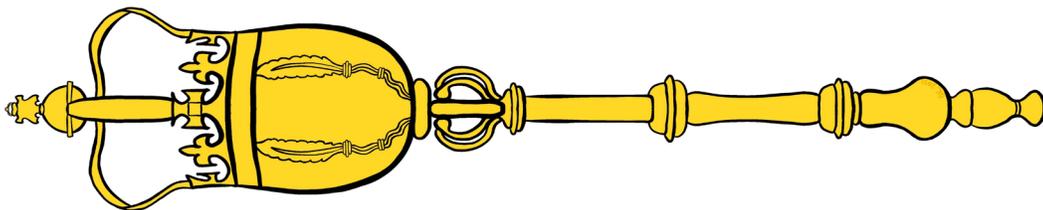
The 46th Legislative Intern Model Parliament presides over a prosperous post-pandemic British Columbia. The year is 2075, and British Columbia has solved many of the economic and political challenges it had to deal with in the first half of the 21st century. The COVID-19 pandemic was a wake-up call that led governments worldwide to tackle the climate crisis, poverty and nuclear proliferation decisively. Thanks to the wealth generated by the rapid advancement of technology and automation of work, scarcity is no longer a challenge. Precisely because the source of this historically unparalleled prosperity has been the automation of work, not much work is left to do by British Columbians, and unemployment rates have reached record highs of 90%. In 2060, the provincial government of the day passed the B.C. Universal Basic Income Act. For the past fifteen years, all B.C. residents have received monthly cheques that far surpass their material needs.

However, massive unemployment, lack of individual or collective problem-solving experience and an automated economy have made British Columbians bored and nihilistic. As a result, riots whose only agenda is to destroy and protest for the sake of entertainment and to feed the destructive nihilism of rioters have been on the rise in the province.

In response to this crisis of boredom, a new political party called the Literate Party of British Columbia (B.C. Lit Party) emerged during the last election and won the popular vote. The party's platform focused on promoting books, literature and philosophy as antidotes to boredom and nihilism. Although the B.C. Lit Party did not win the majority of seats in the House, the leader of the party, the Member for Pthihia-Mount Pelion, has been asked by Her Honour, the Lieutenant Governor, to form the government. The Should've Been the Official Opposition Party (S.B.O.O.P.) has agreed to support the B.C. Lit Party as a minority government. The Rabble-Rousers of B.C. (R.R.B.C.) became Her Majesty's Loyal Opposition and committed to vote against every government legislation.

The government's budget, introduced by the Minister of the Iron Bank, received the support of the S.B.O.O.P. caucus. During the 46th session of BCLIP Intern Model Parliament, The Minister of the Citizens' Contentment and the Minister Responsible for Welcoming Godot, the Minister of Sense, Responsible for Sensibilities and the Minister of Forests and Ents co-sponsored The Literature Revitalization Act to subsidize and promote reading, literature and publishing in the province. In addition, the Member for Neo-Vancouver and the Leader of the Third Party introduced the B.C. S.P.A.C.E Agency Act to support science, research, and job creation to give citizens of British Columbia a newfound purpose. Finally, a Rabble-Rousers of B.C. member and the member for All Things High and Mighty (Mountain Regions) introduced An Act to Pursue Happiness to provide residents with universal access to a weekly happy hour through the Happiness Coupon Program.

The Opposition and Third Party bills received Royal Assent at the end of the session, while the House rejected the Government's bill. Hours of heated debate, countless exchanges of witticism and the occasional drama in the Chamber showed that even in a society darkened by a shadow of indifference, politics could offer a way out of darkness and boredom to brightness and vibrancy.



The Mace

ARTICLES



LIKE FATHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

By Abby Koning

One of many great things about this program is its extensive alumni network. The community of former interns that has amassed over the last 45 years is made up of endlessly interesting, supportive, and accomplished individuals. It just so happens that one of these individuals is my dad.

In 1988, Ben Koning was one of eight B.C. Legislative Interns. During the program, he worked for the Ministry of Forests and the Official Opposition Caucus (the NDP at the time). He currently works as a teacher librarian at two elementary schools and has never given up his passion for provincial politics.

My dad is undeniably an inspiration to me (not only when it comes to my choice to participate in this program), and I am so excited to share with you a conversation about his time as an intern as I get to experience what he did 33 years ago.

What made you want to do the internship?

As soon as I heard about it, I was very intrigued. Dr. Norman Ruff was a political science professor at UVic and was very engaged in what was happening in B.C. politics; he and a couple other professors had co-written a book called “The Reins of Power” and knowing that he was involved at the time got me very interested.

What were some of the highlights of the internship? Were there any things that stand out?

Meeting so many people from the civil service, independent officers, cabinet ministers, and MLAs in general, and going for tea at Government House with the Lieutenant Governor were certainly highlights. George MacMinn was the Deputy Clerk and was already an institution then – he was willing to talk to us any time. We also had the opportunity to sit down with Premier Bill Vander Zalm for an hour and ask anything we wanted.

Try not to take this as something you’ve missed out on, but the trips to Ottawa and Toronto were pretty amazing. We met so many people and got to dine in the parliamentary dining room with Senator Carney. The Free Trade Agreement had just been signed off and she gave us a signed copy. It was all very geeky, but very, very cool. The interns that hosted us were tremendous and did everything they could to give us a great time.

My ministry placement was great, too. They gave me a serious paper to do, and I got to do a bunch of work in the B.C. Archives researching the history of timber royalties. They sent me to Vancouver to interview a retired civil servant and to UBC to talk to Dr. Peter Pearse who headed one of the Royal Commissions on forestry.

Another highlight was getting to have lunch any time we wanted to in the parliamentary dining room and at times being invited by members of the press to sit with them. We had lunch with Vaughn Palmer quite a bit. They also took all of us opposition interns to the NDP policy convention; we really got invited right into the whole process. That’s one thing about the internship program: people treat you like adults. They really honour the ideas of interns, and they see them as not only part of the future but as part of the present.

Then there was the thrill of having something you prepared read in the House. And, of course, seeing Question Period was just great.



Were there any current events at the time that shaped your experience?

Meech Lake was certainly a topic of conversation, especially among the interns. It was interesting that there was a federal impact on what was happening provincially.

At the time there was also a lot of conflict between government and unions. During our year, over half of all the public sector contracts were up for negotiation.

How has your post-internship life been affected by your experience? Is there anything that has stayed with you?

One thing that was so surprising to me was how human politics is. When you get down to the real people that are in there trying to solve problems, you realize that a lot of people are just trying to do their best – mixed with some personality and hard-held beliefs. I guess the fact that it was such a human enterprise made it more hopeful. Maybe that's naïve, but the politicians that were there and especially the very, very, very smart civil service and independent officers were all so impressive and it made me a little more optimistic. I realized the ability of people have impact; anybody can have influence.

Also, the academic head of the program, Neil Swainson, was just perfect. And Elaine Dunbar, the director, was our “Mom-in-Chief.” She really took care of us, and that stuck with me.

What is your advice for me, and other current and future interns, in regard to this experience?

If you're asked or given an opportunity to do something, seriously consider saying yes. Then, if you feel that you're in over your head, persist for at least a month more and see.

Also, know that any experience that you get in the internship is a great experience. You may feel that you might be missing out on something another intern gets to do, but by the time you get to the end you realize that everyone got some special experience, and they were all wildly different.

Compared to the regular, every-day person, no one gets the front seat that we do to these things, ever. While you've earned it and deserve to be here, know that it's an honour and a gift that you get to be there here too.



The 1988 Interns

When you were an intern did you expect that your future child would one day be an intern too?

No! [Lots of laughter] I had no thought that I'd even have a child that would go on to do political science. I am very happy, for sure. I'm happy for anyone who gets to do this program, and I think it's pretty special that we get to share this experience and have this in common.

Any final words?

Just how extremely proud I am of you. (Aww)

But finally, what I think everyone should think about their internships is how your experience can be a benefit no matter where you go. I didn't end up working in politics at all, I'm working in the classroom. One of the biggest roles that we can do is to share about the humanity of government. Individual people can really make a difference, you've seen all these people do it – you just need to get involved.

THE FAMILY BUSINESS

AN INTERVIEW WITH LIZA YUZDA AND RICHARD ZUSSMAN

By Moira Louw

In democracies around the world, journalists play an important role in providing information to the public and holding people in positions of power accountable. I had the privilege of interviewing two journalists whose roles have expanded from reporting on B.C. politics to providing essential information on the COVID-19 pandemic. Liza Yuzda works for News 1130 and provides regular updates on COVID exposures in schools. Richard Zussman works for Global News and has reported on nearly every COVID-19 briefing and announcement. Both Liza and Richard have become prominent sources of COVID-19 information for British Columbians. They also happen to be married. I am so grateful to Liza and Richard for their willingness to meet with me. I have a newfound appreciation for the role of journalists, and am profoundly grateful for their commitment to serving the public through their work.



How did you get into journalism? Is it something you always wanted to do?

L: No, it wasn't something I always wanted to do. My first career was as a ballet dancer. Then I worked at Terrasin (it was BC Gas then), and my job was coming to an end. I noticed that a lot of the things I was Googling were related to journalism. I did informational interviews with a couple of journalists and PR people. The PR people seemed like they did the same thing every day which I'm not interested in, and an old friend said this is probably not what you're cut out for. When Terrasin was bought I got a buyout, so I took that money and went to journalism school.

R: Ever since I was a kid it's what I knew I wanted to do. Like most boys who are sports fans I wanted to be a sports reporter, and I started a newspaper at my high school. I was convinced I wanted to do an undergrad in journalism but Jeff Simpson, a long-time columnist for the Globe and Mail, told me to study arts, history, or politics. I chose politics. I worked at the campus newspaper, and called sports games on the campus radio station, which was still my great passion. I loved doing that as much as I loved doing anything professionally. After my undergrad I worked for a year for an MP in Ottawa with the intention that I would always cleanse myself of my partisanship when I did my Masters in journalism.

What aspects of B.C. politics are particularly interesting or challenging to cover?

L: Unlike my husband, I am not a political buff. I like people stories. For example, the issue of paid time off, that matters to people. Someone sent me something about somebody calling somebody a name in QP. I really don't care. Unless it's really egregious, but I think if people are giving as good as they get they can do their thing. That probably is my biggest struggle, caring about the minutiae because often the minutiae matters for the people stories.

R: Two things really stand out to me. Firstly, the two-party system. 30% or so of the province will always vote NDP, 35% or so will always vote B.C. Liberals. The B.C. Greens are changing that conversation a little bit. We have some of the most environmentally conscious voters, while also having some of the most ardent, conservative, right-wing voices. Secondly, the rural-urban divide is fascinating, and only growing. I often think about our [Global News'] role in that, as local media stations die up. Our stories often reflect what's happening in urban British Columbia. I worry about what that means for people in rural areas if they start feeling more isolated from decision-makers, traditional media, and our business sector.

What has it been like covering the COVID-19 pandemic?

L: It is relentless. People write us with questions they have, they're angry, they're sad. I find that very hard. The daggers being thrown at journalists I find very gutting. I think fear and lack of control is probably the base of it but I don't understand going from criticising policy to saying "you should retire" to me as a journalist or "you're lying" or "you're in the pocket of government." I wanted to think that came from people who were just being mean for the sake of getting a rise. But I've seen that that's not what it is, and I can't ignore it. There are people who are reasonably angry. But there's a big difference between criticism and cruelty, and I think that's been blurred.

R: Covering the pandemic has been the most challenging thing I've ever done. The personal toll has been immense. We have two young kids who are now home with us post-school during what is often the busiest time of my day. For the first time ever, COVID is this interconnectivity around my reporting and my life. And that's really hard. They don't teach you how to deal that at journalism school. I feel the toll on my own mental health, I've struggled through this like a lot of us have. I think reminding yourself that you're only human, you can only do what you can do. But I think there's important reflection there, and maybe we'll learn from it for the next pandemic.

The thing I've struggled the most with is people who say I'm not hard enough on Dr. Henry. But I worry immensely that if I start asking hard questions, people will suddenly think the media has turned on her, that she's not credible, and decide not to follow public health guidelines. The other part is that I'm doing all these stories about hot spots and vaccines, but I don't live on the mainland. I don't know what it's like to have to go to the grocery store in Surrey. It's very different on the Island. I try to think about that, but I can't replicate that here. But the vast majority of the messages I get are positive and I'm deeply appreciative of that. Especially when people send messages like "I got my vaccine because I saw your notice." I can't say thanks enough to the people who have enjoyed the work that we do.

What is it like having two reporters in the same house? Do you run ideas by each other?

L: It's great. We met on the beat in Edmonton, so we don't really know the difference. And we know the wall. Sometimes I'm like "I'm telling you this as my husband not a reporter so you don't know this." And he will do the same. I think it would be very hard to go through this [pandemic] without Richard. It means a lot to have someone who knows your experience without having to explain it.

R: The reality is intensity is amplified. I remember when we took some time off in August, Liza wanted to listen to Dr. Henry's briefing in the car, and it was really difficult listening to the briefing and driving and not being able to tweet out the numbers and comments. The election was really hard. Although we were home, I was working every night from the moment the kids went to sleep to 11:00pm. These aren't 9 to 5 jobs. We're balancing. We work through it, and now we can bounce ideas off each other. It used to be more difficult, because you'd be working on original stories, but now we're working on the same stories every day so we can be more collaborative.



How much effort did you put in to get your perfect 10/10 Room Rater scores? Did you collaborate at all?

R: I was the first local news reporter to get rated.

L: I was very excited. I was the one who really loved Room Rater to start. My mom was a designer, my dad was an architect, so I love this stuff. Richard doesn't care - he sucked up with our kids drawings.

R: I sent the woman who runs Room Rater screengrabs of Liza and told her that Liza loved Room Rater way more than I did, and she'd really appreciate being rated.

L: And then I only got the 8! It took a long time to get to that 10!

THE GENDERED DYNAMICS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

By Gabrielle Parent



Hon. Bowinn Ma



*MLA Stephanie
Cadieux*



*MLA Sonia
Furstenuau*

In Canada, women have full legal equity under the law. We vote in elections in numbers similar to men, we comprise the majority of undergraduate students at universities, and we've occupied some of the highest offices in our country, such as the Governor General, Premier, and even (for a brief stint) Prime Minister.

Yet, despite legal protections and social advancements, our country still has an issue achieving equitable gender representation in politics. Merely 29% of Members of Parliament are women, ranking Canada 53rd internationally in terms of women's representation in national legislatures. Canada lags behind fellow Commonwealth Nations such as the United Kingdom (34%) and New Zealand (58%), and emerging democracies like Argentina (42%) and Rwanda (61%). Strides have been made in British Columbia and with 42.5% of our MLAs being women, we are the province with the second most equitable representation in our Legislative Assembly (surpassed only by Quebec which has 44% women members). Other provinces are faring far worse than B.C., such as Saskatchewan with a mere 11% women members. Upon examining these realities and statistics, one question resonates in the minds of many. If there are no longer any legal barriers to women running for office, why does Canada have such a problem getting women elected?

I had the pleasure of interviewing three Members of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia on this topic: Minister Bowinn Ma, MLA Sonia Furstenuau, and MLA Stephanie Cadieux, and I will be including their remarks as I attempt to answer this large question on women and politics.

Running for Office

In my interviews, all three women declared that they had not anticipated a life in politics. In fact, Minister Ma stated: "Before I ran, I thought you had to be an extra-special super-person in order to do this kind of work. That I could never have enough experience, or I didn't have the qualifications to have the incredible honour to serve in this capacity."

Dr. Lynda Erickson, a political scientist, found that this sentiment is shared amongst women and concluded that there is an unwillingness for women to come forward and run for office. First, Erickson declared, women may be interested in running but are less likely to step forward, instead waiting to be invited. Second, there is a lack of engagement among women to pursue a political career. Reasons for this unwillingness are complex, though many women cite the travel and time away from family, the toxicity of political culture, and the perspective that politics may be “too complicated” as factors hindering their participation in politics. These barriers experienced by women are complicated as there are not explicit laws barring female participation. Instead, the culture of politics, the institutional barriers, and the socialization of women discourage their participation and, as a result, lead to a low number of women holding elected office.

If women do decide to run for office, they have a whole new set of challenges to overcome. First, there is the hurdle of the nomination process, which as MLA Cadieux stated, “at times are challenging for women.” Political parties hold significant sway in terms of women’s representation in legislatures, as they select the candidates to run in electoral districts. A CBC investigation revealed that women candidates are “more likely than men to find themselves running in hard-to-win ridings instead of in party strongholds,” and typically receive less funding for their campaign. This results in plenty of female-identifying candidates during the election, but less women actually elected.

Additionally, women while running for office and while serving as elected officials face increased scrutiny. Minister Ma detailed her experiences as such: “The amount of money that I have to spend on makeup, clothes, and hair and the amount of time that I have to spend on making myself ‘presentable’ far exceeds the time that a man likely spends.”

Discrimination towards women running for office also occurs, especially for women of colour, women with disabilities, and women who are members of the LGBTQ2+ community. Minister Ma shared her experiences as an Asian woman running for office, stating: “The most common question [my volunteers and I] had to overcome before we got to talk about policies, what I stood for, and what I was hoping to do as service to the public, was where I came from.”

MLA Cadieux told me that a candidate that was running against her suggested she wasn’t fit for the job because she was a woman in a wheelchair and had a disability. This sexism, racism, ableism, homophobia, and discrimination women face while running for office can be a significant deterrent and hinders women’s participation in elected life.

Once in the Legislature

MLA Furstenau shared with me that she was quite surprised upon arriving at the Legislative Assembly by the level of embedded sexism within the institution. In fact, once elected, studies have found that women experience discrimination in legislatures by male colleagues, the media coverage, and by the public. Social media has played a significant role in the misogyny faced daily by women holding public office. Misogyny has gone viral on the internet, and many studies have found that female politicians face disproportionate hatred on social media websites. “A lot of women [...] are reluctant to run for office because they look at what happens, particularly online, to women - the kind of vitriol and nastiness that we’re subject to on social media. As are men, but there is a different tone with women [...] it can be quite brutal,” stated MLA Furstenau.

Within the Legislature, women also face institutional barriers, for example a need for childcare and the lengthy hours associated with the job. “There’s a huge burden that women carry in terms of expectations of being the primary caregiver and on top of that being an MLA,” stated Minister Ma. “The availability of the hybrid session that was developed during COVID, I think is actually an opportunity to really change the culture of provincial politics here in B.C. by enabling a broader swath of the population to actually be able to serve in this capacity.” MLA Cadieux also expressed the importance of including some virtual participation from MLAs, allowing mothers, single parents, and others to continue participating at the Legislature.

There are also positives within the Legislature, and the women I interviewed spoke fondly of their fellow women MLAs and male allies. MLA Furstenau told me the story of a bi-partisan women’s caucus meeting with a doctor on the topic of breast density as it relates to breast cancer. The doctor shared that the denser a woman’s breasts, the higher her risk for breast

“The availability of the hybrid session that was developed during COVID, I think is actually an opportunity to really change the culture of provincial politics here in B.C.”

cancer. Yet, provincial policy stated that women receiving a mammogram in B.C. were not told the vital information of their breasts' density.

After the presentation, the women from all three caucuses wrote a joint letter to Minister Adrian Dix and the policy was changed. "That's an example of why it's important that there be a women's caucus. We got a result that was really important and surprisingly overdue because we all came together and advocated for it together," stated MLA Furstenau. This story also shows the importance of having women in elected roles, because as MLA Furstenau and I joked during our interview, male MLAs would have likely reacted quite differently upon hearing the words 'breast density.'

What next?

I believe it's clear that change is needed if we're going to have increased engagement of women in politics. As MLA Cadieux stated, "if we had more women, we would find that we would attract more women [to politics]." To achieve this, the culture of politics must be altered if it's going to be a space that welcomes and encourages women's participation.

Institutional changes, such as allowing for virtual/hybrid models of governance in a post-pandemic world, would not only benefit women, but all parents of young children. Political party changes through the nomination process, campaign financing, and supporting women as they face disproportionate emotional labour during a campaign. And cultural changes – empowering women, dispelling the myth of underqualification, and fighting to eliminate misogyny within the political world.

These changes are vital if we're going to continue to see an upward trend of women being elected to public office. And I hope that all those reading this article would agree, having more women elected, especially women of colour (WOC) and queer women, is very important. I will conclude this article with the thoughts of Minister Ma when answering my question "What advice would you give young women and girls who are interested in politics?"

She simply said, "My advice is they should do it because they have a lot to offer."

Further Reading

Facts and Figures: Women's Leadership and Political Participation: What We Do, UN Women

Monthly Ranking of Women in National Parliaments, IPU's Open Data Platform

Set up to Fail: Why Women Still Don't Win Elections as Often as Men in Canada, CBC/Ici Radio.

Politicians in the Line of Fire: Incivility and the Treatment of Women on Social Media, Research & Politics

Elect Her: A Roadmap for Improving the Representation of Women in Canadian Politics, Report of the Standing Committee on the Status of Women, House of Commons

Women (Not) in Politics: Women's Electoral Participation, Canadian Politics

Women's Representation Today, Legislative Assembly of British Columbia



ALUMNI

Save the date! If public health measures allow, we will be hosting a one-day reunion on **November 27, 2021**

The BCLIP Alumni Association, formed in 2016, had a relatively mellow year due to COVID restrictions. It was very unfortunate to postpone the 45th reunion event, as these celebrations are such a fun way to reconnect with one another. We typically plan for 2-3 pub nights per year, but all were cancelled and we assumed most people didn't need another Zoom meeting in their life. Although the pub nights were temporarily cancelled, we managed to establish a small mentorship program where current interns were connected to Alumni and encouraged to meet a few times throughout the year. These types of cross-generational connections are fantastic for mentorship, career advice, and expanding social circles. This new mentorship program was a success, so we will continue it in future years. If you'd like to be involved, please contact the BCLIP Program. Like most people, we're extremely excited for 2022 and hope to host a variety of events, including potentially a belated, albeit smaller, reunion event. Please join our Facebook page as it's currently the main avenue for connecting. We know many people don't use social media, so we will continue work towards a website in the future. Have a great year everyone and hope to see you soon.

-Matt Dell, on behalf of the BCLIP Alumni Association

ADAM WALTER, '14



As I began to reflect on my 2014 BCLIP experience, I was surprised to realize: A) that seven (!) years have already passed since I awkwardly introduced myself to the other nine interns that I would spend the next six months getting to know and learning from, and

B) that much of what I learned is still useful in my day-to-day life. Following the internship, I moved to Ontario for grad school and ultimately started my career as a federal public servant in Ottawa, currently working in the world of northern affairs. While the issues of the day are much different – debates over the Agricultural Land Reserve don't come up much in Arctic policy development – such exposure to the political side of public affairs has been invaluable to me as a non-partisan public servant. For instance, as one employee in a department of over 5,000, it is easy to become wrapped up in the priority of your specific policy file and whether or not it has the attention of the Minister. However, thanks to my experience with the BCLIP, I can remind myself that not only is my file one of many priorities in the ministerial portfolio, Ministers are also dealing with a multitude of priorities in the House and their constituencies. As a result, I now know the importance of making the most of an opportunity for the Minister's attention and I long for the kind of access I had as an intern!

ELLA CHAMPION, '19



My pre-BCLIP origin story is a mix of East Van, UBC, and Quesnel, and I'm an example of someone who stuck around the Leg post-internship. During my internship, I was placed with the Government Caucus and, after expressing interest in staying on, I interviewed and

got a position as a Research and Communications Officer (RCO) with the caucus starting that fall. During my time as an RCO, I had the opportunity to be assigned a 2020 intern to work with (shout out to Emilio!) and took a leave of absence to work on the 2020 election as campaign manager for Jennifer Rice (basement visitor extraordinaire) in beautiful Prince Rupert. This year, I moved up one floor in the Leg to my current position as Executive Assistant to Minister Rob Fleming in the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. I think the way the internship benefited me most in my work since then is through having had the opportunity just to take the time to observe the goings-on of the Leg, get familiar with the spoken and unspoken rules of the place, and the dynamics and personalities involved. This type of deep contextual knowledge isn't something that everyone has when they start working in the political world, and it has come in handy every day I've been here since.

GOODBYE
FOR NOW





MEMORABLE QUOTES

“I actually don’t mind being a ghost, because now I can haunt the B.C. Legislature forever.”

“It’s a global pandemic, dude. Get with the program.”

“Here are your non-partisan animal crackers.”

“I don’t make decisions on the weekend.”

“I say this with respect: ew.”

“Be in my lane, be hydrated.”

“That was the best meeting I’ve been to. It was terrifying.”

“If there’s no news, we just make something up.”

“Do it for the Gazette.”

“Life is nothing but a collection of actions done with regret.”

“It’s not the peanut gallery... it’s the peanut-free gallery.”

“Shall we call this a heckling session instead of Question Period?”

“I want to be an Arian when I grow up.”

“The Budgetary Blues Brothers are back on the road and they’re playing the same playlist.”

“I can hear you but I’m ignoring you.”

“We are vaxxed, ‘stached, and relaxed.”

“I can’t promise to be funny, but I can promise to be tired.”

CLASS OF 2021



Most Likely to Lead a Protest and Make the World a Better Place | All Time Best Foodie



Most Likely to be Queen's Counsel | Most Likely to be Hydrated



Most Likely to Win the Great Canadian Bake Off | Most Likely to Work Too Much



Most Likely to Become a Supreme Court Judge | Most Likely to Get 10/10 on Room Rater



Best Hype Woman | Best Vaccine Selfie



Worst Poker Face | Most Likely to Design a Famous Building



Most Likely to Sing in the Office | Most Likely to Write a Book and Win a Nobel Prize for Literature



Most Likely to Become a Professor and be Quoted in Poli Sci Classes | Most Likely to Trigger an Existential Crisis



Best Mask-Outfit Combos | Most Positive Attitude



Most Likely to Remember to Take a Photo for the Gazette | Most Likely to be Murdered in Among Us



Best Moustache | Most Likely to Run for Office

Photos

Page 17 (top right) - Interns with Keith Baldrey

Page 17 (bottom right) - Interns with the Leader of the Third Party, MLA Sonia Furstenuau

Page 24 (top) - Interns with the Leader of the Official Opposition, MLA Shirley Bond

Page 24 (bottom) - Interns with MLA Spencer Chandra Herbert

Page 45 (top left) - Interns with MLA Shirley Bond

Page 45 (top right) - Interns with the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia, the Honourable Janet Austin

Page 48 (top) - Interns with the Premier of British Columbia, the Honourable John Horgan

Page 48 (middle left) - Interns with Premier John Horgan

Dear Alumni,

Please email bclip@leg.bc.ca with any updates to your contact information. Going forward, we will be shifting to digital distribution of the Gazette. Please **contact us** if you would still like a printed copy.



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