



BC Provincial Court welcomes interns for the 2024 fall term

Each fall and spring, the BC Provincial Court welcomes students from the Peter A. Allard School of Law at the University of British Columbia as interns. Since 2007, the Court and the law school have partnered in Canada's only Judicial Externship Program, in which final-year students earn academic credits as they spend a term working with judges.

The interns' work includes research, preparing memoranda, and attending trials and other proceedings. Judges volunteer their time to liaise with the law school, mentor interns, and teach them subjects including judicial independence, judgment writing, sentencing, family law, and youth court, child protection and small claims procedures.

The interns are assigned to a courthouse (or a rotation of courthouses to ensure exposure to all aspects of the Court's work) and work with judges four days a week. On the fifth day they attend a workshop with Professor Lisa Martz, the Allard Law faculty member responsible for the program.

With funding from the Law Foundation of BC, each student will also accompany a court party to one or more remote court locations. A highlight of the program, these "circuit court" trips give students a chance to see justice in action in smaller, remote communities.

Reflecting on her trip to Haida Gwaii as an intern in 2019, lawyer Simone Penney said:

"Spending a week with a Provincial Court judge and members of the community in this setting was an excellent learning opportunity that I will carry forward throughout my career. As an aspiring lawyer, the opportunity to confer directly with judges and learn their insights about litigation and legal practice is part of what makes the judicial internship such an amazing experience. Doing so in the context of circuit court allowed for thoughtful discussions both in and out of judges' chambers.

In particular, Judge Stewart highlighted the immense potential presented by a rural legal practice and the importance of creating a practice that meets your lifestyle and not vice versa.

... Thanks to the Law Foundation's generosity, my venture on circuit court was nothing short of a trip of a lifetime."

Judges are always impressed by the interns' accomplishments and breadth of experience. Our autumn 2024 law interns have undergraduate degrees in arts and science from universities across Canada and in France. Two have master's degrees (one has two). During law school, their volunteer contributions include working with the PACE Society, presenting legal education workshops at inner-city schools through Legal Education Outreach, and taking leadership roles in the Law Students Legal Advice Program.

The students bring varied life and work experience to their legal careers, including having worked as a youth worker, librarian, and visual artist. They are ethnically diverse. Two are parents of children in elementary school.

BC Provincial Court judges are looking forward to working with students once again in this win/win program. Reflecting on the program's value to judges, Chief Judge Gillespie says, "Judges benefit from exposure to the varied perspectives of students from a younger generation, as well as from invaluable research assistance."

Professor Martz sees first-hand the benefits to students:

"I am struck every term how students gain confidence over the course of the program - both in terms of their comfort in the courtroom but also in seeing themselves as about-to-become members of the legal profession. The judges and court staff are so welcoming and collegial. It makes the program an ideal transition from law school to legal practice. I am so grateful that students at Allard have access to this opportunity."

More information

[Law Intern Program](#)

[Judicial Externship](#) (Peter A. Allard School of Law)

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