



Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program Alumni Report 2011

“Tenth Year”



Lance Hammell, Shaheen Lotun, Nicole Hamm, Bennet Misskey

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SLIP AFTER A DECADE

Bennet Misskey, 2011 Saskatchewan Legislative Intern

The Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program celebrated its 10th year anniversary in 2011. The Program has significantly expanded over the course of a decade. This has been achieved through innovations made by successive teams of interns, new sponsors and funding opportunities, and the continued support given to the Program by the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, and two outstanding directors.

2011 was an exciting year to be an intern. With the upcoming Saskatchewan election and the Federal election this May, we witnessed intense debates in the House. With the recently fixed election dates, we were able to observe the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan operating under a new dynamic. Because everyone knew the election takes place this fall, the campaign essentially began the first day of session. The federal election also gave us the opportunity to see federal candidates in person such as Jack Layton and Michael Ignatieff.

This year's internship program made inroads in the international comparative study tour component by traveling to Ireland. From June 14th to June 30th, the SLIP team set course for Edinburgh, London, and Dublin with the purpose of learning more about the main jurisdictions in the British Isles. In Dublin, SLIP was able to connect and meet with the European Commission, the European Parliament Office in Ireland, as well as officials and officers at the House of the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament). We were also able to meet with many officers and officials in the Scottish Parliament and Westminster in London. This tour gave us new insights into the nature of devolution, Scottish separatism, the European Union, British/Irish relations, and how another part of the world views Canada.

The national component of our comparative study tour was made possible through the continued accommodation and hospitality of the Parliamentary Internship Program (PIP). With their collaboration, SLIP was able to meet with individuals such as former Speaker of the House Peter Milliken, MP Andrew Sheer (current Speaker), Senator Pamela Wallin, MP Ralph Goodale, former Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe, Sergeant at Arms Kevin Vickers, Clerk Audrey O'Brien, and many other interesting personalities.

SLIP was able to expand and continue established relationships within Saskatchewan. As in previous years, SLIP met and attended conventions by a host of important stakeholders across the province representing very diverse viewpoints. These included attending the SUMA and SARM Conventions, events by SAHO, the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, and meeting with the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. We were also able to meet mayors Pat Fiacco and Don Atchison of Regina and Saskatoon respectively, Saskatoon Police Chief Clive Weighill, Treaty Commissioner Bob McKnight, Prince Albert Parkland Health Authority CEO Cecile Hunt, and many others. These meetings and events were the perfect supplement to the interns' knowledge of Saskatchewan politics acquired in the Legislature. It gave us a deeper perspective of the province by exposing us to very different approaches to politics. It also enabled us to see whether these viewpoints across the province were being represented in the Legislative Assembly.

Many of the most valuable components of the Program have been created by former interns. This growing body of alumni represent a decade of commitment by talented individuals who have contributed to making what SLIP is today. It will be fascinating to observe the evolution of this program in the years to come as we join the ranks of the alumni.

MESSAGE FROM THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



During my time as Clerk of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly, I learned about an Internship Program offered by the Ontario Legislative Assembly and the House of Commons. I felt a similar program would work well in Saskatchewan for two reasons: first, it would give promising university students a rare inside look at how our system of government works; and second, it would be a great outreach tool for the Legislative Assembly, which must continually seek to educate and engage citizens.

It wasn't until I was teaching in the Political Studies Department at the University of Saskatchewan that I was finally able to obtain support for a Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program (SLIP). Over the past 10 years, the Members of the Legislative Assembly have been very supportive of the Program; they have gained capable assistants, and in turn, the MLAs have been good teachers and helpful mentors.

The Program provides a valuable opportunity for participants to develop skills such as letter and speech writing, researching, problem-solving, and public relations. They have had a close-up look at the complicated business of creating public policy. I have been greatly impressed by the interns, who have been, without exception, intelligent and hard working. Their personal integrity has allayed any concerns about giving interns access to Members on both sides of the House. Many interns have gone on to pursue successful careers in government, and I expect that for all of the participants, SLIP has been a foundational experience.

*Dr. Gordon L. Barnhart
Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan*

MESSAGE FROM THE SPEAKER



It gives me great pleasure as Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan to be the patron of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program and in that role to now have overseen four groups of Interns.

Having these university students and graduates take seven months from their busy lives to work with Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) is commendable. Each year a new group of interns receives a first-hand education on how our legislative democracy works. While doing so, the interns provide a fresh perspective to the MLAs view of their own roles within the government process. The interns add an eager dynamic to the work of MLAs in the Legislature and to their work at the constituency level. Overall, I am pleased with the interns' service to our Assembly.

I was pleased to see that the interns enjoyed their education of our democracy. I understand they were able to learn about their own unique interests within government. To that end, I am sure it was a highlight for them to travel, on their comparative study. I wish them all the best in the months and years ahead as they continue with their education or enter the workforce.

I would like to thank Mr. Ken Pontikes for the leadership and oversight he provides to the interns and for his role in maintaining the success of the overall program. I would also like to thank Ms. Monique Lovatt for the administration she provides to the program here at the Legislative Assembly, and for the guidance she gives the interns on a daily basis.

*Hon. Don Toth, Speaker
Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan*



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



In 2011, the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program is celebrating its tenth year of facilitating academic internships within the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan. During the past decade, 43 university students have been mentored by members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.

After completing their internships, our alumni have moved forward with their education and careers – many are currently pursuing post-secondary degrees at North American universities and employment in Saskatchewan and elsewhere in the public service, the professions, business, academics, and community-based organizations. Through the annual Alumni Report, we try to keep in touch with our alumni - both in relation to following their education, career, family, and personal accomplishments and to encouraging them to promote and support the Program for future internships.

The Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program has evolved over the years. Each year, our interns propose ideas to improve and expand the Program. Many of these ideas have been implemented and form on-going components of the Program that we are delivering today. The international travel, community and volunteer activities, Steak Night fund-raiser, and in-province briefings are examples of ideas proposed by former interns which are now integral parts of our Program.

The expansion of the Program has posed challenges to its governance, administrative, and financing structures, which are largely the same as existed ten years ago. Options for changes are being considered by the SLIP Advisory Committee – the Program's governance body consisting of university and Legislative Assembly representatives. The results of these discussions will shape the future direction of the Program.

Over the past ten years, the Program has been fortunate to have the financial support of the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, as well as several Canadian organizations and corporations. While the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan provides funding for the mentorship portion of the Program, our university, corporate, and other funders have made the travel components possible.

We also are fortunate to have the support of several provincial-interest and advocacy organizations in Saskatchewan. These organizations have provided our interns with broader understanding of their organizations' concerns and perspectives and with direct access to their members through complimentary registrations to attend their annual conventions and conferences.

Our interns have also been welcomed by governments, interest and community-based organizations, and universities in other parts of Canada and the world. During the past ten years, our interns have visited governments in numerous cities, including Toronto, Winnipeg, Fredericton, and Ottawa in Canada and internationally, in New York, London, Edinburgh, Dublin, Belfast, Berlin, Washington, and Richmond (Virginia). The international component of our comparative-study program has been enriched by the support and assistance of elected and appointed officials and academics in these jurisdictions who have helped to organize meetings and gain access to individuals and institutions for our interns. We have also enjoyed the on-going assistance of the Parliamentary Internship Program in Ottawa which has assigned Parliamentary Interns to set up meetings and briefings when the Saskatchewan Legislative Interns are in Ottawa.

I have enjoyed serving as director of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program since 2005. It has been a privilege for me to meet and work with our interns and to be part of the personal and academic



development of many accomplished people who are now pursuing interesting careers and making important contributions to society.

*Ken Pontikes
Director
Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program*

VALUE OF SLIP AND VALUED CONTRIBUTIONS TO SLIP



In my capacity as Head of the Department of Political Studies and as a current member of SLIP's Advisory Committee, I would like to make a few observations regarding the value of SLIP and to express my appreciation to several people and organizations that have been instrumental in establishing, sustaining and administering it.

Value of SLIP

SLIP, like other internships, is valuable in several ways for all students selected as interns, those who host them, and the province.

SLIP, along with other internship programs, established in the province, perform important functions. First, and foremost, they perform an important function in profiling Saskatchewan as a province that has opportunities for young people to engage in experiential learning that will serve them well in expanding their learning and their opportunities for satisfying and successful careers. In the absence of such internships in this province, students will turn their attention to internships and employment opportunities in other provinces. If they opt for those internships and job opportunities in other provinces, the likelihood that they will return to Saskatchewan is quite low. Thus, SLIP along with other internship programs perform an important student training and retention function.

In the case of students who are successful in becoming interns, SLIP serves several important functions. It provides students with an important experiential learning opportunity that complements and supplements what they learn in the classroom. In particular it provides them with an important learning opportunity on the operation of the provincial legislature and many of the governmental agencies that interface with the legislature. In addition to learning about the operations of the legislature, they learn about a wide range of public policy and public management issues and options. What they learn is invaluable regardless of whether they opt for careers in the legislature, government, academic, business, or non-profit sectors.

Learning how the legislature and government agencies operate enhances the students' confidence that they know how to deal with those institutions in what one hopes would be their efforts in advancing the public good. In this respect SLIP and other legislative internships provide students with invaluable knowledge and skills that will enhance their ability to experience and exercise the fullness of their citizenship.

In short, learning how the legislature and governmental agencies operate is invaluable in enhancing the students' knowledge that will enhance their studies, their careers, their vocations, and their citizenship. I am able to make this observation with considerable confidence for two reasons. First, my role in administering the career internship program offered by the Department of Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, has allowed me to see how the internships contribute to the professional and personal development of students, and open doors for them in pursuing their careers and vocations. Second, my own experience as an intern in the federal internship program many years ago proved to be invaluable for me in all facets of my professional and personal life.



SLIP is valuable not only for the interns, but also for the offices of the MLAs who host them. The interns provide them with valuable assistance in performing their functions. This is particularly true of any tasks that require research and extra sets of hands to complete them.

Finally, SLIP is important for the province in two ways. First, SLIP is a flagship program housed in the Legislature that reminds legislators and others in positions of leadership both in the public and private sectors that internship programs are immensely valuable on many levels. Second, SLIP provides one of the means by which students can acquire special training and can be enticed to stay in Saskatchewan and make a contribution to its development.

Appreciation for Contributions Made to SLIP

I would like to take the opportunity afforded by this special report, to express appreciation formally to several people and organizations that have been instrumental in establishing, sustaining and administering SLIP during the past decade.

Highly deserving of appreciation are those who were instrumental in establishing the Program ten years ago. This includes, His Honour Lieutenant Governor Gordon Barnhart, who held a senior administrative position at the University of Saskatchewan at that time. His Honour also served very enthusiastically and ably as its first academic director while holding a senior position at the University of Saskatchewan. It also includes those senior academics at the two universities, namely David Smith who was chair of the Department of Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan, Howard Leeson who was chair of the Department of Political Science at the University of Regina.

Special appreciation must also be expressed to the President of the U. of S. and the successive Deans of the Faculty of Arts at the U. of R. who made and maintained a commitment to support the Program financially and logistically since its inception.

Also deserving of appreciation and respect are the party leaders and members of the Legislature's Board of Internal Economy who not only agreed that the legislature should host the Program, but also committed themselves and their respective caucus members to provide learning opportunities for interns.

An equally important contribution has been made by numerous individuals from the two parties in the legislature, including MLAs and their respective staff members, as well as staff members for the party caucuses in the Legislature, who have graciously and warmly welcomed interns into their offices and provided them invaluable guidance, support and insights over the years.

This is also true of the very positive contribution made by successive Speakers of the Legislature and members of their staff over the years. All the Speakers have provided extensive and consistent logistical support to the Programs during their respective tenure. Special recognition and appreciation is owed to Ms. Monique Lovatt, a dedicated member of the Legislature's staff, who has made remarkable efforts in providing logistical support to SLIP and personal guidance and support for the interns. Her efforts have contributed immensely to the success of the Program and the interns for the past ten years.

Others who merit acknowledgement are those who have served on two SLIP committees over the years. This includes the independent Intern Selection Committee which consists of the director of the Program, a representative from the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, faculty members from the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan, two former Speakers of the House and one former Intern. It also includes the Advisory Committee which consists of the current Speaker as Chair, along with delegates of the Clerk's Office, academics from the U. of S. and U. of R., and caucus representatives.



The timely and generous financial support of some sponsors outside the university and legislative sectors, who are acknowledged in various documents of SLIP is also greatly appreciated.

Over the years SLIP has also benefited from some valuable administrative support provided by Alexis Dahl and Blair Pizio while working as administrative assistants for the Department of Political Studies at the University of Saskatchewan.

Last, but by no means least, we owe an immense debt of gratitude to Ken Pontikes who has served as Academic Director for the internship program for most of the life of the Program. His title only captures one dimension of what he does. He takes care of not only the purely academic aspects of SLIP, but also all the important program management functions. He has been and continues to be an invaluable asset to the Program. His exceptional dedication and contribution to SLIP is truly appreciated by all who have been associated with the Program.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to encourage all those who have supported SLIP over the years to continue to do so, and for others to consider becoming supporters of the Program so that it can continue to succeed in the future. Increasing various forms of support is absolutely essential to ensure the continuance of SLIP for another decade of success.

*Joseph Garcea
Head, Political Studies
University of Saskatchewan*

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Jessica Paul (nee Waiser), (2002)

As one of the first interns of the SLIP program in 2002, it's hard to believe the Program is now celebrating its tenth anniversary. While on one hand, it makes me feel old; on the other hand, it makes me proud that the Program has a strong 10-year history in Saskatchewan. As many of you are aware, it took an extremely long time to get the Program off the ground in the first place. Current Lieutenant Governor His Honour Dr. Gordon Barnhart, fought for the Program for decades when he was then Clerk of the Legislative Assembly. When the Program finally came to fruition, Dr. Barnhart served as the Academic Director – a position he held when I arrived at the legislature as one of the first four interns in January 2002.

Over the last ten years, I have met each new crop of interns at the beginning of their journey and am proud of the caliber of people that have gone through the Program. The Program has had its ups and downs since its inception, including almost getting cancelled one year. I'm pleased it has survived and continues to engage young people in Saskatchewan in the ins and outs of our legislative and political system. I also look forward to this publication every year to see where all of the alumni have ended up.

As for myself, I left the world of politics after almost ten years last fall to pursue a new career opportunity that would leave me with more time for my young family. My son Owen is now three and stands a head above his classmates at day care. I've been working as an Account Manager with Look Matters in Regina – a professional services/advertising agency since last November. I find that I still use skills that I learned ten years ago at the "Leg" and continue to be in contact with people that I've worked with over the years. Today, my clients include Regina Downtown and the Saskatchewan Heavy Construction Association. My job includes project management and assisting my clients with web development, social media deployment, training and strategy; government relations, publication design, rebranding, communications and marketing plans, event planning, media relations and more. It's been a nice change from the political world in that I get to be a lot more creative on a daily basis.



So, in closing, congratulations to the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program on the eve of its 10th anniversary. And a special thanks to Monique Lovatt, who has worked tirelessly from the beginning by making all interns feel at home and for always having an open door and time to listen.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Fabian Contreras, (2004)

I'm currently working for the City of Regina as a Strategy and Performance Consultant. Before joining the City in October 2010, I was the Manager of Policy with the Saskatchewan Communications Network. However, in March 2010 government funding for the public broadcaster was eliminated and with that, began an early summer holiday. I took advantage of this free time to finish my Masters degree in Public Administration.

Municipal government is very different from provincial government; more transparent decision-making processes, barefaced political landscape, a more granular level of interaction with citizens and a unique organizational culture. Working out of the City Manager's Office, I get to see it all.

It's tremendous to see the personal and professional growth of other Alumni and to be a part of this growing network. It speaks volumes about the quality of the Program.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: Ryan Griffiths, (2004)

After I finished my internship, I moved to Montréal to do an MA at McGill University. I studied Political Theory, and wrote my thesis on Adam Smith's moral philosophy. I named my thesis "An Anthropomorphic Categorical Imperative: Adam Smith's Impartial Spectator." As happens, during this time, I fell in love with a girl and a city: Montréal and Paulina. At the same time, although I wouldn't call it love, I really fell for Adam Smith's moral philosophy (commonly called sentimentalism). I wrote that thesis under the direction of Dr. Jacob T. Levy. Everything was perfect: the city, the school, the languages (I was learning Polish!), love, and family (Mom and sister now lived near me in Montreal). Everything got better: I am doing my PhD, with the same advisor, at the same school, and live with the same woman, in the same city.

SLIP MILESTONES

Patrick Button (2008) is a PhD student at the University of California in Irvine where he is specializing in economics and public choice.

Fabian Contreras (2004) is working in the City Manager's Office with the City of Regina as a Strategy and Performance Consultant.

Bill Cooper (2003) is now working in Public Relations for the Saskatchewan Potash Corporation.

Craig Fink (2010) is studying at the University of Victoria to obtain a Master's degree in public administration. He is currently on a work term at the Canadian Institute of Health Information.

Kiley (Frantik) Bear (2007) and her husband Riley became the proud parents of Madelyn in October 2009. Kiley continues to be employed as the Communications Manager for the City of Prince Albert.

Justine Gilbert (2007) is attending Carleton University in Ottawa to take her masters at the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs.



Sheena Gordon (2010) and her husband Ben Schubert became the proud parents of Hazel Lucille Schubert in September 2010. Sheena and family have moved to Vancouver to pursue new ventures.

Jarita Greyeyes (2007) has received her Master of Arts degree in Indigenous Governance from the University of Victoria.

Nicole Hamm (2011) has returned to the College of Law at the University of Saskatchewan to complete her Juris Doctor degree.

Lance Hammell (2011) is in the Master of Arts program (political studies) at the University of Saskatchewan.

Avery Kelly (2008) has been studying at the University of Victoria. As part of her Master's program in public administration, she participated in a co-op placement as a research assistant in the Victoria office of the Canadian Institute for Health Information.

Nicole Leach (2009) is at York University where she is studying for a Master of Arts degree in political science.

Justin Leifso (2006) is working as a Policy Analyst in the Primary Health Services Branch with the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health.

Elise Lonie (2010) married Andy Sammons in September 2010. She convocated from the University of Regina with a B.A. Honours in political science and B.A. in History.

Shaheen Lotun (2011) has returned to Carleton University in Ottawa to continue her studies towards a Bachelor of Arts degree in African studies.

Bennet Miskey (2011) has begun his studies towards a degree in law at McGill University in Montreal.

Lucy Periera (2007) married Kris Johnson on July 16, 2011.

Justin Redekop (2008) is in the Master of Public Administration program at the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, University of Saskatchewan campus.

Jonathan Selnes (2007) is practicing law as a litigation associate at Burnet Duckworth & Palmer LLP in Calgary.

Mike Selnes (2010) is in law school in Calgary.

Jessica (Waiser) Paul (2002) is working as an Account Manager with Look Matters in Regina – a professional services/advertising agency.

The preceding information on former interns includes only that of which the Program is aware. All SLIP alumni are invited to keep the Program informed of changes in employment, of the receipt of awards and of interesting personal events and accomplishments in their lives. This information can be sent to Monique Lovatt and/or Ken Pontikes at any time. We will publish the information we receive in future editions of the Alumni Report.

INTERNS' IMPRESSIONS

Shaheen Lotun



The past seven months have introduced me to the interplay between life of an elected official, an extensive but seemingly close knit public service, government agencies and a citizen's sphere full of active non-governmental organizations and individuals, committed to enhancing or preserving quality of life for Saskatchewan people. With SLIP, I have definitely been able to meet people that I never would have otherwise. I am much more aware of the myriad factors that play into the minds of decision-makers, and have greater appreciation for the work elected officials undertake, parliamentary procedure, and the Westminster style of government this province and country have inherited.

Nicole Hamm

It is difficult to sum up my internship experience in a couple of paragraphs, as I have had many incredible experiences in the past seven months. I have had the opportunity to travel to Ottawa, Edinburgh, London and Dublin, meet extraordinary people, explore countless issues, and have a lot of fun along the way.



I think the best part of this internship is the fact that it has left me wanting to learn more and has created new interests for me. I feel truly fortunate to have been able to take part in this Program and thank everyone who made this such a wonderful experience.

Bennet Misskey



This internship program gave me the opportunity to learn about politics in a way that is not available in the classroom. Although the theoretical aspect is important, SLIP gave me a hands-on look at how politics works in practice. In addition to witnessing the everyday business of the Legislature, the Program also allowed me to meet politicians, officials, and officers whom I would not have otherwise been able to. It also gave me the chance to visit and learn about political institutions outside Saskatchewan in Ottawa, Edinburgh, London, and Dublin.

Because SLIP is non-partisan, I was able to benefit from the outstanding mentorship of MLAs on both sides of the House. This showed me the world of two politicians from different political standpoints and I gained a deeper perspective from their insights. I also learned a good deal from the other interns who came from accomplished and diverse backgrounds. These seven months went by fast and I am confident that the knowledge I acquired will help me in my future career.

Lance Hammell

It would not be at all an exaggeration to say, however cliché it may be to do so, that it seems like only yesterday that I with the greatest of trepidation ascended the stairs of the Legislative Building in Regina on the first day of my time with the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program. The seven months which have elapsed since then have passed in what seems to be an instant – it seems as though one morning I went to work and there were six feet of snow on the front lawn, and the next I was packing up my things and moving out of the office in the midst of sunshine and thirty-degree temperatures.





Somewhere in the blur between those two points in time, however, I have found myself to have been immeasurably enriched by my involvement in this Program, both personally and professionally. It has afforded me a myriad of unique opportunities and insights which I never otherwise would have had, and provided me with a set of inter-personal, administrative, research, and analytical skills which will surely stand me in good stead through my career and through life. The experiences I have had during my time with SLIP have unquestionably broadened my horizons and provided me with a whole new perspective on politics – locally, provincially, nationally, and in the world at large.

Most importantly, this Program has allowed me overcome the neglect to which I had exposed my home province, its politics, its opportunities, and the many wonderful attributes of life within it. Thanks to the SLIP Program, I now view my province and its political arena with new and more appreciative eyes, and am more aware of the many great opportunities it presents to me in my career and through life. At the same time, however, thanks to the International Comparative Study Tour, I have received an introduction into the wider world of international politics, from which quarter many exciting opportunities beckon. The SLIP Program alone out of any available internship experience I am aware of is capable of providing that sort of perspective. In short, the time of my involvement with SLIP has been perhaps the single most engaging, enlightening, and informative seven months I have so far experienced, and I have little doubt that the many benefits I was fortunate to take away from this wonderful, unique Program will remain with me throughout my life, wherever it may take me.

TRAVEL CUTS PARTNERS WITH SLIP

We are pleased to welcome Travel Cuts as a corporate sponsor of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program.

With offices in over thirty locations on or near Canadian university and college campuses, Travel CUTS has been serving the travel needs of students, youth, educational institutions, and budget travelers for over forty years. This company is owned and operated by Merit Travel Group Inc., Canada's largest independent specially-travel company.

SLIP's partnership will be with the Travel CUTS' office located at the University of Saskatchewan. Besides assisting with booking travel and accommodations for the travel components of our internship program, this office's staff will provide advice and assistance to the Program and to our interns on the implications of various travel options.

Former interns will be well aware of the administrative challenges faced in organizing and making arrangements for the out-of-province travel components of our Program. We are looking forward to the professional advice and assistance that Travel CUTS will be offering to the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program.

We would like to thank Michelle Levergne, manager of the Saskatoon office of Travel CUTS, for her assistance in securing this sponsorship.



2011 MLA MENTORS

We would like to thank the following MLA mentors for taking part in the 2011 Program. The enthusiastic participation of these members makes the internship program possible:



Top Row: Judy Junor, Saskatoon Eastview; Warren McCall, Regina Elphinstone-Centre; Greg Ottenbreit, Yorkton; Nadine Wilson, Saskatchewan Rivers

Bottom Row: Dan D'Autremont, Cannington; David Forbes, Saskatoon Centre; Sandra Morin, Regina Walsh Acres; Randy Weekes, Biggar

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE COMPARATIVE STUDY TOUR

OTTAWA

Shaheen Lotun, 2011 Legislative Intern

For first-time observers of Oral Questions, or Question Period, it can be a time of intense reflection on the entire construct of the Westminster style of government. Question Period, it has been noted, —serves the Opposition and to a lesser extent the government well in its present form. The 45 minute questioning of the government of the day was not always such a prominent feature of parliamentary proceedings. Questions were asked of the government shortly following Confederation, but there were no written rules to delineate the form, nor substance of questions and answers. It was not until 1964 that rules were established, and then almost ten years for those same rules to be disregarded. Additionally, with the introduction of televised debates, it is a common opinion that Question Period became overemphasized. Charges of increased partisanship and strict party discipline have called into question the merits of



Question Period. However, it may simply be necessary to re-visit rules and conventions that led to the current moment of dissatisfaction with oral questioning. Reviewing issues such as number of sitting days, or types and quantity of legislation debated could enhance the quality of what we see captured by the media. In any event, there is certainly not a shortage of opinions on the matter, nor options that Parliament Hill can adopt to update the management of parliamentary business.

EDINBURGH

Bennet Misskey, 2011 Legislative Intern

The question of Scottish separatism is an old one but it has attracted renewed attention with the recent election of the Scottish Nationalist Party (SNP). The SNP is a centre-of- left separatist party that is led by the colourful First Minister Alex Salmond. The SNP currently holds a single-party majority in the Parliament, which is a very unusual occurrence given the structure of their electoral system. Members of the Scottish Parliament (or MSPs) are elected on a system of mixed-member-proportional representation, which until recently has always produced a coalition government. Even the seating arrangement in the debating chamber is shaped in a broad semi-circle to more easily accommodate the existence of coalition governments. The idea of a single- party majority is an alien concept to Scots, whereas it is the norm here in Canada.

Our meeting with the Assistant Clerk/Chief Executive Stewart Gilfillan was very candid about the current issue of separatism. He explained that the new SNP majority makes it look like there is overwhelming support for independence in Scotland. However, the situation is more complicated. Although the SNP has independence as one of its aims, it kept silent on the issue during the election campaign and focused instead on managing the economy and good government. Once it received a large mandate from the people, it started to bring the idea of separatism back on the table. This strategy is very similar to the one employed by the Parti Quebecois led by Rene Levesque. Failing to win on a separatist platform in 1970 and 1973, the Parti Quebecois ran almost exclusively on a platform of good government and won in 1976.

Gilfillan said that a majority of Scots do not currently support full-blown independence. Rather, there is a slogan circulating in Holyrood called —Independence-Lite,^l which involves asking for more powers than the Scottish Parliament has now, but to still remain within the United Kingdom. This is known as the Scotland Bill, which is presently being debated in the chamber. Allan Campbell, former Senior Assistant Clerk to the Finance Committee, reasoned that the Scotland Bill makes a lot of sense from a financial point of view. At present, the Scottish Parliament does not have any significant power to raise its own taxes. Rather, it receives a lump sum of money (roughly around 30 billion pounds) from Westminster that is earmarked as part of its budget. This arrangement has concerned both Scots and other UK residents alike, since it raises issues about who the Parliament is accountable to for spending the money. Because it must answer to Westminster, Scots do not have as much ownership over government spending than if that money was raised from their own taxes. It is also provoking growing resentment from other UK citizens who do not appreciate Scots benefiting exclusively from their taxes. The Scotland Bill proposes, among other matters, to put an end to this arrangement and to grant the Scottish Parliament more taxing power.

There are various directions that politicians and citizens want to see the Scotland Bill go. Stephen Imrie, Clerk of the Economy as well as the Energy and Tourism Committee, suggests that there are two dominant viewpoints. Conservative members believe that the reform bill is principally about fiscal accountability. Liberals regard it as the next step towards federalism. In any case, there is much that could be done about the power to raise corporate and individual income taxes, increase the borrowing limit, as well as settling jurisdiction issues over natural resources. The next six months will be very important for the prospects of increasing the powers of the Scottish Parliament. It will also come at a symbolic period in

history, as Scotland is preparing to celebrate the 700th year anniversary of the Battle of Bannockburn, which commemorates an important victory for the Scots in their Wars of Independence.

LONDON

Nicole Hamm, 2011 Legislative Intern

By meeting with the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association Secretariat and the Commonwealth Secretariat, we were able to explore the question of the relevance of the Commonwealth in the 21st century.

The Commonwealth, more formally known as the Commonwealth of Nations, was originally made up of former British colonies. The purpose of the Commonwealth is to encourage cooperation among its member states and promote the values of democracy, human rights, the rule of law and good governance.

The ties that bind the Commonwealth community have weakened over the past number of years as countries develop more regional identities and the British colonial period fades into history. Furthermore, most people are not aware of the Commonwealth and its function, particularly young people. This makes it difficult for the Commonwealth to remain relevant.

The Commonwealth also no longer includes just former British colonies. Mozambique and Rwanda have been admitted, while other countries, such as Israel, have applied for membership. This begs the question as to what the true identity of the Commonwealth is in 2011.

The Commonwealth does much good work in a number of important areas, such as education reform, legal reform, debt management and professional development for elected members of government. The work it does is particularly useful for developing countries. But how does that work benefit Canada? It largely does not. Canada provides money to both the CPA and the Commonwealth Secretariat but gets little in return. For example, Canada is a part of the Caribbean section of the Commonwealth Secretariat. Canada provides the most money to this section but receives no help from the Secretariat in terms of programming.

However, one could argue that Canada does benefit from the work of the Commonwealth as it is a vehicle to pursue Canada's foreign policy interests, such as human rights. Working through the Commonwealth allows Canada to work with others to pursue common goals and create support for its own objectives.

DUBLIN

Lance Hammell, 2011 Legislative Intern

Our final business day in Ireland was Wednesday, June 29, when we had a 9:30 a.m. meeting with Mr. Francis Jacobs, Head of the European Parliament Information Office in Ireland. Mr. Jacobs was an extremely gracious host. Mr. Jacobs, a veteran in every sense of the word who has been with the European Parliament since at least the 1970s, provided us a very thorough overview of the structure of the European Parliament, the duties of the Members, the structures which exist to support them, and the regulations which govern them. He also provided a thorough overview of the European Commission, and the interface between the two.





He then moved on to expound on the many facets of the European Union's presence in Ireland, and the relationship between the two. He informed us of just how much impact the European Union (E.U.) has come to have on the day-to-day life of the Irish people, such that in some areas it's almost coming to the point where E.U. policies are of greater effect on the citizen on the street than those emanating from Leinster House. He also covered how the E.U. has allowed Ireland to extricate itself from an unequal economic dependency relationship with the U.K., and just how much Ireland (and in particular the Irish agricultural sector) has benefitted over the years from the monies which flowed in association with Ireland's E.U. membership. He also shared some of his thoughts on how the Irish people viewed the government's decision to under-write the debts of the Irish banks when the economic crisis hit, placing the Irish taxpayers on the hook for the liabilities of the banks, and resulting in Ireland's need for an IMF-E.U. bail-out; how Ireland views the European Union; and, in return, his impressions of how the E.U., and most particularly Germany, view Ireland.

Finally, Mr. Jacobs outlined his reflections on how the newly elected Irish government (which was delivered a huge majority after the 'natural ruling party' was decimated in the last election since the economic crisis hit) seems to be in a 'honeymoon period' at the moment, but will in the fall face the prospect of imposing huge and unpopular cuts to comply with E.U. and IMF bailout requirements, with France in particular being public enemy number one for the Irish because of France's President Sarkozy's single-minded push for very harsh loan conditions. This was an extremely thorough and informative meeting and Mr. Jacobs was a very gracious host – we all left feeling that our final meeting in Ireland had been a great success, and we certainly were a good deal better-informed about the E.U. It was a privilege and a very valuable experience to be able to speak to someone so thoroughly versed in this area, especially given that we in Canada have no experience with an organization such as this.

SLIP STEAK NIGHT

Every Year SLIP organizes a fundraiser in order to raise revenue to allow enhancements to the international comparative study tour. This year's fundraiser was held at the Bushwakker on Tuesday April 12, 2011 and was a great success. Tickets were sold at \$25 and included a 6 oz. steak, Caesar salad, fries, garlic toast, and a 12 oz. Bushwakker beer. Many friends, family, Legislative staff, SLIP alumni, and politicians attended the fundraiser. The staff at the Bushwakker also did a remarkable job in preparing and serving the food.

The most challenging part was scheduling a date and selling the tickets. However, this task was made easier by the tremendous support shown to us throughout the community and within the Legislature. It was also a fun evening and a delicious meal. In total, SLIP raised \$1,154 in support of the 2011 interns' comparative study tour. We would like to thank everyone who attended and for your continued support for the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program.

2012 SASKATCHEWAN LEGISLATIVE INTERNS SELECTED

The Saskatchewan Legislative Interns for 2012 have been selected. The four interns are:

Elliott Bourgeault who is completing a Bachelor of Arts degree, with a double major in political science and German, at the University of Regina

Cody Gieni who is working towards a Master of Public Administration degree at the Johnson-Shoyama School of Public Policy (University of Saskatchewan)



Jason Kiefer who is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts degree in political science at the University of Regina

Reagan Seidler who is completing a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics, with a minor in political science at St. Thomas More College (University of Saskatchewan)

The 2012 interns were selected by a committee consisting of representatives of the University of Saskatchewan, the University of Regina, the Office of the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, the director of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program, and one of the 2011 Saskatchewan Legislative Interns.

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Kyle Toffan, 2005 Saskatchewan Legislative Intern

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SLIP

The Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program (SLIP) provides four university students with a unique educational experience each year.

The seven-month Program gives participants the opportunity to use their theoretical knowledge of government and parliament in a practical setting. They will get first-hand experience with the day-to-day work of elected representatives from both the government and opposition sides of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan.



The Internship focuses on the role of the private member. It provides interns with a perspective of legislators as representatives of their constituents and as law-makers within our parliamentary system of government. It also creates a new and desirable service for legislators by providing them with highly qualified and enthusiastic assistants.

Furthermore, as citizens who better understand the principles of our parliamentary system, participants in the Program will provide a long-term benefit to the province and country.

Visit our Website at <http://www.legassembly.sk.ca/internship/>

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