



## Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program Alumni Report 2010



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## SLIP 2010: Consolidating and Expanding

Craig Fink, 2010 Saskatchewan Legislative Intern



In 2010, the ninth year of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program, the interns wanted to consolidate the tremendous gains made by recent internship cohorts, while expanding the program and employing each intern's unique skills.

Perhaps the most significant difference between this year's program and years previous was the choice of the comparative study tour destination. For the first time since 2004, the interns decided to travel to the United States. More commonly over the past six years, interns have travelled to London as well as other destinations in the United Kingdom and Europe. The comparative study tour is the element of the internship program that has transformed the most through the past nine years, as each group of interns strives for a unique and enjoyable experience.

Over 16 days in June, the interns travelled to New York City, Washington, D.C., and Richmond, Virginia. Though it is difficult for Canadian interns to gain access to politicians and public servants in the United States, through dogged persistence (and with the notable assistance of former intern Rhiannon Stromberg) this year's interns managed to arrange an informative and diverse itinerary (see inside for details). Perhaps most importantly, the interns managed to establish relationships with other internship programs in Washington, D.C. and Richmond, Virginia. This is in addition to the relationship with the Ontario Legislative Internship Program, which was reestablished during a short stay in Toronto earlier in the year, and the long-

standing partnership between SLIP and the Parliamentary Internship Program in Ottawa.

The 2010 interns also attempted to consolidate recent connections, by once again attending annual conferences of the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations and the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce, as well as perennial favourites like the SUMA and SARM conventions. As always, those conferences were particularly valuable for the depth and dimension they add to the basic political knowledge gained by interns within the Legislative Assembly.

By attending the conventions of some of the largest aggregative organizations in the province, interns get to hear the issues that Saskatchewan citizens are focusing on at a grassroots level, and compare those concerns to the agenda at the legislative assembly. It is fascinating to observe the similarities and differences between those agendas, based largely on what the opposition decides to raise in Question Period. For example, health-care questions (particularly as they relate to rural Saskatchewan) dominated the cabinet bear-pit sessions at SUMA and SARM, and similarly dominated question period in the legislature. Conversely, labour legislation (the controversial Bill 80) was debated furiously in the legislature but barely warranted a mention at any of the aforementioned conventions.

Every year, the "current" interns become alumni and go out into the world, armed with the information and experiences provided by the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program. We would like to thank you for your continued interest and support for the program, which assists in extending this opportunity to more interns in the future.



## Message from the Director



Our ninth internship is coming to an end and preparations are well underway for the 2011 internship. Each year, the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program evolves as the current interns bring new ideas and build upon the experiences and opportunities of their predecessors.

With the completion of the 2010 internship, our alumni roster will expand to 39 university students. As in previous editions of the SLIP Alumni Report, we have profiled some of our alumni and provided career and personal updates on several others.

All alumni are encouraged to continue sending us your news. The success of our alumni is a measure of the success of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program. Interns are selected in relation to criteria that emphasize personal character, past accomplishments, and potential for future leadership. We try to identify interns who could play an important role in Saskatchewan's future and therefore, it is not surprising that so many of our alumni are now assuming influential and important positions in many sectors of our province and nation.

One of the highlights of this year's internship was that the comparative-study tour included an opportunity for the Saskatchewan Legislative Interns to meet with interns in the Parliamentary Internship Program, the Ontario Legislative Internship Program, and the Manitoba Legislative Internship Program. There were opportunities for the interns from these programs to attend meetings and briefings with the SLIP interns, as well as to exchange information and experiences about their respective internship programs.

This year's comparative-study tour broke some new ground for the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program. While this year's tour included a stop in Washington, D.C. (last visited by Saskatchewan interns in 2004), several other cities in the United States were visited for the first time. These cities permitted the interns to expand their briefings to include Canadian consular and United Nations

officials, academics from several internationally-renowned universities, and people working at the state level of government in the United States.

Regretfully, one aspect of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program came to an end this year. Rawlco Radio's commitment to support two Rawlco Aboriginal Saskatchewan Legislative Interns was completed in 2009. Due to small numbers of applications from First Nations and Métis students, a decision was made not to extend this component of the Program beyond the two-intern commitment. We appreciate Rawlco Radio's involvement with our Program and its willingness to assist us in trying new ways to enhance our Program.

Finally, as all interns are aware, the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program provides academic credit to its interns at either the University of Saskatchewan or the University of Regina. Since its inception, the two universities have not provided these credits at the same academic level. The University of Regina has treated the internship program as the equivalent of a fourth-year level course, while the University of Saskatchewan has offered credit at the third-year level. Beginning in 2011, the University of Saskatchewan has decided to elevate its SLIP credit course to the fourth-year level. This change provides consistency between the two universities, but also assists in marketing our program to upper-year undergraduate students.

In closing, the annual alumni report is our way of maintaining contact with all of our SLIP alumni. Throughout each year's internship, we also invite our alumni to attend events and meetings involving our current interns. In addition to the mentorship supplied in the core program through the MLAs assigned to interns, our alumni can also serve a mentorship role by sharing their internship and subsequent career experiences with the current interns. As alumni may recall from their experience in the Program, the current interns appreciate the insight, advice, and support from former interns.

I send my best wishes to all alumni. Please keep in touch with us – we enjoy learning about how your lives are unfolding.



## Message from the Speaker



Of all the agencies for which I am responsible, the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program is one of the most rewarding.

Having a group of senior university students and graduates take seven months from their busy lives to work with Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) 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 also 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 that 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 tour to New York City, Washington, D.C., and Richmond, Virginia. I wish them all the best in the months and years ahead as they continue with their education or enter the workforce.

Since stepping into the role of Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, I have overseen three groups of interns. Thus far I have been impressed with the leadership and oversight provided by Mr. Ken Pontikes for the interns and 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*

## Intern Impressions

### Elise Lonie



The past seven months at the legislature have been a very valuable experience for me. Right from the very beginning, the internship has been a wonderful learning opportunity. Orientation gave us the opportunity to meet with many people throughout the province that I may never have met otherwise. Then working with the MLAs gave me the chance to get an inside view of an MLAs world, to learn about the MLA-constituent relationship and the role that an MLA plays in the legislature. As well, the comparative study tour and our travels around the province gave me a chance to make important comparisons between our political culture and customs and those of other places. All in all, it has been very rewarding to be a Saskatchewan Legislative Intern.

### Craig Fink



I suppose it is a cliché to say I cannot believe how quickly the internship passed, but that does not make the statement any less true. It seems like just yesterday that I nervously ascended the front steps of the Legislative Building, uncertain about what the future would hold. Thankfully, things went as well as I could have possibly hoped. I will always cherish this time, in which I made three wonderful friends (my fellow interns), and learned so much from the people who contribute their time and knowledge to this program, in venues ranging from the Legislative Building, to Little Black Bear First Nation, to the halls of the United States Senate.



Perhaps the most unexpected benefit of this program has been the deepened connection that I now feel with my home province. As an intern, I travelled all over the province, and looked at my home with new and more appreciative eyes. As I will be living in Victoria for at least two years, I am thankful that this internship gave me the opportunity to see and understand Saskatchewan more fully before my departure.

### Sheena Gordon



Looking back on the seven months I spent on this internship, I am most amazed by the amount I have learned. I came into the internship with a limited knowledge of Saskatchewan, Canadian and world politics, and I was instantly thrown head first into a real-life political science classroom.

### Mike Selnes



Overall, I am leaving the SLIP program incredibly satisfied with my experience. I had the opportunity to work with some amazing private members, research some unique and interesting policies, and to witness the good, the bad and the ugly of everyday life in the legislature. I learned an incredible amount about the legislative process and I was even able to throw myself into a couple of fascinating policy debates. Besides getting to wake up every morning and walk into the “marble palace” for work, my favourite part of the internship was definitely our comparative study tour. Not only did I get to see some amazing things and meet some profound individuals, but I got to do it with three other amazing interns. I never thought I would make such good friends through the program and have the opportunity to learn so much from my fellow interns. The SLIP experience is one of a kind, and it has left me with a wealth of knowledge and memories that will benefit me for the rest of my life!

I am grateful to my fellow interns who acted as guides through my learning process. I learned more from listening to and participating in intern debates than I have in a classroom in recent memory. I was lucky to be placed with knowledgeable, personable, and approachable peers who accepted my ignorance and endeavoured to fill my head with their own astute political observations.

I am also in awe of the learning experiences we were offered through our travels and visits with many of the important groups and people who work for or in conjunction with the governments of Saskatchewan, Canada, the USA, Virginia and the city of New York. We were afforded so many valuable meetings with genuinely interesting (and interested) people, and I will keep the memory of our time as traveling dignitaries near my heart.

It was a wonderful internship and an important time of learning in my life that I will cherish as I move forward

## Alumni Spotlight: Patrick Button (2008)



I can't believe it's been two years since I was an intern! I miss the internship program and all the great opportunities it provided me. I greatly appreciate the hard work of Monique and Ken in running the program, along with the support I received from my

MLA Mentors (Greg Ottenbreit and Cam Broten). I also appreciate the generosity of all the donors who made the program possible.

A lot has happened since I left the program. After my internship, I started a Master of Arts in Economics at the University of Toronto. I was lucky enough to have won a prestigious Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Master's Scholarship to support my degree.



The experience was very different from what I was used to. I went from a supportive environment at the University of Regina, where I was a top student, to a less-supportive but more academically rigorous environment at the University of Toronto, where I was only an average student. I also moved from the smaller city of Regina to the huge city of Toronto. Although it was difficult to get used to these changes, they were very enriching.

I completed my Master of Arts in Economics at the end of 2009 and started working for Industry Canada in Ottawa as an Economist/Analyst in February 2010. I work for the Horizontal Policy Team within the Policy and Sector Services Branch, which is branch within the Industry Sector. If this sounds confusing, don't worry because I'm just as confused. I've been in this position for a month and I'm still getting used to all the organizational structure and acronyms.

My job involves very general research on competitiveness and innovation in Canada. One of the major issues that Industry Canada is working on is closing the business innovation gap between Canada and other countries. Although Canada's economic fundamentals are strong, business R&D is significantly lower than in other countries. This is a problem because it will hurt the long-term growth and competitiveness of the Canadian economy. I write reports and briefing notes on this and other relevant areas.

I expect to start a PhD in Economics in September 2010, so my job with Industry Canada is only temporary. Unless I change my mind and decide to stay with Industry Canada, or work somewhere else, I will move to Irvine, California in early September to enrol in the PhD program at the University of California, Irvine. Irvine is located in Orange County, about an hour south of Los Angeles and an hour and a half north of San Diego.

I plan to specialize in public choice/political economy at UC Irvine, which is a field in which the university is exceptionally strong. Public choice/political economy is an interdisciplinary field where economic theory and statistical methods are applied to political science issues such as elections and democratic systems. This area bridges my interest in electoral systems with my background and love of statistical methods.

I will specialize in a second field as well, but at this point I am unsure of what it would be. It could be public economics (focusing on general public policy), transportation economics (focusing on public transit), labour economics (focusing on post secondary education) or industrial organization (focusing on business innovation). I have lots of options and lots of time to figure this out.

After the approximately five years it would take to complete my PhD, I plan to teach at least part time at a university, and perhaps do some consulting. I have no idea where I will end up, so the world is my oyster at this point.

## Alumni Spotlight: Haley Gagnon-Hannah (2006)



Let me begin by expressing my gratitude and admiration for the many people involved in the SLIP program that make it possible, and in turn had a great impact on both the personal and career paths I have chosen. I participated in the program in 2006 and had the privilege of working with

Judy Junor and Don McMorris. I must acknowledge these two dynamic personalities, as the lessons I

learned while working with such dedicated mentors I still carry with me today, and for which I am ever grateful. In addition to these mentors the direction of Ken Pontikes and the Office of the Clerk made the program as valuable as it could possibly be. Looking back at my academic career I am convinced that SLIP was the most valuable learning experience I had. It was here I learned many truths about governance, politics, and citizens that cannot be gleaned from a text book.



Following my SLIP term I returned to the University of Saskatchewan to finish my BA. While finishing this degree I was able to continue to serve in the Canadian Forces Army Reserve and worked as a consultant for the University of the Arctic. In the spring of 2007 I convocated as the most distinguished graduate in the Aboriginal Public Administration program with a BA (honours) and a minor in Political Studies.

With the exposure SLIP provided me to the practical side of public policy, I was very confident that I wanted to pursue a career in public service. To this end, in the fall of 2007 I married my husband Benjamin and we relocated to Ottawa so that I could continue my education at the Carleton University School of Public Policy. I began my MA in public administration and was very excited to study in Canada's capital. I focused my MA on public management in the federal bureaucracy with my main project being focused on the administration of Aboriginal economic development in communities. In the fall of 2008 I completed my greatest achievement and gave birth to my daughter Charlotte.

In 2009, upon completion of graduate studies, I began working for the new federal department, the

Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency, as a policy analyst in Ottawa. This has been an interesting experience filled with diverse opportunities and challenges associated with working in a small, new department. My work at CanNor is focused on the design and implementation of policy initiatives for economic development in Canada's Northern Territories. The beauty of working in CanNor is that I can see direct impacts of my work on Northern development. I became a public servant to effect positive change, which is why my work at CanNor has been such a rewarding experience.

Although Saskatchewan will always be my home, I find myself putting down strong roots in Ottawa. It is wonderful to be at the epicentre of Canadian federal policy among so many other dedicated public servants. As I look forward on my career, and look back from where I have come, I realize that participating in the program has thus far been a defining moment in who I am as a public servant, and how I got to this point. Thank you again to all those involved in the program, your work continues to have positive impacts on me, and I am sure will continue to positively impact the work I do in the future.

## SLIP Milestones

### Interns' Notes

**Jessica (Waiser) Paul** (2002) is working as the Director of Communications & New Media for the Saskatchewan Party.

**Jarita Greyeyes** (2007) is one of two youth representatives of the Federation of Saskatchewan Nations (FSIN). As a youth representative she will have speaking privileges at the next FSIN legislative assembly and will provide a direct link between FSIN officials and the province's First Nation youth.

**Lucy Pereira** (2007) now works for the Department of Energy with the Government of Alberta in the oil

sands sector, on government/industry relationship work with a focus on the resource development and financial aspects of the industry. She is engaged to Kris Johnson, with the wedding scheduled for July 2011.

**Jonathan Selnes** (2007) has completed his law degree at Queen's University, graduating with a J.D. (Juris Doctor). After spending the last semester of law school on exchange at the University of Sydney he has returned to Canada and will be articling at Burnet, Duckworth & Palmer LLP in Calgary, Alberta.



**Avery Kelly** (2008) will be undertaking her Masters of Public Administration at the University of Victoria beginning this fall.

**Dawn Gibbons** (2009) will graduate this fall with her MBA. She was also part of a team that won the

University of Saskatchewan Wilson Center for Entrepreneurial Excellence Idea Challenge.

**Andrew Restall** (2009) is currently attending Law School at the University of Saskatchewan.

## Comparative Study Tour 2010

### New York City Hall Welcomes the Saskatchewan Legislative Interns



One of the warmest welcomes we received during our time in the United States was at New York City Hall. Arranged through the Canadian Consulate in New York, our meeting with city officials was tremendously satisfying, and we left with an unprecedented inside look into the governance of the city of New York.

We were able to speak with three of the Mayor's staff members during our time at City Hall. Mr. Arkady Gerney, the First Deputy Criminal Justice Coordinator and Special Advisor to the Mayor, spoke to us about the city's gun-control efforts, largely focused on stopping the importation of unregistered hand guns into the New York City area. Different states have different rules regarding the purchasing of hand guns, and despite the fact that New York State has relatively strict gun control measures, many violent crimes in the city are committed by guns imported from other states. In addition to the patchwork of laws at the state level, there are loopholes that can be exploited in federal laws. For example, hand guns that are purchased from private citizens do not require background checks. Gun shows around the country often feature many sellers who are "private citizens", and thus are

exempt from requiring background checks. However, many of those sellers sell hundreds of guns per year, which leads many municipal governments (especially large urban centers like New York) to believe that gun shows should be more tightly regulated by the federal government.

Our main contact at City Hall was Mr. Ryan Whalen, the Chief of Staff of the Office of the Deputy Mayor for Government Affairs. Mr. Whalen's responsibilities are much more political in nature, as his section of the city administration is responsible for working with the state government and the federal government in order to achieve policy objectives desired by the New York City administration. Mr. Whalen's advocacy targets range from lobbying for stimulus funding to trying to influence the direction of the federal government in terms of climate change/energy legislation.

In addition to the lobbying and persuasion of Mr. Whalen's office, the New York City government has committed to use its size and clout to proceed on various issues alone, rather than waiting for other governments to act. All of the people we spoke with mentioned the dysfunctional nature of the state government and contrasted it the much more functional, practical city government. Ms. Kirsten Eiler, Policy Analyst for Long Term Planning and Sustainability, in the Mayor's Office of Operations, spoke with us about PlaNYC 2030, which was initiated in 2007 and aims to envision the environmentally-friendly, (even more) densely populated New York City of 2030 and take steps to make that vision a reality. It is a multi-faceted plan that is revised every four years. It addresses land-use, water-use, transportation, energy, air, and climate change. According to Ms. Eiler, the city has already reached 50% of the goals outlined in the document, and the plan continues to be expanded and refined.



At the end of the meeting, we were taken on a brief tour of the surprisingly small City Hall building, and we saw Mayor Bloomberg's desk, though he was not occupying it at the time. Rather than being in an opulent office (as one might expect), his desk was actually right in the middle of the desks of his subordinates (approximately 50 in all), in a large room set up like a trading floor. We were told that the configuration is meant to simulate the environment of the trading floors and financial firms where Mayor Bloomberg made his fortune. It was certainly a unique arrangement, unlike anything we've seen in Saskatchewan.

Our visit to City Hall surpassed all our expectations. Though the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program is primarily focused on the provincial level of the political system, we have found our encounters with municipal governments of all sizes to be fascinating. Citizens interact with their municipal governments on a more immediate basis than any other level of government, and it has been a pleasure to gain insight into those governments from municipal employees.

## Meeting at the International Monetary Fund headquarters in Washington, D.C.



Thanks to the effort made by former legislative intern Rhiannon Stromberg, we were able to visit the headquarters of the International Monetary Fund in Washington, D.C. and meet with David Vannier, an external relations officer employed by the fund. This meeting was different than many of the others during our tour, simply because we knew so little about the IMF before departing for our trip. Necessarily, this meeting was less of a discussion and more of a briefing.

Mr. Vannier touched upon the creation of the IMF at the Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire as World War II drew to a close, as well as the complementary mandates of the IMF and the World Bank (the former being more concerned with short-term macroeconomic issues and the latter being more involved with long-term development and poverty reduction initiatives).

Interestingly, Mr. Vannier noted that prior to the financial crisis in late 2008, there had been internal discussion within the IMF that the organization may have outlived its usefulness, due to the long-term stability of the world financial system.

Unfortunately, the IMF's role as an evaluator of economies and as a lender of last resort is more necessary than ever. With many countries in danger of defaulting on their debt obligations, it is important for the IMF to be there to stabilize the financial system so that a single country in financial difficulty does not jeopardize the finances of many others.

For four legislative interns who are novices when it comes to economics, it was an exciting experience to be able to hear about the activities of a world economic organization from someone deeply involved in the process. This was a meeting that we would not have been able to schedule on our own, so we would like to again thank Rhiannon Stromberg for putting us in touch with the International Monetary Fund.

## Interns attend a seminar featuring David Broder of the Washington Post



Mr. Broder on Meet the Press

While in Washington, D.C., we attended a Woodrow Wilson Seminar, which is part of the



American Political Science Association's (APSA) Congressional Fellows program. This particular seminar took the form of a question and answer session with Washington Post columnist David Broder, who is generally referred to as the "Dean of the Washington Press Corps". Dr. Jeff Biggs (the director of the APSA Congressional Fellows program) invited us to the seminar, and we also had a wonderful conversation with Dr. Biggs before the beginning of the seminar.

Mr. Broder discussed the declining influence of the press corps in Washington (primarily due to the decline of the newspaper industry), as well as the inability of the press to focus on complicated, far-reaching issues. Too often, the press corps tends to report on the day-to-day "horse race" and political infighting that takes place on Capitol Hill, instead of how the issues being debated in Washington will affect the day-to-day lives of American citizens. The health-care controversy was cited as a particularly egregious example of this tendency.

Mr. Broder also talked candidly about the performances of President Obama, and the two Democratic Majority Leaders Harry Reid and Nancy Pelosi. He was particularly critical of Ms. Pelosi and what he perceives as the combative posture that she has taken in all of her dealings with House Republicans. It was interesting to hear a "middle-of-the-road" columnist take some relatively strong political stances.

This seminar was a fantastic opportunity to see someone in person whose words loom so large in the public imagination – words that have influenced presidential elections, and continue to influence public opinion in the United States. Mr. Broder was a very engaging speaker, and it was a wonderful opportunity to meet with a member of the Washington press corps, something which would have been impossible without the help of Dr. Biggs.

## A trip to the office of a U.S. Senator



The Hart Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C.

While we were in Washington, D.C., we visited the office of Senator Kent Conrad (D) and had an informal conversation with his Deputy Health Policy Advisor Dana Halvorson and the summer interns working in his office, of which there are thirteen! Ms. Halvorson (who is also the Senator's intern coordinator) asked Sen. Conrad's energy policy advisor and his advisor on financial regulation to drop by our meeting and talk about the work they do as policy advisors.

North Dakota has a great deal in common with Saskatchewan, and that provided a number of conversation points for the group. Both jurisdictions are sparsely populated and dependent upon fossil fuels for transportation, as well as coal for energy generation. Energy is a particularly hot topic in the United States right now because of the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, so we discussed how jurisdictions like Saskatchewan and North Dakota can fit into a green-energy future, given our unique economic situation. The answer, of course, is that there is no easy answer – most of the proposed solutions would significantly affect the economies of Saskatchewan and North Dakota.

We also took the opportunity to discuss the health-care legislation that recently became law in the United States. This conversation was particularly fascinating, as we were able to explain how the health care system actually works in Canada, which dispelled many of the misconceptions that Americans may have had during the health-care debate. Everyone at the table (including Ms. Halvorson) was shocked to find out how much of the provincial budget is devoted to health care. However, being Democrats, I think many of the interns were jealous



of the universal health care system that exists in this country.

Lastly, we would be remiss not to mention that we took a tour of the U.S. Capitol which began in the Hart Senate Office Building. The tour was particularly notable because it involved a ride on the train that travels underneath the Capitol so that senators can quickly travel from their offices to make quick votes. The interns feel that an underground “legislator subway” should be seriously considered during the renovations of Parliament Hill in Ottawa.

legislative process is automatically quite different from Saskatchewan’s legislature. Bills must be passed by both the House of Delegates and the Senate, and signed by the governor before they can become law. Delegates are elected to the House every two years, and senators are up for election every four years. The governor is also elected on a four year cycle, and Virginia is unique in not allowing governors to serve consecutive terms. Governors may serve more than one term, but they must leave the governor’s mansion for a term before returning. Only one governor has accomplished that feat (Gov. Miles E. Godwin Jr.).

### Interns Visit the Virginia State Capitol



The Interns at the Virginia State Capitol

Virginia’s legislature is a “citizen’s legislature”, which means that delegates and senators serve part-time, with most holding jobs outside of the legislature. The legislature sits for approximately three months every year.

Virginia’s constitution states that “no law shall embrace more than one subject, which shall be expressed in its title”, which prevents the complicated bills that often plague the U.S. Congress. Partially as a result of that provision, the Virginia legislature entertains an incredible amount of bills per session (more than two thousand!), ranging from housekeeping bills to important budget measures. This high volume of bills (combined with the short sitting schedule) has required the legislature to be innovative in terms of efficiency, particularly by computerizing much of the process, and by having a robust and business-like committee system.

The final leg of the 2010 Comparative Study Tour involved a short visit to Richmond, the capital of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Before arriving in the city, we contacted the Clerk of the House of Delegates (the lower house of Virginia’s state legislature), the Honorable Bruce F. Jamerson. Mr. Jamerson was incredibly helpful to us during our stay, arranging a robust itinerary for us, during which no less than 16 staff members of the Virginia legislature came to speak with us about their roles. The staff members who attended, ranging from the Jay Pearson, the Project Manager of the Legislative Education and Development Programs at the legislature, to Scott Maddrea, the Deputy Clerk in charge of Committee Operations, were very generous with their time, and happy to answer any of the questions we had regarding the legislative process in Virginia.

During our day at the legislature, we were also able to have lunch with two Richmond-area delegates, the Hon. John M. O’Bannon III (R), and the Hon. James P. Massie III (R). We engaged in a candid discussion of the legislative process from the point-of-view of the legislators, and discussed the issues that they were facing as delegates from the Richmond area.

Virginia, like all American states except Nebraska, has a bicameral legislature, which means that the

There were too many excellent speakers and meetings during our visit to the legislature to adequately describe them here, but needless to say it was a busy and informative day in Virginia’s beautiful capitol. We are very thankful to Mr. Jamerson and his passionate and knowledgeable staff for making our trip to the legislature an unmitigated success.



## Virginia Commonwealth University's Capital Semester



While we were in Richmond, we also met with students from Virginia Commonwealth University who had participated in the internship program at the state capitol. The program in Virginia is called "VCU's Capital Semester", and it lasts for one

semester of the academic year. In addition to discussing Virginia's political culture and the internship run by VCU, we also had the opportunity to explain to the Virginia interns how things work in Saskatchewan (in our legislature and internship program).

The director of the program, Mr. William Leighty also attended the casual luncheon. Mr. Leighty had been the Chief of Staff to former Governors Mark Warner (D) and Tim Kaine (D), and he shared a wealth of stories from his time working for the executive branch of Virginia's government. His memories relating to the Queen's visit to Richmond were particularly uproarious. All told, it was the perfect ending to our comparative study tour in the United States.

## 2010 MLA Mentors

We would like to thank the following MLA mentors for taking part in the 2010 program. The enthusiastic participation of these members makes the internship program possible:



Top Row: Glen Hart, Last Mountain-Touchwood; Judy Junor, Saskatoon Eastview; Greg Ottenbreit, Yorkton; David Forbes, Saskatoon Centre

Bottom Row: Warren McCall, Regina Elphinstone-Centre; Randy Weekes, Biggar; Sandra Morin, Regina Walsh Acres; Tim McMillan, Lloydminster



## 2010 SLIP Barbecue Fundraiser

For the past three years, SLIP interns have organized steak dinners in order to raise funds for the interns' International Travel Fund. Those dinners were quite successful, as they gave the interns, the Members of the Legislative Assembly of Saskatchewan, other external supporters of the program, and the families and friends of interns the opportunity to enjoy an informal dinner together. Due to the success of the dinner's format and fundraising ability, this year's interns initially intended to hold what would have been the fourth annual SLIP-MLA Steak Night. However, due to factors beyond the interns' control (particularly the eventual extension of the sitting hours of the Legislative Assembly), a steak night was simply not possible for 2010.

Instead, the interns chose to hold a barbecue at the Legislative Assembly. The barbecue took place on April 26, 2010, and attracted 85 attendees, of which 41 were MLAs. Diners feasted on burgers, salad, chips, and homemade cookies. The interns did all of the cooking and baking themselves, putting a measure of sweat equity into the fundraising effort. Due to the generosity of all who attended, the event raised \$1119.00 for the International Travel Fund.

The International Travel Fund is used by the interns to finance cultural experiences during their international study tour. When visiting a foreign country, meeting with local politicians, scholars, and public servants is very informative, and those meetings are the driving force behind the international tour. However, the interns' understanding of the host country would be incomplete without the opportunity to experience local events and institutions. The International Travel Fund provides that opportunity.

In 2010, the interns chose to visit New York, Washington, DC, and Richmond, VA for their international trip. The International Travel Fund enabled the interns to take in a baseball game at Yankee Stadium, see some plays on Broadway, take a tour of the United Nations building, and access museums and galleries while on the study tour.

The interns are thankful for all of the support given to them in their fundraising efforts. The tremendous continuing support for the internship program enriches the experience for current and future interns.

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Patrick Button (2008 intern)  
Avery Kelly (2008 intern)



## Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program

The Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program (SLIP) provides four senior university students, or recent graduates, a unique educational experience each year.

The seven-month program will give 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 sides of the House.

The Internship focuses on the role of the private member. It 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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