

This was the inaugural year of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program (SLIP). In January 2001, the Board of Internal Economy, approved the proposal to initiate this program and set aside the funds to do so. This was in partnership with the University of Regina (U of R) and the University of Saskatchewan (U of S). I want to thank these partners for their financial and moral support for this important program. In a time when politics and parliamentary process seem to be less important to the general population, it is vital to have an internship program where young people of our province can work with elected representatives and government officials. It is hoped that the people of Saskatchewan will understand their political and parliamentary processes better by having SLIP. The Legislative Assembly covered the direct costs of the program. We had three sponsors who donated money to enrich the program by covering the costs to have the Interns travel to Toronto, Ottawa and Winnipeg to meet with other Interns, Members and public servants and to see other legislatures in action. I want to thank the Cooperators, the University of Regina and the University of Saskatchewan for their generous donations. It is because of these donations that our Interns were able to broaden their studies and to travel to these three capital cities and to compare federal and provincial politics.

Our first four Interns were: Tim Baker (BA Hons U of S 2001), Maria Kurylo (MA U of S 2000), Wendy Moellenbeck (Third year Arts student U of S) and Jessica Waiser (BA Hons U of S 2001). These four individuals were chosen by a selection committee made up of Dr. Philip Hansen (U of R), John E. Brockelbank (Former Speaker of the Legislature), Herb Swan (Former Speaker of the Legislature), Gwenn Ronyk, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and myself as Academic Director and representative from the University of Saskatchewan. The committee was determined to select the four best people without concern for gender or university where the applicants studied. The results at the end of the year showed that the selection committee made wise choices. A special thanks goes out to the members of this committee who worked very hard to make these selections for 2002 and those for next year. As a point of interest, of the four Interns for 2003, two are from U of R and two from U of S. There will be one woman and three men.

The Interns' program started with a two week orientation in Regina in January 2002. The Interns met with government officials and legislative officers to study the process that they were entering. They also met with the Premier and Leader of the Opposition. They met with caucus staff from both the government and the opposition and prepared a research plan for their research papers which were due by the end of the program.

During the first two weeks, the Interns met as a group first with government members and then with opposition members to determine areas of interest and research needs and plans. The Interns then selected which members they wanted to work for in conjunction with the requests and special needs of the members. The Interns served for three months with members from one side and then shifted over to the other side. The match ups were as follows:

	FIRST TERM	SECOND TERM
Tim Baker	Doreen Hamilton (Government)	Carl Kwiatkowski (Opposition)
Maria Kurylo	Glen Hart (Opposition)	Warren McCall and Graham Addley (Government)
Wendy Moellenbeck	Harry Van Mulligen (Government)	Wayne Elhard and Rod Gantfoer (Opposition)
Jessica Waiser	June Draude (Opposition)	Pat Atkinson and Peter Prebble (Government)

I want to thank the members who agreed to work with the Interns and for their teaching abilities. The Interns wrote letters, prepared questions for Oral Question period, wrote Members' statements, prepared constituency correspondence and completed various research projects for the members. In many cases, the Interns went with the member to his/her constituency to see first hand, the way a member represents the people in the constituency. Without the members' enthusiastic support and willingness to spend time with the Interns, the program would not have enjoyed the success it did.

The Interns planned two out of province research trips. The first was to Ottawa and Toronto where they met with other Interns, Members of Parliament and the Ontario Legislature. On a separate voyage, the Interns saw the Manitoba Legislature in action and met with counterparts. The Interns reported that their study visits were an important part of their overall very positive experience with SLIP. The Interns were thus able to compare the various different systems of government and to broaden their understanding of the Canadian Parliamentary system. A special thanks goes out to all the members, officials and interns in Ottawa, Toronto and Winnipeg who worked so willingly with the Saskatchewan Interns.

Over the seven months of the program, the Interns developed a web site for SLIP, a logo, letterhead, business cards, and lapel pins. They designed the visual identity for the program on their own and have created a lasting legacy for the program.

With any program, certain measurables must be identified to help organizers know if the program met with success. The first measurable was the evaluations done by the members who had Interns. There was an initial concern about confidentiality and whether the Interns would be able to work for one side of the House and then transfer to the other without letting party secrets slip. This initial hesitation on the part of the members was very soon erased as the Interns proved that they were reliable and trustworthy. Interns were even allowed to sit in on one of the caucuses, a first for Saskatchewan. The members soon learned that Interns can be very valuable to them. The Interns proved to be quick studies with a good background in the academic study of politics. They were then able to transfer this “book knowledge” into practical worth for the members. For the members who worked with Interns, their evaluations were very positive and they have already indicated they would like to have an intern again next year. Several members offered suggestions for change for another year. Members would like to have their Interns’ offices closer to their own so that they can relate on issues more rapidly. They also suggested that time be set aside each week for the intern to actually shadow the member for a set period of time to see all that the member does in a day. These are good suggestions and we will see if they can be implemented for the coming year.

Part of the program required the Interns to make public presentations on SLIP to encourage students to apply for future years. They also made public presentations at both the U of R and the U of S on a public issue of interest to students. This part of the program was to give the Interns experience with public speaking and organizing workshops.

Another measure of growth and learning was a brief exam written by the Interns on their first and last days in the program. It was the same exam each time and the exercise was conducted to measure the amount of growth for each intern. The exam tested their knowledge and understanding of the parliamentary process. The Interns were tested on their approval or not of the Legislative Assembly and politicians in general. We now have a concrete measure of how their attitudes changed and improved over their seven months with the Legislature based on a better understanding of the process.

The Interns also completed evaluations of the program and offered some very helpful suggestions for improvement for next year. Notwithstanding the suggestions, the Interns expressed a very high level of satisfaction with the program and were very appreciative of the people who supported SLIP. For Interns in the program who are still students at either university and relying on student loans, we did experience some problems this year. We are working with the universities and the provincial government to avoid future problems for students who are relying on student loans to finance their education.

The final requirement for each Intern was to write a twenty-five page paper of publishable quality on a parliamentary or public policy topic. The four Interns have completed their papers and once we have enough papers over the next few years, we will publish a collection of the best of these papers. This will add to the body of knowledge on governance and public policy. One of the Interns this year was completing her degree and used her option to have her Internship as a class recognized by the University of Saskatchewan. Based on her work experience and the academic paper, she received six credits toward her degree. She is now back at university to complete her degree program.

A financial statement for the Program is attached. This statement shows the contributions from the sponsors and amounts paid to cover the research visits to Ottawa, Toronto and Winnipeg.

I can report that year one of the program has been a huge success thanks to the support of our sponsors, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and all members of the Saskatchewan Legislative Assembly. The last and most special thanks has to go to the four Interns themselves—Wendy, Tim, Maria and Jessica for their keen enthusiasm, hard work, dedication to the Program and their love of learning about our legislative system. Each Intern has said that their experience as an Intern has altered their perception of governance and politics. Thanks to the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program, we have four young people who are very knowledgeable about our political system and how the people are governed. The new Interns for 2003 are already selected and have begun their orientation. The process of serving the members and learning about our system of government will continue.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Saskatchewan Legislative Internship Program

Gordon Barnhart PH.D.
Academic Director

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