



Summer Student Reflections

Many of the courses I took while attending law school at the University of Victoria had substantive components focused on Aboriginal law and introduced me and other students to the plurality of flourishing Indigenous legal orders that operate in British Columbia and across Canada. However, it wasn't until my final semester of law school that I took a course specifically focused on the practice of Aboriginal law in Canada – Indigenous Lands, Rights and Governance – and it was this course more than any other that has shaped the trajectory of my future legal career.

As a settler whose grandparents immigrated here from Poland and Scotland, I have always thought it important to educate myself about the Indigenous peoples on whose lands I now live and work. Much of this education was unfortunately lacking in my public-school education, and so I took it upon myself during my undergraduate and law school degrees, as well as outside of school, to better inform myself about the history and current experiences of Indigenous individuals, peoples and nations.

Indigenous Lands, Rights and Governance was an important part of this education. It provided me with a solid understanding of the current legal landscape through which Indigenous peoples engage with the Crown and influenced me to apply for a co-op work placement at Sequoia Legal LLP for the summer. That too, has been an important part of my education – one that I am overjoyed to continue as an articling student starting this fall!

My summer at Sequoia has been incredible – everyone I work with is fun and kind, and the work is always interesting and fulfilling. Each and every lawyer and paralegal at Sequoia is brilliant, dedicated and hardworking. Everyone brings something important and special to the table, all working towards the goal of achieving the best outcomes for our clients. I often spend my days engaged in legal research on a diverse range of topics to support Indigenous individuals, corporations and governments with their day-to-day needs and operations. I have written memos and drafted contracts, reviewed First Nations' by-laws and membership codes, and prepared presentations and letters to proponents and to the Province. My favourite assignments so far are those that relate to the Specific Claims Tribunal, where I can combine my enthusiasm for public interest and historical work.

I'm truly grateful to practice in an environment that shares my commitment to reconciliation with Indigenous peoples, and where there is a shared focus on ensuring that settler governments fulfill their constitutional duties in this regard. I greatly value the opportunity to continue my education at and to contribute to the important work of Sequoia Legal, particularly in service to its Indigenous clients.

Jeremy Coleman, August 2024