



First French program grad eyes legal career in EU

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While Nicolas Sarkozy and Ségolène Royal battled each other for the French presidency in 2007, Ania Kolodziej ambled the esplanades near the Eiffel Tower in Paris, stopping at cafes to drink espresso, eat croissants and argue politics with her fellow students.

For the North Delta native, who was attending the Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques (FNSP), one of France's most prestigious academic institutions, the experience was a piquant complement to SFU's French Cohort Program in Public Administration and Community Services.

Kolodziej is the first graduand of the new Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences program, also known simply as the French Cohort Program (FCP), which is taught primarily in French and consists of an extended minor in the language and a major in political science. The FCP was created with funding assistance from the federal and provincial governments to help immersion students in B.C. pursue a post-secondary education in French.

Kolodziej attended French immersion in North Delta from kindergarten to Grade 12. She also studied German, Spanish and Polish, her parents' native tongue. She studied political science at the FNSP, focusing on European politics with the idea she would someday practice law in the European Union (EU), the group of European nations that participates as a single unit in the world economy.

Kolodziej was recently accepted into law school at the University of Ottawa's Programme de Droit Canadien. Beginning this fall, she will study not only common law, which is practiced in English-speaking Canada, but also Quebec civil law, which originated in Europe. Knowing both legal systems, says Kolodziej, will allow her to practice law in the EU upon graduation.

Kolodziej says the study of French has helped make her a citizen of the world — as well as a better Canadian. Fluency in both official languages has enhanced her understanding and appreciation of Canada from both the English and French perspective. "Everyone should learn both languages," she says simply.

By Roberta Staley