What Can I Do in Government?

Jordan Perrella

Twice a year, Arts Co-op teams up with SFU Career Services to put on one of the most valuable events for students seeking career insight. The What Can I Do In Government event gives students the unique opportunity to learn the details of government careers by putting current government employees in the hot seat. Braving a barrage of questions, table hosts sit in small group formats with student attendees. Representatives from organizations such as Public Health Agency Canada, Canada Border Services Agency and Canada Revenue Agency make up some of the table hosts. With an average of four to eight students per table, rotating every ten minutes, students are able to grasp the nitty gritty details of their ideal government career. The firsthand experience given by table hosts provides invaluable insights for any student in pursuit of career direction. The fall 2009 event was especially successful, featuring eleven different government agencies and thirteen table hosts to draw over one hundred and twenty students. What Can I Do in Government is an event you don’t want to miss! March 24th; Be sure to save the date on your calendar and keep your eyes peeled for the event on Symplicity.
Co-op with the RCMP

Roberta Prattico
Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Vancouver Branch

I still recall sitting in my grade seven class and listening to a presentation of an RCMP member that was part of the D.A.R.E. (Drug Abuse Resistance Education) Program. By the end of her talk I was in awe. I thought to myself how much pride one must have to work as part of the RCMP, the cornerstone of what Canadians are internationally recognized for and greatly admired. About six years later, I experienced that same feeling of admiration while sitting in my Introduction to Criminology class at SFU. I have always had a strong passion and interest for Criminology. My goal is to one day work as a forensic psychologist and do profiling of sex offenders, serial killers and psychopaths.

A Work Term in Federal Government

Vanessa Leung
Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Vancouver

As a 1st term Arts and Social Sciences Co-op student, I had to struggle to find a Co-op placement during the summer of 2009 when the employment rate was at an all time low. However, I kept searching for a placement in the hopes that my persistence and patience would eventually pay off. It finally did. I was very pleased to secure my first Co-op position working for Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) as the Assistant to the Director of Citizenship and Immigration, Vancouver Office.

After landing my first Co-op job, I had plenty of opportunity to polish my existing skills and learn new ones. Being the Assistant to the Director involves managing the daily work schedule of my supervisor, setting up board meetings, and handling large volumes of files. Adequate knowledge is required for the different database systems such as the Police Reporting Information Management Environment (PRIME), and the Police Information Retrieval System (PIRS) to execute quality assurance activities. I have been lucky to have an extremely supportive supervisor, and work with an incredible team of highly experienced individuals. A large portion of my time is devoted to assist the Pardons Coordinator. I have been mentored to conduct research on complex files to action Pardon Granted Notifications and respond to requests from the National Parole Board on information of the criminal activity of its applicants. Collectively, within the first month of my employment, months-worth of backlogging was reduced. Working in the OIS has allowed me to be exposed to the many RCMP units and has opened the doors to a future that now seems attainable.
meetings with unit heads, managing information and securing travel arrangements when needed. Since my position involves extensive exposure to different departments and units, I was able to further develop my interpersonal and networking skills under the guidance of my sub-supervisor. Working at CIC has taught me to be more adaptable to a fluctuating work place as well as the importance of learning on the go in a fast-paced environment.

I enjoy working at Citizenship and Immigration Canada and have found the work environment to be very accepting and friendly. CIC regularly hires Co-ops and Interns so the employees here are very welcoming and are used to working with new people all the time. I am glad I joined the Co-op program because it has given me the tools to secure work experience and the opportunity to work with a variety of people with different backgrounds and degrees. These experiences are invaluable to me, regardless of which direction my future career will take me.

A Look Inside the BC Public Service

Mike Aube
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Burnaby

For the past two semesters, I have been working as a Project Assistant for the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure on the South Fraser Perimeter Road component of the Gateway Program. The South Fraser Perimeter Road Project (SFPR), approximately 40km long, will be a new four-lane, 80 km/hr route along the south side of the Fraser River. The SFPR will extend from Deltaport Way in Southwest Delta to 176th Street (Hwy 15) in Surrey, with connections to Highway 1, 91, 99 and to TransLink’s new Golden Ears Bridge connector. My role on the project has included updating the Project Management Plan, performing data analysis for financial controls as well as a number of tasks related to property acquisition monitoring.

Working on such a large scale public infrastructure project has given me the opportunity to not only put into practice the skills that I’ve learned in school, but also to learn a tremendous amount of practical know-how. Working closely with some very experienced and skilled professionals has allowed me to learn from the best. I consider myself lucky to have had the chance to find a project based position working for the Province of BC, which has given me the opportunity to get firsthand experience in project management. Working on a once in a generation project like the SFPR is such an unbelievable experience. I am surrounded by great coworkers and get to work in a fast-paced environment that promotes learning. The support given to coop students from the BC Public Service is phenomenal, making you feel welcomed and appreciated. I would highly recommend positions in Project Management as well as working for the BC Public Service to all students looking for a rewarding work experience.

“The support given to Co-op students from the BC Public Service is phenomenal...”
Co-op in Copy writing

Leigha Smith
Self-Counsel Press, North Vancouver

When applying for my first Co-op term, I decided to go out on a limb and apply to Self-Counsel Press (SCP). Being an Arts student, I wasn’t sure how suited I would be to a Communications Co-op, but it turned out to be a great fit. As an Editorial Intern at SCP, I quickly came to realize that the skills I would acquire at this job would contribute to my academic career as well as create a better understanding of the publishing industry. For an aspiring author, the experience has been amazing. Working as an editor at SCP is about a lot more than simply reading and writing on manuscripts. The material being read is very educational and has come in unexpectedly handy with friends, family, and peers. I learned a lot about business, law and the publishing business in general simply as a side effect of doing my job. With the level of reading required in order to conduct a thorough edit, I also increased my deep-reading abilities. I now find reading texts to be a significantly faster process, and I’ve developed better information retention than I had before I took the job.

I also spent some time writing on the job! I now have half a dozen articles published on the SCP website. The experience piqued my interest in journalism, and I’ve really broadened my horizons in terms of potential careers over the past eight months. Beyond the duties of the job, however, were the things I learned simply by being in a publishing environment. Conversations with one of my coworkers, who has been in the publishing business for 35 years, have proven endlessly helpful to me and to friends who are writers as well. Overall, it was a great learning experience. This job is great not only for Communications majors but also for anyone interested in writing, editing, or publishing.