Working For the Feds
An interview with CIDA’s Executive Vice President, David Moloney

By Emily Ross

David Moloney, SFU’s Champion from the Federal Government, has described himself as someone who “…can’t decide what he wants to do when he grows up.” Given the fact that he is currently the Executive Vice President of the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) in Ottawa and someone who has worked in the federal government for over 25 years, this may come as either a surprise or a reassurance.

Mr. Moloney came to SFU to speak to students about working for the Feds – the benefits, his experience, and most important to SFU students, how to get involved. David Moloney’s personal work experience with the federal government shows how many opportunities there are for students within the government. Having worked for Finance Canada, Privy Council, Treasury Board Secretariat and Industry Canada, Mr. Moloney’s career exemplifies not only the diversity of jobs found within government, but also the flexibility available. With a thousand types of jobs in 150 countries, he explained that the government is a place where you can “…grow your career and morph your career.”

David Moloney stressed that one of the positive elements of working for the government is the impact that you personally can have, since it’s “not just what the federal government does for you, but what it does for Canada.”

Along with David Moloney’s experience working in government, he also has experience hiring staff. With the confession of having interviewed as many as a thousand students over the years, Mr. Moloney gave insight into what the government is looking for when you apply. He stated that though academics and performance are heavily weighted, having a little “something else” can put you ahead of the curve. He recommends getting involved in part-time work, Co-op, volunteering, sports, student government – something to show your curiosity, your energy and your drive, giving your interviewers and [future] employers insight into who you are. His final piece of advice: make sure to invest in yourself by “ask[ing] a million questions in your first job! You need to, and if you don’t, they [employers] will wonder why you don’t.”

David Moloney speaking at the “Working for the Feds” event at SFU last fall.
Co-op Destination: **Africa**  
**Advocating for Youth Needs**  
By Corrine Baerg  

After having an amazing time studying in South Africa on an SFU exchange semester, I decided I had to return to Africa for a different experience – a co-op work term. This time, my travels led me to Ghana, West Africa, where I completed a self-directed work term with the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI).  

With a passion for children and youth rights, I arranged a focus for the work term with my supervisor at CHRI, which would complement my skills and my future career goals. For my work term I concentrated on beginning a Juvenile Justice Program at CHRI, which advocates for the needs of youth in the criminal justice system in Ghana.  

During my time in Ghana, I was able to see first-hand, the human rights abuses that occur in the country and completed research which will hopefully help correct some of these issues. Since I was working for an organization which is well-respected in Ghana, I was able to observe Juvenile Court proceedings, meet with various Ministers in government, interview youth at the remand homes and correctional centers, and attend conferences on criminal justice and human rights. In addition, my co-workers were eager to help me learn about other areas of advocacy, and I wrote reports on forced evictions, learned about child trafficking, and worked on CHRI’s Access to Information campaign.  

The skills and experiences I have gained from completing an international co-op work term are immeasurable. As an International Studies major with a focus on Africa, this work term allowed me to gain practical knowledge and skills which have complemented my academic knowledge. My work term has only reinforced my desire to pursue a career in the field of human rights and international law, and I am grateful for an incredible international work term!

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Treaty Negotiations with **INAC**  
By Ryan Schmidt  

If you’d asked me back when I first joined the Co-op program, I wouldn’t have predicted that I’d be working for Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). I enrolled in the Master of Arts program in the School of International Studies at SFU because I was interested in international development. So when I joined the co-op program, I wanted a workterm with the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA).

It became clear that CIDA postings were all in Ottawa and my circumstances made it too difficult for me to move there. My co-op advisor suggested that if I was interested in the federal service I should look at INAC, since they have an office in Vancouver and often had co-op postings. It didn’t seem to fit with my studies or career path in international development, but I recalled that one of my IS professors had challenged those of us interested in overseas work with the reality of developing world conditions for many Canadian First Nations.

The position I took was in the treaty negotiation office of INAC. One of my colleagues calls treaty negotiations “onshore international relations”, and it’s a good description. Working here has really added depth to my understanding of international relations and development issues. The interaction and struggle for understanding between different cultural, social and political systems takes place between federal and provincial governments and
“At INAC, I’m getting a chance to work in a microcosm of international relations...”

- Ryan Schmidt on INAC

First Nations just as it does between developed and developing countries. Also, as in international development studies, there is a concern with economic development and how it may benefit and impact communities. At INAC, I’m getting a chance to work in a microcosm of international relations, right here in Canada, while contributing to a process that may change history. My co-op experience has opened my mind to new career possibilities, and even if international work is still on my horizon, there is no doubt that this INAC position has helped me shape many of the perspectives and skills I will use in the future.

Walking through the lobby of the Lester B. Pearson building in Ottawa this morning, I paused to reflect on how important SFU’s Co-op program has been to me. Through Arts Co-op, I landed a position which has helped me bridge the gap between education and the workforce, and has also provided me with valuable experience working in the Canadian public service.

During my time at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), I’ve been involved in everything from writing speeches and researching business opportunities, to planning and organizing summit meetings. The wide variety of tasks I’ve undertaken and the experience I’ve gained from completing them has enriched my abilities in ways that would not have been possible without co-op.

Much of the work I do centers around several core skills: research and writing, analyzing and synthesizing information, and most important, communication. Examples of my more regular tasks include: researching and composing briefing notes for meetings or events, and following the news in order to maintain and distribute an information tracking database.

While I have gained valuable training from these tasks, my communication skills have definitely benefitted the most from working at DFAIT. Being able to effectively work in a team environment, consulting with others on multiple projects at once, is an important skill that will help me in all my future endeavours. As an International Studies MA student focusing on China, my background and education are directly related to the work I am doing, and my previous knowledge and experience have proven to be great assets while working at DFAIT. At the same time, I chose DFAIT because the position was a perfect opportunity to test my career plans; prior to co-op, this is where I saw myself working in the future, and I wanted to make sure that vision had merit. As I walk out of my workplace into the latest Ottawa snowstorm, I am happy to say the test was a complete success.

Flying the Coop: A Change of Pace in Ottawa
By: Ryan Kitching

For co-op workterm profiles please visit:
sfu.ca/olc
I completed my first co-op term at Union Gospel Mission (UGM) on the Downtown Eastside as a Special Giving Co-op Student. When I first started at UGM, I thought it was a church! But within my first week, I came to realise that UGM is much more than a church or soup kitchen. UGM offers many services to assist people with housing, education, drug and alcohol recovery, and much more. I worked in donor relations and fundraising which involved developing and maintaining relationships with monthly and mid-level donors. I also had the opportunity to campaign for UGM, host dinner events and thank-a-thons, solicit companies for donations, give school presentations, lead tours, volunteer, and organize the 2010 Christmas Hampers program. This job has impacted me in so many different ways.

The Downtown Eastside is not as transient as I thought. It is in fact a true community where people have a very strong sense of pride and they genuinely care about each other. I have learned so much about the world and about how many different valid lifestyles there are in our society. The most humbling thing I learned at UGM was that there are many people in this world that have immeasurable problems, and they still have a very large capacity to reach out and help others. From all of the incredible experiences I’ve had at UGM, I’ve learned a lot about myself and my capabilities.

I’ve also learned that my planned career as a speech pathologist may not be the right path for me. I have a few new thoughts about the future, maybe I’ll work in fundraising for a non-profit organization or maybe I’ll become an Outreach Worker. For now though, I plan to stay on at UGM as a volunteer - my UGM journey is just beginning!