

# WELDON

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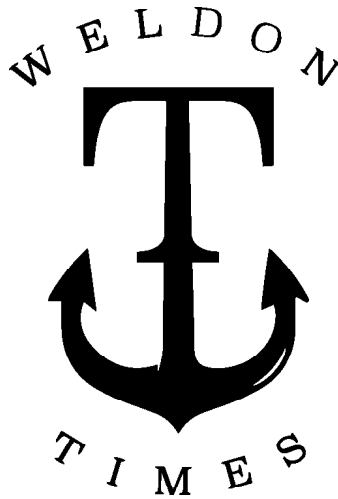
## QUARTERLY

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The Weldon Quarterly is written and published by the law students of Dalhousie University.

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*Dalhousie University sits on Mi'kma'ki, the traditional territory of the Mi'kmaq.*



# Letter from the Editors



Hi everyone! My name is Tiffany, and I'm a second-year student at the Schulich School of Law. I'm originally from Toronto. Prior to law school, I obtained an Honours Bachelor of Arts from University of Toronto, where I specialized in English, as well as minored in French and Classical Civilization. In my spare time, I run and practise karate. I also enjoy cooking, developing narrative-driven interactive games, and writing short stories/poems.

I'm very excited to take on the role of Co-Editor-in-Chief this year. The Weldon Times has and continues to deliver a variety of neat law-related articles written by our peers to the Schulich community. Please feel free to reach out to either me or Madison if you'd like to write for us – we'd be happy to have you!

*Tiffany Leung (2L)*



Hello readers! Welcome to another year of publications from the Weldon Times. Tiffany and I are excited to be taking on the role of Editors-in-Chief together and look forward to publishing all kinds of thought-provoking, student-written content during our tenure.

My name is Madison, and I'm originally from Thunder Bay, Ontario. Now in my second year of law school at Dal, I studied journalism at Carleton University before moving to Halifax in 2019. When I'm not studying or snuggling with my cat, you can find me serving as the communications chair for the Nova Scotia Young Liberals.

The Weldon Times is always looking for fresh faces and new content. Feel free to drop us a line any time you feel like pitching a story you're itching to write. Wishing everyone all the best as we try to navigate this year of classes online!

*Madison Ranta (2L)*



# The Pros and Cons of Studying Online as a 1L During the Covid-19 Pandemic

Zainab Adejumobi (1L)

The riddles that 2020 has presented us with are something that many could never have imagined. We have seen a surge in demand for items like masks, sanitizers, hand washes, and toilet paper. Zoom culture is on the rise, and technology has saved us from a year that could have been worse without it.

Can you imagine what life is like for a first-year law student who is studying remotely? The answer is a mix of bliss and dread. The first struggle is the time-zone difference. While Zoom and other video-chat platforms have allowed classes to take place online, time-zone differences mean that a humble 9 am class in Halifax means a horrific 6 am class for students studying from Alberta or Saskatchewan. This pandemic has also led to a heavy reliance on technology for class attendance, which means that a faulty computer, a slow bandwidth, or an internet outage is the new nightmare dream that taunts law students.

The social aspect of virtual law school is currently not well defined, and students everywhere are trying to make the most of online meetups and Facebook chat boxes. This must be even worse for professors, who must sometimes speak to black boxes on mute on Zoom. Professors also must navigate replying to questions from live discussions while reading the comments in the chat box.

But are there any positive aspects to all of this? Yes, a lot of them. Firstly, remotely studying means that we do not have to search for or pay for a residence in Halifax. Online classes mean that we do not have to pay for a bus pass or spend money on gas to commute to school. Taking classes online also means that we can attend class from wherever we like, whether at home or at the park.

*“Can you imagine what life is like for a first-year law student who is studying remotely? The answer is a mix of bliss and dread.”*

In a classroom, you can audibly hear people’s words, typing sounds, shifting, and more. However, with the mute button on Zoom, we enjoy perfect silence where the only audible voice is the professor’s. Thanks to the “turn camera off” feature, shy students can participate in class discussions with a bit more ease. Some classroom rules also do not apply. When the camera is off, you can lie down on your back while you listen to lectures, eat lunch, or cook dinner, all while in class.

For those students who do not like walking around campus, online class means that your next lecture is only one university web search and Zoom link away. For the students who are studying remotely from home, there is the added benefit of having family support as they start law school classes. Although we must connect socially online, our online solidarity is strong.



# Tips for Law School Success

Maria Rizzetto (3L)

COVID and the switch to remote learning has changed the way we structure our time, but it should also prompt a change in our law school habits. There are many resources available, such as the Career Development Office, Student Services and Engagement Office or the Peer Mentoring Program, to help students stay organized and on top of their work. Aside from these useful resources, the following are some tips to help students (particularly 1Ls) establish a strong footing as they embark on law school and their legal career.

## Build relationships

Maybe you came to law school with the perception that it is “cut-throat.” Law school can surely be competitive when it comes to curved grades and recruitment, but compared to other law schools, Schulich has a very strong sense of community. Halifax is very open for business and you can (and should) make an effort to foster relationships with fellow students. This will be crucial when exams come around in order to form study groups. Not to mention that law school is filled with incredible

“*Law school can surely be competitive when it comes to curved grades and recruitment, but compared to other law schools, Schulich has a very strong sense of community.*”

people from all different backgrounds, some of whom will become your best friends and/or colleagues.

It is just as important to build relationships with professors. First, this will help you engage with the material better. Second, recommendation letters are more often than not requested for jobs and you don't want to put yourself in a position of asking a professor to write one for you if they can't tell a future employer anything about you. A lot of courses are 100% exams and marking is also anonymous so the reality is most professors don't know how well you did unless they specifically look. Lastly, they're exceptionally brilliant people who love their work and are committed to helping you when you take the initiative to ask.

## Seize opportunities

The various invitations to get involved in law school are nothing short of overwhelming. You might question if you have the time or if you can even do whatever the role entails, but things do calm down and you will realize you are absolutely capable. The issue is that if you don't seize the opportunity someone else will and then you may be wishing you put yourself out there.

You don't have to get involved in everything, but make sure you pick some involvements. Being involved will help your resume and scholarship applications, and it is also a great way to meet like-minded people and allow you to explore different areas of law you may have not even thought you'd be interested in.

## Network with lawyers

Just do it. You may not enjoy it, you may think it is not worth your time to squeeze in that coffee

## Tips for Law School Success *Continued*

or Zoom meeting with a lawyer, you may think you will meet people once you start working, but it cannot be stressed enough that networking will help you get opportunities you wouldn't get otherwise. There may not be big socials that firms put on given COVID, but that is kind of a blessing in disguise as those events often mean you are competing for attention. Now, a more personal and deliberate networking strategy is a must and the benefits of one-on-one meetings with lawyers are endless. Lawyers and especially Dalhousie alumni will be receptive to you reaching out to them. You can ask for a meeting to learn about their practice area, their firm, or basically anything. Also, make sure to ask the lawyer if anyone comes to mind that they think you should talk to next.

### CANs

CANs are case briefs often prepared by top students and are located on Brightspace under the Law

Students' Society section. They outline the issues, facts, decisions, reasoning and ratios of cases. They are organized by class and then by professor. Some CANs are word for word what the professors lecture on, others might vary, but ultimately they have the main ideas.

It is not advisable to rely solely on CANs and not do your readings, especially during COVID and the switch to the open exam model, as you want to be able to separate yourself from others given the curve. CANs are a way to check your progress and understanding of cases you read and can be used as a way to prepare for class if you didn't quite get to a reading or two. Case frameworks, which are roadmaps for answering certain questions on exams, are also included in the database and organized in the same way. Frameworks are extremely helpful when you're staring at all your notes trying to make sense of how to approach questions on a practice exam.



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# White Privilege and Black Ancestry

Laura Graham (2L)

My white privilege is a living artifact of slavery, assimilation, and oppression in Canada. Let me tell you why.

This story about my ancestors takes place in Mi'kmaq. Most of what I write here occurred in Epekwitk (Abegweit/Prince Edward Island/PEI). The vast majority of my ancestors came from Scotland, Ireland, and France, and I recognize, lament, and strive to undo the harm their arrival inflicted on Indigenous peoples. Let me be up front here, too, and state that I am certainly not a historical expert on this topic and that the information I present here is thanks to the hard work of many others. I am but a simple googler.

I was a young teenager when I learned that I have Black ancestry through my maternal grandmother (Nana Barb). It wasn't a family secret by any means when I learned this—just something that hadn't been known or realized or remembered. A fact forgotten. Whitewashed. Far enough back that it was a point of intrigue and something to perhaps help explain the curls Nana passed on to her eight kids.

“*This conversation is about amplifying some long forgotten Black voices.*”

What's a white person to do with this information? You can go around saying you have Black ancestry, tip-toeing on the edge of a weird brand of virtue signalling. Or, you can keep the knowledge in your back pocket and simply not do anything. The easy way out.

Now in my late twenties, as I pored over tweets

and clicked through Instagram stories in May and June in response to the killing of George Floyd, I was forced to wrestle with the question of what good I can do with this information about my ancestry. Is it really my place to say anything? Simply, yes. This is a conversation for everyone.

This conversation is about amplifying some long forgotten Black voices. Not the most comfortable spot to be in as a privileged white woman, but my internal struggle itself is privileged. This is a small story about slavery in Canada—a story that goes beyond that one Underground Railroad Heritage Minute.

David and Kessiah Sheppard were my 5x-great grandparents. They were also Black slaves owned by Sir Edmund Fanning, the Lieutenant Governor of the British colonies of Nova Scotia from 1783-1786 and PEI from 1786-1805. (Yes, this is the same Edmund Fanning fictionalized in the *Outlander* books and TV series.)

David and Kessiah were listed in the *Book of Negroes*, a document containing the names of 3000 Black Loyalists who emigrated from New York to Nova Scotia in 1783. These Black Loyalists were previously enslaved Africans who had escaped to the British lines during the American Revolutionary War. In pledging allegiance to the Crown, there was a promise of land and freedom—you can probably guess how that turned out.

“David Shepherd, 15, likely boy. Formerly the property of William Shepherd, Nansemond, Virginia; left him 4 years ago. GBC.” (\*GBC = General Birch Certificate—proof of service to the British military during the American Revolutionary War issued in the name of Brigadier Samuel Birch.)

## White Privilege and Black Ancestry Continued

“Kessiah Sheppard, 18, stout wench. Formerly the property of Saul Sheppard, Norfolk, Virginia; left him 4 years ago.”

In July 1783, David and Kessiah sailed from New York on L'Abondance, one of many ships bound for Port Roseway, Nova Scotia, now better known as Shelburne. It's unclear when or how exactly they became Fanning's property. Despite that, David and Kessiah were only two of thousands of Black Loyalists who didn't end up with the freedom they expected upon arrival in Nova Scotia—some received low quality land, others received nothing at all. Besides the land issue, however, most (all?) were treated poorly in Nova Scotia, a segregated society. Over one thousand eventually left the province, heading back across the Atlantic Ocean to Sierra Leone.

Regardless of when they crossed paths with Lieutenant Governor Fanning, it is likely that David and Kessiah were with him in Halifax for some time before the move to PEI. At some point, they had their first child, Benjamin Matthias Sheppard, my 4x great grandfather. It's unclear whether Benjamin was born in Nova Scotia or on the Island.

What is clear, though, is that Benjamin was baptized in Charlottetown on March 22, 1789. In 1781, only eight years earlier, the PEI Legislature passed *An Act, declaring that baptism of slaves shall not exempt them from bondage*. What does that mean, you ask? It means, “Sorry, Ben. You can be free from sin... but not from slavery.” This Act was later repealed in 1825, even though it had essentially become “dead letter law” by that point.

In adopting legislation that clearly mentioned slaves, PEI acknowledged indentured servitude on the Island for what it was. Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, on the other hand, never managed to pass legislation that explicitly related to slaves. Some attempts to do so were made in NS, but for whatever reason, it never happened. Slavery itself continued for some time in both of these provinces, despite the lack of legislation.

This lack of legislation was problematic. It set up

an easy way to deny the existence of slavery in NS and NB. If it was never codified in law, it was easier for those who wanted to deny it was a problem. This made the undoing of slavery in those provinces all the more complicated. How could you fight something that simply “didn't exist”?

“The fact of the matter is that these people should be remembered just as proudly as any other ancestor.”

I cannot bring this up without drawing a parallel to the denial, by some, of systemic racism in Canada. It would not be absurd, I think, to imagine that to some extent, the denial of systemic racism in this country is built upon the legacy of the early days of denying the existence of slavery in this country. Under British rule, the *Slave Trade Act* (1807) eventually outlawed slave trade in the British Empire, with the *Slavery Abolition Act of 1833* prohibiting slavery altogether.

Most of what is known about the Black population in PEI in the late 1700s and early 1800s is known because of court documents. In February 1792, David Sheppard, my 5x great-grandfather, was convicted of stealing a saw. In July of that year, Executive Council reconsidered his punishment. The minutes noted, “Davy, a black man, convicted of stealing a saw, was sentenced to receive 39 lashes—but was afterwards pardoned.” It's possible, some surmise, that David Sheppard was spared the full punishment because he was the property of a prominent figure, the Lieutenant Governor.

Some historical records indicate that Lieutenant Governor Fanning gave David and Kessiah Sheppard a farm near Cardigan, PEI, when they were emancipated. With little evidence



to confirm this fact, it is hard to determine what Fanning's personal motive was for setting them free. David and Kessiah went on to have several children, allowing Sheppard to become a widespread surname in the area by the late 1800s. Interracial marriages were bound to happen with a low population of Black settlers in PEI and with the isolation that came with living in a rural area. This helps to explain why the early Black population of Prince Edward Island has largely been forgotten.

The fact of the matter is that these people should be remembered just as proudly as any other ancestor. Many ancestors experienced hardship. Many of us are descended from slaves. We wouldn't be here if it weren't for their hardship. By writing this—as a white woman who has not experienced racism—my goal is to bring more light to the fact that slavery existed in Canada and is another dark part of this country's history we must refuse to deny.

David and Kessiah are just one part of the story.

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## Resources

### Prominent Academics

- Dr. Afua Cooper, Dalhousie University <https://www.dal.ca/faculty/arts/sociology-social-anthropology/faculty-staff/our-faculty/afua-cooper.html>
- Dr. Harvey Amani Whitfield, The University of Vermont <https://www.uvm.edu/cas/history/profiles/harvey-amani-whitfield>

### Books

- *Black Islanders: Prince Edward Island's Historical Black Community* by Jim Hornby (1991) – out of print but available at libraries
- *North to Bondage: Loyalist Slavery in the Maritimes* by Harvey Amani Whitfield (2016) <https://www.ubcpres.ca/north-to-bondage>
- *The Book of Negroes* by Lawrence Hill (2007) <https://www.lawrencehill.com/the-book-of-negroes> – also a miniseries

### Articles

- "A Whitewashing of History" by Deneen L. Brown (2002, The Washington Post) <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/2002/02/17/a-whitewashing-of-history/b013fd77-9bde-4588-934e-345d1550bcda/>
- "Slave Life and Slave Law in Colonial Prince Edward Island, 1769-1825" by Harvey Amani Whitfield and Barry Cahill (2009) <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/Acadiensis/article/view/12734/13666>
- "Behind the Book of Negroes" by Lawrence Hill (2015) <https://www.canadashistory.ca/explore/books/behind-the-book-of-negroes>

### Other

- "Book of Negroes" (Black Loyalist Directory, 1783) [https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/ic/can\\_digital\\_collections/blackloyalists/documents/official/black\\_loyalist\\_directory2.htm](https://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/ic/can_digital_collections/blackloyalists/documents/official/black_loyalist_directory2.htm)
- "Slavery's long shadow: The impact of 200 years of enslavement in Canada" by Kyle Brown (2018, CBC Radio episode) <https://www.cbc.ca/radio/ideas/slavery-s-long-shadow-the-impact-of-200-years-enslavement-in-canada-1.4733595>



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# Summer Internship: Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission

Madison Ranta (2L)

In case you haven't heard, apparently there's some sort of global pandemic going on that's altered everyone's lives. While that meant my summer went a little differently than I had originally anticipated, I was still fortunate enough to be able to spend the past few months working as a summer intern at the Prince Edward Island Human Rights Commission.

As you might remember (or will soon learn) from public law, a province's human rights commission is an independent agency responsible for administering and enforcing their human rights legislation. Every province has a human rights commission, although their size and the way they operate varies across the country. If someone believes that they have experienced discrimination on the basis of a protected ground in an area of life covered by a province's *Human Rights Act or Code* (the exact term varies from province to province but the purpose is the same), they can file a complaint with the human rights commission.

The PEI commission is a small, close-knit group that consisted of seven full-time employees when I was there. Three of them were lawyers tasked with investigating complaints, with two being Dal law grads.

My internship with the PEI commission mainly focused on assisting with legal research related to human rights issues, but I was also able to deliver some education presentations and shadow the Commission lawyers as they met with complainants. During the months of May and June, I worked remotely for the Commission from Halifax. Once the Atlantic bubble was put into place in July, my cat and I relocated to Charlottetown so that I could complete the remainder of my internship in person. The first 10 weeks were paid for by Dalhousie as one of the law school's sponsored internships, with the remainder paid for by a Canada Summer Jobs grant that the Commission applied for.

“ *Helping the Commission to update their website materials also reinforced for me the importance of making legal resources accessible to the public. People shouldn't need a law school education in order to be able understand the process of filing a human rights complaint.* ”

I absolutely loved this internship placement and I am so grateful to have been afforded this opportunity. I appreciated the chance to try working in a public law setting that wasn't government (although the Commission is a government agency created by statute, it is independent). I am still trying to decide what kind of law I want to practice after graduation, and this gave me the chance to expand my understanding of the opportunities available to me.

I learned a lot about how human rights complaints are addressed in practice by a human rights commission. This includes what kind of work goes into mediating a settlement between parties, dismissing a complaint, or conducting a board of inquiry hearing to investigate the complaint. I also feel that I improved my legal research skills through all of the research memos I completed for Commission staff on a variety of issues. It was interesting to learn about some of the key case law and precedents for human rights law. Through this internship, I was also surprised to learn about how Canada's provincial and territorial human rights commissions differ from each other. I learned

that the abilities of commissioners and commission staff to dismiss complaints vary widely depending on the jurisdiction.

Lastly, helping the Commission to update their website materials also reinforced for me the importance of making legal resources accessible to the public. People shouldn't need a law school education in order to be able understand the process of filing a human rights complaint. Making the commission's resources easy to understand expands access to justice by helping those who need it most better exercise their rights under the Act.



## Summer Student: Borden Ladner Gervais, Toronto Office

Shanna Stanley-Hasnain (2L)

I spent this past summer as a 1L Summer Student at Borden Ladner Gervais (BLG) in Toronto. I was ready for that office grind, the big firm experience, late nights ordering pizza with office-mates while slugging away to finish a massive document review, the after work happy hour... and then my bedroom turned into my cubicle.

Despite having COVID strip away the quintessential firm lifestaples, I was lucky to gain countless invaluable experiences at BLG. I was pleasantly surprised that as a 1L student, I was effectively indistinguishable from all the returning students and 2Ls in the eyes of the lawyers we were working for (except for the fact that I probably came off as more frantic and lost). I naively thought we would be separated into "more experienced" and "less experienced" in terms of the types of assignments we would be given. Instead, the work just came in, and someone - anyone - had to take it. Because of that, I was able to sample areas of law I never thought I would have the chance to explore. I had applied to BLG specifically due to their strong health law practice, but ended up taking on assignments in a variety of practice areas, including construction disputes and contracts, product liability, professional negligence, privacy and data

protection, public-private partnership agreements, municipal liability, motor vehicle arbitration claims, health law...and document review. Lots and lots of document review. As someone with diverse interests, being able to dabble in multiple areas of law rather than narrowing myself into one field so early in my career was just what I needed. I also had the opportunity to sit in on motions, examinations for discovery, arbitration and review board hearings, and client meetings - many of which I had conducted document reviews or prepared memos for in advance, taken notes during, or drafted summaries for clients afterwards. This allowed me to feel wholly involved in the cases, as opposed to a cog in the wheel. It was also as exciting as it was beneficial to see the lawyers I was assisting "in action."

While many people recommend working somewhere other than a firm during your last summer of "freedom," experiencing the law firm environment and lifestyle early on has many benefits. It is helpful to learn whether a high demand, "trial by fire," type of environment is somewhere where you would thrive. You also spend your time working for clients that are often larger scale institutions, rather than individuals. This can make the work feel a little

“While many people recommend working somewhere other than a firm during your last summer of “freedom,” experiencing the law firm environment and lifestyle early on has many benefits. It is helpful to learn whether a high demand, “trial by fire,” type of environment is somewhere where you would thrive.”

less personalized - another aspect that is useful to determine whether you enjoy working in a big firm environment. Ultimately, gaining this knowledge will help you make educated and strategic moves in 2/3L in terms of where to take your career path.

A highlight to my summer experience was BLG’s amazing mentorship program. You are placed with an Associate and a Senior Mentor, who you are in constant open communication with throughout the summer and who reassure you every step of the way. The Student Program itself is also exceptional. Even though the students only met face-to-face once or twice throughout the whole summer, the Student Team worked tirelessly to help us feel connected and supported. Working alongside a large cohort of summer students was also not only a lot of fun, but the close-knit, team-oriented environment that BLG fostered meant that there was always someone to turn to if I needed help or support on an assignment.

All in all, my time at BLG was fulfilling and eye-opening. From working on projects that seemed to be of intimidatingly high stakes, to building relationships with incredibly talented lawyers, and to making urgent runs to the office, bank, or court at the drop of a hat, there was never a dull moment, despite seeing the four walls of my bedroom more than I ever thought I would!



## Summer Experience: Research Assistant

Deanna Kerry (2L)

I spent my 1L summer as a research assistant for Professor Devlin. There were three main aspects to my job:

1. updating some chapters for the next edition of *Lawyers’ Ethics and Professional Regulation* (so if you take The Legal Profession and Professional Responsibility next year or the year after, I am sorry, some of the chapters are now longer);
2. compiling and submitting the final documents

for a book about judicial discipline written by law professors from around the world; and

3. working on the 1L Legal Ethics course to make sure its online version stays just as fun and exciting as the in-person version we usually do.

I really enjoyed my summer. I learned a lot about ethics and the interesting dilemmas that can arise in a lawyer’s or judge’s career. There can be a lot of nuance and uncertainty about the

ethical course of action in a certain situation. Other times, a lawyer or judge will do something so outrageous that it's unbelievable and clearly unethical.

My favourite part of the summer was getting to write a note for the Professional Responsibility textbook about the importance of "Trans Competent Lawyering". This is a phrase coined by law professor Samuel Singer describing how lawyers must have an understanding of trans issues as part of their professional obligations. People often view trans (and LGBTQ+ issues more broadly) as optional to learn about but this is not the case for lawyers. I believe this is very important to bring up in this textbook.

I think Professor Devlin tries to act intense or scary

“There can be a lot of nuance and uncertainty about the ethical course of action in a certain situation.”

sometimes, but it's all a lie and he's actually really nice. If you can work for him, I recommend it. The only downside is having to call him and ask him what his handwriting says (I think his handwriting has an Irish accent somehow?), but you'll become an expert at that eventually.



## My Summer Inexperience

Jamie Samson (2L)

I am sure I don't have to tell anyone that we have been living through "unprecedented times." It was all I heard and read about all summer – included in every news briefing, every email, and, unfortunately, every rejection that I received from potential employers. Almost every summer job that I applied for was pre-emptively cancelled as part of COVID-19 precautions. I understood. But that didn't make it easier to face a summer without employment, without income, and with a whole lot of long and empty hours ahead.

I had fully resigned myself to a healthy drain on my line of credit and a lot of sleeping by May, when I was hired to a position with the Dalhousie Student Union. Mind you, my position as Chair of the Dalhousie Student Union Council is not paying my rent. I'm paid very fairly for the work I do, but the position is what I would call very part-time – occasional, if you will. I oversee monthly

council meetings and monitor an email account in the meantime. I work a maximum of ten hours a week. I earn pocket money, not a living.

I enjoy the work I do on council. During meetings, I make sure that everyone gets a chance to speak. I get to listen to others' opinions and arguments while enjoying the seat of a neutral observer. I communicate with many people and try to help them, and I occasionally succeed in doing so.

What I've realized through this position and throughout this summer, however, is that sometimes it's okay to do *nothing* - and even better, sometimes, it's okay to do *everything*. I have not been productive in any traditional sense over the last four months; I have not prepared for my 2L year, I haven't been working, and I haven't been writing the next great Canadian novel. But I have learned how to make a very poor origami crane, how to rollerblade with only minor injury,

how to spend money I don't have, and how to paint a little bit better than I did four months ago. I have achieved nothing that would look good on a resume, but I have greatly enjoyed my free time.

Out of all of this, I do not advocate for spending money you don't have – it is easy to forget that a line of credit needs to eventually be paid back to the bank. However, I do think that on occasion, when life permits, we should allow ourselves to indulge in a whim. To try something – a hobby, a food, a style – where we just don't know what the outcome will be. We may love it. We may hate it. We may leave it sitting in the corner of our bedroom for an entire summer (even when we have absolutely nothing else to do) because learning mandolin is *hard*. But that's what pocket money and unprecedented times are for. Doing something unprecedented.

*“What I've realized through this position and throughout this summer, however, is that sometimes it's okay to do nothing - and even better, sometimes, it's okay to do everything.”*





# Alumnus Bio: Samantha Ratnam, BA (Memorial '08) JD (Schulich '13)

Tiff Ward (1L)



SAMANTHA RATNAM, BA (MEMORIAL '08) JD (SCHULICH '13)

Samantha Ratnam is currently a Senior Corporate Policy Advisor at the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services. In her current role, she works with senior leadership on initiatives related to policy and legislation.

After receiving her B.A. from Memorial University

in 2008, Samantha began her law career as a student at Schulich. She says she was drawn to Dal and the Schulich School of Law because of its national and international reputation. Schulich was known for not only producing exceptionally strong legal minds, but also for its collegial atmosphere, embodied in the Weldon Tradition of unselfish public service. This community of support and friendship was central to Samantha's experience, and the wide range of extra-curricular activities available at Schulich gave her the opportunity to get a feel for what type of law she wished to pursue upon graduation.

Samantha joined the Nova Scotia Public Service in 2015 with the Department of Justice and has worked in a wide range of roles over the last several years. She spent time as a Court Officer/Conciliator with the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia (Family Division) where she worked with judges, lawyers, self-represented litigants, and other members of the public. She conducted alternative dispute resolution meetings and did duty conciliation as part of her day to day work. Samantha then chose to pursue a career in public policy, working first with the Department of Agriculture and then with Service Nova Scotia (now the Department of Service Nova Scotia and Internal Services).

Her public service career has provided Samantha with many opportunities to expand her skills both as a lawyer and a leader. Recently, Samantha took on a temporary role as a privacy officer with her department. This role gave her an opportunity to delve into privacy in government, providing guidance around privacy matters, reviewing privacy impact assessments, and responding to



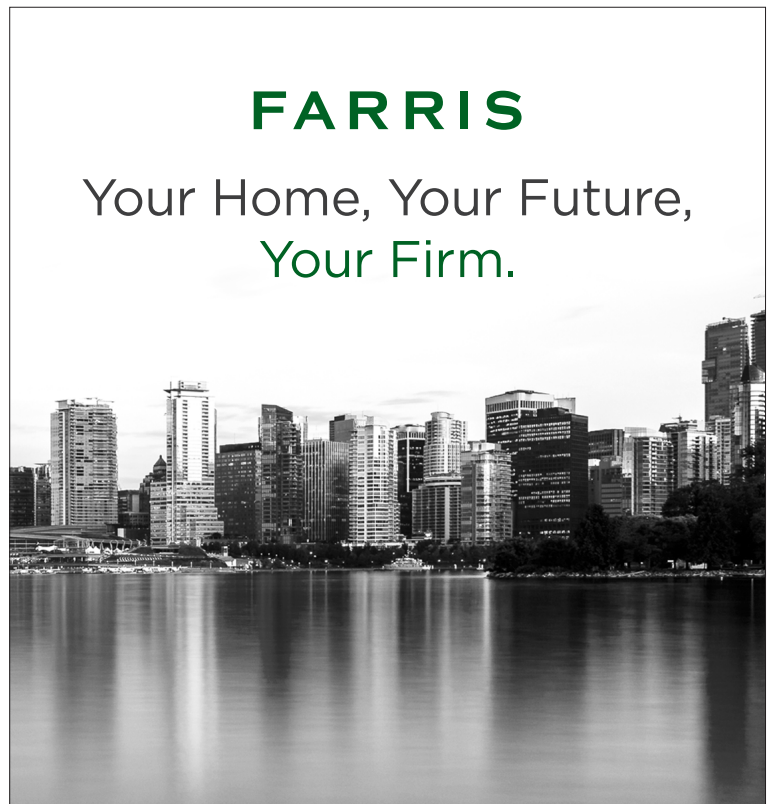
privacy breaches. Samantha advises that “it’s important to pursue professional development opportunities throughout your career to broaden your skill set.”

Samantha is especially proud of her role as a coach in the intergovernmental case competition, Policy Hack. This annual competition sees interdisciplinary teams of public servants come together to solve real-life public policy cases drawn from all three levels of government. Samantha’s role as a coach in 2018 and 2019 was to take her team through the competition, supporting them throughout the development of their case solution and presentation to senior leader judges on competition day. Her teams made it to the final “lightning round” competition in both years, winning the Championship in 2019. “Policy Hack gave me a chance to mentor colleagues and participate in their professional development. I was also able to build new relationships across different levels of government,” she says.

*“When in law school, take advantage of mentoring and networking opportunities,” she says. “Get to know people so that you have a strong network to support you as you move forward in your career.”*

Samantha suggests that law students who are thinking about a career in government pay particular attention to developing their communication and research skills, as these are vital to success in policy roles. Samantha also advises not to “discount the importance of interpersonal relationships” and credits her ability to work closely with others as a key to her success. She also credits her involvement with DFLA’s mentorship program during her time at Schulich with her focused interest in government and policy work.

“When in law school, take advantage of mentoring and networking opportunities,” she says. “Get to know people so that you have a strong network to support you as you move forward in your career.”



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# **MEEET YOUR LSS EXECUTIVES**



## President

### Meghan Faught (3L)

Meghan was born and raised in Ontario in small towns ranging from Thunder Bay to Tara. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of Waterloo with a Bachelor of Arts and Business, majoring in history. After graduating, she wanted a change of scenery and moved to Tofino, BC where she spent eight blissful months attempting and failing to surf, running in the rainforest, and eating her weight in tacos. Academia called her out to the East Coast where she completed her Master's in Environmental Policy at Memorial University, where she focused her research on global eco-certification schemes. The love of learning, challenging herself, and helping others brought her to law school and into the role of President at the LSS. In her "spare" time, Meghan loves reading, baking, and being outside in any capacity, usually with her partner and two dogs.

In her second year, Meghan was Vice President External for the LSS, where she was the Faculty of Law representative for the Dalhousie Student Union Council. On Council, Meghan led a judicial board petition, and sat on the Bylaw Policy Review Committee and the Internal Investigation

Committee. In her role as Vice President External, she organized the annual LSS + Law Library Food Drive, and sat on the Dalhousie Law Alumni Association Board of Directors. This experience led her to run for President.

As President, Meghan acts as the formal and official representative of the Society. This means she meets with the Dean on a regular basis to discuss important student concerns, sits on the Faculty Council and gives regular updates on the student body, and acts as the official spokesperson of the Society.

This year brings unique challenges for the entire student body. As President, Meghan is focused on supporting the executive team in transitioning their various portfolios online, advocating for students in various capacities, and supporting students in any way she can.

Her priorities this year are focused on aiding students in the transition to online learning. This involves advocating for increased wellness and mental health support, understanding and communicating the challenges students are facing in a virtual world, and listening to student concerns and synthesizing and communicating these concerns to the appropriate levels of administration.

Meghan prioritizes meaningfully helping students and will aim to ensure that students feel supported and heard throughout the year.

Meghan encourages any student to reach out with concerns or questions.



## Vice President Finance

### Micah Boyes (3L)

Micah was born in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and raised on a farm just outside the village of Borden. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts in Business Economics from the University of Saskatchewan. While in undergrad, Micah took on leadership roles in various student organizations, including as President of the Economic Student Society.

Last year, Micah was a 2L Representative on the Dalhousie Law Student Society Board of Directors. As part of that role, he sat on the Faculty Council, the Teaching Awards Committee, and is currently sitting on the Associate Dean Search Committee. Micah was also an active member of the law school community, including regularly contributing to the Weldon Times and playing intramural sports with various law school teams.

Micah's interest in student governance comes from his love of politics. Introduced to politics by his brother at the age of 8, he has been involved in every federal election since 2006. In 2015, he interned at a Member of Parliament's office in Ottawa, an experience which solidified his interest in public service. In 2018, he worked for the Saskatchewan government in the Minister's

Offices of Finance and Government Relations. This opportunity allowed him to see how decisions made by those in public office can affect people, especially decisions dealing with finances. The experience also impressed upon him the importance of fiscal responsibility for those who are dealing with others' money. Because of this, it is Micah's goal to be transparent and accountable to the students of the Schulich School of Law, whose money it is that goes into running the LSS.

As VP Finance, Micah is responsible for managing all LSS funds and financial records. It is his responsibility to complete an audit of the LSS in order to receive the levy which students pay. Once the disbursement is received from the DSU, the money flows from the LSS into funds that directly support the student body. For example, the LSS will reimburse students for certain law-related costs. Given the unique and uncertain circumstances of the present year, Micah and the rest of the executive team have been brainstorming ways to make these funds more widely available for the wider student body.

The majority of the money the LSS manages goes to society funding. Societies are an important part of the law school experience, especially at Schulich. This happens in the winter term, so if you are a part of a society, keep an eye out for that.

Micah is looking forward to meeting the challenges that this year will bring and is committed to doing his best to ensure that every student, whether in Halifax or not, has the best possible law school experience. Any questions for him can be sent to [vpfinance@dallss.com](mailto:vpfinance@dallss.com).



## Vice President Student Life

Maya Churilov (2L)

Maya is a second-year student at Weldon who was born in Toronto and raised in Vaughan, Ontario. She completed her Bachelor of Commerce at the Ted Rogers School of Management at Ryerson University, majoring in Law and Business and minoring in Professional Communications. Majoring in Law and Business sparked her curiosity about the regulation of business and corporate structures, which led her to apply to law school. She is currently completing the Business Law specialization and is interested in Competition Law, Securities Regulation and Corporate Governance.

While completing her studies, Maya worked in the hospitality industry as a server and bartender. In her spare time, Maya loves baking, and some of her favourite recipes include toffee chocolate chip cookies, snickerdoodles, and M&M brownies. Her other hobbies include photography and anything to do with the outdoors – hiking, camping, fishing, ATVing, and occasionally skydiving. She recently took up golfing over the summer, completing lessons at the Links at Montague in Halifax. Maya is fluent

in Russian and also loves travelling. Her favourite destinations include Barcelona, Amalfi Coast, and Sint Maarten. Over the summer she visited every Atlantic province for the first time.

Before joining the LSS as VP Student Life, Maya represented Section C as a 1L representative last year. This, in combination with her passion for the collegial community at Schulich, made her run for VPSL. Maya also volunteered at the Nova Scotia Supreme Court's Access to Justice Clinic through Pro Bono and acted as an advocate for several AIO and SDC hearings through the Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service. She is returning to DSAS this year and is taking on a new Pro Bono project at the Elizabeth Fry Record Suspension Clinic. In the summertime, she interned with the Canadian Red Cross in their International Humanitarian Law division, working on IHL research and educational outreach.

Maya's portfolio as VP Student Life includes overseeing Schulich's many student societies, handling communications and social media, and planning events for students.



## Vice President External

### Shane Isler (3L)

Shane decided to run for the position of VP External at the end of his second year of law school because he decided that he wanted to do more for the school and his fellow law students, helping to develop a more inclusive environment at Weldon. He also really likes knowing what is going on behind the scenes, and with the ample amount of free time law school gives you, why not use some of it to get involved?

As VP External, Shane is responsible for supporting the LSS and law students by representing them to external organizations, acting as a liaison to the Dalhousie Student Union, and organizing the annual Food Bank Drive which takes place near the end of the fall term. In his role as VP External, Shane sits on both the DSU Council and DSU Student Senate Caucus as the Faculty of Law Representative, is a member of the DSU External Committee, and is on the Board of Directors of the Dalhousie Law Alumni Association.

Beyond his involvement through the LSS, at Schulich, Shane's engagement includes being a Co-Chair and Financial Officer for the Social Activist Law Student Association (SALSA), as well as being a member of OUTLaw and of Sober Support.

In his free time – what he has of it – Shane enjoys spending time with his fiancé, getting outdoors and being active, cooking, baking, finding and sharing random facts with friends, and watching funny pet videos.

If you have any questions, concerns, or ideas for what you would like to see the LSS do, or if you just feel like having a chat, send Shane an email at [vpexternal@dallss.com](mailto:vpexternal@dallss.com).

Shane grew up between Montréal and Nova Scotia. He completed his undergraduate degree in Political Studies from Queen's University before taking time off, bartending and working at music festivals in Montréal, as well as working at a vineyard in the Annapolis Valley.

Eventually Shane wanted a change, so he packed up and moved to Sweden for two years. During this time, he travelled around parts of Europe, experiencing different countries and cultures that helped him to gain perspective on people, life, and himself. Over these two years he also completed the interdisciplinary Master's of Science in Global Studies programme at Lund University, where he wrote his Master's thesis on the clear inaction of the Canadian government in calling an inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Shane's motivation for coming to law school was a desire to make his experience and education more actionable and practically applicable, in order to advance his long-term goals of working with human rights, inequality and social issues.



## Vice President Executive

Yazan Matarieh (3L)

Yazan calls many places home. He immigrated to Canada from the Middle East around a decade ago. He considers Palestine his place of origin and Halifax his adopted home.

Prior to law school, Yazan completed a Diploma of Engineering and a Bachelor of Engineering at Dalhousie University. While there, he served as a member at the Dalhousie Student Union Council for a total of three years and was appointed to committees like the DSU Investment Review Committee and the DSU Bylaw and Policy Review Committee. Those appointments opened Yazan's mind to the importance of advocacy and set him on a path towards acquiring a legal education. Since becoming a law student, he has joined a number of groups on campus, including the Dalhousie Student Advocacy Service and the Dalhousie Legal Aid Tenant Rights Program. In every role he occupies, Yazan tries his best to draw lessons from his past experiences to bring a fresh perspective to the table.

As the Vice President Executive of the LSS, Yazan is responsible for any governance matter

within the Society. This can range from ensuring all LSS executives meet regularly throughout the year to discuss and coordinate their activities to organizing the LSS Annual General Meeting. You can also speak to Yazan about your locker issues, election questions, or about getting involved in committees.

Yazan enjoys spending his free time with his friends and loved ones. He enjoys learning (about) new languages, pretending he knows how to play the ukulele, and talking to people about podcasts. Recently, he has also been listening to musicals more and more, so don't be surprised if he's humming something or other when you run into him.

Yazan is always happy to have a conversation with anyone. He invites you to send him an email at [vpexecutive@dallss.com](mailto:vpexecutive@dallss.com).



## Vice President Academic

### Nicole Kelly (3L)

Hi, my name is Nicole Kelly and I am excited to be returning as your VP Academic for the 2020-2021 school year. I've really enjoyed serving as the VP Academic, 1L Executive Representative, and Section A Representative (aka the best section) in my first two years of law school and I'm excited to spend my last year on the LSS Executive once again.

I did my Bachelor's and Master's degrees at the University of Guelph and had the odd experience of being the Teaching Assistant for courses I had taken during my undergrad. It really helped show me first-hand what a difference it can make to utilize different teaching techniques to improve the student experience. This is what motivated me to run for VP Academic to make sure that students' opinions and needs are considered during the curriculum change process.

As your VP Academic, I am responsible for being the liaison between students, faculty, and administration for everything academic related. Part of this job is sitting on the Faculty Council, Academic Committee, and Teaching

Awards Committee alongside the other student representatives. I have really enjoyed working with faculty to keep communication open and working to make sure that everyone is getting the best learning experience possible.

As upper-year students will remember, the Academic Committee worked hard last year on a curriculum reform proposal to semesterize the mandatory curriculum of the law school. While we had to press pause on this proposal during the COVID-19 crisis, I am excited to pick up where the committee left off and continue working on this proposal.

I am also responsible for the CANs database (currently on the LSS Brightspace page). I found CANs to be a very helpful tool in 1L/2L and I spent a lot of time this summer updating the database to make it better organized. Later this year I will be putting out a call for CANs in classes that need up-to-date CANs or for our newer classes that don't have any CANs. I hope you'll keep your eyes out for that email in your inbox!

I'm looking forward to working with you this year and if you have any academic-related questions or comments, please reach out at [vpacademic@dallss.com](mailto:vpacademic@dallss.com).



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