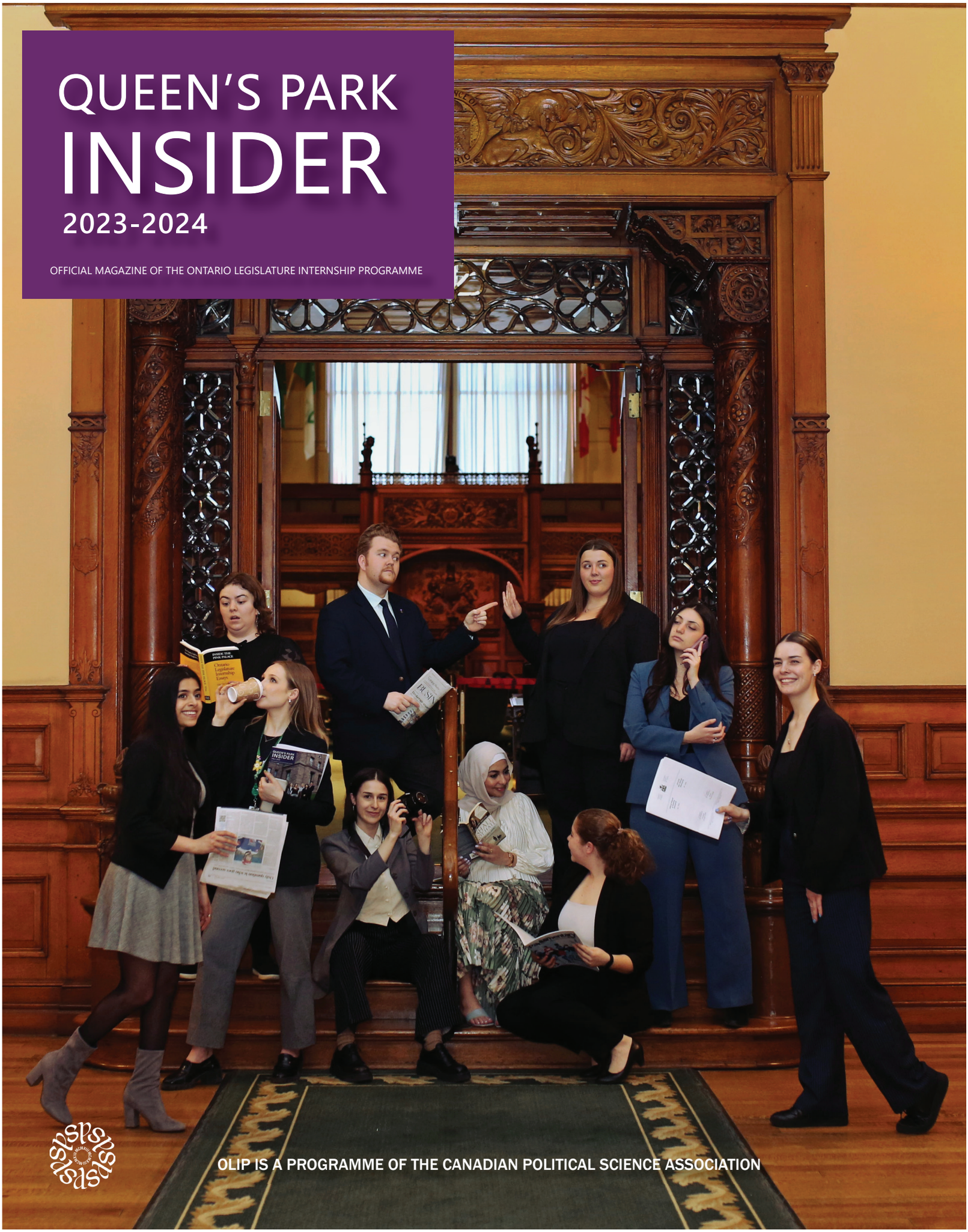
QUEEN'S PARK INSIDER

2023-2024

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE INTERNSHIP PROGRAMME



OLIP IS A PROGRAMME OF THE CANADIAN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

FROM THE EDITORS

Dear readers,

What a special experience it has been to revisit the many highlights of our OLIP year, and to retell them through photos and stories. When we offered our fellow interns the opportunity to be individually credited for their magazine contributions, their response was resounding: we are a collective and wish to be represented as such. This reflects the team-oriented approach that defined the 2023-24 OLIP cohort, and which we hope is apparent in this year's *Queen's Park Insider*.

Politics would not be politics without unpredictability, and we would be hard-pressed to think of a dull day this year. Writing about our time in OLIP gave us the opportunity to slow down and reflect on our experiences thus far. We are eager to shed light on what this unique programme offered us for those who share our interest in Ontario politics.

We cannot talk about the invaluable experiences OLIP has provided us without acknowledging the generosity of those who have made our experiences in the vibrant political space of Queen's Park possible. We would like to first thank the Canadian Political Science Association; the Speaker of the House, the Honourable Ted Arnott; the Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, Trevor Day; all the hard-working staff at the Legislative Assembly; and, of course, the Members themselves. Without your trust and guidance, OLIP would not be possible. To our partners: your generous contributions have enhanced our education, and we are so grateful to have met and gained insights from each of you. Lastly, Dr. Constantinou, Michael Vidoni, Julia Douglas, Elisa Natarelli, and Richard Sage, your caring leadership and support does not go unnoticed – thank you for the time you dedicate to championing this programme.

To our fellow interns, we hope this magazine will serve as a time capsule of our year together. We can keep these memories alive by taking the lessons we learned along with us into the next chapters of our careers – whether the fundamental role of democratic values like accountability and integrity, or the importance of listening and learning across political divides. Whatever each of us goes on to do next, there is no question that our personal discoveries from this year, and the relationships we built along the way, will play an important role in how we approach our work in the future.

Happy reading to all,

Astrid Krueger & Bridget Carter-Whitney



The Admin Team

Academic Director: Dr. Peter Constantinou

Legislative Coordinators: Julia Douglas & Michael Vidoni

Programme Manager: Elisa Natarelli

Archivist: Rick Sage

OLIP Committees

Social Media: Razan Akiba & Olivia Collver

Receptions: Rhea Saini & Taylor Pizzirusso

Recruitment: Kaitlin Gallant & Steffi Burgi

Meetings: Taylor Pizzirusso & Razan Akiba

Alumni Relations: Olivia Collver & Kaitlin Gallant

Study Tours: Steffi Burgi & Rhea Saini

Partnerships: Milena Basciano & Evan Cameron

Magazine: Astrid Krueger & Bridget Carter-Whitney

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear readers,

As OLIP's Academic Director, I have had the pleasure of watching the members of the 48th cohort embrace the year's opportunities to the fullest. The interns are now finishing their second placements, preparing to present their academic papers at the upcoming CPSA conference, and looking toward the next chapter of their careers. It is hard to imagine that in ten short months these young professionals went from nervously shuffling around Whitney Block to striding confidently through the legislative building as seasoned political staff.

We know this transformative programme would not be possible without the individuals and organizations who have donated their time, expertise, and resources to enhance our interns' professional development.

I would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the Canadian Political Science Association and the Legislative Assembly of Ontario for their continued support and generosity. Thank you as well to the Speaker, Hon. Ted Arnott, and Clerk, Trevor Day, who have kindly supported the programme for many years. We would not have had another successful year without the hard work and dedication of Programme Coordinators Michael Vidoni, and Julia Douglas, Programme Manager Elisa Natarelli, and volunteer archivist Richard Sage.

Additionally, I would like to express my gratitude to our many partners who generously support the programme and ensure it provides an incredible learning opportunity for the interns. We are so appreciative of your investment in Ontario's future leaders. To all who took time from your busy schedules to meet and share your insights with the OLIP interns, thank you for your part in creating a rich learning experience for this cohort.

I would also like to thank the many OLIP alumni who continue to champion our programme. OLIP's impact extends beyond each year's interns, and I look forward to seeing the 48th cohort become mentors themselves and give back to the programme as alumni.

I always look forward to seeing how the interns bring perspectives and assumptions from their lived experiences with them to the Ontario Legislature, and leave ten months later with a very different understanding of politics, along with new memories and goals. From the beginning, this year's cohort was characterized by a strong spirit of collaboration and a desire to support one another. Let's keep an eye out for these interns as they continue to progress and use the lessons learned at the Legislature to make positive contributions to their communities and province.

With much gratitude, and best wishes for 48th OLIP Cohort,

Dr. Peter Constantinou



What is OLIP?

The Ontario Legislature Internship Programme (OLIP) was established in 1975 and is administered by the Canadian Political Science Association and supported by a substantial grant from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario. The non-partisan programme is not associated with the Government of Ontario or with any political party. OLIP provides backbench opposition and government members of the Legislative Assembly with highly qualified assistants while simultaneously giving interns academic and practical experience in the day-to-day work of the Legislature.

INTRODUCING THE INTERNS

RAZAN AKIBA, *Palestinian, born in Toronto, grew up in Jordan, living in Mississauga*



Education: Honours Bachelor of Arts in History and Political Science, Minor in French (University of Toronto)

About Me: I love sneakers! I always colour-coordinate my shoes to my outfit. Look out for my shoes!

Assembly Placement: I gained more insight into committees during my placement with the Committees section of the Procedural Services Branch. I had the opportunity to work on a variety of projects, including a document on Private Members' Public Bills and a procedural note on committees. Thanks to all the clerks for meeting with me!

MILENA BASCIANO, *Vaughan, Ontario*



Education: Honours Bachelor of Public Administration, Specialization in Policy Analysis (York University)

About Me: I used to compete in Canadian lifeguard championships. Did you know lifesaving is a sport?

Assembly Placement: I was privileged to work with the incredible staff at the Parliamentary Protocol and Public Relations Branch. I supported and provided research and analysis on the Legislative Assembly of Ontario's educational programs, interparliamentary relations, diplomatic visits, and event protocol. I cherished having a range of fruitful responsibilities and invaluable opportunities to learn.

STEFFI BURGI, *North Vancouver, British Columbia*



Education: Honours Bachelor of Arts in Language and Intercultural Relations, Minor in Politics (Toronto Metropolitan University)

About Me: I love to read and one of my favourite books to recommend is How to Stop Time by Matt Haig.

Assembly Placement: I was very excited to be placed with Table Research Office in the Procedural Services Branch. There, I worked on a range of projects, including a procedural note on a typical sitting day in the House and a research report on the incorporation of Indigenous traditions in various legislatures.

EVAN CAMERON, *Brampton, Ontario*



Education: Bachelor of Arts in Political Science and North American Studies (Wilfrid Laurier University)

About Me: Aside from being a total political nerd, I have also been a musician for many years and spend my spare time performing live music across Ontario.

Assembly Placement: I was placed with the Legislative Protective Service, where I worked on a survey and subsequent report on MPP safety within the Legislative Precinct. It was particularly interesting to gain a unique perspective on this behind-the-scenes aspect of the Legislature.

BRIDGET CARTER-WHITNEY, *Toronto, Ontario*



Education: Bachelor of Arts in International Development Studies (Trent University); Master of Arts in Political Science, with a Diploma in Democratic Administration (York University)

About Me: I am driven by curiosity and empathy, and passionate about nurturing political spaces that are supportive, constructive and community focused.

Assembly Placement: I was grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the important work of the Parliamentary Counsel team, alongside Astrid, in our Assembly placement. We were privileged to learn from the Legislature's dedicated internal Counsel, who were generous in sharing their time and knowledge with us and answering our many questions.

OLIVIA COLLVER, *Norfolk County, Ontario*



Education: Honours Bachelor of Arts in Political Science, Minor in Criminology (Western University)

About Me: Coming from a rural area, and with experience in municipal government, I am so excited to be exploring the city of Toronto and learning about government at the provincial level.

Assembly Placement: I had a wonderful experience during my placement in the Information Services Branch. My responsibilities included reviewing and offering feedback on the Legislative Assembly's internal and external websites. I also had the opportunity to write an article about OLIP for the website. I truly appreciated my time with this incredibly friendly department!

INTRODUCING THE INTERNS

KAITLIN GALLANT, *Etobicoke, Ontario*



Education: Joint Honours Bachelor of Social Science in History and Political Science, French Immersion (University of Ottawa)

About Me: Besides reading political memoirs and watching CPAC, I spend most of my spare time on a bike, rating Toronto's gelato scene, or travelling across Canada to visit family.

Assembly Placement: With the Canadian Parliamentary Review, I wrote articles on political family dynasties, the Legislative Assembly's Seven Grandfather Teachings carving, and Ontario's first two women MPPs. My highlights were learning from Will, the editor, and hosting two roundtables with parliamentarians and civic education industry professionals.

ASTRID KRUEGER, *Edmonton, Alberta*



Education: Honours Bachelor of Arts in International Relations, Minors in Philosophy, History, and Political Science (Mount Allison University)

About Me: Though I had not lived in Toronto before moving here for OLIP, I have driven across the country, from Edmonton to Halifax, twice!

Assembly Placement: My placement with Parliamentary Counsel gave me the opportunity to write briefs of Supreme Court cases, investigate issues of parliamentary privilege, and review legal documents. I want to thank my incredibly enthusiastic and receptive supervisors Gabriela and Will for the ultimate law school litmus test!

WHAT ARE THE INTERNS LISTENING TO?



Stranger in the Alps
Phoebe Bridgers



Abbey Road
The Beatles



The Magnolia Electric Co.
Songs: Ohia



Desire, I Want to Turn Into You
Caroline Polachek



Room Under the Stairs
ZAYN

TAYLOR PIZZIRUSSO, *Toronto, Ontario*



Education: Bachelor of Arts in Political Science (University of Waterloo); Master of Arts in Political Science (University of Guelph)

About Me: After studying political science through an academic lens, I am so excited to get up close and learn how Queen's Park runs from the inside!

Assembly Placement: I was placed at the Legislative Library where I worked with their rare books collection, conducting research on the War of 1812 and Indigenous history. I was grateful for this opportunity to learn more about Canadian history and the importance of preserving it for future generations.

RHEA SAINI, *Mississauga, Ontario*

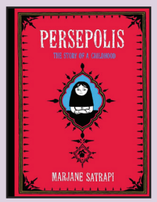


Education: Honours Bachelor of Health Sciences, Interdisciplinary Minor in Community Engagement (McMaster University)

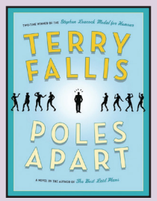
About Me: I am passionate about the importance of community engagement and grassroots initiatives and am currently organizing a campaign to increase student access to the Hamilton Bikeshare!

Assembly Placement: I had the privilege of completing my placement with Legislative Research, where my work included creating a research brief on vaccine boosters and doing background research on how jurisdictions across Canada have approached Indigenous reconciliation. I want to thank everyone in the office for their warmth, guidance, and support!

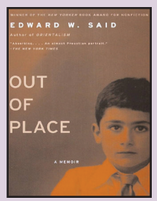
WHAT ARE THE INTERNS READING?



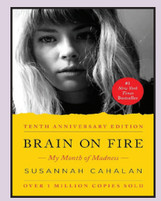
Persepolis
Marjane Satrapi



Poles Apart
Terry Fallis



Out of Place
Edward Said



Brain on Fire: My Month of Madness
Susannah Cahalan



See No Stranger
Valarie Kaur

MPP PLACEMENTS

Astrid and MPP Chandra Pasma

For my first placement, I had the pleasure of working with MPP Chandra Pasma, representative for Ottawa West—Nepean, and NDP Education Critic. In this office, I worked closely on the education file, which overlaps with many other policy areas, including labor, mental health, transportation, childcare, and more. Because of the complexity of this file, whenever we were connecting with stakeholders like unions, schoolboards, and advocacy groups, or creating informational resources for teachers and parents, we had to have a strong understanding of the intersecting and wide-reaching impacts of education policies.

I love how working in this office forced me to become a generalist, both in understanding provincial policies, and in exercising an array of (newly acquired) skills. For instance, I researched and briefed MPP Pasma on new bills and news stories, wrote Members' statements and questions for question period, and created advocacy resources. One highlight from this experience was planning a press conference to call for increased support for deaf, blind, and deafblind students in Ontario schools.

I also had the pleasure of visiting MPP Pasma's riding of Ottawa West—Nepean and contributing to the community-oriented work of the constituency office. I enjoyed meeting with constituents to discuss their concerns and connecting them to services through our office.

I'd like to thank MPP Pasma and staff, Samantha, Darren, and Haniel, for their insight and guidance. I'm grateful for their trust, and the opportunity to help carry out the meaningful work of their office.



Astrid and MPP Ernie Hardeman

This spring, I had the pleasure of working with MPP Hardeman of Oxford! In selecting my MPP placements, I sought to work in offices that were as different as could be: one urban and one rural riding; a newly elected MPP and the second-longest serving at the Legislature; and, of course, opposition and government.

Having grown up in a city, I was excited to learn about the experiences and interests of a rural, largely agricultural, community. MPP Hardeman was never short of wisdom to share, collected from his 29 years as an MPP, including a tenure as Minister of Agriculture. He has a keen eye for assessing policy implications and a close, understanding relationship with his constituents.



I especially enjoyed visiting Oxford. It was inspiring to see how connected a long-term politician could be to their community. Walking around the riding, MPP Hardeman was constantly approached and always greeted his constituents with a familiar smile and an eagerness to listen. His commitment to representing his constituents' perspectives at Queen's Park was clear, and he shared various tactics to navigate this responsibility effectively.

I would like to thank MPP Hardeman for the warm welcome to team Oxford, and his staff, Jacob, Shelley, Jennifer, and Kelly, for helping me better understand their community.

Bridget and MPP Deepak Anand

Being placed with Mississauga—Malton MPP Deepak Anand, then Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, offered me the opportunity to help serve his community. In true political form, every day was different: whether writing speeches and Member's statements, preparing questions for committee or drafting quotes for media releases, I never knew what to expect, but I did know that MPP Anand trusted me to assist him.

Working with MPP Anand, I reflected on the expectations placed on elected officials to serve their communities. For ridings in the GTA like Mississauga—Malton, it can sometimes be difficult to strike a balance between a Member's legislative and constituency work, as they try their best to attend as many community events as they can despite the full-time workload at Queen's Park during sitting weeks. On my first day, MPP Anand shared his approach: he will meet with anyone and hear them out. Sitting in the passenger seat as we drove to events across Mississauga and beyond, I realized that much of an MPP's life is spent in transit. Through taking the time to be present and make personal connections with stakeholders and community members, MPP Anand showed me the impact of showing up.

Thank you MPP Anand for your passionate support of OLIP, not only by hosting an intern but also for highlighting the programme in a Member's Statement!



Bridget and MPP Sol Mamakwa

Spending my second placement in MPP Sol Mamakwa's office was an illuminating experience. I appreciated being given the trust to assist him with his many responsibilities. MPP Mamakwa represents Kiiwetinoong in northwestern Ontario, a riding with many First Nations communities, including many fly-in reserves. He is also the NDP's critic for Indigenous and Treaty Relations and Northern Development.

Within my first month on the team, I observed the wide range of requests that come across MPP Mamakwa's desk. Some were celebratory, and many others spoke to the unique challenges faced by northern Indigenous communities, including intergenerational trauma, and unequal access to resources and services. I took notice of the



efforts MPP Mamakwa dedicates toward helping the people in his community feel connected to his work at Queen's Park, including by doing a Facebook Live most days at the Legislature.

Lastly, it was special to witness a moment long advocated for by their team – when a motion was passed to allow MPPs to speak not only English or French in the House, but also an Indigenous language. It was a meaningful day for MPP Mamakwa, whose first language is Anishininimowin. The cross-party dialogue that led to this change stood out as a reminder of the importance of relationship-building within the Legislature. I am so grateful to MPP Mamakwa and Athena for the chance to be part of the team and contribute to their work.

MPP PLACEMENTS

Evan and MPP Mike Schreiner

My first placement, with MPP Mike Schreiner, was a remarkably engaging and rewarding experience. My work in MPP Schreiner's office varied greatly, and included speechwriting, preparing briefings, staffing events, and researching policy ideas, among many other tasks.

This placement was particularly busy because, along with representing Guelph, MPP Schreiner, is also leader of the Green Party of Ontario. As a result, I was able to work with our team on several interesting projects, such as preparing for media scrums and press conferences, speechwriting for major speaking engagements, and sorting the high volume of media and event requests that came into the office. MPP Schreiner's role as leader also meant that our office hosted several stakeholder meetings each day, which I was fortunate to participate in.

The last several weeks of my placement in MPP Schreiner's office also saw the introduction of a second Member of his party to the Legislature with the election of MPP Aislinn Clancy. While significantly changing the day-to-day workings of the office, this provided me with the additional perspective of working within a caucus, which I had not yet experienced.

I extend my most sincere thanks to MPP Mike Schreiner, and to Sam, Anna, Candice, Cecilia, James and the many others in Toronto and Guelph who made this placement such a positive experience.



Evan and MPP Andrew Dowie

My second placement, with MPP Andrew Dowie, was an exciting and eye-opening opportunity to learn about the role of a government Member. MPP Dowie represents the riding of Windsor—Tecumseh, which encompasses the east side of the City of Windsor, and the entirety of the Town of Tecumseh. This makes the riding quite unique as MPP Dowie has both rural and urban constituents.

My work in the office varied greatly, with day-to-day tasks that included speech writing, preparing content for the local newsletter, briefing the Member ahead of media interviews, and attending events and stakeholder receptions along with him. During one of the Legislature's constituency weeks, I had the chance to join MPP Dowie in the riding. While I was in Windsor—Tecumseh, I accompanied the Member to several community events, visited local businesses where he recognized their hard work, and joined him on a riding visit with the Minister of Seniors and Accessibility. MPP Dowie also introduced me to the Mayor of Windsor, Drew Dilkens, and several other local elected officials.



It was a pleasure to work with MPP Dowie and his staff; I thoroughly enjoyed contributing to the work of their office. Thank you to MPP Dowie, Brianna, Mike, Cole, Salam, and Meghan for the warm welcome to Windsor, and for the wonderful experience of working alongside you.

Kaitlin and MPP Laura Smith

For my first placement, I had the pleasure of working with MPP Laura Smith of Thornhill, then the Parliamentary Assistant (PA) to the Minister of Tourism, Culture and Sport. In her office, I wrote many speeches and briefing notes, and researched for her private Member's bills.

I also worked on MPP Smith's PA portfolio, and found meetings with heritage, sporting and arts organizations and non-profits to be particularly interesting. By attending events including an art exhibit launch, a tourism conference, and a gala for librarians with MPP Smith, I saw how Tourism, Culture and Sport earned its reputation as the "fun" ministry. I was also able to accompany MPP Smith to other parts of Ontario, including Aurora for an intergovernmental funding announcement and Lindsay for a "Destigmatizing Dementia" event related to one of her private Member's bills.



I also had the pleasure of visiting MPP Smith's riding of Thornhill numerous times, where I learned about its strong Jewish community and its growth and development as a GTA suburb. I enjoyed meeting with constituents, visiting businesses and non-profits, and partaking in several community events, including a seniors' Christmas party, a community dinner at a synagogue, and several Hannukah celebrations.

Thank you to MPP Smith, and staff, Daniela, Sheldon, Delia and Chelsea, for their warm welcome and guidance, and for providing such a well-rounded and enriching experience!

Kaitlin and MPP Guy Bourgouin

For my second placement, I had the pleasure of working with MPP Guy Bourgouin of Mushkegowuk—James Bay, the Official Opposition Critic for Francophone Affairs, Mining, and Natural Resources and Forestry. In his office, I enjoyed drafting letters of support, managing the correspondence for municipal council resolutions, and researching for several private Member's bills. I was also able to join MPP Bourgouin in many meetings and functions related to the Franco-Ontarian community and the natural resources sector.

In April, I had the privilege of visiting MPP Bourgouin's riding of Mushkegowuk—James Bay. This was the furthest north I have ever travelled in Ontario, and it certainly did not disappoint! I learned about the riding's strong Franco-Ontarian and First Nations communities, as well as the unique challenges faced in the North, such as road safety and health care access. I was able to spend time in Kapuskasing and Hearst, and even had the opportunity to fly over the James Bay coast to visit Fort Albany First Nation. Attending the community walk-in clinic hosted by MPP Bourgouin, and taking a helicopter ride with the Deputy Chief, who pointed out where the recent wildfires occurred in the region, were particularly impactful experiences.

Thank you to MPP Bourgouin, and staff, Adriana, Mélanie, Jessica, Stephanie, and Shirley, for their mentorship and support, and for providing such a unique experience in the opposition!



MPP PLACEMENTS

Milena and MPP John Fraser



From scrums to speeches to stakeholders, I had the opportunity to contribute to a variety of work in MPP John Fraser's office. Our days usually began with a briefing about the issues of the day, and the occasional last-minute drafting of a question or Member's statement. After a long hour of questioning and heckling during Question Period, I would support MPP Fraser in anticipating questions from the media during the scrums that would happen afterwards. The remainder of the day would be dedicated to meetings, events, speech writing, and losing track of MPP Fraser in the hallways of Queen's Park. I also had the opportunity to do research for, and help draft, an upcoming private Member's bill.

Along with the many lessons I learned, MPP Fraser taught me the importance of leadership, particularly in fostering and maintaining unity. While I was in his office, he was filling the role of Interim Leader of the Ontario Liberal Party for the second time. He kept the caucus afloat and inspired by remaining calm and keeping the laughter flowing.

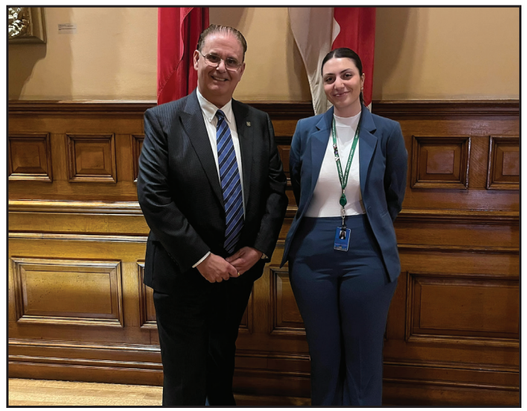
Thank you to Chief of Staff and OLIP alumnus Eric, and MPP Fraser for an incredible four months in the office. I'm grateful for their trust, which allowed me to become a valuable member of the team.

Milena and MPP Rudy Cuzzetto

MPP Rudy Cuzzetto has spent his whole life living in the small but mighty confines of Port Credit: from birth at his historic family home, to his first job at the gas station at 16, and later to representing the community at Queen's Park, the area has played a central role for him. For my spring placement, I had the opportunity to work with MPP Cuzzetto and explore the dynamic and diverse riding of Mississauga—Lakeshore.

My greatest takeaways included the strength of the connection between MPP Cuzzetto and the community, as well as his admiration for his home. He is committed to building relationships with residents and key stakeholders, and consistently advocates for the growth and resilience of organizations and initiatives in the community. It was intriguing to tour the riding and visit various businesses, whether to commemorate a grand opening, celebrate a 100th birthday, or recognize exceptional service to the community.

In addition to his community involvement, MPP Cuzzetto is engaged in his legislative duties. It was rewarding to contribute to writing speeches, meet with stakeholders, and help prepare for events such as the annual Italian Heritage Month reception (a task meant for me as an Italian). I found it interesting to learn about both his three-year tenure as the Parliamentary Assistant (PA) to the President of the Treasury Board and his new role as PA to the Minister of Energy. Thank you to MPP Cuzzetto and staff Michael, Cassandra, Dorothy, Zahra, Joanna, and Nicolas for an incredible four months.



Olivia and MPP Bhutila Karpoche

For my first MPP placement, I was grateful for the opportunity to work with MPP Bhutila Karpoche from Parkdale—High Park. Having never worked in an MPP's office, I did not know what to expect, but MPP Karpoche made sure I was exposed to every aspect of the role.

Every day was different and exciting. I was given the opportunity to draft questions, Member's statements, social media content, and so much more. I was also lucky to spend lots of time in both her Queen's Park office and her constituency office in High Park. As I am more familiar with rural issues than urban issues, I was looking forward to working in an urban riding. MPP Karpoche is the critic for GTA issues, and it was interesting to learn about all the concerns people face in urban ridings that I was not as familiar with before OLIP.

MPP Karpoche showed me around the riding and highlighted the characteristics of its distinct neighbourhoods. The communities of Parkdale—High Park are close in distance but have completely different compositions. MPP Karpoche is the first person of Tibetan heritage to be elected in North America, and during my tour of the riding, kindly brought me to different locally owned restaurants to try Tibetan food. Though I tried many delicious foods for the first time, my personal favourite were momos!

Thank you, MPP Karpoche and Spencer, Dechen, and Carly, for welcoming me to the team!



Olivia and MPP Natalia Kusendova-Bashta

For my second MPP placement, I had the pleasure of working for MPP Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, Member for Mississauga Centre. I had a completely different experience from my previous placement, which is the beauty of OLIP. I am grateful to have had the chance to learn from and work with two driven and passionate MPPs!



While working with MPP Kusendova-Bashta, I learned a wide variety of new skills and gained a new understanding of the Pink Palace. The office is busy and exciting; whether it was writing speeches, recording videos, or running to receptions, there was always something to look forward to. When I first joined the team, MPP Kusendova-Bashta was the Parliamentary Assistant (PA) to the Minister of Francophone Affairs, and a few weeks into my placement, her role changed to PA to the Minister for Seniors and Accessibility and PA to the Minister of Long-Term Care. I was very excited to work on these files with MPP Kusendova-Bashta!

I had the opportunity to visit Mississauga many times. In the constituency office, I learned more about the riding and the needs of its residents. Throughout my time with MPP Kusendova-Bashta, I was constantly impressed by her dedication to serving the people of Mississauga Centre and her tireless advocacy on their behalf.

Thank you MPP Kusendova-Bashta, Harjap, Beberg, Urooj, Beata, Filip, and Sebastian for being so helpful and welcoming!

MPP PLACEMENTS

Razan and MPP Doly Begum

In my first placement, I was lucky enough to be MPP Doly Begum's first OLIP intern! MPP Begum represents Scarborough Southwest (SSW), is the deputy leader of the NDP, and the critic for Immigration Services and International Credentials. I had an enriching experience writing remarks, Member's statements and questions for Question Period, as well as planning the SSW Career Fair, responding to constituent emails, attending stakeholder meetings, drafting social media posts, and working on the biweekly newsletter – the Begum Bulletin!



One of my favourite moments was the SSW Career Fair. We began planning the Career Fair when I first joined the office in November. It involved finding a venue and then choosing a day when residents would be able to attend. We also reached out to and coordinated with a variety of organizations to exhibit. I helped make a graphic and draft a caption to promote the Career Fair on MPP Begum's social channels. It was also included in the Begum Bulletin! We reached the week of the Career Fair in late February; by then, we had already dealt with the unexpected and unpredictable issues that can arise in the world of politics and in event planning. We finalized attendance with exhibitors, arranged for snacks and refreshments, and printed out signs leading to the Career Fair location. We had an amazing turnout, making the lengthy planning process very rewarding. It was a great last day in my placement, working hard with the entire team.

A huge thank you to MPP Begum, Ishra, Zach, Krystyna, Fayzul, and Tien for welcoming me to the team.

Razan and MPP Lucille Collard



In my second placement, I was excited to work with MPP Lucille Collard, who represents Ottawa—Vanier. MPP Collard is House Leader for the Liberal Party, Third Deputy Chair of the Committee of the Whole House (one of the Deputy Speakers!), and the critic for three portfolios: the Attorney General, the Solicitor General, and Francophone Affairs.

As House Leader, MPP Collard's office coordinates Member's statements and questions for Question Period among all the independent Members. In this placement I enjoyed learning new skills as I focused more on legislative tasks. MPP Collard's office further differed from my previous placement because the Ontario Liberal Party does not have recognized party status in the Legislature, and independent Members do not have the same access to caucus services as recognized parties. This means that everyone takes on many roles, which can lead to busy days in the office.

My first week in MPP Collard's office was very memorable. International Women's Day fell during that week, and several MPPs dedicated their Members' statements to highlighting women's achievements. The independents requested unanimous consent to respond to a Ministerial Statement about International Women's Day, which was granted later. I also had the chance to see MPP Collard organize a press conference on an issue she felt strongly about.

In MPP Collard's office, I have learned more about working with the resources you have and the importance of representing the constituents. I would like to thank MPP Collard and David for welcoming me and making me feel like a valued member of the team!

Rhea and MPP Adil Shamji

For my first placement, I had the honour of working with MPP Adil Shamji, who represents the riding of Don Valley East. My four months in the office were busy and rewarding, as I had the opportunity to be involved in a variety of tasks and projects. Through preparing press releases and debate remarks, coordinating stakeholder meetings, and planning a roundtable discussion, or crafting form letters and communicating with constituents, I was able to gain a comprehensive understanding of the functioning of the office and the breadth of tasks staff are involved in.



I also had the opportunity to learn about a wide scope of policy issues across MPP Shamji's critic portfolios, which include Health, Colleges and Universities, Indigenous Affairs, and Northern Development. It was fascinating to see how MPP Shamji's experience as a physician influenced his approach to the health file, particularly how he draws on what he has heard from patients and colleagues to inform his legislative direction. Additionally, his shared professional experience with key stakeholder groups on the file facilitated relationship-building and demonstrated the value of finding common ground. Thank you to MPP Shamji, Lorne, Ahmed, and Palwashah for welcoming me to the team and contributing to such a wonderful learning experience!

Rhea and MPP Nolan Quinn



I had the wonderful opportunity to spend my second placement with MPP Nolan Quinn, who represents the riding of Stormont—Dundas—South Glengarry. I learnt a great deal about the region from MPP Quinn, who is quite the history buff. The riding is rich in history, proclaiming itself to be "Where Ontario Began." The placement provided me an opportunity to step outside the GTHA bubble, both figuratively and literally (with a visit to the riding), and to explore the issues facing rural communities across Ontario. I found it fascinating how the "rural lens" became almost second nature when thinking about various policy directions, and I deeply appreciated MPP Quinn taking the time to share this perspective with me.

MPP Quinn is also passionate about a range of policy areas, serving initially as the parliamentary assistant (PA) to the Minister of Children, Community, and Social Services, and more recently as the PA to the Minister of Health. Although I hadn't expected to follow the health file across my placements, I found it enriching since it allowed me to develop a deeper understanding of the complexity of the largest ministry in the province. Additionally, I appreciated the opportunity to engage with a range of tasks in the office, such as conducting outreach to schools in the riding, assisting with crafting speeches and remarks, and supporting the planning of a reception focused on men's mental health.

Thank you to MPP Quinn, Dylan, Jo, and Michael for being so warm and supportive throughout my time in the office!

MPP PLACEMENTS

Steffi and MPP Natalia Kusendova-Bashta



For my government placement, I had the privilege of working with MPP Natalia Kusendova-Bashta, who represents Mississauga—Centre and was then Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Francophone Affairs. I had the opportunity to work on a variety of different projects: researching and drafting private Member's bills, helping with stakeholder relations, planning constituency events, and writing speeches.

I found MPP Kusendova-Bashta's work with the Ministry to be particularly meaningful; it involved engaging with Francophone stakeholders and attending many Francophone events. I was impressed by the effort MPP Kusendova-Bashta and her team put in to addressing the needs of this community. I also visited the constituency in Mississauga multiple times, where I enjoyed attending MPP Kusendova-Bashta's New Year's levee with community members, stakeholders, and various politicians.

A huge thank you to MPP Kusendova-Bashta and the whole team for being so welcoming and making this placement a positive learning experience!

Steffi and MPP Catherine Fife

For my second placement, I had the pleasure of working with MPP Fife, who represents Waterloo and is the NDP's Finance and Treasury Board Critic. Throughout my time in the office, I had the opportunity to work on many tasks, such as stakeholder consultations for a private Member's bill (PMB), providing assistance in researching and drafting the PMB, writing questions for Question Period, and learning about the Finance portfolio.

One of the most exciting and busy days in the office was Budget Day, when the Minister of Finance tabled the 2024 Ontario Budget. The day's tasks included preparing for MPP Fife's one-hour speech in response to the budget, attending the NDP press conference about it, and writing questions for the following day's Question Period. It was interesting to see the Legislative Pages distribute copies of the budget to all the Members in the House, and to listen to the Minister of Finance introduce the budget. At the end of the day, I went to the TVO studios with MPP Fife, where she and other opposition MPPs shared their thoughts on the budget. Although it was a 12-hour workday, it was also an incredibly rewarding and exciting experience.

A huge thank you to MPP Fife and Karissa for an incredible placement and for making me feel part of the team.



Taylor and MPP Billy Pang

My first placement was with MPP Billy Pang, who represents Markham—Unionville and was then the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Citizenship and Multiculturalism.

MPP Pang previously worked as a schoolboard trustee and pastor in his community, and his work with his constituents is a top priority. I attended many events in Markham related to Christmas and Chinese New Year, which allowed me to understand more about the constituents of Markham—Unionville and their relationship to MPP Pang. I was also able to sit in on stakeholder meetings and learn about the ways that provincial politics involves work with all kinds of organizations and initiatives, from autism programming to maternal health and transportation infrastructure.



I am so grateful to have seen how an MPP office works up close and how stakeholder relationships are key to supporting the riding. I also learned how to write for a political audience and to write succinctly on complicated research topics to assist an MPP with their daily activities.

I'd like to extend special thanks to the constituency office team, Conni, Larry, Dickson, and Gary, who supported me throughout the experience. Their generosity and kindness were evident throughout my placement, and I appreciate them welcoming me to their office.

Taylor and MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam

My second placement was with NDP MPP Kristyn Wong-Tam who represents the riding of Toronto Centre. They are the opposition critic for Small Businesses, 2SLGBTQ+ issues and the Auditor General.

MPP Wong-Tam has worn many hats in their life, from running their own businesses, to being a city councillor, and now serving as an MPP. They have represented the riding of Toronto Centre (municipally until 2022, and now provincially) for 12 years. Since Toronto Centre is my riding, I was excited to work in this office and learn about ways to help my community. In my time there, I learned more about how to write speeches, edit videos, and conduct political research.

I also worked with constituents, helping to find answers to their questions related to provincial issues. This experience showed me how to foster relationships with stakeholders and ensure that people felt heard by their MPP. It's clear that MPP Wong-Tam is a pillar of their community, and it was thrilling to learn more about tenant rights, 2SLGBTQ+ rights, and justice issues that they advocate for in their riding.

Special thanks to Ben and Emma at the Queen's Park office and Asiya, Sasha, and Sam at the constituency office for welcoming me to their team and supporting me throughout this placement.



IN MEMORIUM

REMEMBERING RON BLAIR

By Graham White

Ron Blair, OLIP's first Academic Director, passed away in August. He grew up in Paisley, Scotland and came to Canada with an MA in History from the University of Glasgow. One of the first faculty appointed to the new Scarborough campus of the University of Toronto, he was a gifted teacher whose lectures combined erudition with dry wit. Fearsomely well-read, especially in Canadian and British politics, his conversations were sprinkled with insightful, if often obscure references ("Of course Lord Haldane argued that the BNA Act …") proffered in an offhand manner that assumed everyone was as well-informed as he. As co-host of a TVO program on politics, Ron knew politicians and backroom movers and shakers as well as theory.

Among Ron's special interests was Parliament, so it was natural that the Canadian Political Science Association tapped him to run OLIP when it was created in 1976. It was no sure thing that the program would survive in Queen's Park's hot-house atmosphere (OLIP began life at the start of the first minority government in decades), but Ron's guidance set it on the road to the success it continues to enjoy. A wonderful raconteur, he could bring those around him to paroxysms of laughter as he held forth on his misadventures, displaying only the slightest hint of a smile. Ron is fondly remembered by the interns he mentored, amazed, and amused.







SPOTLIGHT

THE CHANGING OF THE GUARD

Our Meetings with Ontario's Lieutenant Governors

In November 2023, the Hon. Edith Dumont assumed the position of Lieutenant Governor of Ontario, following the longest-serving Lieutenant Governor in the province's history, the Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell. Our cohort had the distinct privilege to meet with both of them. Through hearing about their individual approaches to the role and aspirations in it, we gained an appreciation for the Lieutenant Governor's responsibilities in our legislative system. Though the Lieutenant Governor gives final approval to all laws in Ontario, their signature does not indicate their own personal approval. Rather, Royal Assent serves as confirmation that the due legislative process has been adequately observed. In sweeping terms, their role is to safeguard democracy.

Both the current Lieutenant Governor and her predecessor have passionately embraced this aspect of the position. The Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell's experiences as an international diplomat and an Under-Secretary General at the United Nations heightened her awareness of global threats to democracy and appreciation for Canada's strong parliamentary systems. Nevertheless, she noted that "democracies are fragile," and nations must be vigilant to not "slide down a slippery slope." This is, in part, why Ms. Dowdeswell dedicated much of her tenure to promoting civic engagement and awareness. "Democracy is so much more than a vote," she noted, "it's how we set the ground rules for how we get along with each other."


The Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell


The Hon. Edith Dumont

The Hon. Edith Dumont similarly outlined civic education as a priority for her tenure. Her Honour hopes to convey that all Ontarians have a role, a place, and a voice in our democratic process.

As the first Francophone to serve as Lieutenant Governor, the Hon. Edith Dumont is proud to act as a steward for "la Francophonie." She also takes her role as a representative of all Ontarians to heart.

The Hon. Elizabeth Dowdeswell shared this sentiment, noting that during her time visiting all of Ontario's ridings she cherished the opportunity to "hold up a mirror to Ontarians to see each other." It was clear to us that both the current and former Lieutenant Governor were united in their pride to serve a democratic institution where, despite the diversity of experiences and perspectives in Ontario, all voices are heard and valued. Each also spoke of wanting to embrace reconciliation throughout their tenure; a complicated plight, given the history of Crown-Indigenous relations in Canada.

We now understand that the role of Lieutenant Governor is not solely to serve as a representative of the monarchy. Instead, it is to embody and defend democratic values, and to show communities that all voices must be included. In this, we OLIP interns would like to congratulate the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell for working in service of these aims for nearly a decade, and express our sincerest excitement for the Honourable Edith Dumont as she embarks on this amazing journey.

KEEPING WATCH

Ontario's Independent Officers

We were fortunate to meet with the Independent Officers of the Legislative Assembly. Each officer has a distinct and important role in our province's democracy, and at the heart of our discussions was the imperative of maintaining independence while holding the government and our elected officials accountable.

Greg Essensa, the Chief Electoral Officer at Elections Ontario, emphasized the critical role of impartiality in overseeing electoral processes, which is especially important to his role as the guarantor and advocate for Ontario's free and fair elections. Nick Stravropoulos, who was Acting Auditor General at the time of our meeting, echoed the importance of impartiality. He outlined how auditors function autonomously to uphold accountability and transparency in public expenditures through means such as value-for-money audits.

Meanwhile, Patricia Kosseim, the Information and Privacy Commissioner, highlighted the significance of safeguarding the privacy rights of Ontarians in an increasingly digitized world. She stressed the importance of her office's autonomy in enforcing privacy laws, while balancing transparency and access to reliable government-held information.

When we met with the Integrity Commissioner, J. David Wake, he underscored the vital role the office plays in upholding ethical standards across the public sector. He shared that having independent oversight enhances accountability, and therefore helps maintain public trust in government institutions. Ombudsman Paul Dubé also spoke


Nick Stravropoulos



Greg Essensa

of the importance of accountability, emphasizing the necessity of providing recourse to citizens in their dealings with government bodies. His office's independence is instrumental in holding governmental entities accountable for their actions and decisions, thereby promoting fairness and equity in administrative processes.

In addition to discussing their mandates, each officer shared their avenues for collaboration and knowledge-sharing across jurisdictions, both in Canada and internationally. Each officer recognized the benefits of sharing resources and expertise to tackle common challenges more effectively. Furthermore, our discussions centered on ways of enhancing the efficacy of these offices, from leveraging technology for more efficient operations to implementing diverse outreach strategies. We found it inspiring to learn about each officer's approach to improving their effectiveness in order to best serve the public interest.

Along with the immense passion each officer held for their role, one thing was abundantly clear to us: the commitment to upholding the principles of independence and collaboration, and striving to optimize the function of the government serves as the bedrock of Ontario's Independent Offices, and thus ensures that the interests of Ontarians are promoted at every step of the way. Thank you to all the Independent Officers for being so generous with your time and sharing such remarkable insight with us – we are deeply appreciative of it!

MINISTERS AND MEMBERS

Insight from Ontario's Elected Officials

Since September, we have had the pleasure of meeting with many current and former Members of Provincial Parliament, some of whom have also served in Cabinet. While the content of these meetings varied greatly, they shared an overarching theme about the importance of Members representing and engaging with their constituents.

The opportunity to meet with former MPPs shed light on a wide range of political circumstances. Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo served as the NDP Member for Parkdale—High Park from 2006 to 2017, and Tim Murphy (a former OLIP intern!) served as the Liberal Member for St. George—St. David from 1993 to 1995. These meetings helped us learn about how significantly the Legislature has changed in the past 30 years, from the recognized parties in the Chamber to the Standing Orders, while other aspects of the legislative process have remained unchanged year after year. We heard about Rev. DiNovo's fascinating journey after politics, including her experience being a minister with the United Church of Canada, and some of the insights Mr. Murphy learned from his time supporting political campaigns and serving as Chief of Staff to former Prime Minister Paul Martin.

We also had the pleasure of meeting current MPP Bobbi Ann Brady, who has represented Haldimand—Norfolk since 2022. MPP Brady shared her distinct perspectives, gained from over 25 years of working for former MPP Toby Barrett, as well as her own time sitting as an independent. Her reflections on the party system emanated from her unique trajectory, and it was particularly interesting to hear about the enhanced role of


Minister Paul Calandra


Minister Stephen Lecce

serving her constituents in her legislative work as an independent. We also met with NDP MPP Sol Mamakwa, who represents Ontario's largest and most northwestern riding, Kiiwetinoong. Despite the small size of its population, Kiiwetinoong faces extreme challenges, from a mental health crisis and intergenerational trauma to poor access to healthcare and infrastructure. MPP Mamakwa spoke of his dedication to raising these difficult topics and advocating for his constituents.

Finally, we had the chance to meet with several Members who serve in Cabinet: Government House Leader and Minister of Legislative Affairs and Municipal Affairs and Housing Paul Calandra, Associate Minister of Mental Health and Addictions Michael Tibollo, and Minister of Education Stephen Lecce. These meetings exposed us to the intricacies of each ministry's mandate and the level of preparation and knowledge required for ministers to be effective in their posts. It was particularly interesting to hear about Minister Calandra's role as Government House Leader, and to learn about the work that takes place behind the scenes for the functioning of Question Period and the Government Caucus.

We would like to thank all current and former Members who met with us. Your insights have been invaluable and allowed us to expand our knowledge of provincial politics, in turn making us more effective in our contributions as interns.

MEETINGS WITH FORMER PREMIERS

Learning from the Past, Hopeful for the Future

We are lucky to have had the opportunity to meet with several former premiers to learn about their experiences as leaders of Ontario and look forward to meeting with other former premiers over the coming weeks. Thank you to David Peterson, Dalton McGuinty, and Kathleen Wynne for meeting with us. We were so grateful for your time and candor.

Although each former premier had their own goals and faced unique challenges, they all remarked on the importance of working across the aisle. They noted that working with other parties was vital to fulfilling their goals and creating better policies for Ontarians. No leader can work alone, and provincial projects are often massive undertakings that need support from all parties in order to succeed. Kathleen Wynne shared that this was crucial during her time as premier; working collaboratively brings out one another's strengths, allowing MPPs to effectively serve the Ontarians they represent. She specifically outlined the importance of coming together to bridge the gaps between us, having difficult conversations, listening to each other, and working toward better solutions.


Kathleen Wynne

We also noticed that the former premiers we met with have an unfailing optimism for humanity. Though we wondered if their perspectives on politics and the public would have been negatively affected by their experiences in such a demanding and complex role, they all spoke proudly and encouragingly about the ways people can change the world. Dalton McGuinty and David Peterson similarly noted that politicians can appeal to people's best or worst instincts: it may be easier to speak to and amplify people's fears, but it is essential to appeal to the compassionate, generous instincts in people to create a better world.

Despite the prestige and pressure of the role, premiers are people as well; they have learned how to lose, how to succeed, and how to engage with others. They have had the unique opportunity to represent all Ontarians at Queen's Park, which makes their knowledge invaluable. They encouraged us to take risks, think big and reach out to people who think differently than us so that we can learn and grow in our own careers beyond OLIP.


David Peterson

FOLLOW THE LEADERS

Our Meetings with the Premier & Party Leaders

This year, the OLIP interns were lucky to meet with a series of individuals who are key to the functioning of Queen's Park: the party leaders! We had the incredible opportunity to meet with Premier Doug Ford, Leader of the Ontario PC Party, and MPP Marit Stiles, Leader of the Official Opposition and of the Ontario NDP. We were also grateful to meet with MPP Mike Schreiner, Leader of the Green Party, as well as with MPP John Fraser, who was partway through his second stint as Interim Leader of the Liberal Party at the time. More recently, we met with the current Liberal Leader, Bonnie Crombie.

Though each has a unique role within their respective party, common threads emerged throughout these conversations which gave us insight into what is required to lead a political party. For instance, several leaders discussed the tricky balance they must strike between representing constituents, their party, and citizens across Ontario. In navigating this, each spoke to the importance of ensuring their work at Queen's Park reflects the priorities of Ontarians. For example, Premier Ford shared his personal philosophy of listening to the stories and views of people across Ontario, an iterative process that allows for an informed outlook to emerge.

Another common theme was how leaders support and unite the MPPs of their party. MPP Fraser, for example, spoke of the importance of bringing his party together during periods of change. He checks in often with MPPs and focuses on relationship building to ensure each of them felt supported. The interns also heard from MPP Stiles about the importance of building trust within a caucus through fostering open dialogue and finding unique ways to connect with her team.

It was also fascinating to hear about what keeps the leaders motivated despite the numerous challenges their roles present. MPP Schreiner shared his guiding mission of creating change through community, which involves bringing people together by building on their commonalities to address the most pressing challenges our province faces. In a similar vein, Ms. Crombie shared her daily mantra, "what am I going to do to help people today?", a philosophy that grounds her and reminds her of the impact and importance of public office.


MPP Marit Stiles


Bonnie Crombie

We are extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to meet with each leader. We learnt a great deal from MPP Schreiner, MPP Fraser, Ms. Crombie, MPP Stiles, and Premier Ford. They were all extremely gracious with their time and in sharing their wisdom. We thank them sincerely for their support of the programme!


Premier Doug Ford


MPP Mike Schreiner

NAVIGATING DEMOCRACY

Insights from Three Key Meetings at the Ontario Legislature

As part of the OLIP orientation, we had the privilege of connecting with three individuals in particularly significant roles at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario: the Speaker, the Clerk, and the Sergeant-at-Arms. Meeting with them provided us with valuable insights on the inner workings and traditions of the Legislative Assembly. As we reflected on our conversations with these individuals, a common theme emerged – their shared unwavering commitment to the principles of democracy.

It was a pleasure to meet with the Honourable Ted Arnott, the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly and a long-time friend to OLIP. The Speaker's role, which is centered on maintaining order and decorum in the legislative Chamber, provides a unique perspective on our parliamentary system. We discovered that his dedication to the principles of fairness and impartiality is a cornerstone in preserving the democratic ideals of the Assembly. In our discussions, the Speaker emphasized the critical need for respectful debate and ensuring that all voices are heard, even amidst the most heated discussions. It was clear that the Speaker plays a vital role in safeguarding the legislative process.

In another informative meeting, we delved into the role that the Clerk, Trevor Day, plays at the Legislative Assembly. He is a fount of knowledge and expertise who provides procedural advice and


Tim McGough


Hon. Ted Arnott

guidance to the Speaker and MPPs. A theme that emerged in this meeting was the importance of maintaining the integrity and transparency of the democratic process. In addition to his advisory role, Mr. Day is also responsible for the papers and records of the House and ensuring the production of the daily house documents. His commitment to procedural excellence underscores his pivotal role in upholding the customs of the Legislature.

Finally, we met with the Sergeant-at-Arms, Tim McGough, whose role extends far beyond symbolism. Themes of vigilance and adaptability were evident in our conversation, which emphasized the importance of security and safety within the Assembly. In a rapidly changing world, Mr. McGough's commitment to preparedness and protecting the Assembly's heritage is commendable. The Sergeant-at-Arms, through his diligence, ensures that the Assembly operates safely, balancing the need for public access to the Legislature with security for all.

Whether through the Clerk's commitment to procedural excellence, the Speaker's dedication to fairness and decorum, or the Sergeant-at-Arms' vigilance, each of these figures plays an indispensable role in the leadership of the Legislative Assembly. We extend our gratitude to these remarkable individuals for their time and dedication to the institutions of democracy in Ontario.

ASSEMBLY STAFF

Hard Work Behind the Scenes at Queen's Park

Have you ever wondered who turns on the microphones in the House, who combs through years of legislation to assist in preparing upcoming Members' bills, who transcribes every statement made in the Chamber for *Hansard*, or who keeps the time while Members are speaking? These are just a few of the many tasks completed by the staff of the Legislative Assembly. Throughout the month of September, we had the pleasure of meeting with staff from teams across the Office of the Legislative Assembly to learn more about their roles and responsibilities.

Let us look at how the work of Assembly staff fits into a typical sitting day at Queen's Park. Starting at 6:00 a.m., library technicians collate clippings of significant news headlines, which are then delivered by email by 8:30 a.m. At the beginning of the sessional day, in what is known as the Speaker's procession, the Sergeant-at-Arms carries the Mace up to the Chamber, followed by the Speaker, the Clerk, a Table Officer, and two Legislative Pages.

Throughout the day, staff from the Broadcast and Recording Service are responsible for turning on Members' microphones as they speak and ensuring that proceedings are televised and live-streamed, enabling the public to follow proceedings. As the


Broadcast and Recording Services


House Publications and Language Services

Members speak, *Hansard* reporters listen attentively to allow them to prepare the official transcript for that day's meeting, while Language Services provides simultaneous translation in French and English. Meanwhile, the Clerks at the Table are busy keeping the time, recording votes, and advising the Speaker and Members on various procedural matters as they arise.

During the midday recess, many staff and Members grab lunch or coffee prepared by Parliamentary Food Services in the cafeteria. They may also walk by the Precinct Properties Branch, whose team is hard at work considering the upcoming renovation of the Legislative Building. Later in the day, Members introduce new bills, based on neutral background research and analysis by the respective teams at Legislative Research and the Legislative Library. Throughout the day, groups of visitors or elementary-school children may be spotted on a tour organized by Parliamentary Protocol and Public Relations, giving them the opportunity to learn about democracy in the provincial legislature.

So concludes another day that relies on the staff of the Legislative Assembly to support the functioning of the House. We want to thank all the Legislative Assembly staff who took the time to meet with us - we so enjoyed the opportunity to learn about their vital roles in keeping the provincial legislature running.

MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA

The Task of Building Interest in Ontario Politics

The only individuals you will see running around Queen's Park more often and in more of a hurry than OLIP interns are the members of the media. Whether they are locked in a room on Budget day, gathering for a scrum after Question Period, or asking questions after a press conference in the Media Room, members of the media are committed to sharing what's happening at Queen's Park with Ontarians.

Before our time in OLIP, a number of us had already been learning from Steve Paikin by tuning into TVO's *The Agenda* and by listening to his podcast with John Michael McGrath. We were excited to pick his brain and were thrilled when he agreed to meet with us. We had a wide-ranging conversation, discussing civic engagement, the future of journalism, and what qualities, according to Mr. Paikin, make a premier great. We also had the chance to continue our conversation during a visit to *The Agenda*'s set at the TVO office.

Martin Regg Cohn, with the *Toronto Star*, has also been a friend of the programme's for many years.


Steve Paikin

We had an interesting discussion with him about his impressive background covering politics all around the world, and his choice to bring that expertise to Queen's Park as a columnist with the *Star*. We also had the chance to meet his colleague Noor Javed, who covers GTA municipal politics. She shared with us her dedication to positively impacting public policy.

Jeff Gray, a Queen's Park reporter for the *Globe and Mail*, spoke with us about the importance of the media's role in supporting and maintaining democracy, especially at a time where the traditional media industry is becoming smaller.

The interns also finally had the opportunity to put a face to the name behind the *Queen's Park Observer* e-newsletter: journalist Sabrina Nanji. We enjoyed "gossiping" about her creative approach to the newsletter, her daily process of writing them, and her aspirations for the future of the newsletter.

Though *The Trillium* is relatively new to the scene, reporters Aidan Chamandy and Charlie Pinkerton have experience covering politics and bring with them perspectives gained from their time in Ottawa and covering Parliament Hill. We were fascinated to learn about how *The Trillium* came to exist, and how it encourages readers to care about politics.

A recurring theme across these meetings was the shared value placed on making coverage of Ontario politics available and captivating, so that the people of Ontario remain informed, connected to, and interested in the work that happens every day at Queen's Park.

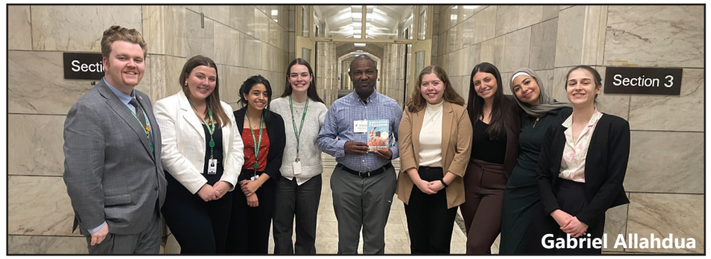

Martin Regg Cohn

OUTSIDE OF THE PINK PALACE

External Perspectives on Provincial Politics

Alongside the incredible cast of key Queen's Park figures featured on the previous pages, we have had the pleasure of speaking with people who interact with politics outside of the Pink Palace. These conversations widened the scope of our understanding of the impact of provincial decisions and allowed us to consider perspectives not always reflected in the day-to-day activities of the Legislature.

Scholars specializing in democratic institutions provided us with studied perspectives on the functioning of our systems of governance. Whether in discussions of constitutional law with Dr. Emmett MacFarlane, electoral reform and the history of democracy with Dr. Dennis Pilon, gender and sexual misconduct policies in politics with Dr. Tracey Rainey, electoral boundary design with Dr. Peter Loewen, or public sector ethics and accountability with Dr. Ian Stedman, we were challenged in our thinking about Ontario's democracy. We also appreciated hearing about the practical experiences in public administration and party politics from Dr. David Docherty, OLIP alumnus and President of



Gabriel Allahdua

Manitoba's Brandon University, and Dr. Kate Graham, former candidate for leader of the Ontario Liberal Party.

We were also fortunate to learn from community organizers, who shared their methods of political engagement. We are grateful to Gabriel Allahdua, winner of the Speaker's Book Award, for being candid about the experiences that drew him to advocate for migrant justice in Canada, and former runner-up for Mayor of Toronto, Gil Penalosa, who shared his passion for environmentally-minded urban design. At the Samara Centre for Democracy, we learned about youth engagement in politics and heard how the Centre strategizes to be effective in its efforts to strengthen Canada's democracy.


Beverley McLachlin

Yet another mechanism of political change, the legal system, was highlighted in our meetings as well. Jennifer King, who works with the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, told us about how the organization has used the courts in its efforts to induce the federal government to fulfill its legal obligations toward First Nations children and youth. We were also honoured to host Former Chief Justice of Canada, Beverley McLachlin, whose countless legal decisions have had concrete impacts.

We owe an additional thank-you to the people who put extra time aside for informative sessions, including Paul Laffin, who taught us about using Statistics Canada data in research.

Whether focused on academia, advocacy, or the courts, these meetings (and many others still) provided us with a greater understanding of the nuances and contrasting perspectives on provincial affairs. In broadening our horizons, they highlighted the value of bringing many voices to the table to gain a meaningful understanding of political matters.

NOTABLE ALUMNI

JESS DUTTON

In 2023, Jess Dutton was appointed as Canada's Ambassador to the Republic of Indonesia; but back in 1995, Jess was an OLIP intern during the Mike Harris government. During OLIP, Jess worked for MPP Doug Galt (PC), then Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of the Environment, and MPP Elinor Caplan (Liberal), the latter of whom influenced him to become a federal political staffer. Jess attributes his desire to pursue a meaningful career in government to his experience in OLIP, where he learned how high-stakes decisions are made and the art of navigating ministerial offices.

Following OLIP, he made the jump to federal politics and worked for Sheila Copps, then Minister of Canadian Heritage, eventually becoming Chief of Staff in 2003. Jess then transitioned to the federal public service in 2005 to work at Foreign Affairs Canada. Thus began his diverse diplomatic career.

Jess has held multiple roles: a political Counsellor in Seoul, South Korea, the Director of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team, the Deputy Ambassador to Kabul, Afghanistan, and the Deputy Head of the Stabilization and Reconstruction Task Force in Ottawa. In 2014, he became the Deputy High Commissioner in Delhi, India – Canada's largest mission in the world! Later, from 2017 to 2020, Jess served as Canada's Ambassador to Egypt, where he evacuated over 800 Canadians during the initial COVID-19 outbreak. Prior to his current appointment, Jess was the Director General of the Middle East.



To recent OLIP alumni, Jess recommends keeping an open mind and building your network. Most importantly, he recommends finding balance within your professional life while keeping an eye on the bigger picture: your family and your mental health.

LEANNA KATZ

Leanna Katz's path from OLIP to a distinguished career in law is a testament to the programme's impact. Following her year in the 2012-2013 cohort, Leanna's career has taken her from prestigious clerkships to academic pursuits at renowned institutions.

After completing OLIP, Leanna studied at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Law, earning her Juris Doctor. She then went on to clerk at the British Columbia Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court of Canada, after which she moved to New York City, where she practiced commercial litigation. Her thirst for knowledge then led her to pursue a Master of Law at Harvard Law School. Leanna's journey has today come full circle with her return to academia, currently in the second year of her doctorate at McGill's Faculty of Law.

During Leanna's OLIP year, she worked for MPPs Mike Colle (Liberal) and Christine Elliot (PC) during a pivotal time in Ontario's political landscape, when she had the chance to witness the transition of the Liberal leadership and premiership from Dalton McGuinty to Kathleen Wynne. Leanna's advice for the OLIP alumni community is to be fully present and open to learning from your surroundings. She emphasizes the importance of cultivating relationships, both professional and personal, as they can pave the way for career opportunities and lasting friendships.



Leanna credits OLIP with reshaping her perspective on the relationship between the legislative and judicial branches of government. Witnessing the decision-making process at the Legislature deepened her comprehension of the legal profession, particularly in understanding how judges analyze legislative intent when rendering legal judgments. Ultimately, Leanna Katz's journey exemplifies OLIP's capacity to shape not only careers, but also perspectives.

STUDY TOURS

Québec City



Sunday, November 19

The long-anticipated day arrived: our first study tour! Study tours are an amazing opportunity for the interns to compare traditions and practices across different legislatures. For this particular study tour, we were incredibly excited to visit the Westminster-style parliament of a province that prides itself on the separation of church and state, and has a unique relationship with the federal government.

The morning started bright and early, with a 7 a.m. meet-up at the airport (and lots of coffee!). A short flight later, we arrived in Québec City. We spent the afternoon exploring the city and bien sûr, our first stop was poutine for lunch. We enjoyed our first snow of the season meandering around the beautiful streets of old Québec City.

Monday, November 20

We could not have asked for a better introduction to Québec's National Assembly than meeting Member of the National Assembly (MNA) Sylvain Lévesque over breakfast. We had a fascinating discussion with Mr. Lévesque that spanned Québecois culture and politics, his approach to engaging with communities, and the pressing issues that the National Assembly is debating.

We pondered these themes as we then headed outside with the Foundation Jean-Charles-Bonenfant Interns, our hosts, who led us on a tour of Old Québec. In the afternoon, our meeting with former Minister of Employment, Professor François Blais, allowed for discussions about the Québec separatist movement, cultural identity and immigration in Québec, and democratic reform.

Our day concluded with a tour of the National Assembly itself. Moving through the original building to the recent additions, we soaked in the grandeur of the National Assembly and observed the physical manifestation of Québec's history in its present parliament.







STUDY TOURS

Tuesday, November 21

Our morning began with an exciting meeting with Sébastien Bovet, Radio-Canada's Bureau Chief at the National Assembly. We loved learning about how political news is reported, and he even gave us the opportunity to try our hand at being TV reporters! We then enjoyed meeting Nora Loreto, a freelance journalist based in Québec City, with whom we discussed political activism and the practical side of engaging people in politics. Our morning concluded with a meeting with Julie White, who shared insights from her experiences as a former staffer and present-day government relations specialist.

After lunch, we had the opportunity to watch la période des questions et réponses orales (question and answer period), during which we took note of the differences in decorum and heckling between the National Assembly and Queen's Park. It finally came time to say goodbye to our gracious hosts, the amazing Bonenfant interns, and we dashed to the airport to catch our flight (once aboard the airplane, many of us interns immediately fell asleep!).

As we returned to Toronto, we reflected on the core discussions from our time in Québec, which centered around how to preserve cultural identity and inclusion, the implementation of strategies to promote civic engagement, and the ability of the public to impact politics.

Yellowknife

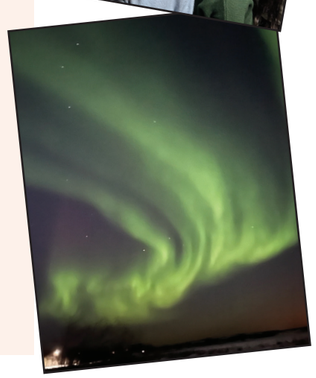
Monday, February 26

Our first day in Yellowknife was incredible! The morning started with a brisk walk to the Legislature in –30 degree weather. When we arrived, we were warmly greeted by Speaker Shane Thompson, and Senior Advisor Danielle Mager. We were touched by the intentionality of the design of the Northwest Territories' (NWT) Legislature; for example, from outside the building one can see directly into the Chamber demonstrating a commitment to transparency and openness. We also found the mace to be very meaningful, containing pebbles from each of the 33 communities in the NWT. When moved, the rain-like sound of the mace is meant to remind legislators of the communities they represent.

In our engaging meetings with Agatha Laboucan, the Executive Director of the Native Women's Association, and with Shawn McCann, Deputy Secretary of Indigenous and Intergovernmental Affairs at the Government of Northwest Territories, a theme that emerged was the unique jurisdiction of the territorial government in relation to Indigenous self-governments and the federal government. These discussions encouraged us to consider what true reconciliation could look like in Canada's North.

In the evening, we went to Bullocks Bistro, famous for its fish 'n chips, with the Clerk of the Assembly, Glen Rutland. Post-dinner, we walked uphill to a nearby monument and basked in the glow of the northern lights – it was a breathtaking moment!





Tuesday, February 27

Our day began by observing the Standing Committee on Accountability and Oversight. The committee, composed of the Regular Members of the Legislative Assembly, provided a firsthand look at how a consensus-style legislatures operate. Though there were differing opinions, every Member was given the chance to share their views, and the committee navigated disagreements collectively. During our lunch with these MLAs a few hours later, we were surprised to hear them discuss many of the same pressing issues that Ontario's MPPs often raise, giving insight into the shared challenges faced by northern and rural communities.

In the afternoon, we had the opportunity to meet with the Mayor of Yellowknife, Rebecca Alty, and the Chief Electoral Officer, Stephen Dunbar. We discussed the unique difficulties of emergency management in the North: specifically, balancing the need to carry out the same operations as larger jurisdictions with very limited resources. We also gained an appreciation for the resilience of communities across the NWT. Our dinner conversation that evening with the Deputy Clerks provided an in-depth look into these tight-knit communities.

We ended the day with a dog sledding adventure under the northern lights, complete with a strawberry moon and bannock!



Wednesday, February 28

On Wednesday, many of our discussions centered on the power of Northern identity to unite communities, which is embraced by the GNWT. For lunch we had the incredible opportunity to chat one-on-one with members of the Executive Council, including Premier Simpson. We spent the rest of our afternoon exploring Yellowknife, which included a walk on the famous ice road!

We would like to extend a huge thank you to everyone in Yellowknife, especially Danielle and Speaker Shane, who generously shared their time with us and made it an unforgettable experience. We were blown away by the 'Northern Hospitality' extended to us in the spectacular Northwest Territories!

The interns had the experience of a lifetime in Yellowknife thanks to our partners, the Co-operators, which supported the study tour. We are so grateful for the Co-operators' continued support and dedication to our program.

THANKING OUR PARTNERS

AMAPCEO

"AMAPCEO is proud to sponsor the next generation of policy-makers and we want to ensure they appreciate the role of public servants and their bargaining agents." – President Dave Bulmer

Each year, AMAPCEO hosts the new OLIP cohort at their office to discuss labour relations, government relations, and public administration. Known as Ontario's union for professional employees, AMAPCEO is a non-partisan trade union that represents more than 15,000 professionals working for the public interest within Ontario's public service.

AMAPCEO has been a supporter of OLIP for over sixteen years. Thank you, President Dave Bulmer, Vice-President Cynthia Watt, and Team Lead of Labour Relations Bargaining (and noted OLIP alumnus) Ben Rossiter, for hosting us this year and for your ongoing support of the programme. Meeting with the AMAPCEO team provided us with the opportunity to reflect on the tactical approaches and tradeoffs unions must consider, and we appreciated hearing about which types of strategies lead to the best outcomes for your members.

We are inspired by AMAPCEO's and its members' devotion to ensuring safe, fair, and fulfilling work opportunities for professionals across the province.

We at OLIP are so grateful for AMAPCEO's unwavering support for our programme, and for the strong relationship we have sustained over the years.



BRUCE POWER

Did you know that Bruce Power generates 30% of Ontario's electricity? This means that one in three homes, schools, businesses, and hospitals are powered by Bruce Power. As Canada's first private nuclear generator, Bruce Power boosts Ontario's economy each year, employing more than 4,000 full-time staff to safely produce the energy that provides Ontarians with 30% of their electricity.

Bruce Power is a proud partner of OLIP, and they generously invited the interns to visit their site on the shores of Lake Huron again this year. We had the incredible opportunity to visit Site B and see the nuclear reactors in action while learning about the impact of nuclear energy.

Nuclear power is an emissions-free source of energy that will play a vital role in Canada's goal to be net zero by 2050. We will not forget learning firsthand how nuclear energy is produced and witnessing the many precautionary safety measures that visitors and workers alike must comply with, and seeing the carefully planned regular facility maintenance that takes place at the site itself. We were also impressed to hear that Bruce Power produces medical isotopes that are at the forefront of advancing cancer research and are used for sterilizing hospitals and medical resources around the world.

Thank you, Clint Thomas, Senior Manager of Government Relations, and Mike Hobson, Corporate Communications Specialist, for the incredible tour and for your continued support for OLIP.



THE INSURANCE BROKERS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

The Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario (IBAO) has been a long-time supporter of OLIP, and each cohort is greeted by their friendly smiles and wealth of knowledge about the insurance industry. This spring, the interns had the pleasure of welcoming Brett Boadway, Chief Operating Officer of the IBAO, to our office at Queen's Park.

The IBAO is a not-for-profit, membership-based organization that represents Ontario's insurance brokerages, both large and small. Its collective strength allows it to influence industry policy, promote the benefits and value of working with a broker, provide educational programming to support brokers through their careers, and advocate for brokers and consumers across the province.

In our conversation, Brett shared some of the pressing concerns and priorities of insurance brokers in Ontario, including the complexity of auto-insurance buy-ins and the impact of climate change on the industry. For example, we were interested to learn how the industry is responding to an increase in climate-related damage claims, like repairs for flooding, and what this means for the insurance industry and its relationship with government in the future.

Thank you, Brett, for the insightful conversation, and for IBAO's continued support of the programme.



ONTARIO POWER GENERATION

We are grateful to have had the opportunity to meet with Nicole Gruythuyzen and Jake Sikora (a former OLIP intern!) from Ontario Power Generation (OPG). OPG provides approximately 50% of Ontario's energy resources, making it one of North America's largest electricity generators. With energy being such a high-profile and much-discussed policy area, it was exciting to find out more about its work.

It was particularly interesting to hear about the importance of public engagement in OPG's work as it prepares to take on major projects to support decarbonization and grid capacity expansion in the coming decades. We also enjoyed learning about the government relations work that Nicole and Jake undertake on behalf of OPG, and how their team collaborates with the Ministry of Energy to support Ontario's energy needs.

Following our trip to the OPG office, we were thrilled to visit OPG's Darlington Nuclear Generating Station, which supplies 20% of Ontario's energy. It was fascinating to see the reactors and used fuel up close, and to learn about the extensive safety precautions in place at the facility.

Thank you to OPG for its ongoing support of OLIP, and a special thanks to Nicole and Jake for hosting us at their office, and to Chuck and Lucas for the tour at Darlington.



THANKING OUR PARTNERS

ONTARIO REAL ESTATE ASSOCIATION

OREA Ontario Real Estate Association

We were thrilled to join the Ontario Real Estate Association's (OREA) government relations team—OLIP alums Jason Lagerquist and Dia Mukherjee—for a partnership lunch to learn more about OREA's work representing over 100,000 Ontario realtors. With housing becoming an increasingly critical policy issue in recent years, we were interested to hear how OREA advocates on behalf of its members and participates in the dialogue around housing.

We learned how OREA's government relations team works to engage directly with the Province on broader issues relating to housing and affordability. It was also fascinating to hear how Jason and Dia's experience as OLIP interns has been helpful in their current roles at OREA.

Thank you to Jason and Dia for inviting us to lunch and for sharing such valuable insights about your work. We are so grateful for OREA's ongoing support of the programme.



PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES



Each year, ten aspiring recent graduates dive into the exciting world of politics and experience incredible opportunities that are unique to any lifetime. Please consider supporting OLIP's endeavours and champion the leaders of tomorrow by becoming a corporate partner or by donating to the programme. Contact partnerships@olipinterns.ca or visit www.olipinterns.ca/ - for more details.

OLIP YEARBOOK

PREDICTIONS FOR THE 2023-2024 COHORT

Which intern is most likely to...

Never leave Queen's Park – **Evan**

Become a deputy minister – **Milena**

Serve as OLIP's Academic Director – **Kaitlin**

Be the next president of the Queen's Park Press Gallery – **Bridget**

Win a Nobel Peace Prize – **Razan**

Become Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health – **Rhea**

Solve the housing crisis – **Taylor**

Be Mayor of Norfolk County – **Olivia**

Become an ambassador – **Steffi**

Take over *The Agenda* when Steve Paikin retires – **Astrid**

A Year in Our Camera Roll



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