

UBC LAW INNOCENCE PROJECT - STUDENT RECRUITMENT 2011-2012

In January 2011, the UBC Law Innocence Project will be accepting applications from students for the 2011-2012 academic year. The Innocence Project at UBC is a clinical education program which matches students with practicing lawyers to review claims of wrongful conviction in British Columbia. The Project only accepts claims of factual innocence in murder and sexual assault cases.

Ten to twelve students are selected to participate in the program based on their resumes, a statement of interest and an interview. Students receive a total of nine credits for their work with the Project: three credits for the academic seminar taken in the Fall term and six credits for the clinical work they conduct throughout the year.

1. **Academic Seminar:** Law 482C “Preventing Wrongful Convictions and Miscarriages of Justice”
Instructors: Mary Ainslie (crown counsel) and David Layton (defence counsel)

Law 482C, “Preventing Wrongful Convictions and Miscarriages of Justice” makes up the academic component of the Project. The seminar is offered in the Fall term and is a co-requisite for participation in the Innocence Project. Students also receive priority registration for Evidence in the Fall term.

2. **Clinical Component:**

The clinical component of the program consists of three parts: weekly group meetings, casework, and office hours.

- i. Weekly meetings– the students meet with the Director as a group for two and a half hours once a week to discuss the progress of their cases and to hear from guest speakers on various topics related to post-conviction review work and the practice of criminal law.
- ii. Office hours - Students are required to maintain two administrative office hour per week and three casework hours. During this time, students help with office administration and work on their file review.
- iii. Casework – Students are assigned cases as applications are received and are assessed against the Project’s eligibility guidelines. Students’ work on the cases includes: document and evidence gathering, meetings with the applicant in prison, speaking with the applicant’s previous counsel, document review, applicant and witness interviews, legal research and writing, fact investigation and trial transcript review. Once the Project satisfies itself that the case merits further investigation, the Director assigns the case to supervising counsel. The student conducts the investigation and review under the guidance of counsel with assistance from the Director where required.

Student feedback on the program has been extremely positive. Below are comments from students who participated in the first year of the Project.

I cannot believe how much practical information I walked away with – the most useful learning project I’m sure I will experience at law school. I look forward to helping in any way next year.

I’m extremely thankful for the opportunity to be involved with the Innocence Project in its very first year, and it was a really great experience. For sure my favourite part of law school! I think it’s probably the coolest program at the school, and has the potential to make a huge difference in people’s lives – of course for the wrongfully convicted, but also for the students involved in the project.

I highly recommend the Innocence Project for anyone with an interest in practicing criminal law. Engaging with real, serious criminal matters in a 'mini-law firm setting' is a valuable experience. You will also gain exposure to the criminal bar, and learn more about topics outside of the law, such as how DNA testing works.

APPLICATIONS

If you are interested in applying for a position with the Project, please e-mail the Director at tlevy@law.ubc.ca and an application will be e-mailed to you.

Application Deadline: **Jan. 28 th, 2011 2:00 p.m.** Interviews will be held the week of Jan. 31st.