

NS Department of Justice, Public Safety Division
By Adem Toprak

Introduction

I am in my fourth year, completing a double major in Political Science and Sociology, with a certificate in Indigenous Studies. I decided to enroll in the POLI/GWST 4390 practicum placement class in order to get some experience before I graduate. I was eventually placed at the Public Safety Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice where I worked on some very interesting projects over the term.

The Public Safety Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice works in collaboration with the government, stakeholders, and diverse communities of the province of Nova Scotia. It generally focuses on the safety of the public and pushes to increase public confidence in the justice system. The division oversees policing strategy which encompasses police consulting services, private security licensing, compliance services, and security intelligence management services. Additionally, it oversees public safety investigations that implement the safer communities and neighbourhoods act, the rewards for major unsolved crimes program and the provincial firearms program. The division primarily functions out of an office building located in downtown Halifax with more than 30 employees.

During my time at the Public Safety Division, I worked on multiple projects rather than working on one main project. When I was first introduced to my supervisor, we had a couple of virtual meetings discussing the work in the division and what I would be doing there. A couple of days after the last virtual meeting, I went into the office and I was given a laptop and an access

card to the building to work there whenever I wanted. However, since I began working during the big COVID wave, I had to work remotely for a couple of weeks and after the cases began to decrease and the restrictions started to be lifted, I had the option to work in the office. The projects I worked on consisted of creating a table on different policing models across the country, a 3-part major project on cyberbullying and finally writing up joining instructions for a presentation attended by an American federal police force as well as all the municipal police forces across the province.

What Projects I Worked on

The first project I began working on was creating a table looking at the current policing models and policing reviews of each province and territory, whether a policing review was completed, and if the provinces and territories issued a report on said policing reviews. This project was a long and interesting one to work on as I had to do intensive research on every province and territory. Furthermore, I looked at how many municipal police forces there were in each province/territory, if they had a self-administered First Nations police force, and if they had their own provincial police force or if they had contracted the RCMP to do provincial policing. From what I have found during my research, 10 of the provinces/territories have the RCMP contracted to do provincial policing. The three that do not are Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland. I really enjoyed this project because I learned a lot about policing in different provinces/territories and learned of different policing reviews.

I then began working on a major project that took about 6 weeks to complete. It consisted of three parts, each part given every 2 weeks, all having 3-4 research questions. The main idea of

the project was to look at cyberbullying in Canada and around the world. I had to do more research on this project compared to the police model one and found many interesting answers, facts, and statistics. The first part of the project was to research the incident rates of cyberbullying across Canada and whether they increased during the pandemic. The second part was to research the average screen time of children and adults and whether it increased during the pandemic. The third part was to research tort laws for cyberbullying in territories and any practices each province had to combat cyberbullying. This project was interesting as I got to learn a lot about cyberbullying across Canada and around the world. Furthermore, I found some interesting statistics on cyberbullying and why the cyberbullying act was established.

The final project I worked on was to write up joining instructions for a presentation by an American federal police force for all the municipal police forces across the province. Moreover, I had to create a schedule for the presentation which consisted of the start time, each part of the presentation and the end time. For the joining instructions, I had to write where the presentation was being held, what the presentation was about, who the presentation was for, dress instructions and COVID instructions. The completed instructions were then sent to my supervisor who then sent it to all the municipal police chiefs. At the start of my placement, I was required to sign a confidentiality agreement for certain projects I had to do, thus, this is all I can say about the presentation. I also had the privilege to attend the presentation, however, I could not attend as it conflicted with an exam I had on the same day. This project was very interesting as well as I got to know what the presentation was about as well as having a federal police force from America to present. I would have enjoyed it a lot more if I had the chance to attend the presentation.

Experience Gained and Conclusion

My experience at the Public Safety Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Justice has been very great. I learned a lot from the multiple projects I worked on while I was placed and gained valuable experience I can use for my future path in policy. Working for the Department of Justice as anyone who deals with the policies has been one of my career goals and doing a placement with the public safety division has let me see how much I want to work there in the future. The division is doing phenomenal work and I give all my respects to them. Unfortunately, due to the ongoing mass shooting inquiry and the legislative sessions keeping the division busy, my time at the Public Safety division was cut short by a couple of weeks.

. The option to work from home or to go to the office was also great as I live almost 30 minutes away from the office, thus, working remotely was wonderful. Furthermore, flexibility with projects was also a great thing as it was easier to balance my school workload with the placement work. The biggest fear I had working at a practicum placement was the lack of guidance, however, the people I worked with were wonderful and I had a lot of guidance for some of the work I was confused on. If I had lived closer to the office, I would have undoubtedly enjoyed it a lot more because of the setting. I would have also made a few connections with the employees working there, learning from senior employees and gaining a lot of wonderful experience. If you enjoy working in an office setting, I would definitely recommend this placement.

All in all, I recommend this placement to anyone who is interested in policing matters, safety and security. This is certainly an important placement for senior undergraduate students

looking to gain research experience, which also allows someone to improve their academic experience as well.

References

Nova Scotia. (n.d.). *Department of Justice Public Safety*. Retrieved from:
https://novascotia.ca/just/public_safety/