



Master's Degree Being Designed *for* BC Notaries

The future of the notarial profession has never looked brighter or more exciting.

In the Fall of 2008, everyone intent on entering the Notary profession in BC will be required to complete the Master of Arts in Applied Legal Studies program currently being developed at Simon Fraser University.

This signifies a new and exciting era for BC Notaries Public, as their professional status becomes enhanced through future generations of Notaries holding a professional graduate degree.

The Society of Notaries Public of BC has been working closely with the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser as the program proceeds through its development process. The new educational process includes most of the former training requirements, but there will be an expansion in the depth and breadth of understanding that new Notaries will have regarding both the law and broader social issues.

Students will complete a genuine graduate degree program, fully sanctioned by Simon Fraser, one of the most forward-thinking and dynamic postsecondary educational institutions in the province.

The degree program will incorporate a combination of state-of-the-art distance education elements, with intensive in-class instruction. It will provide students with foundation courses that impart skills and deeper understanding about law and the broader social world.

The degree program will incorporate a combination of state-of-the-art distance education elements, with intensive in-class instruction.

This foundation will be built upon through the delivery of coursework central to the day-to-day work of a Notary Public, preparing candidates for the standard provincial exams, which will remain substantially unaltered. The program is based on a trimester system—three terms per year, with each term consisting of 13 to 14 weeks of time commitment.

A capstone course at the end of the 16-month program helps prepare the student for stepping out into the practical training, which will remain an essential component of notarial preparatory work.

People interested in becoming a Notary Public from the Fall of 2008

onward will have their applications reviewed by both The Society of Notaries Public of BC and the Graduate Program Committee of Simon Fraser University's School of Criminology.

Successful applicants will begin the program with 2 weeks of full-time, in-class study at Simon Fraser's Central City campus in Surrey. Members of The Society and faculty responsible for teaching the foundation courses will indoctrinate students into the world of the Notary Public.

All students will take three initial courses during the Fall term:

- a course on Canadian law and legal institutions;
- a course on legal research and writing; and
- a broad-based course on legal philosophy.

In the January term, all students will take courses on contracts and real property and a selected-topics course on aspects of business law. In the Summer, all students will be required to complete two courses: one on advanced real property and the other on personal planning.

The Summer course is offered on-campus in a condensed 6-week format, running from early May through mid-June. The final Fall

term will involve an intensive distance-delivered capstone course. Interspersed throughout the program will be several of the required provincial exams.

Faculty responsible for delivering the program will include a combination of faculty with legal backgrounds from Simon Fraser University, legal practitioners drawn from the local bar, and current Notaries Public already associated with the prevailing education program.

The program is currently going through the final stages for official approval at Simon Fraser University. It is anticipated that the ultimate approval of the University's Senate and Board of Governors will occur in late 2007 or early 2008.

Potential students who are interested in applying to enter this program should be able to apply early in the new year. Students successfully completing the program, while eligible to complete the final phase of entry into the profession by securing articles and completing the requisite exams, are not guaranteed an articling position.

In addition to those hoping to enter the profession, current BC Notaries Public who are interested in obtaining this exceptional new degree are encouraged to apply for enrollment in the program. It is anticipated the program will enroll between 20 and 25 students per year. ▲

David MacAlister, BA, MA

(Criminology), LL B, LL M, has taught courses on criminology, criminal justice, and law since 1985. His current teaching areas include Criminal Procedure and Evidence, Philosophy of Law, Human Rights and Civil Liberties, and Sentencing. His research interests include the area of financial compensation for victims of crime and sentencing practices and the use of reparative dispositions in the criminal law. Co-author of the text, *Canadian Criminal Justice Today*, David is presently an Assistant Professor in the School of Criminology at Simon Fraser University.

dmacalis@sfu.ca