

Position Title: WL S23 More-than-Human Legal Rights & Duties Researcher

Position Classification: Research/Professional (non-lab)

Job Description

This position will enable an Allard JD student to develop and hone a range of highly transferable skills at legal research, analysis, writing and communication on the exciting and timely topic of securing legal recognition of the reciprocal rights and duties between humans and more-than-human relatives such as rivers, mountains, species, ecosystems and supernatural beings in what is now called British Columbia. The student will work directly with the Director of the Centre for Law and the Environment, Professor Stepan Wood. The main focus of the work will be coordinating with project partners to prepare a major grant application for a collaborative action research project on this subject. The goal of the project is to work with settler-colonial and Indigenous organizations and communities to foster the development, expression and implementation of laws to protect the legal standing and rights of animals, rivers, species, ecosystems and other more-than-human relatives in ways that respect the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and reinforce the authority of Indigenous law and governance.

The student will conduct and write up research, help prepare a major grant application, edit Centre publications on the research topic, and help build partnerships with Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations and communities. Current and target partners include [several Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations, names redacted].

Duties

With the Director's support and guidance, the student will:

- Conduct legal research into state and Indigenous laws related to more-than-human relatives and "rights of nature" in Canada and beyond, using UBC library digital resources and legal research tools (eg CanLII, Westlaw);
- Help prepare a major grant application for a multi-year, interdisciplinary, collaborative action-research project on this subject, using online collaboration tools (eg Slack, Teams, OneDrive) and granting agency platforms (eg SSHRC);
- Communicate and help cultivate relationships with individual and organizational project partners and collaborators;
- Work with relevant UBC research offices to develop and refine the grant application (eg ORS, SPARC)
- Help edit and publish Centre publications on this subject;
- Write one or more blog posts about the project for the Centre's blog.

Most duties will be performed virtually using digital tools including the UBC Library website, Internet, email, online collaboration tools and videoconferencing platforms. For duties that require on-site



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attendance, the supervisor and student will cooperate to plan safe in-person work arrangements in accordance with applicable public health measures.

Supervision

The student will work under the direct supervision of the Centre's Director, Professor Stepan Wood. Professor Wood will meet with the student at least biweekly and communicate by email more frequently to provide direction, training and feedback. Meetings will be in person or virtual, depending on the public health situation and the student's preferences.

QUALIFICATIONS

The position is open only to current Allard JD students. Applications from other students will not be considered. The student will have a demonstrated interest in environmental law and related fields, preferably including Indigenous and environmental rights; strong legal research and writing skills; familiarity with legal research tools and citation style; ability to work independently; and strong organizational skills.

Prior experience with project management, grant writing, non-profit organizations, Indigenous organizations or grassroots community work is an asset. Preference will be given to candidates who identify as Indigenous.

Contribution to the University Community

Impact

By helping advance a major collaborative action-research project on the cutting-edge topic of redefining legal relationships between humans and nature and between settler-colonial and Indigenous societies, the student will make an important contribution to fulfillment of the Centre's goal to be an internationally recognized hub for creating and spreading knowledge, ideas and practices at UBC and beyond about the role of law in securing a healthy environment and a sustainable society. The student will also contribute to achieving the law school's goals of training thoughtful and competent lawyers, providing students with a deeper understanding of Indigenous legal issues and Indigenous laws in Canada, and creating and disseminating research with local, national and global impact that strengthens the law school's standing as a centre of exceptional legal research. Moreover, the student will contribute to revitalization of Indigenous legal orders and reconciliation of settler-colonial and Indigenous laws.

Safe, supportive and inclusive workplace

The Centre embraces equity, diversity and inclusion in all its activities and operates in accordance with UBC's Respectful Environment Statement. The Centre encourages applications from members of groups that have been marginalized on any grounds enumerated under the BC Human Rights Code, including sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, racialization, disability, political belief, religion, marital or family status, age and status as a First Nation, Métis, Inuit, or Indigenous person. Professor Wood is trained in occupational health and safety, workplace equity, implicit bias and Indigenous cultural competency and is a past member of the law school's Joint Occupational Health and Safety



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Committee. He ensures that all Centre employees familiarize themselves with the Respectful Environment Statement and complete UBC's mandatory training for all employees in health, safety, bullying, harassment and privacy. The Centre offers support to students via the law school's office of student wellbeing and UBC's equity and inclusion office and centre for student involvement & careers.

Student Learning Components

Supervision & Training

As the student's direct supervisor, Professor Wood will:

Provide a comprehensive orientation to the position and training in relevant research tools and techniques, supported by reference librarians as needed;

Oversee the student's use of a Plan-Do-Review approach, including by helping the student to establish goals, timetables and work plans for assigned tasks; providing regular verbal and written feedback on the student's work; and having the student reflect on lessons learned upon completion of tasks;

Meet with the student at least biweekly to review progress, communicate with the student proactively between meetings as needed, and answer the student's inquiries promptly; and

Encourage increasing initiative and autonomy in planning and executing duties as the student gains familiarity with the position.

Connections & Learning

Professor Wood will be the student's mentor, fostering their intellectual and professional development and cultivating opportunities for the student to meet and network with other students, researchers and project partners. The student will be appointed as a Fellow of the Centre for Law and the Environment for the duration of their employment and will have opportunities to interact informally with other Fellows and faculty members.

This position will develop and enhance the student's personal learning and professional growth by entrusting them with responsibility and autonomy commensurate with their level of experience and readiness. The position will also afford some degree of flexibility in terms of the precise tasks the student works on, giving them opportunities to pursue subjects and skills that interest them most.

Career Exploration

This position will deepen and expand the legal research and analytical skills essential for academic success in law school and professional success in the practice of law or related fields. The student will develop and hone skills at researching domestic, international and comparative law, secondary legal literature, and Indigenous legal systems. The student will also acquire highly transferable skills at project management, grant writing and communication. Many of these same skills are also valuable for academic growth and success.