



Representatives from the Society of Notaries Public of BC together with SFU administration on the SFU Burnaby Campus to recognize the Society's contribution to the development of the Applied Legal Studies program.

## **SFU Applied Legal Studies to shape future of BC notaries with \$3.5M gift**

March 2, 2023

A major donation from the [Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia \(SNPBC\)](#) to the Applied Legal Studies program at Simon Fraser University's (SFU) School of Criminology will lead to significant advancements in the field of applied legal studies, and place SFU as a pivotal partner in the expansion of notary education in British Columbia.

The \$3.5 million gift will fund an endowed professorship within the [Master of Arts in Applied Legal Studies \(MA-ALS\) graduate program](#). The endowment gift is a milestone in SNPBC's longstanding partnership with SFU Criminology, which dates back to when both parties came together to establish the MA-ALS program in 2008.

The MA-ALS program provides notaries with core academic competencies in noncontentious areas of the Canadian legal system. Today, students wishing to gain admission to SNPBC and practice as notaries in BC must graduate from SFU's MA-ALS program—the only program that SNPBC recognizes for this purpose. As of March 2021, more than half of BC's practicing notaries are graduates of the MA-ALS program.



John Mayr, the CEO and Executive Director of SNPBC said that the Society is excited about the ongoing opportunity to provide rigorous training and education to BC notaries, strengthen legal excellence, and enable the people of this province to enjoy greater choice in trusted legal service providers.

“British Columbians rely on notaries public for the legal advice and legal services they provide. Having a strong, collaborative relationship with SFU and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences ensures that our partnership of excellence in legal education and service to the public will continue,” says Mayr. “Graduating educated highly skilled legal professionals in a timely manner will increase access to legal services in the province.”

The investment will contribute to the greater permanence, stability, and continuity of the MA-ALS program. SFU criminology professor and program director [Margaret Hall](#), who holds the B.C. Chair in Applied Legal Studies, says that the endowment will help create a permanent professorial position dedicated to legal research and teaching excellence.

“The generous gift from the SNPBC will enable further development of the MA-ALS program, in terms of building interdisciplinary connections within SFU, developing new course programming, and attracting external resources to the program,” says Hall. “Our commitment is to provide first class and cutting-edge legal education to notaries in British Columbia.”

To further strengthen engagement with SNPBC, Hall will also work with the MA-ALS program steering committee to deliver a timely and enriched curriculum while accounting for any forthcoming changes to the scope of practice for notaries.

The MA-ALS program, which is housed in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS), also aligns with the faculty’s strong commitment to recruit the world’s brightest minds and advance academic programming that meets the needs of today and tomorrow.

“FASS is strongly committed to better integrating academic research and career development throughout our departments. The partnership we share with SNPBC in the MA-ALS program is a prime example of this,” says FASS Dean Laurel Weldon. “As a career development program, the program prepares students for a successful professional career, and we are proud to be a partner in shaping the future of notary education in BC.”

A recipient of the 2011 Award of Excellence from the Canadian Association for University Continuing Education, the MA-ALS program prides itself as a challenging and rewarding program taught by instructors with industry experience. The program currently accepts up to 35 full-time students and enjoys a hybrid delivery model where students attend in-person for two weeks at the start of each fall term and complete the remainder online.

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[**IMAGE GALLERY:** [https://1sfu.sharepoint.com/:f:/t/SFUTeams-FASSCommunicators-FASSCommshareddrive/EnL\\_UEsAMnNOofqVbYrAYLYB-sxIGnKCCUrb9drb8c2Xyw?e=W2sAic](https://1sfu.sharepoint.com/:f:/t/SFUTeams-FASSCommunicators-FASSCommshareddrive/EnL_UEsAMnNOofqVbYrAYLYB-sxIGnKCCUrb9drb8c2Xyw?e=W2sAic)]

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## Learn more

**The Society of Notaries Public of British Columbia (SNPBC)** is the regulatory body for members of the Society. Its mandate is to regulate the profession in the public interest by setting standards and investigating complaints. SNPBC seeks to ensure that the people of B.C. are served by legal practitioners who meet high standards of learning, competence, and professional conduct. [www.snpbc.ca](http://www.snpbc.ca)

**The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS)** is the largest and most diverse Faculty at SFU. Supported by world-class research faculty, FASS offers a variety of interdisciplinary programs where students have the flexibility to explore relevant topics that help them develop the skills and knowledge they need to succeed in their future careers. [www.sfu.ca/fass](http://www.sfu.ca/fass)

**SFU Advancement & Alumni Engagement (AAE)** works with university partners and alumni to advance knowledge and innovation, foster the leaders of tomorrow, and transform lives through philanthropy. AAE is committed to helping SFU donors advance new ideas that are furthering our communities—like addressing environmental concerns, providing lifelong value for students, and promoting social justice—and encourage investment in programs that are transforming the landscape of teaching and learning. [www.give.sfu.ca](http://www.give.sfu.ca)