



pro bono
students
canada | réseau national
d'étudiant(e)s
pro bono



PBSC instills in students the importance of public service. It teaches that being a lawyer is not just a job, it's not just a paycheck. Being a lawyer is about membership in an honorable profession that has an obligation to serve the public. This is the power of PBSC.



How did you become involved with PBSC?

I supported PBSC when I served as Dean of the University of Victoria law school from 2008-2013. The mission of PBSC fits perfectly with the law school's commitment to public service and social justice. After I finished my term as Dean, I was keen to continue lending a hand, and thus I was delighted to become the faculty adviser of the UVic chapter.

What is your role as faculty adviser?

My first priority is to be an on-site resource for the student volunteers, ready to answer their questions or point them to people who can help them. The second is to be an ambassador for PBSC generally and my chapter in particular. Since PBSC couldn't operate without local lawyers who volunteer their time and expertise, it's important for PBSC to maintain good relations with the bar.

What kind of role do you think students have in addressing the access to justice gap?

The crisis in access to justice is enormous. The law students who volunteer for PBSC are one part of various programs in BC that are grappling with the huge need for legal assistance. While the students' efforts may seem like the proverbial drops in a bucket, every drop does make a vital difference to the specific client, and thus should not be discounted or dismissed merely because the bucket is large. More importantly, PBSC instills in students the importance of public service. It shows them that being a lawyer is not merely a job, it's not only a paycheck, it's about membership in an honorable and learned profession, one that has an inherent obligation to serve the public. This message is the power of PBSC.

What advice would you give young lawyers about making time for pro bono work?

I would tell them to imagine that they are celebrating their 70th birthdays, and are looking back on their lives. What do you want to remember? That you drove the swankiest Mercedes, or that you did something to make the world a better place? I would remind them of Winston Churchill's justly-famous statement: "You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give."

How does your involvement with PBSC benefit you personally?

I enjoy becoming better acquainted with the talented students who are involved with PBSC. Moreover, I get the satisfaction of knowing the community is being well-served by UVic Law students.

**Professor Donna Greschner,
University of Victoria Faculty of Law & PBSC On-Site Supervisor**