



**“ I want to live in a community where people care about each other. If I want that, then I have to be that. Having an opportunity where I can get guidance from my professors and learn from mistakes before starting an articling position gives me comfort – when I go into articling, I’ll have the necessary experience to do a better job in an area that I wouldn’t have had practical work experience in. ”** – Valerie Fernandes, student

While a few experiential learning opportunities take alumni back to their internship roots, others engage students with their underlying interests and passions. At York University’s Osgoode Hall Law School, every Juris Doctor student is exposed to law in action through an experiential course or program as part of their legal education. Osgoode’s Office of Experiential Education program, the first of its kind at a Canadian law school, serves as a catalyst for experiential learning initiatives. With a passion for social justice, Valerie Fernandes, a third-year Osgoode student, is taking part in The

Innocence Project, which teams law students with seasoned criminal lawyers to examine cases of suspected wrongful conviction. Together, they reinvestigate these cases to seek proof of innocence. Fernandes is now working on her second case involving a suspected wrongful murder conviction. She is interviewing subjects, collecting evidence obtained by private investigators and forensics reports, and connecting the dots with Osgoode Professor Alan Young, who is a criminal lawyer and the program supervisor. As a result of her work on this project, her tenacious commitment to social justice and her studies at Osgoode, Fernandes secured an articling position at the Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted. There, she will be working on cases similar to those at The Innocence Project.

Ontario’s communities are home to some of the world’s most socially innovative organizations; this

translates into a prolific range of opportunities for students interested in social justice. Erin Kang was a student of the University of Toronto’s Urban Studies program in the fall of 2011 and received one of her top choices for placement: the Centre for Social Innovation. During her internship, Kang helped facilitate the opening of the centre’s third location in Toronto’s Regent Park, connecting socially conscious people and organizations to each other and the community. Passionate about



**“ My academic focus was community development and neighbourhood resilience. Now, I’m working in that very field and loving it. ”**

– Erin Kang, alumna

her work, she volunteered with the organization when her placement ended. Just a few months before graduation, Kang landed a permanent job at the Centre for Social Innovation as the events co-ordinator and community membership animator, and she rates her job satisfaction as off the charts. She continues to empower members of the centre and works toward a community built on social justice.

**“ Ontario’s postsecondary institutions are global leaders in offering innovative applied learning programs that combine traditional classroom teaching methods with hands-on, collaborative activities that help students learn in new ways. These experiential learning courses help our students develop the valuable practical skills that many employers are seeking and help position these students to actively contribute to our highly skilled, 21st century global economy. ”**

– Brad Duguid, Ontario’s Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities