

Experience North 2023 Blog Post – Graeme Dick – Sault Ste Marie

In January 2023, I was only a couple months from completing my undergraduate and looking forward to an opportunity to be able to utilize my degree outside of the classroom in the real world. Scrolling through *Indeed* on the couch in my apartment I came across a posting for Northern Policy Institute (NPI) that presented just this, a summer policy analyst position quite literally in my own backyard. I would soon find that the commute to the job would take less than ten minutes from my home here in Sault Ste Marie, by foot!

Being born and raised in the Sault, I had felt that at this point in time I had already experienced all that the north had to offer. However, after four months of employment with NPI I feel that I have really had my eyes opened as to what potential the Sault and the North holds. It was exciting to see firsthand the research that is being conducted here in Northern Ontario as well as being able to work alongside the knowledgeable and personable people who are incredibly passionate about what they do.

Throughout the summer at NPI, I was immersed in pursuing professional research and tasked with providing recommendations to combat Northern Ontario's prolonged population aging challenge. Being able to utilize what I had learned at school and apply it for the benefit of my local community and region was an unforgettable experience. Additionally, being involved in our 2023 Magnetic North conference gave me invaluable insight as to how professional conferences like these operate. Throughout the summer I felt that the work that I was doing at NPI was larger than myself and was for the wellbeing of my colleagues, neighbours, and community members of Northern Ontario.

With NPI I could not have asked for a better introduction to the world of policy. Especially for someone like me, who comes from a political science/international relations background. I feel that the opportunity provided through an *Experience North* placement would be incredibly rewarding for any individual, regardless of their background. If they maintain an interest in anything Northern Ontario and are looking to make a real, professional, difference in their own communities. I know that what I have learned and worked on here at NPI will be of great value to me in my future career and wholeheartedly recommend the *Experience North* program.