

University of Washington

Arctic Sovereignty Task Force



Ottawa Fact-Finding Mission

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Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies
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Faculty: Vincent Gallucci and Nadine Fabbi

Ottawa Fact-Finding Mission

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Trip Report

Editor: Patrick Lennon

All photography by Gustaf Andreassen, except where noted



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Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

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The University of Washington's Office of Global Affairs, College of Arts and Sciences, Social Sciences in the College of Arts and Sciences, the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, and the Center for Global Studies and Canadian Studies Center in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies.

The Task Force would also like to extend special thanks to:

Nadine Fabbi and Vince Gallucci, the course instructors, for their tireless efforts organizing the Ottawa trip;

Nancy Hector, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, for her efforts supporting our fact-finding mission;

Cecilia Sithembile Silundika, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), for organizing our meetings with her colleagues;

Sophie Thériault, Civil Law, University of Ottawa, for organizing the symposium at her institution;

And last, but certainly not least, every single office, organization, and individual who took time from their busy schedule to meet with us and share their extensive knowledge about the Arctic.



Hello! Bonjour! Qanuippit!

Every year, students in the Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies at the University of Washington take part in a senior capstone project called Task Force. The program has been a part of the International Studies program for more than 25 years, and is one of the highlights of the undergraduate curriculum in the Jackson School.

Students are split up into different Task Force groups comprising 10 to 15 students. Each Task Force is focused on a contemporary international issue, and is led by Jackson School faculty with expertise in the subject area. Each student spends the first part of the 10-week quarter doing intensive research on a specific sub-field within the topic, and then spends the remainder of the quarter writing an in-depth policy report. These individual chapters are compiled by student editors into a final Task Force report. An expert in the field of study is invited to the University to meet with students, question them on their findings, and evaluate their final report.

Our Task Force, led by Vincent Gallucci and Nadine Fabbi, was charged with studying the issue of Arctic sovereignty. Global climate change is dramatically transforming the landscape of the Circumpolar North, and both Arctic and non-Arctic countries are beginning to shift their attentions to the region. As part of our research on this subject, we traveled to Ottawa, Canada, for a fact-finding mission. Generously funded by a grant from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, this week-long trip allowed us to meet with Canadian Federal agencies, international diplomatic representatives, legal experts, and other individuals with extensive knowledge and experience on Arctic issues.

We learned an incredible amount from the people we met with, both about Canada and about the Arctic as a whole. It helped refine and focus the subjects of our Task Force report, and also opened up new avenues of inquiry. Without this trip, we would have been severely hampered in the writing of our report, as much of what we learned has not been published elsewhere.

This report is an account of the individuals and groups that we met with, intended to provide a window into our experiences in Ottawa, and the subjects we researched. I hope you enjoy it, and I hope that perhaps you too will become interested in learning more about the rapidly changing Arctic. What happens in the North affects us all.

Merci! Thank you! Nakurmiik!

Patrick Lennon

Editor, Ottawa Trip Report



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Inuit Circumpolar Council
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

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Delegation of the European Commission to Canada
Embassy of the Russian Federation
Polar Continental Shelf Project

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Royal Norwegian Embassy
Benoît Pelletier
Donat Savoie

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Embassy of Iceland
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Embassy of Denmark
University of Ottawa



Ottawa Hosts

Departments/Organizations/Embassies

Aboriginal and Circumpolar Affairs Division, Foreign Affairs and International Trade
Canada

Circumpolar Liaison Directorate, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Delegation of the European Commission to Canada

Embassy of Denmark, Ottawa

Embassy of Iceland, Ottawa

Embassy of the Russian Federation in Canada

Embassy of the United States of America, Ottawa

Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa

Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

International Polar Year, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

International Relations Directorate, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Inuit Circumpolar Council, Canada

Inuit Relations Secretariat, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Northern Affairs Organization, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Northern Strategy, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Oceans Law Division, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

Polar Continental Shelf Project, Natural Resources Canada

Royal Norwegian Embassy, Ottawa

United States Relations, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada



Ottawa Hosts Speakers/Hosts/Coordinators

Avdoshin, Evgeny A., Embassy of the Russian Federation in Canada
Bergmann, Martin, Polar Continental Shelf Program, Natural Resources Canada, Ottawa
Borbey, Patrick, Northern Affairs Organization, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Chumakov, Valery, Embassy of the Russian Federation in Canada
Duschenes, Christopher, Inuit Relations Secretariat, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Di Girolamo, Giovanni, Delegation of the European Commission to Canada
Finkler, Harald W., Circumpolar Liaison Directorate, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Graham, Angela, North America Outreach and Mission Liaison Division, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Henningsen, Jakob, Embassy of Denmark, Ottawa
Heynen, Jeff, US Relations, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Kadas, Robert, Aboriginal and Circumpolar Affairs Division, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Kudluk, Henry, Communication and Liaison Office, Inuit Relations Secretariat, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Kozij, John, Strategic Policy and Integration Directorate, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Lalonde, Suzanne, Faculty of Law, Université Montréal
Locklear, Lonzell, Embassy of the United States of America
Loring, Eric, Environment Department, Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
McRae, Donald, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
Morse, Bradford, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
Moss-Davie, Pitseolalaq, Research Coordinator, Inuit Circumpolar Council
Naess, Tor B., Royal Norwegian Embassy, Ottawa
Okalik, Paul, Nunavut
Pelletier, Benoît, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
Pharand, Donat, International Law, University of Ottawa
Rees, Stephanie, International Polar Year, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Reimer, Chester, Chester Reimer Consulting Inc.
Savoie, Donat, Inuit, Arctic and Circumpolar Affairs
Silundika, Cecilia Sithembile, Circumpolar Liaison Directorate, Northern Affairs Organization, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
Sim-Nadeau, Sue, Polar Continental Shelf Project
Steele, Earl James, Embassy of the United States of America
Stewart, Allison, Oceans Law Division, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada
Thériault, Sophie, Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa
Thordardottir, Sigridur Anna, Embassy of Iceland, Ottawa
Vatne, Per, Royal Norwegian Embassy, Ottawa
Whitaker, Marilyn, International Relations, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada



Canadian Museum of Civilization



Task Force students experiment with ways of braving subfreezing temperatures

The very first activity for the Ottawa Fact-Finding Mission was a trip to the Canadian Museum of Civilization. This was our first experience with Ottawa's bitterly cold temperatures, which was quite a shock for those of us used to Seattle's mild, temperate climate. At the Museum, we first toured the First Peoples Hall, which was a broad yet detailed introduction to the aboriginal peoples of Canada. Then we traveled through 1,000 years of Canadian history in just under 30 minutes during our whirlwind trip through the Canada Hall. Most of us had very little knowledge of Canadian history or culture, so this visit to the Museum provided us with valuable background for the rest of our trip.



Parliament of Canada



Nadine Fabbi and Task Force students take in the Library of Parliament

That afternoon, we toured the Parliament of Canada. The timing of our trip was especially lucky, as we were able to tour Parliament the day before the Speech from the Throne, which begins a new legislative session. Our enthusiastic tour guide was able to use that event to give us an even greater understanding of Canadian politics than we normally would have received. Much like the trip to the Museum, the tour of Parliament was important in further developing our basic knowledge about Canada. The rest of the week was naturally focused on Arctic issues, so doing these two tours first was especially helpful, and got our week off to a good start.



Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada

Nancy Hector, Senior Program Advisor, North America, International Education and Youth Division

Jeff Heynen, Deputy Director, US Relations

Paul Gibbard, Director, Aboriginal and Circumpolar Affairs

Allison Stewart, Oceans Law Division



Patrick Lennon and Emily Epsten confer in between DFAIT presentations

Bright and early Monday morning we were welcomed at Canada's Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) by Nancy Hector, who was instrumental in making our Ottawa trip a reality. She organized a fascinating morning program to help us begin the research part of our trip. First we met with Jeff Heynen, DFAIT's Deputy Director of US-Canada Relations. He spoke at length about the close relationship between the two countries at all levels – social, economic, and governmental. Next we met with Paul Gibbard, DFAIT's Director of Aboriginal and Circumpolar Affairs. He spoke about Canada's new Northern Strategy, a domestic policy with regards to the Arctic, and about Canada's long-standing involvement and support of the Arctic Council. Finally, we met with Allison Stewart, a lawyer in the Oceans Law section of DFAIT. She gave an overview of Canada's legal claims in the Arctic, including questions about Hans Island and the Northwest Passage. Together, they were a very informative slate of speakers, and we were able to ask questions that drove deeper into the issues at hand. It was the perfect start to our mission.



Inuit Circumpolar Council

Pitseolalaq Moss-Davies, Research Coordinator

Chester Reimer, Consultant



Nadine Fabbi listens as Chester Reimer fields questions from the students

Monday afternoon we visited with two important organizations representing aboriginal peoples in the Arctic. The first was the Inuit Circumpolar Council (ICC), an international organization that represents Inuit in four countries – Canada, Russia, Greenland (Denmark), and the United States. Pitseolalaq Moss-Davies, a research coordinator with ICC Canada gave us a general overview of the ICC and its various activities. She shared with us some of ICC Canada's priority issues, including climate change, youth, health, biodiversity, and economic development. We also met with Chester Reimer, a consultant working with the ICC, who talked about the exclusion of the Inuit voice from sovereignty discussions in the Arctic. He mentioned in particular the fact that although there is aboriginal representation on the Arctic Council, there were no aboriginal groups invited to be a part of the Ilulissat Conference and the subsequent Ilulissat Declaration. In response, aboriginal groups held the Inuit Leader's Summit on Arctic Sovereignty. He provided us with the text of the joint statement that came out of that summit, which was very valuable to several of the chapters.



Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami

Rosemary Cooper, Political Coordinator

Stephen Hendrie, Senior Communications Officer

Eric Loring, Senior Environment Researcher



Ruben Shimonov takes notes during the ITK presentation

On Monday afternoon we also met with representatives of the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), the national Inuit organization in Canada. Rosemary Cooper, a Political Coordinator with the ITK, gave us a history of the Inuit in Canada, and talked about the development of the ITK. We then spoke with Stephen Hendrie, their Senior Communications Officer, and Eric Loring, a Senior Environment Researcher, about the issues facing Inuit in Canada today. These include a rapidly growing and very young population, a very high suicide rate, high unemployment and low incomes. They discussed the impacts of climate change, which include reduced access to country food, which is the traditional and most healthy diet for Inuit. They also spoke about the importance of food security, and about the difficulties in adapting to a rapidly changing climate. These difficulties are so serious that Sheila Watt-Cloutier, an important Inuit leader, has taken steps to sue the United States for human rights abuses resulting from its contributions to global climate change. All in all, our meetings with the ICC and ITK made for an interesting and educational afternoon.



Embassy of the United States of America

James Steele, Environment, Science and Technology Coordinator

Bud Locklear, Specialist: Environment, Science, and Technology



Jamie Stroble, April Nishimura, and Ruben Shimonov pose outside the US Embassy

On Tuesday morning, we returned home to the United States – the United States Embassy, that is. We met with Jim Steele, the Environment, Science, and Technology Officer at the Embassy in Ottawa, and Bud Locklear, a Canadian who has worked at the Embassy for 10 years on environment, science, and technology issues. Jim Steele first emphasized the very close ties that the United States and Canada have. He then gave a presentation on the US point of view about sovereignty claims in the Arctic, in particular about the Northwest Passage. While he too downplayed the idea that there is any sort of “conflict,” he made very clear that the United States believes an international strait runs through the Northwest Passage, and he gave the legal arguments that the US uses to back up its claim. He also emphasized cooperative relations in the Arctic, in particular the participation of both the United States and Canada in the activities of the Arctic Council.



Delegation of the European Commission

Giovanni Di Girolamo, First Counsellor and Head of Political and Public Affairs



Jamie Stroble, Nadine Fabbi, and April Nishimura meeting with Giovanni Di Girolamo

The Task Force had lunch on Tuesday with Giovanni Di Girolamo, head of the Political and Public Affairs section with the Delegation of the European Commission to Canada. He discussed the desire of the European Union to become more involved in the Arctic, including seeking a greater role within the Arctic Council. He explained that Europe's interest in the Arctic is primarily based in the issue of climate change. Climate change in the Arctic will affect all European nations, and increased development in the Arctic could aggravate that climate change. He emphasized the idea of sustainability in developing shipping and natural resources throughout the Arctic, and also encouraged increased international cooperation across the board. Many of us had questions about why the European Union, with only three Arctic member states, would be interested in such a large role in the Arctic, so it was very enlightening to hear the perspective of the European Commission first-hand.



Embassy of the Russian Federation

Evgeny Avdoshin, Third Secretary

Valery Chumakov, Counsellor



Task Force students waiting outside the Russian Embassy

On Tuesday afternoon we took a long walk to the Embassy of the Russian Federation. There we were met by Evgeny Avdoshin, Third Secretary of the Embassy. He shared with us the Russian perspective on Arctic issues, a perspective that had been sorely lacking in the rest of our meetings. He assured us that Russia's provocative planting of a Russian flag several miles under the North Pole was a purely scientific exercise, to prove that it could be done despite the extreme pressure experienced so deep in the ocean. He also expressed a desire for international cooperation, noting that it is unlikely that any country will be able to access any of the resources in the Arctic on their own. Another interesting point that he brought up, that was not discussed very much by other countries we met with, was the importance of defining precisely one what means by the Arctic, as there are many several interpretations. We also met with Valery Chumakov, who shared his knowledge on Arctic fisheries issues.



Polar Continental Shelf Project

Martin Bergmann, Director

Sue Sim-Nadeau, Senior Advisor



The Task Force listens to Martin Bergmann's presentation

Tuesday evening brought us a special dinner as well as a unique perspective on Arctic issues. The Task Force was joined for dinner by Martin Bergmann and Sue Sim-Nadeau, both with the Polar Continental Shelf Project, a part of Natural Resources Canada. Polar Continental Shelf is a logistics support organization that assists scientists researching in the Arctic region. With aircraft and supplies, the support over a thousand scientists and other personnel on hundreds of research projects per year. They require researchers working with them to meet all Canadian government requirements, which include environmental indigenous communities, incorporation of traditional knowledge, and meeting with affected populations to make sure they are invested in the research. After answering our questions, Mr. Bergmann said he hoped that we would be a part of a new generation of Arctic researchers and advocates, which are sorely needed as the world begins to pay increasing attention to the North.



Royal Norwegian Embassy

Tor B. Naess, Ambassador

Per Vatne, First Secretary



Ambassador Naess looks on while First Secretary Vatne presents

Our first meeting with an ambassador occurred Wednesday morning when Norwegian Ambassador Tor Naess welcomed us to the Royal Norwegian Embassy. Together with First Secretary Per Vatne, he presented the Norwegian perspective on Arctic issues. He established that the Arctic is Norway's top priority right now, both from a domestic and international perspective. He focused on international cooperation, pointing out dialogues that have already been established with other Arctic nations. In particular, Ambassador Naess talked about Norway's relationship with Russia, and their efforts to engage the Russians to become more involved. Both gentlemen also reiterated out the need for sustainable development of resources in the Arctic, to prevent further global climate change. This echoed common themes that we heard throughout the week.



Benoît Pelletier

Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa

Former member of Québec's National Assembly and Minister in the Québec Government



Benoît Pelletier (center) with Gustaf Andreasen and Alison McKay - Photo by N. Fabbi

Our guest for lunch on Wednesday was Benoît Pelletier, a former politician from Québec. This was our first meeting with someone from Québec, which was an eye-opening experience for us all. Mr. Pelletier is a constitutional law expert, but he shared with us his experiences working on negotiations for increased self-government in Nunavik, a region in northern Québec that is home to a mostly Inuit population. He discussed the pros and cons of the arrangement that was agreed upon, and also shared his legal opinions on self-government arrangements that have been tried in other parts of Canada. He believes that the Nunavik arrangement is more constitutional and thus perhaps more sustainable in the future than other self-government attempts. This was very interesting for all of us, and especially for those of us working on the chapters on North America and indigenous peoples.



Donat Savoie

Consultant, Inuit, Arctic and Circumpolar Affairs
Former Chief Federal Negotiator, Nunavik Project, Québec



Marta Schwendeman, Stephen Printz, Andrew Schwartz, Gustaf Andreasen, and April Nishimura with Donat Savoie - Photo by N. Fabbi

Our final meeting on Wednesday was with Donat Savoie, former Chief Federal Negotiator for the Nunavik project in Québec. He shared with us some of the fascinating history of aboriginal peoples in Canada, in particular the importance that World War II and the Cold War had on Canadian relations with Inuit. He also shared with us his experiences living with an Inuit family, which was a brief but exciting glimpse into life in the Arctic. Most importantly, he spoke about his role in negotiating the Nunavik self-government agreement. He emphasized that the current agreement is only an interim agreement, and that it will be followed by more negotiations and a final agreement in 2009. This will transfer some powers from the province of Québec to the Nunavik government, which will be run as a public government. Mr. Savoie's insights were intelligent, funny, and engaging, and after his presentation we were ready for our final two days in Ottawa.



Embassy of Iceland

Sigríður Anna Thordadóttir, Ambassador



Ruben Shimonov and Stephen Printz question the Icelandic Ambassador to Canada

Our second and final ambassador of the week was Sigríður Anna Thordadóttir, the Ambassador of Iceland. She shared with us the long history of Iceland in the Arctic, and their current interests in the region. Iceland is especially interested in the shipping possibilities in the region, as they view themselves as being in a prime location as a starting point for shipping through the Northwest Passage or the Northern Sea Route. The Ambassador also focused on the importance of international cooperation, in particular through the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). She, like many we met with, expressed her hope that the United States would ratify UNCLOS as soon as possible. She also pointed out the extreme effects of global climate change on Iceland, and Iceland's efforts to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Many of us were also taken in by pictures of Iceland's incredible natural beauty, and talk of travel to Iceland was overheard quite often as we made our way to our next meeting.



Indian and Northern Affairs Canada

Patrick Borbey, Assistant Deputy Minister of Northern Affairs

Marilyn Whitaker, Director, International Relations Directorate

John Kozij, Director, Strategic Policy and Integration Directorate

Henry Kudluk, Communication and Liaison Officer, Inuit Relations Secretariat

Harald Finkler, Director, Circumpolar Liaison Directorate

Stephanie Rees, Research Coordinator, International Polar Year



Task Force students pose with INAC presenters - Photo by N. Fabbi

Our Thursday afternoon was packed full with a series of meetings at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC). We were welcomed by Patrick Borbey, the Assistant Deputy Minister for Northern Affairs, and our host Cecilia Sithemile Silundika. Our first presentation was from Marilyn Whitaker, who spoke about the modern history of aboriginal peoples in Canada, and the development of the Indian Affairs department. Next John Kozij presented about Canada's soon to be published Northern Strategy, a domestic policy document for Canada's North. The Northern Strategy is centered around four pillars—sovereignty, economic and social development, environmental protection, and governance—which are underpinned by further development of science and technology. Next Henry Kudluk described the purpose and history of INAC's Inuit Relations Secretariat, which operates as a liaison between the Inuit of Canada and the federal government. This was followed by a talk by Harald Finkler. He focused primarily on cooperation within the Arctic, in particular Canada's significant role on the Arctic Council, and efforts to engage Russia in bilateral and multilateral cooperation. The final presentation of the afternoon was from Stephanie Rees from the International Polar Year, who explained the history of that event and Canada's involvement in Arctic research. It was a very full afternoon, but incredibly informative!



Paul Okalik

Former Premier of Nunavut Territory



Task Force students with former Premier Paul Okalik - Photo by N. Fabbri

Thursday night was a special treat for part of our Task Force group. We were able to attend a talk given by Paul Okalik, the former (and very first) Premier of the territory of Nunavut. He told a very personal story about his life, and the problems he has faced. But he also shared with us what he went through helping to build Nunavut. He decried a lack of infrastructure in the North, and called for more devolution of powers to the territory. He expressed his hope for increased resource development in Nunavut, as long as the Inuit will be able to benefit from that development. And, in a nod to our group of Americans in the audience, he said that he hoped our new government would take steps to recognize Canadian sovereignty over the waters of the Northwest Passage. We got to meet former Premier Okalik afterwards, and speak with him briefly. This special evening was definitely one of the highlights of our trip.



Embassy of Denmark

Jakob Henningsen, Deputy Head of Mission



Jakob Henningsen presents on Arctic issues

Our final day in Ottawa began with a trip to the Embassy of Denmark. There we met with Jakob Henningsen, the Deputy Head of Mission. He had some very interesting things to share about the Danish view on Arctic issues. He was very critical of American and Canadian environmental policies, stressing the absolute importance of fighting global climate change. He also discussed some sovereignty issues, stating Denmark's claim to Hans Island, and stating that the Northwest Passage is an issue that should really be settled by the United States and Canada. He was also very open about discussing Greenland and recent moves towards increasing self-government for the Danish territory. He also emphasized the importance of recognizing indigenous claims to the area, and the necessity of including their input in discussions on the future of the region. He was one of the few non-Canadians we met with who specifically addressed indigenous issues without prompting from the Task Force. All in all, the presentation was very engaging and extremely informative.



University of Ottawa

Donat Pharand, Professor Emeritus, International Law

Donald McRae, Faculty of Law

Suzanne Lalonde, Faculty of Law, Université de Montréal

Sophie Thériault, Faculty of Law

Bradford Morse, Faculty of Law



Andrew Schwartz (L) and Jamie Stroble (R) with Donat Pharand

The final event of our Ottawa trip was a Symposium on Arctic Sovereignty – Legal Issues and Inuit Rights, held by the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa, and organized by Sophie Thériault. Our first speaker was Professor Emeritus Donat Pharand, perhaps the leading legal expert on the Northwest Passage. His insights on the subject were incredibly valuable, but we were also very grateful for his opinions on the Arctic region in general. Coming from someone who has studied the Arctic for more than twice as long as most of us have been alive, this was very meaningful. We also heard from Donald McRae, another professor at the University of Ottawa, and Suzanne Lalonde, a professor at Université de Montréal. They shared their own perspectives on the Northwest Passage, including the very interesting point from Professor McRae that Canada should perhaps stop pushing the United States on the issue, and rather simply go ahead and do what is needed to assert Canadian sovereignty in the region. The final presentation of the symposium was by Sophie Thériault and Bradford Morse, both with the University of Ottawa. They gave a presentation on aboriginal land claims agreements as well as Inuit food security, and the role of law in securing access to traditional food. This was a very informative presentation, and gave us a perspective that was lacking through most of the rest of the week. Professor Thériault's talk, which focused primarily on social justice issues surrounding Inuit populations, reminded us all that there is much more to this than simply high-level government debates about treaties and laws. This was a brilliant way to end our week, rounding out a very diverse and exciting group of individuals and organizations. I hope that our final report was all the better for everything we learned during our week in Ottawa!





The students of the Arctic Sovereignty Task Force

From L-R: Stephen Printz, Ruben Shimonov, Julia Troutt, Patrick Lennon, Gustaf Andreasen, Emily Epsten, April Nishimura, Marta Schwendeman, Alison McKay, Kristen Olson, Andrew Schwartz, Jamie Stroble, Naama Sheffer

(Photo by N. Fabbi)

