



Perkins Bass '34 Public Affairs Internship Fund INTERN PROFILE



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Vanessa Haggans '23 New Hampshire Adult Parole Board

Vanessa Haggans '23 grew up in Boulder, Colorado where she graduated summa cum laude from Fairview High School as an IB Diploma recipient. At Dartmouth, Vanessa is pursuing a double major in economics and biology with a minor in public policy. As a First-Year Fellow with the Rockefeller Center, Vanessa interned at the World Resources Institute where she developed an interest in sustainable development and economic policy. Vanessa competes as an attorney on the Dartmouth Mock Trial team, volunteers as a ski patroller at the Dartmouth Skiway, and conducts research in the Biology Department. Her time on Mock Trial and her public policy coursework has deepened her interest in the legal system, particularly relating to non-violent crimes and judicial reform and she plans to attend law school.

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Executive Summary from Vanessa's final report:

I worked as a remote intern at the New Hampshire Adult Parole Board to complete a comprehensive review of New Hampshire parole warrants. As an intern, I attended weekly parole hearings and analyzed over 500 warrants to improve our understanding about recidivism rates, particularly with drug offences and non-violent crimes. Dartmouth Professor Jennifer Sargent also mentored another Dartmouth intern this spring, giving me the opportunity to collaborate directly on a final report that we presented to the entire Board and several parole officers in June. The goal of this research was to inform future New Hampshire Department of Corrections policies and practices to reduce recidivism while on parole. After observing the vast variation between parole officer interactions with parolees

and differences in reporting behavior, we tailored our report to focus on parole officer actions that are most effective in reducing recidivism.

Given the transition to an electronic warrant system in the fall of 2020, this was the first full review of the database to date. The internship provided an incredible opportunity to understand the inner workings of New Hampshire's parole system. The experience reaffirmed my interest in attending law school and ultimately practicing criminal or constitutional law. I am incredibly grateful for this internship opportunity, and I cannot thank the Rockefeller Center enough for their continued support.

The New Hampshire Adult Parole Board is an independent agency within the New Hampshire Department of Corrections and reports directly to the New Hampshire governor. The Board conducts nearly 2,000 hearings per year to assess whether incarcerated individuals should be granted parole or whether individuals on parole should be re-incarcerated following parole violations. The Board consists of nine members that the Governor appoints. Professor Sargent was appointed Chairman of the Board in January 2020. In this role, she is responsible for overseeing parole hearings and Board functions.

Working with Professor Sargent provided me with countless opportunities to better understand the parole system outside of the classroom. I have a strong interest in criminal law and the justice system from my participation on the Dartmouth Mock Trial team and my coursework in the Public Policy Department. I gained a tremendous appreciation for the hardships the parolees spoke about, and I also began to understand how complicated opioid use disorders are. I truly believe this experience had a tremendous impact on my future legal career and provided important background for my studies in law school. Now more than ever, I am inspired to work in the criminal justice system and support programs that work to reduce drug-related recidivism.