

Citizen Lawyer Program

2017-18 Annual Report



Overview

Mission

The Citizen Lawyer Program (CLP) exists to advance the College of Law's teaching and service missions. It is a teaching platform for students to develop the knowledge, values, and skills that are central to the law as a professional calling. By offering a wide variety of opportunities each year for pro bono work, community service, and programs about issues, skills, and values most critical to both personal and professional success, CLP extends students' legal education beyond the classroom and clinical programs, while engaging them directly in serving the law college's mission of public service.

Structure

Brian Farrell serves as the Director of CLP in addition to other responsibilities. CLP is additionally staffed by two or three student research assistants who maintain regular hours in the CLP office (182 BLB). Secretarial support is provided by Diana DeWalle and Nilza Molina.

Components

CLP's activities fall into four general categories:

- Administering structured, law-related pro bono projects
- Facilitating non-law related community volunteer service
- Programming related to student professional identity development
- Supporting Iowa Law's service recognition initiatives

These activities are described in greater detail below.

Pro Bono Projects

CLP partners with non-profit and government agencies to administer a number of structured law-related volunteer opportunities for Iowa Law students each semester. These Pro Bono Projects provide students with an opportunity to gain experience in a legal setting, develop skills, network with practicing lawyers, explore their interests, and provide public service. These are strictly volunteer positions – students are not compensated (as they would be for summer clerkships) nor do they receive academic credit (as they would for field placements or clinic).

Students apply for open positions at the start of each semester and assignments are made by the CLP Director. Students are allowed to continue with the same placement in subsequent semester by agreement of the student and the partner organization. There were 81 students placed in Fall 2017 semester projects, and 80 participated in Spring 2018 projects. An additional 24 students participated in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) project during the winter months of 2017-18.

The projects for the 2017-18 academic year were:

- **ACLU of Iowa** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Under supervision of staff attorneys, the law student volunteers assisted the ACLU of Iowa in conducting confidential and privileged prisoner mail intake.
- **Chicago Volunteer Legal Services** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers provided written legal analysis or gather legal research related to questions posed by a CVLS attorneys working on a civil case.
- **ICCompassion Immigrant Resource Center** (Fall 2017): Student volunteers assisted the Immigrant Resource Center with research needed for asylum and hardship cases, as well as assist with citizenship classes.
- **Innocence Project of Iowa** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers assisted the Innocence Project of Iowa and its partners in its efforts to investigate past cases of alleged wrongful conviction in Iowa; to educate judges, lawyers, law enforcement personnel, and the public; and to improve the integrity of Iowa's criminal justice system through policy initiatives.
- **Iowa Coalition Against Domestic Violence** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers assisted ICADV's legal staff in preparing and submitting immigration applications based upon U Visa and VAWA eligibility. Under the direction of an ICADV staff attorney, students worked directly with victims and their advocates collecting evidence and preparing the immigration petition for submission to USCIS.
- **Iowa Legal Aid: Employment & Expungement** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Students assisted Iowa Legal Aid in its Racial Equity Project to conduct Expungement & Employment Barriers Clinics in Des Moines, Waterloo, Davenport, and Dubuque. These clinics aim to serve a high volume of clients with advice, form preparation, and other limited services to address issues such as expungement, use of private background checks

for housing and employment, dealing with debt owed to the Court, and denial of licensure and vehicle registration.

- **Iowa Legal Aid: Self-Represented Divorce Clinic** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers assisted persons who are self-represented litigants in divorce cases using forms approved by the Iowa Supreme Court. Under the supervision of an ILA staff person or volunteer attorney, students reviewed forms with litigants for completeness and assisted them in filling them out.
- **Iowa Legal Aid: Staff Attorney Research Assistance** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers assisted attorneys with interviewing clients, spotting issues, performing research, and drafting letters and other documents.
- **Iowa Society of Health Attorneys** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers assisted in drafting Iowa health law case law update for annual statewide meeting of health care attorneys.
- **Iowa State Bar Association: Iowa Free Legal Answers** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers assisted the ISBA and its partners in leading Iowa's development and implementation of a 50-state interactive pro bono website, part of a national initiative led by the American Bar Association Pro Bono and Public Service Committee.
- **Iowa State Bar Association: New Iowans Legal Advice Clinic** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Volunteers supported the operation of the clinic in which legal advice is provided by volunteer attorneys.
- **Iowa Supreme Court: Access to Justice Commission** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers conducted general research on legal services delivery in Iowa and other states and attended Commission meetings.
- **Johnson County Attorney's Office: Rocket Docket** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers completed pre-hearing compliance checks for participants in the program and assisted with docket review sessions.
- **Johnson County Attorney's Office: County Attorney Payment Plans** (Spring 2018): Students assisted the office with its CAPP program, in which persons convicted of motor vehicle offenses to get their drivers licenses back by developing and adhering to payment plans.
- **Kids First: Children of Divorce Workshops** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Students helped facilitate the Kids First Workshops for Children of Divorce in North Liberty and Cedar Rapids. The goals of the workshops are to give kids a safe and confidential place to discuss their feelings about divorce; to let kids know they are not alone and the divorce is not



Student volunteers with Access to Justice Commission Chair Justice Brent Appel and Vice-Chair Anjie Shutts.

their fault; to teach kids practical skills to handle their emotions and adjust to family changes; and to help kids understand what to expect from the legal process in an age-appropriate way.

- **State Public Defender – Cedar Rapids** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Students assisted with the operations of the SPD’s Cedar Rapids office as needed, including case management and document/exhibit organization.
- **State Public Defender – Iowa City** (Fall 2017 & Spring 2018): Students assisted with the operations of the SPD’s Iowa City office as needed, including case management and document/exhibit organization.
- **Volunteer Income Tax Assistance** (Winter 2017 & Spring 2018): Student volunteers provided a much-needed service to individuals who might not otherwise file taxes.

Non-Law Volunteerism & Philanthropy

Service is a core value of the legal profession, and CLP works to instill this ethic in Iowa Law students throughout their legal education. In addition to the law-related pro bono projects described above, CLP connects Iowa Law students to non-law volunteer opportunities in the local community, and promotes service work of all types. While students are encouraged to find the opportunities that best fit their own interests, CLP also facilitates the following structured opportunities:

First Year Service Challenge

Each fall, the Citizen Lawyer Program coordinates the First Year Service Challenge, which encourages first-year Iowa Law students to unite with their peers to help the local community. Each of our first-year class sections is encouraged to organize a volunteer service project they will perform as a group during the month of September. The section with the highest rate of participation is recognized during our annual Pro Bono Celebration in October. The First Year Service Challenge continues to successfully connect students with local organizations and their fellow class members, instill the ethic of community service in students, and empower student leaders. In 2017, the first year class performed nearly 200 hours of service during the challenge.



Members of Section 5 volunteered at Shelter House.

Featured Partners

While CLP encourages students to find opportunities that reflect their passion and fit their skills and schedules, it also highlights ongoing relationships with several partners that have worked well for law students in the past, including:

- **The Crisis Center of Johnson County**, which operates an emergency food bank in Iowa City. Iowa Law students have committed to filling a regular shift at the Crisis Center.
- **Big Brothers Big Sisters of Johnson County's School Based Mentoring Program**, provides an opportunity for law students to work 1 to 1 with a Little Sister or Brother. Volunteers visit with their Little Brother or Little Sister for one hour at the same day and time each week during school hours.

Professional Identity Development

Lawyers & Leaders

The *Lawyers & Leaders* (L&L) series consists of workshops, lectures, and other programs that focus on the pro bono tradition, leadership development, practical lawyer and life skills, and community issues. CLP typically organizes three or four event each semester, and designates an additional event or two outside of the college. Attendance at L&L programs is voluntary, but attendance at one program each semester is one requirement for membership in the Pro Bono Society. The following programs occurred during the 2017-18 academic year:

- ***Civility Matters***. Iowa Board of Trial Advocates members facilitated an educational and entertaining program aimed at increasing civility and courtesy in the legal profession.
- ***Ascending the Slopes of Professionalism: Is there a Role for Pro Bono Service?*** Lawyers face an array of pressures in building their careers. Iowa Law alumnus Charles Dick highlighted the importance of community service and pro bono work in personal and professional development.
- ***Re-entry/Parole Simulation: Living the Life as a Returning Citizen***. This simulation helped participants understand the obstacles offenders face after incarceration.
- ***Pro Bono Week Celebration***. Recognition of Pro Bono Society members and announcement of highest rate of participation in the First Year Service Challenge.
- ***A New Model for Law Practice: Community Lawyering***. Justin Gross, Chris Rottler, and Virginia Sipes presented information on the innovative firm Community Lawyers of Iowa and Iowa's new legal initiative.
- ***Ministers of Justice: The Special Role of Prosecutors***. Judge Kevin McKeever, a former prosecutor, and Elisabeth Reynoldson, a former assistant attorney general, discusses the role of prosecutors and information on Iowa's prosecuting internship program.
- ***OWLSS Salary Negotiation***. Presentation by UI College of Business Professor Josey Bathke. Talking about money/salary increases/raises can



Judge Kevin McKeever and Elisabeth Reynoldson discuss the role of prosecutors.

be uncomfortable. This event will provide advice on how to approach those tough conversations.

- ***What's Next in the Legal Profession? Clients Sparking Change and How Attorneys Must Adapt.*** How can attorneys adapt to these changes? How can/should we be better? How can/should we be better? Join Nicolle Schippers from ARAG Legal for a presentation discussing what is currently happening in the legal industry.
- ***Memories of a Nuremberg Judge.*** Judy Hamilton Crockett share memories and letters from her father, Major Clarence E. Hamilton, a 1921 Iowa Law graduate and Judge Advocate in Nuremberg, Germany. Major Hamilton served in WWI, was an attorney, and re-enlisted at age 50 to serve in WWII. He was the man in charge of the denazification of Bavaria and reestablishing the postwar court system in the Allied occupied area.
- ***LGBTQ Micro-Conference on Healthcare, Education, Advocacy and Rights.*** The conference will spark dialogue, collaboration, and action on campus and in the community for LGBTQ individuals and the organizations and institutions that serve them.
- ***OWLSS Conference.*** The Organization for Women Law Students and Staff invites you to join them at their annual Spring Seminar. This year the event will feature a panel of four successful female Iowa Law alums that are working various legal positions in different areas of the country. A panel of esteemed women professionals will discuss their experiences and answer your questions.

First Year Core Series

The First Year Core Series is a collaboration between CLP, Career Services Office, Field Placement Office, and other student services entities. It is a comprehensive program series for first-year students focused on academic skills, career exploration and job seeking skills, professionalism, and self and law school management. Five sessions were held in the fall semester, and three in the spring semester. All first year students are expected to attend, and lunch is provided.

Fall 2017 session topics:

- Effective Study Habits & Organizing Course Materials
- Intro to Legal Careers & Practicing Application
- Preparing for your Job Search: A Comprehensive Approach
- Developing an Effective Strategy for Final Exams
- Information for Spring Registration

Spring 2018 session topics:

- Spring Semester Success
- Summer Success
- Second Year Success

Service Recognition Programs

All Iowa Law students are encouraged to report all service hours completed during the semester via Symplicity. CLP helps maintain this service hour reporting system. Iowa Law students have a strong tradition of volunteer service, and the Class of 2018 graduated having completed a total of 8,302 hours over their law school careers.

CLP also assists the Iowa Student Bar Association in administering Iowa Law's service recognition programs, the Pro Bono Society and the Boyd Service Award.

Pro Bono Society

The Pro Bono Society is a student group that emphasizes the importance of public service and volunteerism in the legal profession. The Pro Bono Society serves as a vehicle to assist law students seeking to earn the Boyd Service Award. Membership is an earned honor that signifies an objectively measured commitment to serving others during the school year, as well as the development of the skills and values important to a life of public service in the tradition of "pro bono publico." Students who complete 15 hours of service in a semester (at least half of which is community focused) and attend one *Lawyers & Leaders* program are invited to membership. The Society inducted 42 members in Fall 2017 (based on Spring 2017 criteria) and 71 members in Spring 2018 (based on Fall 2017 criteria).



Pro Bono Society members at the Pro Bono Week Celebration.

Boyd Service Award

The Boyd Service Award is bestowed at graduation on students who have completed at least 100 of service over their careers. The award is recognized by a designation on the diploma and by wearing an honor cord on graduation apparel. *Honors* are awarded to students who complete at least 100 hours, *High Honors* are awarded to students who complete at least 150 hours, and *Highest Honors* are awarded to students who complete at least 200 hours. At least half of the minimum hours for each level must be community focused.

Thirty-four members of the Class of 2018 graduated with Boyd Service Honors. Of these, 12 were awarded Honors; 13 were awarded High Honors; and 9 were awarded Highest Honors.