

Citizen Lawyer Program

2018-19 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. He is assisted by student research assistants who maintain regular hours in the CLP office (182 BLB). Secretarial support is provided by Nilza Molina and Diana DeWalle.

Components

CLP's activities fall into four general categories:

- Administering structured, law-related pro bono projects
- Encouraging and 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).

Pro bono opportunities are advertised at the start of each semester using position descriptions created by the CLP Director and the supervisor from our agency partners. Students apply for open positions and assignments are made by the CLP Director. Students are typically allowed to continue with the same placement in a subsequent semester by agreement of the student and the partner organization. There were 86 students placed in Fall 2018 semester projects, and 70 participated in Spring 2019 projects. An additional 5 students participated in the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) project during the winter months of 2018-19.

The projects for the 2018-19 academic year were:

- ***ACLU of Iowa*** (Fall 2018 & Spring 2019): 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 2018 & Spring 2019): Student volunteers conducted legal research and provided written analysis related to questions posed by a CVLS attorney working on a civil case.
- ***Innocence Project of Iowa*** (Fall 2018 & Spring 2019): 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 2018 & Spring 2019): 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. This project was funded through a grant secured by CLP and ICADV which expired at the end of the spring semester.
- ***Iowa Legal Aid: Employment & Expungement*** (Fall 2018 & Spring 2019): 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 2018 & Spring 2019): 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 2018 & Spring 2019): Student volunteers assisted attorneys with interviewing clients, spotting issues, performing research, and drafting letters and other documents.
- ***Iowa Society of Health Attorneys*** (Fall 2018 & Spring 2019): Student volunteers assisted in drafting Iowa health law case law updates for an annual statewide meeting of health care attorneys.
- ***Iowa State Bar Association: Innovation & Outreach*** (Fall 2018 & Spring 2019): Student volunteers assisted the ISBA and its partners in innovation of community outreach efforts, 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 2018 & Spring 2019): Volunteers supported the operation of the clinic in which legal advice is provided by volunteer attorneys.
- ***Iowa Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission*** (Fall 2018 & Spring 2019): Student volunteers conducted general research on legal services delivery in Iowa and other states and attended Commission meetings.
- ***Johnson County Attorney's Office: County Attorney Payment Plans*** (Fall 2018): Students assisted the office with its CAPP program, in which persons convicted of motor vehicle offenses regain their drivers licenses by developing and adhering to payment plans.
- ***Johnson County Attorney's Office: Rocket Docket*** (Fall 2018 & Spring 2019): Student volunteers completed pre-hearing compliance checks for participants in the program and assisted with docket review sessions.
- ***Kids First: Children of Divorce Workshops*** (Fall 2018 & Spring 2019): 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



ATJ Commission volunteers outside the Iowa Judicial Branch Building in Des Moines in September.

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.

- **Mediation Services of Eastern Iowa** (Fall 2018): Students assisted in developing and promoting MSEI's annual CLE program.
- **State Public Defender – Cedar Rapids** (Fall 2018 & Spring 2019): 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 2018 & Spring 2019): 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 2018 & Spring 2019): Student volunteers provided a much-needed service to individuals who might not otherwise file taxes.
- **Voting Rights Restoration Clinic** (Spring 2019): Student Volunteers assisted the VRRC in Johnson County by meeting with clients and discussing their criminal history in order to seek restoration of their voting rights.

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. CLP 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



Members of Section 3 volunteer at Table2Table.

fellow class members, instill the ethic of community service in students, and empower student leaders. In 2018, 97 out of the 149 new Iowa Law students (69%) performed 217 hours of service during the challenge for organizations including the Crisis Center, Table2Table, Salvage Barn, Grow: Johnson County, and Hope Lodge.

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 on the same day and time each week during school hours.

Professional Identity Development

The Citizen Lawyer Program organizes the *Lawyers & Leaders* program series and coordinates Iowa Law's First Year Core Series.

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 events 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 2018-19 academic year:

- ***Civility Matters*** (Sept. 13): Iowa Board of Trial Advocates members and Iowa Law alumni Pat Sealey, Jamie Cook, and Judge Andrew Chappell facilitated an educational and entertaining program aimed at increasing civility and courtesy in the legal profession.
- ***Using Your Law Degree to Meddle in Non-profits and Municipalities*** (Oct. 5): Joel Greer, a 1978 Iowa Law graduate, shared his experiences as president or chair of 22 non-profit corporations, VP of three, secretary of four, and Mayor of Marshalltown, Iowa, which suffered significant damage from an EF3 tornado in June 2018.

- **Pro Bono Recognition Ceremony** (Oct. 25): Molly McDonnell, a 2016 Iowa Law graduate and attorney at Iowa Legal Aid, delivered remarks on the role of lawyers in society and the importance of service. Pro Bono Society members were recognized and the highest rate of participation in the First Year Service Challenge was announced. A reception followed.



Molly McDonnell ('16) speaks to students in October.

- **Reforming Juvenile Justice in Iowa** (Nov. 1): Speakers discussed the juvenile justice system in Iowa. Speakers included Erin Altheide of Juvenile Court Services, Rachel Antonuccio of the State Public Defender's Office, LaTasha DeLoach of the State of Iowa DMC Committee, and Jeree Thomas of the Campaign for Youth Justice.
- **Making the Record** (Nov. 9): Court reporter Karen Teig, shared how attorneys can favorably present themselves and make the most complete, clear, and concise record from pretrial deposition to final trial transcript.
- **The Price of Free** (Feb. 8): CLP co-hosted a screening of the award-winning documentary, *The Price of Free*, about the child labor prevention advocacy work of Nobel Peace Prize winner, and past visitor to Iowa Law, Kailash Satyarthi.
- **Salary Negotiations** (Feb. 21): A panel of speakers discussed their experience with negotiating salaries, what they found to be the best negotiation tactics, and gave tips on how to successfully discuss salaries with employers. Co-sponsored with OWLSS & CSO.
- **Exercising Prosecutorial Discretion** (Mar. 8): Iowa Law alumni Elisabeth Reynoldson, Will Ripley, and Jeff Brunelle discussed the role of discretion in their work in both the state and federal systems at the trial and appellate levels.
- **OWLSS Conference** (Apr. 4): The Organization for Women Law Students & Staff invited the Iowa Law student body to join them at their annual Spring Seminar.
- **Limited Scope Representation** (Apr. 18): Meg Norberg from Iowa Legal Aid explained limited scope representation and its relevance to access to justice and the future delivery of legal services.

First Year Core Series

The First Year Core Series is a collaboration between CLP, Career Services Office, Field Placement Office, and other offices. It is meant to present essential information to first-year students in a cohesive and efficient manner. Five sessions were held in the fall semester, and three in the spring semester. All first-year students were encouraged to attend this lunchtime series. The series focuses on the following topics:

- **Academic Skills** (study skills, exam skills, synthesis, self-regulation)
- **Career Exploration & Job Seeking Skills** (learning opportunities, articulating goals, mechanics, networking, managing expectations, using resources, self-assessment, strategic planning)
- **Professionalism** (ethics, etiquette, communication skills, service, role in society, responsibility, fidelity, collaboration, economics)
- **Self & Law School Management** (health, finances, time, project management, emotional intelligence, registration mechanics, curricular planning, compliance)

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 2019 graduated having completed a total of 6,183 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 37 members in Fall 2018 (based on Spring 2018 criteria) and 68 members in Spring 2019 (based on Fall 2018 criteria).



Pro Bono Society members at the Pro Bono Recognition Ceremony.

Boyd Service Award

The Boyd Service Award is bestowed at graduation on students who have completed at least 100 hours 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.

Twenty-eight members of the Class of 2019 graduated with Boyd Service Honors. Of these, 14 were awarded Honors; 8 were awarded High Honors, and 6 were awarded Highest Honors.