

Stanford Law School

Pro Bono Program

STUDENT HANDBOOK 2011-2012

It is the daily; it is the small; it is the cumulative injuries of little people that we are here to protect....If we are able to keep our democracy, there must be one commandment: Thou shalt not ration justice.

- Learned Hand

*Address at the 75th anniversary celebration of the
Legal Aid Society of New York, Feb. 16, 1951*

Why Pro Bono ?

In the rush of finals and bar exam cramming, Valerie McConnell, SLS '10 wrote, "My fondest memories at SLS are from pro bono work. I can think of no better way to have spent my time in law school." She was not alone. Over a third of each SLS class graduates with Pro Bono Distinction, meaning they spent at least 50 hours using their legal skills in unpaid public service. Some advocate for homeless clients seeking Social Security Disability benefits, others offer legal assistance to domestic violence survivors, others teach law to at-risk youth. Students develop a new legal system with the Afghanistan Legal Project or research best practices for international business. In total, over 200 students each year participate in the Levin Center's Pro Bono Program.

Why do so many students volunteer?

- **The Need** - "Pro Bono" is shorthand for "*Pro Bono Publico*" which means, "for the good of the public." And, yes -- as the ABA has made clear by calling upon every licensed attorney to aspire to perform 50 or more hours of pro bono legal service yearly -- it is indeed for the good of the public that lawyers provide free representation to those who would otherwise be on their own. The need is dire.
- **It's Fulfilling:** Any Pro Bono volunteer will tell you they felt grounded and empowered by their service. As Pro Bono Distinction grad Karli Baumgardener, SLS '11, put it: "East Palo Alto; Real people and real problems; Monday four to six."
- **It's Fun:** "What makes it worth it?" Pro Bono Distinction grad Eli Miller said, "Incarcerated teenagers understanding the Constitution and making us laugh."
- **You Learn a Lot** – SLS Pro Bono Program volunteers learn about criminal record expungement, guardianship, legal issues affecting homeless vets, pretrial detention investigation. They may go to San Diego to help homeless veterans with legal issues. They do pretrial detention investigation at the New Orleans Office of the Public Defender. They help rural Californians seeking debt relief. As another recent Pro Bono Distinction grad explained: "Classes taught me the law I need to know. Pro Bono service showed me the lawyer I need to be."

Who Can Participate in the SLS Pro Bono Program?

Anyone. Everyone! We encourage ALL of you to participate.

How Do I Earn Pro Bono Distinction?

To qualify for Pro Bono Distinction -- for which students are honored in the Levin Center Spring Awards Ceremony at the end of their 3L year -- students must perform at least 50 hours of eligible pro bono service during their three years at the law school.

The requirements for eligible pro bono service are that it be:

- Uncompensated
- Law-related work
- At or with an SLS-approved non-profit or government agency
- Performed under the supervision of an attorney, faculty member or other qualified supervisor
- For which no academic credit is received

What Hours Count for Pro Bono Distinction Credit?

Students will be given pro bono credit for the following public service work:

- **Law-related assistance to a non-profit agency engaged in uncompensated policy advocacy for, or legal representation of, low-income clients**
- **Law-related assistance to a governmental entity**
- **Lesson preparation and presentation in legal education projects**
- **Hours in excess of SLS clinical program requirements**
- **Hours in excess of those for which student is receiving summer funding at a public interest placement**
- **Substantive training directly relating to the *pro bono* project**
- **Student leader time spent organizing and coordinating projects**
- ***Note:* Travel time does *not* count towards *pro bono* hours**

What Training is Required?

Every student who commits to participation in a project must attend SLS Ethics Training and any training required by the project itself.

How Do I Sign Up for the Pro Bono Program?

- ***First*, sign the Pro Bono Commitment Form and return it to Betsy de la Vega in Room 209 by September 6, 2011.**
- ***Then*, come to the Pro Bono Fair on September 9, 2011!**

But, wait! What Projects are Available? Read On....

STANFORD LAW SCHOOL PRO BONO PROGRAMS

Domestic Violence Pro Bono

The Domestic Violence Pro Bono offers students the chance to work directly with survivors of domestic violence in a restraining order clinic. After receiving training from both SLS and Bay Area Legal Aid in Redwood City, students will work one-on-one with survivors in BayLegal's restraining order clinic. During a weekly or bi-weekly one-hour shift, volunteers meet with survivors, explaining what protections are offered by the restraining order and how to serve the order. After completing one quarter in the afternoon clinic, students may also participate in morning clinics, where they listen to survivors' stories and help them write statements in support of their applications for restraining orders. After one quarter's experience, students may also volunteer in "full rep," working closely with an attorney and researching legal or factual issues related to ongoing cases. All volunteers must participate in quarterly training sessions, which may include courthouse tours or meeting with BayLegal attorneys for overviews of relevant law. We encourage anyone who wants to work with domestic violence survivors to apply to this project. No prior experience is needed. **Student Leader Contacts:** Amanda Brouillette, amandab1@stanford.edu, Aimee Krause, akrause@stanford.edu.

Student Animal Legal Defense Fund

SLS's Student Animal Legal Defense Fund Pro Bono offers students the chance to work on animal law projects through research and writing, legislation/policy advocacy, and community outreach. Animal law is a quickly expanding and changing field; projects may include defense of animal activists, consumer protection, or administrative rule-making. We work with some of the most well-respected practitioners in the field and are open to exploring any relevant areas in which volunteers may be interested. **Student Leader Contact:** Jeff Pierce, jdperce@stanford.edu.

Alternative Break Options

Every year, SLS offers students the opportunities to work with organizations outside of the Bay Area, both within California and around the country, during various school breaks. In past years, for example, students have travelled to Miami during spring break to assist stranded Haitians with obtaining Temporary Protected Status and to New Orleans to work at the Office of the Public Defender. *More information will be made available regarding trips for 2011-12 later in the year.*

Housing Pro Bono

Affordable, stable and clean housing is a fundamental need, but not a reality, for many of Stanford's nearby residents. After receiving SLS Ethics Training, students in the Housing Pro Bono Project volunteer at Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, where they receive substantive training in the law and assist area low-income residents with housing and landlord tenant issues, including eviction, inhospitable housing and problems related to Section 8 housing subsidies. Students conduct intake interviews to identify potential legal issues and understand the client's goals. Then, in consultation with experienced housing attorney Jeanne Merino and paralegal Victor Ramirez, students develop an action plan to best serve their client's interest. Some students may also pursue extended advocacy and investigation on their client's behalf, and may participate in administrative hearings, negotiate with landlords and draft briefs for small claims court and the EPA Rent Board. Students may also participate in community education and advocacy. **Student Leader Contacts:** Christopher Brumwell, cbrumwel@stanford.edu; Aaron Teitelbaum, aaront1@stanford.edu.

Language Bank Pro Bono Program

Language Bank Pro Bono is an interesting alternative for Stanford students who are fluent in languages other than English. On an as-needed basis, Language Bank volunteers provide written translation and oral interpretation services to clients of other pro bono programs and to other Bay Area agencies that need free interpretation and translation. In past years, various agencies have made requests for translation services in French, Spanish, and Cantonese. **Student Leader Contact:** [Aviva Gilbert, avivag@stanford.edu](mailto:avivag@stanford.edu).

International Business Practices Pro Bono Colloquium

This project provides students the opportunity to work with Law School Lecturer Chip Pitts -- former Chief Legal Officer of Nokia Inc. and Chair of Amnesty International USA -- in an exciting effort to address some of the key emerging legal issues affecting ethical globalization, sustainable development, corporate social responsibility, business and human rights. Scheduling is flexible, but students have generally spend two - four hours a week on their project. Students may work on Good Practice Notes for the UN Global Compact which are concise written notes regarding good practices employed by companies to further the goals of respecting and promoting human rights. Volunteers may also participate in the Corporate Culture and Values Project, which involves inventorying and analyzing business's existing corporate values in order to design creative, yet realistic, ways to promote human rights values and practices by global businesses. **Contacts:** Chip Pitts, chip.pitts@att.net; **Student Leader Contacts:** Dimitri Phillips, phillidl@stanford.edu; Brian Hoffman, bnhoff@stanford.edu.

Volunteer Attorney Program

Students in the Volunteer Attorney Program (VAP) have the opportunity to meet face-to-face with clients who come to Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto, seeking assistance on a wide variety of cases. VAP volunteers counsel clients on a broad range of issues: *i.e.*, personal injury, debt consolidation, contract law, consumer protection law, real estate and housing law, insurance, small claims, family law, and more. After conducting intake interviews, students may also draft follow-up memos and in some cases provide brief, limited services to clients under CLSEPA attorney supervision. Students are required to attend SLS ethics training and VAP-sponsored training prior to participating. This program, which involves approximately two one-hour sessions per quarter, teaches students how to effectively communicate with clients from diverse economic and racial backgrounds and affords them an opportunity to apply knowledge learned in the classroom to real-life scenarios. **Student Leader Contacts:** Allie Dunworth Leeper, allieleeper@gmail.com, Meredith Louise Williams, merwill@stanford.edu, Meredith Wall, meredith.wall@stanford.edu.

Voting Rights Pro Bono Project

Although voting is a fundamental right, problems at the polls, with the registration system, and with the redistricting process continue to deny millions of Americans the ability to participate equally in the democratic process. Students involved with the SLS Voting Rights Project will have the opportunity to support non-partisan election protection and voting rights efforts by assisting legal advocates on a pro bono basis. Last year, student volunteers with the Voting Rights Project fielded hundreds of election day calls on the nonpartisan 866-OUR-VOTE election protection hotline and -- in partnership with a national voting rights nonprofit -- compiled three state-specific guidebooks on redistricting to distribute to community organizations seeking to become more involved in the process. Projects for 2011-2012 are TBD and will depend on the needs of voting rights organizations during the year. **Student Leader Contact:** Alex Tischenko, at012003@stanford.edu.

FLY (Fresh Lifelines for Youth)

Fresh Lifelines for Youth, Inc. (FLY) was founded in 1998 by Christa Gannon, a Stanford Law School alumnus, and the current Executive Director. FLY's mission is to reduce juvenile crime and incarceration through legal education, mentoring, and leadership training. The Law Program targets the most at-risk and disadvantaged youth, teaching them about the law and consequences of crime while building important life skills such as anger management, empathy and problem solving. The Law Program is taught by volunteers who complete an application, interview, and background check processes, as well as 30 hours of training. Volunteers are trained in, and utilize FLY's nationally recognized cognitive-based curriculum. Each volunteer completes about 80 hours of service over the course of a quarter. SLS students are currently working with high-risk and probationary youth in several locations in East Palo Alto and Redwood City. *Because this is an intensive program, 1Ls are advised to consider it no earlier than the second quarter.* **Contact:** Tara Schmidt, tara@flyprogram.org; **Student Leader Contact:** Stephanie Klitsch, sklitsch@stanford.edu.

StreetLaw

As a StreetLaw teacher, you and two or three other co-teachers will interact with incarcerated youth in one of several local facilities. Each week, your group will select, prepare, and teach one of many pre-designed lessons. Lesson topics vary from substantive criminal law (*e.g.*, Three Strikes, gang enhancements), to criminal procedure (*e.g.*, search and seizure.) The goal of StreetLaw is to inform incarcerated youth of their rights and responsibilities, develop their advocacy skills, and promote critical thinking about our justice system. In addition to SLS Pro Bono training, StreetLaw volunteers must complete specialized training designed to familiarize them with teaching and classroom management techniques. Please note that prior teaching experience is not necessary. A lack of experience should in no way discourage a desire to participate in StreetLaw. **Student Leader Contact:** Daniel Brown, danielcareybrown@gmail.com.

Guardianship Pro Bono

Remember when you were a child without a care in the world? Are you interested in making sure local children have the same carefree childhood experience? Then join The Guardianship Pro Bono! SLS and local legal community leaders will train you in introductory ethics, client interviewing skills, and the basics of the California guardianship petition process. During intake sessions, student volunteers interview potential clients who seek guardianship of minors, then consult with volunteer attorneys regarding how to properly advise clients on pursuing a guardianship. The Guardianship Pro Bono is a great way to get face-to-face time with clients and attorneys from top Silicon Valley law firms. Please join us in advocating for children in the Peninsula and South Bay areas. **Student Leader Contacts:** Kevin O'Herin, kaoherin@gmail.com, Tim Hsia, hsia.timothy@gmail.com.

Naturalization Pro Bono

One-third of San Mateo County residents are foreign born. Over 100,000 have not yet naturalized. Many need assistance to prepare their Citizenship interviews with US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS). You can help! Work with the International Institute of the Bay Area in their

Redwood City office to answer client questions regarding the naturalization process and role-play the citizenship interview with them. Students will have opportunities to research and consult on naturalization eligibility issues and may have a chance to accompany clients to their interviews at USCIS. Prior to participation, students will receive SLS Ethics Training as well as an overview of the naturalization process from Professor Jayashri Srikantiah. Volunteer sessions will be approximately two Tuesday or two Thursday evenings per month, from 5:30 - 7:00 p.m. Student volunteers may have the option of planning additional immigration-related events. **Contact:** Sheryl Bergman-Munoz, smbergman@iibayarea.org. **Student Leader Contacts:** Marisa C Diaz, mcdiaz@stanford.edu; Cathleen Dawn Hamel, chamel@stanford.edu.

SLS Tax Pro Bono Project

The SLS Tax Pro Bono Project has an immediate impact on the lives of low-income people in the Stanford community. By offering free tax preparation to income-qualified employees of Stanford's dining services and hospital and their families, student volunteers enable these clients to receive their tax refunds without scams or hefty fees. Participants develop interviewing and advising skills -- along with knowledge of some basic tax principles -- while preparing the clients' tax returns. Prior experience with tax returns is not needed. This year, the project will hold service hours on-campus, with additional opportunities available in Menlo Park. Volunteers must both take SLS Pro Bono Ethics Training and complete a one-day certification session conducted in association with the IRS's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. After their training, students will sign up for at least three 4-hour shifts in February and March (excluding Spring Break), and the first two weeks of April. **Student Leader Contacts:** Bobby Fischbeck, robertbf@stanford.edu, Meredith Williams merwill@stanford.edu, Jordan Wappler, jwappler@stanford.edu.

Pacific Legal Foundation Pro Bono Project

The Pacific Legal Foundation is a public interest law firm that litigates constitutional issues from a more conservative and libertarian perspective. Students in this project will research for and write amicus briefs, court briefs, and research memoranda for PLF attorneys on cases related to property rights, eminent domain, environmental regulations, civil rights, and First Amendment issues. Time commitment will vary from week to week and month to month depending on the available projects. **Student Leader Contact:** Ilan Wurman, iwurman@stanford.edu

National Lawyers Guild Legal Observers Project

The purpose of the Demonstration and Marches Legal Observers Project is to enable people to express their political views without unconstitutional government interference by providing trained legal observers to act as the eyes and ears of the legal team. Students attend a 1.5 hour training where they learn to systematically observe and record any incidents and/or possibly illegal law enforcement activities. They then volunteer to observe at one to three events during the year. Information gathered by Legal Observers has contributed to an extremely successful track record in defending demonstrators' rights. **Student Leader Contacts:** Maggie Filler, maggie.filler@gmail.com; Omar Shakir, oshakir@stanford.edu, Jennifer Gonzalez, jennlaw@stanford.edu.

OneJustice Bus Trips

California has the country's largest low-income population - approximately 5.3 million residents living at or below the poverty line. (The number of people experiencing extreme economic hardship in California is equal to the population of the entire state of Massachusetts.) OneJustice is a non-profit organization that, among other things, partners with law schools to arrange law student trips to provide access to justice to this underserved population. This year, SLS students will be able to go on one of four Justice Bus trips to help clients in rural areas with various legal problems, such as housing, immigration and credit issues. Look for more information later in the year!

Social Security Disability Pro Bono Project

Not far from the Stanford Law School campus is the Opportunity Center, where some of our most vulnerable neighbors come seeking assistance in getting access to much-needed benefits, medical care and housing. The Social Security Disability Pro Bono Project offers students an unparalleled opportunity to work in the intake phase of legal proceedings in which these homeless adults and children with a range of physical and mental health disabilities are seeking Social Security Disability benefits and medical coverage. After joining the project, students receive SLS Ethics Training as well as additional substantive and skills training from in-house supervising attorney Lisa Douglass, a lecturer in the Mills Legal Clinic. Then, with supervision and guidance from Ms. Douglass and the project's Student Leaders, they conduct an intake interview with the client, prepare and submit an initial application for benefits, and complete a summary memo. Students then follow up by requesting medical records from the client's health care providers and submitting them to the Social Security Administration. Volunteers are expected to devote 5-10 hours per quarter. **Student Leader Contacts:** Dan Corbett, corbett@stanford.edu; Kristin Wickler, wickler@stanford.edu.

Project ReMade (Reentry: Making a Difference through Entrepreneurship)

This year -- in an exciting new project offered in collaboration with the SLS Criminal Justice Center, and under the close guidance of its Executive Director Debbie Mukamal -- SLS students will have a chance to work with clients from "With Open Arms", a prisoner reentry program for women returning home to San Francisco after incarceration. Called Project ReMade, the project's goal is to help people successfully reenter into society by empowering them as entrepreneurs. *How, exactly, will Project ReMade student volunteers be involved?* With training on curriculum design and teaching techniques from the Stanford Center on Teaching and Learning, they will design and teach a curriculum that combines instruction on legal issues specifically affecting Project ReMade Clients -- *i.e.*, their legal responsibilities and the legally-imposed collateral consequences of their convictions -- with instruction on entrepreneurship. The classes will be comprised of a small group of Project ReMade clients who have expressed a specific interest in starting a small business. Entrepreneurship topics will include product development, financing, marketing and sales, personal financial literacy, technology, and environmental considerations, along with soft skills such as leadership, time management and goal-setting. Each Project ReMade client will be paired with SLS Project ReMade volunteers, as well as professional mentors, to help in the design of a unique business plan. Volunteers will also have the chance to collaborate with students and professionals at the Stanford GSB. Students are expected to devote 10-30 hours per quarter. **Student Leader Contact:** Angela McCray, admccray@stanford.edu.

What should I do if I want to do Pro Bono, but don't feel comfortable diving in during the first quarter? That is totally fine, but DO sign the Pro Bono Commitment Statement which acknowledges your understanding of pro bono obligations generally. Then send a quick email to Betsy de la Vega at delavega@law.stanford.edu to let her know that you plan to wait a bit before signing up for a project.

Questions? Contact Betsy de la Vega in Rm. 209 or at delavega@law.stanford.edu.