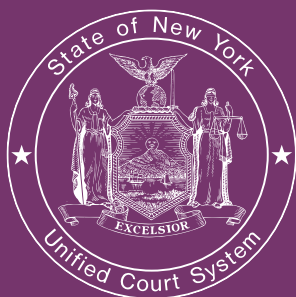


NEW YORK STATE PERMANENT COMMISSION ON ACCESS TO JUSTICE
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH ALBANY LAW SCHOOL

THE LAW SCHOOL
INVOLVEMENT WORKING GROUP

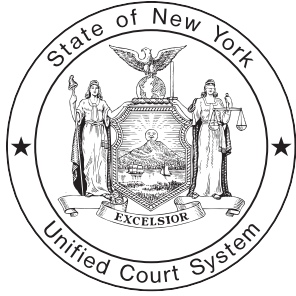


TENTH ANNUAL
LAW SCHOOL
CONFERENCE

MOVING FORWARD IN THE COVID ERA:
IDENTIFYING AND ADDRESSING THE
STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES OF POVERTY,
INJUSTICE, AND INEQUALITY

REPORT ON THE JUNE 8, 2022
LAW SCHOOL ACCESS TO JUSTICE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 2022



**New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice
in partnership with Albany Law School**

**Report on the June 8, 2022
Law School Access to Justice Virtual Conference**

**Moving Forward in the Covid Era:
Identifying and Addressing the Structural Challenges
of Poverty, Injustice, and Inequality**

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2022 KEY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE PERMANENT COMMISSION

- A. Law Schools should expand digital and remote clinical and pro bono opportunities for students through collaborations with other law schools and legal services organizations. Partnerships that incorporate technology have the potential to increase access to legal services in historically underserved communities while offering students practical experience that informs culturally sensitive lawyering.
- B. A comprehensive review of the Pro Bono Scholars Program should be undertaken to consider both adjustments to the program rules and proposals for expansion, guided by the Work Group’s recommendations.
- C. Law schools should elevate instruction on rural legal practice and establish related internships and clinical programs, leveraging technology to expand access to justice to rural communities.
- D. Law Schools and law students should continue to address barriers to access to justice in the community:
 - 1. Law schools should support student groups that assist in disaster recovery and emergency/crisis management. Law schools are encouraged to participate in their local Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (www.nvoad.org).
 - 2. Law schools should bolster the pipeline of housing attorneys with strong housing course offerings, including landlord-tenant law and Black landowners’ dispossession, and with support of student engagement in tenant organizing work.
 - 3. Law schools should continue to address the civil legal needs of immigrants in New York State, while helping to bridge the digital divide in immigrant communities by providing legal technology education and working to expand access to technology.
- E. The Commission should convene the 2023 Law School Access to Justice Conference in partnership with a host law school.

2022 LAW SCHOOL CONFERENCE WORK GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Work Group on Law Schools' Response to Community Needs

1. Blueprints for Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Management

- a. Emergencies and disasters require long-term crisis responses. Law schools should support student groups that stand ready to respond to crises, near and far.
- b. Law schools should join their local Volunteer Organizations Active in Disaster (VOAD, www.nvoad.org) and include the [National Disaster Legal Aid Advocacy Center](#) among their web resources.

2. Preserving Housing, Assisting Tenants

Law schools should bolster the pipeline of housing attorneys by:

- a. Strengthening doctrinal housing law courses, expanding curricular offerings such as landlord-tenant law and Black landowners' dispossession, and integrating interviewing and mediation training.
- b. Supporting and providing training for law students to engage and/or assist in tenant organizing work. Law students can be encouraged to collaborate with local tenants' unions and other community partners to provide know-your-rights trainings, tenants' rights guides, and other informational materials. This will provide law students, even in their first year, an experiential learning experience.

3. Addressing the Emergent Civil Legal Needs of Immigrants in New York State

- a. Law schools should offer law students the opportunity to assist with clinics that screen immigrants. Under the supervision of an attorney, law students can help schedule, coordinate, and conduct basic intakes. Law students who have fluency or skills in languages other than English are uniquely situated to assist immigrants navigate the civil and immigration court systems.
- b. Law schools should continue to be a hub for the development of written materials and training resources that keep track of updates in the law. Law students can contribute to immigrants' rights advocacy efforts, for example, by working with detained immigrant children and engaging with community organizations that welcome and settle immigrants.
- c. Law schools should help meet the need for legal services for immigrants, particularly in upstate New York. Law schools can help both by providing legal technology education and working to expand access to technology in immigrant communities.

B. Work Group on Rural Access to Justice | Providing Civil Legal Assistance in Rural Communities

Law schools should help address the rural access-to-justice crisis by:

1. Offering courses and training seminars on rural law practice and/or seek to integrate rural topical issues into core curricular classes, which should include instruction in Town and Village court practice.
2. Presenting law practice management trainings that focus on solo and small firm practice.
3. Offering inter-law school online classes on rural practice by engaging professors, practitioners (including Attorney Emeritus volunteers), and members of the judiciary in student instruction.
4. Hosting panel discussions with rural practitioners and judges presiding in areas that encompass rural communities.
5. Offering intensive rural practice training during school intersessions in coordination with legal services organizations based in and/or serving rural areas and developing internship programs with legal services organizations to serve rural communities.
6. Establishing rural practice internship and mentorship programs in coordination with legal services organizations and the Attorney Emeritus Program to serve rural communities.
7. Developing a rural fellowship program, where a law school (or donor) sponsors new graduates to live and practice in rural areas.

C. Work Group on Law Schools – Legal Services Partnership Projects in the Covid Era: Confronting a Crisis, Learning for the Future

1. Law schools should experiment and explore digital/remote opportunities to facilitate partnerships, cooperation, and collaboration among schools and organizations that may not have been geographically feasible absent virtual platforms. Such partnerships and the expanded use of technology could enable law schools to provide legal services to communities that have historically been underserved by clinical and pro bono programming, improving access to justice.
2. Law schools should also utilize remote partnerships to help acclimate students to the kind of new technologies that will come to dominate the future practice of law. These remote partnerships can help students learn how to work with stakeholders in different environments and with new service-delivery models.
3. The Work Group encourages the New York Court of Appeals to consider accepting the American Bar Association's (ABA) guidelines that permit students to apply up to thirty (30) distance-education credits to earn a JD degree. With new technologies that can help expand access to justice through remote partnerships, increasing the permissible number of remote credits to align with the ABA's standards would encourage innovation. It will also enhance the ability of law schools and students to develop cutting-edge programming, clinical offerings, classes, and academic projects that utilize technology to expand access to justice.

4. Law schools, courts, and non-profit organizations should also explore partnerships to establish informational kiosks throughout underserved communities to facilitate access to critical legal information.

D. Work Group on Reflections on the Pro Bono Scholars Program and a Proposal for a Lawyers Justice Corps as an Alternative Pathway to New York Bar Admission

1. Create an annual survey for Pro Bono Scholars and alumni.
2. Adjust the Pro Bono Scholars Program (PBS Program) timetable for completion of hours:
 - a. The PBS Program should allow for some hours to be completed in the fall semester in advance of the February bar exam.
 - b. A one-week training and orientation in collaboration with legal service providers should be offered in the fall semester. This one-week fall training could address client interviewing, trauma-informed lawyering, and wellness. A session with the Chief Judge, outlining the history of the program and its impact, should be considered.
3. Create recruitment and outreach programs across law schools to increase participation in the PBS Program:
 - a. Pro Bono Scholar alumni could participate in live programs or record videos sharing their experiences;
 - b. Law schools and their academic deans should focus on increasing the number of scholars and reduce reliance on GPAs as a selection factor; it is likely students with lower GPAs would benefit from the PBS Program's networking and job placement opportunities.
4. Adopt a platform for PBS Program alumni to remain connected.
5. Pursue alternative pathways to bar admission, such as the Lawyers Justice Corps:
 - a. The Lawyers Justice Corps would be a better measure of minimum competence to practice law;
 - b. It would enhance access to justice by putting graduates to work in legal services programs immediately upon graduation; and
 - c. This alternative pathway would help reduce the unacceptable disparate racial impact of the bar exam.

REPORT FROM THE LAW SCHOOL ACCESS TO JUSTICE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

On June 8, 2022, the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, in partnership with Albany Law School, convened the Tenth Annual Law School Conference via Zoom. ¹Permanent Commission Chair Helaine M. Barnett² welcomed the 225 virtual participants from New York’s 15 law schools – and beyond – and applauded them for their incredible work throughout the pandemic to deliver effective civil legal assistance to the many in need. Ms. Barnett invited the participants to heed the remarks of then-Chief Judge Janet DiFiore³ and the call to action issued by Associate United States Attorney General Vanita Gupta⁴ to inform their Work Group discussions and develop recommendations on how law schools can continue their efforts to expand access to justice.

KEYNOTE DIALOGUE

New York City Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Anne Williams-Isom moderated the Keynote Dialogue, *“Understanding Community Needs and Pursuing Access to Justice,”* with Dr. Mary T. Bassett, Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health; Dr. Alice Green, Executive Director of the Albany-based Center for Law and Justice (the Center); and Marco Flagg, the Center’s Program Manager and Community Engagement Coordinator.

In introducing the Keynote Dialogue, Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom remarked that her lifetime of work – as a lawyer and educator – with children and families has shaped her philosophy that helping children and families thrive requires a holistic approach to addresses education, health care and nutrition, employment, housing, and childcare. Williams-Isom noted that it is erroneous to presume that individuals outside of marginalized communities understand or are aware of both the deep-rooted inequities embedded in our governmental and social welfare institutions and the violence experienced by poor people who access services, healthcare, and related benefits.

Racial discrimination issues in healthcare, education, and access to justice is often discreet and not as overt as in police brutality cases. Since the onset of Covid-19 in February 2020 and the summer 2020 protests against police brutality and racial injustice, these disparities have been exposed and documented. Williams-Isom stated that, as a society, we need to see the violence that seeps into institutions meant to protect us all and combat the fear poor people feel when seeking assistance. She suggested that the panel and participants explore how to provide services and support to the people who most need it and consider how to use the law to protect our most vulnerable communities.

Dr. Green described the Center she founded as a trusted resource and advocacy leader on behalf of poor people and communities of color in Albany for nearly 40 years. Covid continues to define the daily work of the Center which involves collaborations with community-based legal, social, and medical organizations. Dr. Green pointed to their collaborative health-equity work with Albany Medical College, advocacy with the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New

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1. [2022 Law School Conference Agenda \(nycourts.gov\)](#)
 2. [Helaine-Barnett_LSC_Welcome.pdf \(nycourts.gov\)](#)
 3. [Chief-Judge-Law-School-Access-to-Justice-Conf-June-2022.pdf \(nycourts.gov\)](#)
 4. [Associate-Attorney-General-Gupta-Remarks.pdf \(nycourts.gov\)](#)

York, and criminal legal system diversion efforts with social and mental health care community partners. This work is possible because of the committed cohort of community volunteers and students who engage in legal research and court monitoring, among other efforts. In fact, an Albany law student's coordinated service delivery model developed during the pandemic is under review for community implementation by the Albany City Council.

Dr. Green related that stereotypes are deeply embedded in healthcare; for example, Black men are not viewed as suffering from mental health issues but as "bad not mad"; people of color receive dissimilar treatment in hospitals; and there are different assumptions about pain experienced by people of color.

Mr. Flagg illustrated Dr. Green's propositions with real life examples. He described an incident involving an elderly Black woman who sought emergency medical attention in an Albany hospital and called the police for assistance; the police ended up removing her from the hospital premises, causing her to leave with more extensive injuries than those for which she initially sought treatment. Most of the Center's clients experiencing discrimination in accessing health care are low-income Black women ranging in age from 46 to 71; several were discharged from care facilities or banned from visiting sick relatives based on allegedly rude behavior that was not particularized in any reporting.

Mr. Flagg said that attention must be paid to this pervasive violence. He believes collaborations with legal and social services organizations and "learning partnerships" with people in the community to understand their experiences will break down barriers caused by language, a lack of awareness, bias, etc., and produce incremental but steady change. Mr. Flagg advocates for the use of the law as a sword and shield to battle systemic discrimination. Mr. Flagg asserts that engaging lawyers and law students with the community to foster understanding will promote more just and equitable systems.

Dr. Bassett's decades of work in healthcare, including her service as New York City Commissioner of Health and now as the New York State Health Department Commissioner, bears out hard truths about the inherent inequities in access to health care. This is evidenced by the disproportionately high Covid death rates among Black and Brown populations; increased incidence of stillbirths and infant deaths in communities of color; the scarcity of hospitals or urgent care facilities in poor neighborhoods, together with the dearth of medical equipment and supplies in such facilities; and the pressing need for mental health services in low-income communities and those populated by people of color.

Dr. Bassett recounted that when she trained at Harlem Hospital, they had no CT scanner; no matter how well-trained, doctors and staff cannot administer proper care without the necessary equipment and supplies. This is the reality of structural racism. The law has put these structures in place, and lawyers and law students must now dismantle them.

Dr. Bassett noted that social determinants dictate overall health; life circumstances are determinative of access to health care, food, safe housing, and education. It is therefore not unexpected that health outcomes are impacted by lower standards of care. For decades, we have known that the pain of a Black patient is undervalued in comparison with their white counterpart, even for children. Dr. Bassett related that even well-trained and highly educated medical professionals are not exempt from explicit and implicit biases, which compromise the delivery and quality of healthcare. While anti-bias trainings have been ramped up, multi-pronged efforts to overcome the segregation in our hospitals and health care system must be

deployed. Lawyers can ensure that people are treated with dignity and afforded equal access to health care. Lawyers and law students can help people secure governmental benefits and advocate for those in need.

There is no health without mental health, and increased engagement with community members has surfaced systemic inequities. Each of the panelists remarked that many people do not get help because they are afraid of the institutions intended to assist. For example, if a person is acting out, the typical response is to call the police. However, if the person is experiencing a mental health episode, a police response is likely inappropriate. Only recently is there movement toward a public health approach to mental health. Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom described the “Be Heard Pilot,” where an EMS team and social worker will respond to an emergency call where it is suspected that the person is experiencing mental health issues. This pilot is an outgrowth of listening and partnering with community members and stakeholders. Dr. Green mentioned the Center’s “Zero Youth Detention” project advocating for young people who need mental health services, particularly if they are involved in the juvenile justice system.

Our system of laws is not a guarantee of justice, as the Keynote Dialogue revealed. Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom concluded the session by challenging law schools and law students to use their knowledge and skills to dismantle the barriers to access to justice in our city and state.

WORK GROUP SESSIONS: HOW LAW SCHOOLS AND LAW STUDENTS ARE ADDRESSING BARRIERS TO ACCESS TO JUSTICE IN THE COMMUNITY

Work Group A: Law Schools’ Response to Community Needs

Work Group Moderator:

Sarah Rogerson, Professor of Law, Director, The Justice Center at Albany law School, Director, Immigration Law Clinic, Albany Law School; Member, 2022 Law School Access to Justice Conference Planning Committee

Part 1: Ensuring Delivery of Civil Legal Services in the Covid Era – Blueprints for Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Management

Facilitators:

Thomas Maligno, Executive Director, William Randolph Hearst Public Advocacy Center and Director, Pro Bono and Public Service, Touro Law Center; Member, Statewide Law School Access to Justice Council

Rebecca Sanin, President/CEO, Health and Welfare Council of Long Island

Overview

Emergency responders to natural disasters, like Hurricane Katrina in 2005 and Superstorm Sandy in 2012, to the terrorist attacks of 9/11/01, and to the Covid-19 public health crisis, include law school deans, professors, administrators, law students and lawyers. Lives are lost and destabilized, families are uprooted, homes are damaged and destroyed, personal injuries

are sustained, and income streams are disrupted. Legal information and assistance are critically important to help restore lives and stabilize communities. The Work Group session reviewed the response of law schools, nationally and within New York State, to disasters and crises.

Mr. Maligno traced the work of Touro Law Center and its law students back to their involvement in the then newly created National Student Hurricane Network to assist Gulf Coast victims of Hurricane Katrina, up to the more recent Covid legal hotlines. He stressed the critical need for a nimble yet permanent coalition that stands ready to respond to a public emergency and that understands needs will change for each occurrence.

An example of such a group is VOAD or Volunteer Agencies Active in Disaster. VOADs have a national base and operate locally to mobilize the disaster response effectively. Members include law schools, and regular meetings are held to ensure readiness. Informational materials are posted online and resources include references to the Legal Services Corporation (see [National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disasters - Center for Disaster Philanthropy](#)).

The versatility of technological-based service delivery, which became more widely accepted throughout the pandemic, allows remote disaster response work by students to assist victims outside the geographic area of their law school.

Ms. Sanin referenced “disaster fatigue.” Disaster fatigue is evident in the short-term emergency funding for projects that often must cease operations after one-to-two years, although the on-going complications and disruptions for those affected persist. It is also reflected in the decline in pro bono legal assistance after the initial catastrophe. The Work Group queried how to retain pro bono legal volunteers to help with the ripple of untoward consequences stemming from the initial crisis.

Part 2: Preserving Housing, Assisting Tenants

Facilitators:

Norrinda Brown Hayat, Associate Professor of Law and Director of the Housing and Tenant Solidarity Clinic, Rutgers Law School, S.I. Newhouse Center for Law and Justice

William J. Niebel, Adjunct Professor of Law and Director of the Tenants Advocacy Practicum, Cornell Law School; Staff Attorney, Legal Services of Central New York

Panelists:

David Crossman, Staff Attorney, Legal Aid Society Northeastern New York; Housing Justice Staff Attorney, The Justice Center at Albany Law School (incoming June 2022)

Jennifer Seidman, Cornell Law School, J.D. Candidate, 2023

Overview

Professors Niebel and Hayat stated that community housing needs and access to legal assistance have been exacerbated by the pandemic, particularly for low-income individuals and families. Based on their experiences assisting low-income unrepresented tenants throughout the pandemic, Mr. Crossman and Ms. Seidman emphasized the importance of ensuring tenants know their rights. There is a pressing, continual need for both advocacy on behalf of tenants and ready access to current information on changes in housing laws and benefits for tenants, as well as practitioners and law students.

The right to counsel in Housing Court, codified in 2017 in New York City, is rooted in the collaborations and coordination of community organizations and coalitions who told the stories of the people experiencing housing issues to lawyers and activists who, in turn, advocated for legislative change. Grassroots organizations convey the needs of the community; lawyers and law students are most influential when they “meet tenants where they are” to effect policy change and law reform.

The enactment of the right to counsel in New York City Housing Court, the end of the statewide eviction moratoria on evictions, and the ripple of deleterious effects of the pandemic on economically vulnerable populations have created an urgent need for more tenant attorneys. This has highlighted the imperative for a sturdy educational pipeline that trains housing attorneys. Law school clinics and practicums expose students to the need, but the core group of people addressing the housing crisis is too small. Law schools must expand doctrinal housing courses (e.g., landlord/tenant law, Black landowners’ dispossession) to match the level of doctrinal criminal law courses, and expand clinical coursework for tenants’ advocacy. Law schools should emphasize housing procedure and defense work in courses akin to criminal procedure/defense courses because the real-world consequences of losing housing can be comparable to those of a criminal conviction.

Increasing collaborations among law schools and community partners is a key component to expanding access to assistance for individuals confronting housing matters. Partnerships with social services organizations that have an established relationship with the community can provide a more streamlined approach for individuals seeking help. Similarly, law student collaborations with tenant organizations generate a two-way transfer of knowledge: law students can learn from tenant-organizers’ lived experiences and support tenants with legal information and materials. In addition, law students can become involved in tenants’ advocacy in their first year prior to eligibility to join clinics.

The panel and participants discussed the need for stronger policies to protect tenants and the lack of uniformity of these policies throughout the State. The Work Group pointed to the salutary impact of measures to maintain housing, such as the Tenant Safe Harbor and Emergency Rental Assistance Program, that have expired or been rolled back, now subjecting individuals and families to upheaval.

It was noted that law school and law student engagement with community partners working to assist tenants throughout the pandemic served to expand access and fill gaps where legal service providers or social services organizations lack capacity due to funding or practice constraints. Law students organized (e.g., Cornell’s Tenants Legal Hotline) and continue to support housing telephone hotlines that reach a broad demographic and expand informational access and referrals. Importantly, law school efforts can serve individuals who do not qualify for pro bono legal services – or who are not confronting the imminent crisis of homelessness – and cannot afford an attorney. The Work Group recognized the value of law student participation in housing court observation and monitoring projects to ensure transparency and accountability as a valuable community service, particularly now as court practices adjust to pandemic circumstances.

Part 3: Addressing the Emergent Civil Legal Needs of Immigrants in New York State

Facilitators:

Nermeen Arastu, Associate Professor of Law and Co-Director of the Immigrant and Non-Citizen Rights Clinic, CUNY School of Law

Kristen Wagner, Legal Projects Coordinator, Immigrant Advocates Response Collaborative (Immigrant ARC)

Overview

Associate Professor Arastu and Ms. Wagner expressed the need for advocacy and support of immigration legal services across the state, particularly in upstate regions in New York, where increased numbers of Afghan refugees and other immigrants have been resettled. They recognized the efforts of New York's law schools to establish screening clinics and coordinate with community services organizations to best help immigrants. Ms. Wagner emphasized the significant role of legal services in representing minors and giving voice to the myriad issues confronting newly arrived individuals who typically are fleeing traumatic circumstances.

The Work Group discussed the range of access challenges from language to medical to education to housing and employment. Clinical training for law students should include cultural competency skills and engagement with community organizations.

The Work Group recognized the need to identify long-term immigration options, other than asylum, for individuals whose parole periods have expired. It was agreed that legal assistance is imperative for filing applications, and case-by-case evaluation is necessary to ensure appropriate resolution. The lack of adequate resources in upstate New York remains a challenge; law school partnerships with urban pro bono programs present a viable option to expand legal assistance to immigrants and providers who serve such populations.

Work Group B: Rural Access to Justice | Providing Civil Legal Assistance in Rural Communities

Facilitators:

Alison Paul, Executive Director, Montana Legal Services Association; Member, Legal Services Corporation Rural Justice Task Force

Hon. Stan L. Pritzker, Appellate Division, Third Judicial Department; Co-Chair, New York State Bar Association Task Force on Rural Justice

Panelists:

Kelly McGovern, Director of Pro Bono Affairs, Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.® (LawNY)

Kim Diana Connolly, Professor; Vice Dean for Advocacy and Experiential Education; Director of Clinical Legal Education, University of Buffalo School of Law

Overview

Technology offers promise for legal service delivery to individuals in remote or rural areas, as well as for individuals who face other barriers (e.g., disability, transportation). Putting aside the very real challenge of reliable broadband and even access to the internet, technology has not tempered the rural access to justice crisis. A host of factors, including the increasing age and spate of retirements among attorneys domiciled in rural regions and a dearth of younger attorneys settling in rural areas, has created a “legal desert” in many less populated New York counties; Judge Pritzker reported that 90% of New York’s attorneys live and practice in urban areas. Ms. Paul pointed out that in terms of land mass, her home state of Montana is the fourth largest state in the country yet there is only one lawyer for every 8,500 residents living in poverty. In this regard, technology is a singularly important tool for access to justice. Access to legal information and services provided by websites empowers people to represent themselves by explaining processes and procedures and offering referrals to free legal services.

The Work Group addressed the twin challenges in rural areas: reaching individuals living in poverty and recruiting lawyers to serve those individuals. Judge Pritzker remarked that settling in a geographically remote area and setting up a legal practice demands a pioneering spirit. He recognized that negative preconceptions of life in a rural community create barriers, and overcoming such biases and connecting with rural communities requires education and outreach.

Commenting on community outreach, Professor Connolly and Ms. McGovern echoed Ms. Paul’s assertion that individuals in rural areas often do not know about available legal services or how to access such services. Ms. Paul emphasized the importance of a presence in local radio, newspapers, and flyers in social service agencies. She promoted the opportunity for law students to design outreach materials, such as bar coasters with questions and graphics that, in Montana, provide website and telephone numbers for local resources. Akin to the discussion in the Housing Work Group, panelists and participants stressed that there must be an investment in community to understand community needs. Loan forgiveness, coupled with rural incubators, could incentivize students to settle in rural communities.

More broadly, the Work Group considered ways to recruit a diverse pool of legal service attorneys for rural areas. Suggestions include (1) outreach to attorneys in rural areas outside New York State; (2) summer programs for law students to experience rural practice and lifestyle; (3) recruitment of potential law students from rural areas, beginning in middle school and high school; (4) teaching law students about opportunities to become a judge, district attorney, or town attorney in rural areas; and (5) addressing salaries and debt forgiveness as incentives to work in underserved communities.

The Work Group also discussed what the New York State Bar Association can do to incentivize rural law practice generally. Ideas include offering seminars on specific rural practices; funding training programs to encourage lawyers to engage in rural law practice; promoting collaborations between local bar associations and legal services organizations to remunerate law students to live and work in rural areas for the summer; exploring mentorship of rural lawyers by urban lawyers and/or law firms; and pairing young lawyers with experienced rural lawyers to ensure the sustainability of small practices.

Work Group C: Law Schools – Legal Services Partnership Projects in the Covid Era: Confronting a Crisis, Learning for the Future

Facilitator:

Raymond H. Brescia, Hon. Harold R. Tyler Chair in Law and Technology and Professor of Law, Albany Law School

Panelists:

Marika Dias, Director, Safety Net Project, Urban Justice Center; Steering Committee Member, Right to Counsel NYC Coalition; Trainer, Housing Justice Leadership Institute

Veronica N. Dunlap, New York Program Director, Pro Bono Net

Hon. Fern A. Fisher, Center Attorney, Legal Hand; Sassower Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law, Visiting Associate Professor of Law and Special Assistant for Social Justice Initiatives to the Dean, Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University; Member, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

Luz E. Herrera, Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Experiential Education, Texas A&M University School of Law

John Whitlow, Associate Professor of Law and Co-Director, Community Economic Development Clinic, CUNY School of Law

Overview

The pandemic challenged law school faculty to meet the moment. As all work and school transitioned to remote platforms, law school partnerships with legal services providers offered clinical faculty a unique opportunity to serve both their students and clients served by their clinics.

A survey of law school clinical faculty conducted during the pandemic (early 2020-2021) revealed a considered approach to instruction in the “technology of lawyering” and a recognition of the influence of technology on legal practice.⁵ It is incumbent on law schools to prepare students to engage effectively with technological tools, particularly to serve clients who may also have digital access issues that compound their legal challenges. Concomitantly, promoting awareness of best practices to protect client confidentiality and providing skills training that includes cultural competency are imperative and integral to lawyers’ ethical obligations.

The pandemic has sparked increased community activism and organizing that compels providers and their partners to meet community members “where they are.” For example, CUNY Law School’s Community Economic Development Clinic work with the Urban Justice Center’s Safety Net Project to strengthen eviction defense policies – and ameliorate housing inequality – showed students how the law can be a tool to help build the power of tenants to generate systemic change. Professor Whitlow described the work of their partnership as pedagogically sound and meaningful to the law students both as a lens on access to justice and as a lesson in empowerment.

5. Herrera, Luz & Boonin, Sarah, *From Pandemic to Pedagogy: Teaching the Technology of Lawyering in Law Clinics* (2022), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4038537>

At the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University, Judge Fisher’s access-to-justice class engages her students in the Legal Hand’s call center to provide information and appropriate legal and social services referrals to individuals to stave off civil legal actions. Legal Hand was founded as neighborhood storefront centers where trained community members volunteer to assist their neighbors confronting issues involving housing, family stability, domestic violence, consumer debt, elder care or estate matters, public benefits and/or immigration. Under the supervision of a lawyer, these trained community volunteers provide legal information, including assistance in filling out forms, and offer referrals to local legal and/or social services providers. Judge Fisher emphasized the value to the law school of their engagement with Legal Hand. permitting by working side by side with community members, students get to hear first-hand the experiences of people living in poverty while learning substantive law. Judge Fisher recounted how students help a person fill out court forms; check the status of cases; call court clerks to arrange an accommodation for a disabled client; or research an issue in short order.

The concept of “live help,” whether via telephone or electronic chat or communication, is an integral component of Pro Bono Net’s service delivery, which relies on a law student staff of 55-60 students each semester. As a virtual information resource since its inception, Pro Bono Net recognizes the importance of creating a digital map of provider services to enable people to navigate the virtual options, and it has tried to serve as a central hub for providers. Pro Bono Net instituted cultural sensitivity training for its staff to recognize and address digital literacy issues.

The Work Group participants agreed that law schools, courts, and non-profit organizations should explore partnerships to create informational kiosks physically located in underserved communities to help residents access critical legal information, which will inure to the benefit of non-profit legal and social service providers and the courts.

The Work Group acknowledged the relative ease of remote collaborations with legal services providers – and outreach to clients – regardless of physical distance. Technology has been leveraged to foster connections and collaborations that benefit the providers, law schools and students, volunteers, and clients, leading to expanded access to justice. Of course, not every interaction is well served by a remote connection, but it is undisputed that access for those facing physical, geographic, or other access barriers is maximized by virtual options.

Given the demonstrated importance and efficacy of remote learning environments, New York should consider adopting the ABA’s 30-credit allowance for distance learning to earn a law degree.⁶ Under the current New York Court of Appeals Rules, only 15 online credits are permitted, lagging behind other states and the ABA. Increasing the permissible number of remote credits would encourage innovation and enhance the ability of law schools and students to develop cutting-edge virtual programming, clinical offerings, classes, and academic projects that utilize technology to expand access to justice.

6. See <https://www.law.com/2022/08/05/new-york-not-keeping-pace-with-aba-distance-education-rules/>

Work Group D: Reflections on the Pro Bono Scholars Program and Beyond – A Proposal for a Lawyers Justice Corps as an Alternative Pathway to New York Bar Admission

Facilitator:

Michaela K. Rossettie Azemi, Director of Pro Bono Services and Externships, Cornell Law School; Member, 2022 Law School Conference Planning Committee; Member, New York State Law School Access to Justice Council

Panelists:

Jennifer A. Gundlach, Emily and Stephen Mendel Distinguished Professor of Law and Clinical Professor of Law, Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University

Mindy Jeng, Administrative Counsel, New York State Office of Court Administration

Eileen Kaufman, Professor Emerita, Touro Law Center

Marisa Pagan-Figueroa, Cornell Law School 2022 Pro Bono Scholar Alumna; Debevoise & Plimpton, LLP

2022 Pro Bono Scholars:

Emily Harwell, Cornell Law School '22

Sandile Magagula, Cornell Law School '22

Rachel Skene, Cornell Law School '22

Nicole Wong, Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University '22

Overview

Pro Bono Scholars Program

The Work Group credited the Pro Bono Scholars Program with enhancing the quality of legal education through hands-on legal learning, direct work with clients, and exposure to the professional responsibility of every lawyer to engage in pro bono as recommended by Rule 6.1 (see [Pro Bono Rules | nycourts.gov](https://www.nycourts.gov/pro-bono-rules)). Scholars gain “practice-ready” skills, are exposed to networking opportunities, and are well poised for jobs at placement sites.

The Program was created to establish a pipeline of lawyers for public and non-profit legal service and inspire a culture of pro bono among graduates who join private practices. Program highlights include a steady increase in the number of student participants since its 2014 launch with approximately 100 Pro Bono Scholars from New York law schools to approximately 140 scholars annually, including scholars from law schools outside New York. Enhancements to the seminar/course component were mentioned, including new joint classes across five or more law schools that offer training on client interviewing, negotiation, and trauma-informed lawyering.

The compressed time frame of the program, starting immediately after the February bar exam and its impact on student wellness present challenges. The 2022 Scholars and other Program alumni pointed to the rigidity of the time frame, mandating 520 hours for the semester, as a detriment to learning. Entering a full-time placement without a break to decompress after the bar exam was characterized as overwhelming at best. The lack of flexibility presents a

troubling problem, given the high rates of depression and suicide among attorneys, at a time when increased attention is being given to wellness and life-work balance in the legal profession.

Another major challenge presented is the dearth of data on the career trajectories of scholars. There is a lack of annual, reliable data across the law schools and an absence of longitudinal data on where Pro Bono Scholars are practicing or working two and five years after graduation. As a result, it is not known whether the Program is fostering a cadre of public service lawyers as originally envisioned.

Alternative Pathway to Bar Admission

Professor Eileen Kaufman proposed the Lawyers Justice Corps as an alternative pathway to attorney licensure in New York, considering it a fairer measure of minimum competence to practice law and serve to expand access to justice. She explained that the program would be open to all law school graduates; rely on standard hiring practices of legal services providers; require participants to commit to two years of service; and confer a license after six months of rigorous training, supervision, and independent evaluation of a portfolio of work.

Professor Kaufman posited that a Lawyers Justice Corps would enhance access to justice by creating a cadre of legal services lawyers who immediately following graduation from law school would begin work to represent the indigent, rather than studying for the bar exam. It is estimated that the Lawyers Justice Corps would generate 500 hours per graduate that otherwise would have been spent studying for the bar exam. This translates into 50,000 hours of client work, assuming 100 participants. The Lawyers Justice Corps would help to create a national pool of lawyers to represent vulnerable populations facing myriad legal problems associated with the pandemic, including the current housing crisis resulting from the lifting of eviction moratoria.

Professor Kaufman explained that the Lawyers Justice Corps is a natural extension of the Scholars Program. It provides a coherent pathway for students interested in public interest work; their course selection in law school would not be driven by the bar exam but would be geared to career goals. If the bar exam were not a prerequisite for admission, participants would not have to spend two-to-three months studying for the exam, saving thousands of dollars in bar prep course expenses.

Importantly, Professor Kaufman argued that the Lawyers Justice Corps is a better measure of lawyer competence than the traditional bar exam. She related that many states are actively reconsidering how attorneys are licensed and are developing alternative pathways to admission, such as supervised practice. This national reexamination reflects new insights that have been gleaned from studies such as *Building a Better Bar*,⁷ which identified the actual competencies required for the practice of law and offered a set of recommendations for a more valid licensing system. Even the National Conference of Bar Examiners has acknowledged that its exam is outdated and is in the process of developing a new test – Nextgen – that will emphasize skills, not memorization. The Lawyers Justice Corps would do just that. It is a more accurate assessment based on actual lawyering performance, not test-taking ability, which according to a recent Access/Lex report, is more a test of resources than competence. And it is less likely to produce the unacceptable disparate racial impact demonstrated year-after-year from the results of the traditional bar exam.

7. Merritt, Deborah Jones & Cornett, Logan, Inst. for the Advancement of the Am. Legal Sys., *Building a Better Bar* (Dec. 2020).

Based on the Work Group's discussion, a post-conference survey was distributed by the Office of Court Administration to the 140 Scholars in the 2022 class. It is estimated that there was an 85% response rate and 84% of those responder-Scholars endorsed the idea of completing a portion of required hours in the fall semester. About 24% of the responder-Scholars described their mental well-being as poor or somewhat poor during the Program, and 19 Scholars commented that they wished they had more time between taking the bar exam and the beginning of their commitment or a reduced hours requirement.

(The report from the Work Group's two breakout sessions is included as an Exhibit).

CLOSING SESSION

Dean Matthew Diller presided over the Closing Session where the Work Group facilitators presented their groups' recommendations for the Permanent Commission's consideration.

Dean Diller remarked that the Conference Work Group discussions illustrated how law schools are educating student to make a difference and to expand access to justice. Dean Diller noted that technology offers tremendous potential for lawyers to assist clients across all practice areas.

Ms. Barnett adjourned the Conference and expressed her appreciation for the important work of New York's law schools and students in helping to close the justice gap.

EXHIBITS

2022 LAW SCHOOL ACCESS TO JUSTICE CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Helaine M. Barnett

Chair, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

Donna Lee

Law School Conference Planning Committee Co-Chair; Professor, CUNY School of Law; Member, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

Connie Mayer

Law School Conference Planning Committee Co-Chair; Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Raymond and Ella Smith Distinguished Professor of Law, Albany Law School

Michaela Azemi

Cornell Law School, Director of Pro Bono Services & Externships; Member, New York State Law School Access to Justice Council

Hon. Lucy Billings

Justice, Supreme Court, New York County; Member, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

Kristin Brown

President & CEO, Empire Justice Center

Matthew Diller

Dean and Paul Fuller Professor of Law, Fordham University School of Law; Member, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice and Chair, Law School Involvement Working Group

Camille Siano Enders

Senior Assistant Public Defender, Schenectady County Public Defender's Office

Hon. Fern Fisher

Center Attorney, Legal Hand; Sassower Distinguished Visiting Professor of Law, Visiting Associate Professor of Law and Special Assistant for Social Justice Initiatives to the Dean, Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University; Member, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

Barbara Jordan-Smith

Coordinator, The Government Law Center, Albany Law School

Lauren Kanfer

Staff Counsel, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

Lillian Moy

Executive Director, Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY; Member, New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice

Alicia Ouellette

President and Dean, Albany Law School

Sarah Rogerson

Professor of Law; Director, The Justice Center; Director, Immigration Law Clinic

James J. Sandman

Trustee, Albany Law School; Distinguished Lecturer and Senior Consultant to the Future of the Profession Initiative, University of Pennsylvania Carey School of Law

Hon. Leslie E. Stein

Director, The Government Law Center, Albany Law School

Tom Torello

Director of Communications and Marketing, Albany Law School

Patrick Woods

Deputy Director, The Government Law Center, Albany Law School

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INTRODUCING THE LAWYERS' JUSTICE CORPS

(reprinted by permission from Eileen Kaufman | for educational purposes)

The creation of a Lawyers' Justice Corps can immediately address two crises in the legal profession:

- The lack of access to legal services for a widening segment of society
- The exclusion of people of color from the legal profession due to an outdated licensing system that fails not only to test adequately for needed competencies but imposes significant and unnecessary costs.

The Justice Corps addresses these needs by helping states develop an alternative to the traditional bar exam for licensing lawyers. This additional pathway rigorously tests attorney competence without relying on the flawed high-stakes written bar exams that produce racially disproportionate results. It allows new lawyers to serve disadvantaged clients more quickly, helping to close the justice gap.

The Justice Corps pathway to licensure operates in addition to other pathways as an alternative for candidates who choose and are eligible for it. Jurisdictions will continue to license most lawyers through the bar exam. For some others, however, the Lawyers' Justice Corps will provide a pathway that both protects and serves the public.

Here is how Justice Corps law licensing works:

- A jurisdiction's highest court will designate public service organizations serving underrepresented individuals and communities that qualify for the program.
- Qualifying organizations will hire law graduates for job openings, using their usual hiring practices and offering their customary compensation.
- The Justice Corps lawyers will begin working for their organizations shortly after law school graduation rather than deferring work to prepare for the bar exam. If interim licenses are available in the state, the new lawyers will practice with those licenses.
- The host organizations will supervise and provide regular feedback to the Corps lawyers.
- If a new lawyer completes 6 months of successful full-time supervised practice, documented through the assessment rubrics, the organization will certify that lawyer for admission to the bar. This certification will take the place of successful completion of the bar exam.
- A certified lawyer will be required to continue to work for the organization for at least an additional six months.
- The new lawyer must satisfy all the jurisdiction's other requirements for admission, such as successful completion of the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE) and completion of a character and fitness review. Justice Corps certification takes the place of only passing the general bar exam.

The Justice Corps pathway will assure that only competent candidates are licensed:

- Candidates may pursue this path only if they have a J.D. degree and are hired by a qualifying public service organization.
- Supervisors will receive support on best practices for supervising and assessing candidates—including training on how to handle candidates who are not meeting expectations. They will use assessment/feedback rubrics based on a national study of new lawyer competence, Building a Better Bar, to assure that Corps members develop the competencies needed for entry-level practice -- competencies that extend beyond those tested by the traditional bar exam.
- Portfolios of candidates' redacted work products could be available for review by bar examiners.
- At the same time, the Lawyers' Justice Corps will increase access to justice for the clients of qualifying organizations:
 - Law graduates will be available to start work in late May, rather than August. Rather than devoting 400+ hours to bar preparation, these graduates will devote that time to under-served clients.
 - The graduates will learn, practice, and receive feedback on the skills they need to serve clients, rather than memorizing the details of doctrinal rules, most of which they are unlikely ever to use.
 - Lawyers in the Justice Corps will constitute a new network of lawyers who work with and support one another, strengthening public service organizations and the relationships among them.
 - Support for the Lawyers' Justice Corps from government and private funders will provide additional financial support to legal service organizations.

The Lawyers' Justice Corps will advance core values of the legal profession. It will protect the public with bar licensure based on proven competence, facilitate career pathways for lawyers committed to fulltime social justice work, and demonstrate a jurisdiction's commitment to access to justice and thoughtful, nondiscriminatory licensing.

Contact Eileen Kaufman at ekaufman@tourolaw.edu for more information.

May 22, 2021

LAWYERS JUSTICE CORPS – PUBLIC SERVICE IN A TIME OF CRISIS

(Bloomberg Law | June 19, 2020 | for educational purposes)

The Covid-19 crisis and the impact of institutional racism add to the challenges for low- and middle-income people in America. Four law professors—members of the Collaboratory on Legal Education and Licensing for Practice—explain how and why a new Lawyers Justice Corps can help address those problems and also provide a new path to legal licensing.

Our nation faces two crises: the Covid-19 pandemic and a painful reckoning with institutional racism that is long overdue. Lawyers cannot cure either, but we can step up to help repair the damage done by both. Some of us are already fighting on the front lines of these efforts, but lawyers need to do more. We need a Lawyers Justice Corps.

ABA President Judy Martinez recently declared, “African Americans were enslaved in our country. They bore the brunt of the horrific racism of Jim Crow and Klan terrorism. And violence continues today, as does racism through laws that unjustly and disproportionately impact people of color. Lawyers have a special responsibility to address these injustices.”

Martinez has also pointed out that “thousands of Americans will need help” during the Covid-19 pandemic, “with legal issues including lost jobs, evictions, insurance claims, family emergencies and obtaining government benefits they need to survive.” We can add prisoners and other institutionalized people to the list of people in dire need of help; the rapid spread of Covid-19 has made confinement dangerous to all and fatal to some.

This explosion of legal needs multiplies the already unmet legal needs of so many low-income and middle-class people.

Like AmeriCorps, But Focused on Legal Needs

We propose a Lawyers Justice Corps to help close this gap in legal services. The Corps would provide a structure for weaving together opportunities to serve unmet local needs for legal representation and assistance. Think AmeriCorps, but focused on legal needs. Recent law graduates would join the Corps by committing to a year of work. Public service and advocacy organizations would select applicants and commit to providing supervision for the work of the Corps member for that year.

Participants in a Lawyers Justice Corps would be paid for their professional services at the entry-level salary for the legal organization where they work. Support for new positions might come from expanded state and federal funding for legal services to meet pandemic- or justice-related needs. Funding could also come from bar association foundations, philanthropies, and law firms.

Law schools, which have community contacts with public service organizations, should assist in developing placement opportunities and funding sources for the program.

A New Path to Legal Licensing

A Lawyers Justice Corps created now could also respond to another crisis within our own profession: the difficulty of maintaining the traditional path to law licensing during the pandemic.

Because of the risk of infection and limits on large gatherings, many states have deferred the July bar exam until September—but no one knows if testing can safely go forward at that point. Some states are limiting seats at testing sites, turning away applicants. Some are planning online exams. One state, Utah, has announced licensure after a period of supervised practice. Many states are still searching for a viable “plan B” if testing is not possible this year.

Service in the Lawyers Justice Corps offers a solution: law graduates who successfully provide supervised legal services for one year through the Corps would be licensed without being required to take a bar exam.

These graduates will demonstrate their competence while working under supervision to serve real clients. Using the Corps as a pathway to licensure simultaneously responds to the challenges facing our licensing system and serves society by building a cadre of lawyers to address the growing need for legal services for the many harmed by Covid-19 and racial injustice.

The Corps would satisfy the same purpose as the bar exam: protecting the public by licensing only those who possess the minimum competency needed for practice. Instead of answering multiple choice and essay questions about hypothetical clients, Corps members would address the more challenging, nuanced needs of real clients.

If successful, they would be certified by their supervising attorney as competent in providing legal services in compliance with the rules of professional conduct.

Supervised public service for Corps clients offers a real-life performance test of a candidate’s lawyering knowledge, skills, professionalism, and judgment—including key aspects of competence that are not tested on the current bar exam. After demonstrating all of these competencies, candidates would be licensed to practice in the jurisdiction where they performed their public service.

The Corps would build on the indispensable work of Equal Justice Works and other organizations that support public service fellowships. By offering licensure to these fellows, as well as to other entry-level public service attorneys, the Corps would enhance the attractiveness of these positions.

Both Corps hosts and clients would benefit from having new hires begin work immediately without waiting for a bar exam to be available. Nor would Corps members have to interrupt their client service by taking off significant time to study for and take a bar exam. Clients and hosts would get competent, sustained work from Corps lawyers.

Jurisdictions adopting this proposal will need to expand their supervised practice rules to accommodate practice by Corps members. This is already happening in many states as a way of permitting law graduates to practice while awaiting licensure. But instead of providing merely provisional licensing, the proposal creates an ongoing pathway to licensure for those who successfully complete one year of supervised public service.

Many graduates would not choose the Justice Corps route to licensure. Similarly, during years when bar exams are more readily available, some employers may want their attorneys to seek more rapid licensure through the exam. That traditional path to licensure will remain available. But this new path can extend beyond the immediate crisis of the 2020 pandemic, helping address the longstanding and huge unmet legal needs of disadvantaged and marginalized populations.

People need legal help, today more than ever. A Lawyers Justice Corps is a modest way to enlarge access to justice and provide immediate, uninterrupted legal services to more of the most vulnerable among us.

This column does not necessarily reflect the opinion of The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. or its owners.

Author Information

Carol L. Chomsky is a professor of law, University of Minnesota Law School.

Joan W. Howarth is the interim associate dean for experiential legal education and distinguished visiting professor at UNLV-William S. Boyd School of Law. She is also dean emerita at Michigan State University College of Law.

Eileen Kaufman is professor emerita, Touro College, Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center.

Deborah Jones Merritt is a distinguished university professor and the John Deaver Drinkol Baker & Hostetler Chair in Law at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law.

All four authors are members of the Collaboratory on Legal Education and Licensing for Practice, a group of 11 scholars who have studied and written about the bar exam, licensing, and legal education for many years.

BIOGRAPHIES

Arastu, Nermeen

Facilitator, Addressing the Emergent Civil Legal Needs of Immigrants in New York State

Nermeen is an Associate Professor of Law and the Co-Director of the [Immigrant & Non-Citizen Rights Clinic](#) at the CUNY School of Law. She and her students represent non-citizens through all aspects and postures of the immigration system with the express mission of representing those who are most marginalized within the immigration system.

Nermeen's writing, scholarship, and advocacy focus on racial and religious disparities in our nation's immigration adjudication and enforcement. Most recently her writing & scholarship have been published in the *UCLA Law Review*, the *Harvard Human Rights Journal*, *The Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine*, *Newsweek*, *City Limits* & *Slate*.

Prior to joining CUNY's faculty, Nermeen was a litigation associate at Simpson Thacher & Bartlett, LLP, and a staff attorney at the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF). At AALDEF, Nermeen led the Immigrant Rights Program and Post-9/11 Civil Liberties Project. Through the course of her pro bono work at Simpson Thacher and tenure at AALDEF, Nermeen managed an immigration docket which included deportation defense, suppression, asylum, citizenship and green card interviews, and various other immigration processes. Additionally, while at AALDEF, she oversaw monthly immigration clinics in conjunction with various community-based organizations, litigated matters relating to zoning and houses of worship, addressed anti-Muslim bias in the immigration system, and advocated against racial and religious profiling and law enforcement surveillance.

Nermeen has also worked at the Legal Assistance Centre of Namibia and in the Immigrant Women Program at Legal Momentum (formerly NOW Legal Defense) where she focused on policy relating to gender-based violence.

Nermeen is a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Law School and the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Azemi, Michaela K. Rossettie

Facilitator, Reflections on the Pro Bono Scholars Program and Beyond - A Proposal for a Lawyers Justice Corps as an Alternative Pathway to New York Bar Admission

Michaela currently serves as the Director of Pro Bono Services and Externships at Cornell Law School. Formerly she was the Associate Director for Judicial Engagement and Professional Development. She previously worked as the Regional Pro Bono Coordinator for LawNY's private attorney involvement and law student internship programs. She was a Staff Attorney for LawNY from September 2013 to August 2016, handling Family Law and Disability Advocacy cases.

Michaela received her B.A. in Sociology and Women's Studies from the University of Delaware in 2009, her J.D. from Case Western Reserve University Law School in 2012 and was admitted to practice in NY in 2013. In the summer of 2013, she volunteered as a Pro Bono Attorney for LawNY where she developed a model for LawNY's pro se divorce clinic and was honored to receive the NYSBA Empire State Counsel Award in the Fall of 2013.

Michaela has served on the President's Committee on Access to Justice for the NYSBA, the Pro Bono Coordinators Network of the NYSBA, New York State Chief Judge's Attorney Emeritus Advisory Council, and was formerly the President of both the Steuben County Bar Association and the Finger Lakes Women's Bar Association.

Barnett, Helaine M.

Conference Welcome

Helaine M. Barnett has devoted her entire professional career to the provision of civil legal aid to the poor and in the pursuit of equal access to justice.

In January 2004, she was appointed President of the Legal Services Corporation (LSC), in Washington, DC, the first legal aid attorney and first woman to serve in that position, where she served for six years. Under her leadership, LSC issued the groundbreaking Justice Gap Report, which documented the unmet civil legal needs of low-income Americans.

Before joining LSC, she spent 37 years with The Legal Aid Society in New York City, where she became the Attorney-in-Charge of its multi-office Civil Division. Among her accomplishments, she created its Homeless Family Rights Project and mobilized its 9/11 disaster assistance response.

Upon returning to New York in 2010, she was appointed by the Chief Judge of New York State to chair a newly created statewide Task Force to Expand Access to Civil Legal Services, which has become the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice, which she continues to chair. As a result of its work, New York has allocated annually \$100 million of state funding for civil legal services, more than any other state in the country.

She was appointed an Adjunct Professor at New York University School of Law where she taught a class on Access to the Civil Justice System. She founded Legal Hand, which began with neighborhood storefront centers staffed with community volunteers, who are not lawyers, who provide legal information, assistance, and referrals to try to prevent issues from turning into legal actions, which have now been expanded to virtual Legal Hand Call-In Centers.

She has held leadership positions in the American Bar Association, serving on its Board of Governors and its Executive Committee, the only legal services lawyer to have held these positions, and is a member of the ABA House of Delegates. She is a recipient of numerous awards, including the ABA Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the New York Law Journal, the New York State Bar Association Gold Medal for Distinguished Service in the Law, and the ABA Fellows Outstanding Service Award, and has published several law review articles on access to justice.

She is a 1960 graduate of Barnard College and received her law degree from New York University School of Law in 1964.

Bassett, Hon. Mary T.

Keynote Dialogue

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH., was appointed Commissioner of Health on December 1, 2021. She previously served as Director of the François-Xavier Bagnoud (FXB) Center for Health and Human Rights at Harvard University and FXB Professor of the Practice of Health and Human Rights in the department of Social and Behavioral Sciences at the Harvard T.H. Chan School

of Public Health. Prior to that, she served as Commissioner of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, Director for the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation's African Health Initiative and Child Well-Being Prevention Program; and as Deputy Commissioner of Health Promotion and Disease Prevention at the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. Early in her career, Dr. Bassett served on the medical faculty at the University of Zimbabwe and went on to serve as Associate Director of Health Equity at the Rockefeller Foundation's Southern Africa Office. After returning to the United States, she served on the faculty of Columbia University, including as Associate Professor of Clinical Epidemiology in the Mailman School of Public Health.

Dr. Bassett received a B.A. in History and Science from Harvard University, an M.D. from Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, and an M.P.H. from the University of Washington.

Brescia, Raymond H.

Facilitator, Law Schools – Legal Services Partnership Projects in the Covid Era: Confronting a Crisis Learning for the Future

Ray combines his experience as a public interest attorney in New York City with his scholarly interests to address economic and social inequality, the legal and policy implications of financial crises, how innovative legal and regulatory approaches can improve economic and community development efforts, and the need to expand access to justice for people of low and moderate income. He is the author of "The Future of Change: How Technology Shapes Social Revolutions" (Cornell University Press, 2020), which examines the intersection of technology and social movements, from the American Revolution to the present day. He is also the co-editor of two books: "Crisis Lawyering: Effective Legal Advocacy in Emergency Situations" (New York University Press, 2021); and "How Cities Will Save the World: Urban Innovation in the Face of Population Flows, Climate Change, and Economic Inequality" (Routledge 2016).

Before coming to Albany Law School, he was the Associate Director of the Urban Justice Center in New York, N.Y., where he coordinated legal representation for community-based institutions in areas such as housing, economic justice, workers' rights, civil rights, and environmental justice. He also served as an adjunct professor at New York Law School from 1997 through 2006. Prior to his work at the Urban Justice Center, he was a staff attorney at New Haven Legal Assistance and the Legal Aid Society of New York, where he was a recipient of a Skadden Fellowship after graduation from law school.

Professor Brescia also served as Law Clerk to the pathbreaking Civil Rights attorney-turned-federal judge, the Honorable Constance Baker Motley, Senior U.S. District Court Judge for the Southern District of New York. While a student Yale Law School, Professor Brescia was co-recipient of the Charles Albom Prize for Appellate Advocacy; was a student director of several clinics, including the Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Law Clinic and the Homelessness Clinic; and was Visiting Lecturer in Yale College.

Professor Brescia earned his J.D. from Yale Law School and his B.A. from Fordham University.

Connolly, Kim Diana

Panelist, Rural Access to Justice |Providing Civil Legal Assistance in Rural Communities

Professor Kim Diana Connolly has focused her academic career on how best to educate future lawyers about access to justice and related issues, as well as how best to use laws and policies to protect the planet and its inhabitants. She serves as Vice Dean for Advocacy and Experiential Learning, and the Director of the Community Engagement Clinic and other clinics at the University at Buffalo School of Law - SUNY. Professor Connolly's commitment to access to justice advocacy began before she attended law school, when she ran a non-profit working to bring social and environmental justice to those facing a lack of access to clean water and sanitary wastewater removal in North Carolina. She holds degrees from Georgetown University Law Center, George Washington University Law School, and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Crossman, David

Panelist, Preserving Housing, Assisting Tenants

David is currently staff attorney with the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern NY. He joined LASNNY in 2017 as a Pro Bono Scholar and stayed as a housing attorney following graduation until moving to LASNNY's Medical Legal Partnership with St. Peter's Health Partners in 2021. At the end of June 2022, David will start a new position as housing justice staff attorney at The Justice Clinic at Albany Law School.

Dias, Marika

Panelist, Law Schools – Legal Services Partnership Projects in the Covid Era: Confronting a Crisis Learning for the Future

Marika is a public interest attorney who has worked in civil legal services since 2001, focusing on providing legal services that support community organizing efforts and grassroots organizing groups. Marika is currently the director of the Urban Justice Center's Safety Net Project, which focuses on eviction defense and tenant rights, homelessness advocacy and organizing, and public benefits advocacy. Marika is also a member of the Steering Committee of the Right to Counsel NYC Coalition, and a trainer in the Housing Justice Leadership Institute. Previously, Marika was the Director of the Tenant Rights Coalition at Legal Services NYC and prior to that, the Managing Attorney at Make the Road New York.

DiFiore, Hon. Janet

Conference Welcome

Janet DiFiore was appointed by Governor Andrew Cuomo on December 1, 2015 as the Chief Judge of the Court of Appeals and the State of New York, She was confirmed by the New York State Senate on January 21, 2016 and took office the same day.

Chief Judge DiFiore has devoted virtually her entire professional career to the fair administration of justice, including service as a prosecutor and as a judge.

From 2006 to 2016, as Westchester County District Attorney, Chief Judge DiFiore served as the chief law enforcement officer for a county with almost one million people and headed an office of over 230 employees, assigned to eight branch offices. In that position, she was in

the forefront of establishing innovative education and prevention initiatives to reduce crime. Her many initiatives included leading the effort to create a Child Fatality Review Team in Westchester County; working to establish Westchester County's Multidisciplinary Team to investigate child abuse cases; and the creation of the Child Advocacy Center, to provide a child-friendly environment for young victims working with the District Attorney's office. She also led the effort to establish the Westchester Intelligence Center, to facilitate the use of databases to obtain evidence and uncover trends in criminal activity, and established a Violent Felony Screening Protocol, for enhanced early review of the evidence in cases involving violent crimes.

Chief Judge DiFiore served as a Judge in Westchester County Court from 1999 to 2002, presiding, by designation, over matters in Family Court, Surrogate's Court and Supreme Court. She served as a New York State Supreme Court Justice from 2003 to 2005. During that time, she was the Supervising Judge of the Criminal Courts for the Ninth Judicial District, leading the effort to reduce the criminal case backlog, to establish a Mental Health Court and a Sex Offender Court, and the implementation of Domestic Violence and Drug Treatment Courts. She also served as Access to Justice Coordinator for the Ninth Judicial District.

Prior to being elected as a Judge, Chief Judge DiFiore served as an Assistant District Attorney and Chief of the Narcotics Bureau in Westchester County; Deputy Village Counsel for the Village of Bronxville; and worked in private practice.

In 2014, Chief Judge DiFiore served as a member of the Governor's Commission on Youth, Safety and Justice, created to recommend reforms to the laws governing the prosecution of young offenders. In 2011, Governor Andrew Cuomo appointed her to serve as the first Chair of the New York State Joint Commission on Public Ethics. Chief Judge DiFiore has also served as the Co-Chair of the New York State Justice Task Force, created in 2009 by then-Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman, to examine the causes of wrongful convictions. Then-Chief Judge Judith S. Kaye appointed her, in 1999, to serve on the Commission on Drugs and the Courts, and, in 2004, Judge Kaye appointed her to serve on the Commission on the Future of Indigent Defense Services. Chief Judge DiFiore also has served as the Co-Chair of the Westchester County Reentry Task Force and as a member of the Advisory Board of the Holocaust and Human Rights Education Center. And, in 2011-12, she served as President of the District Attorneys Association of the State of New York.

Chief Judge DiFiore received her J.D. from St. John's University School of Law in 1981 and her B.A. from C.W. Post College, Long Island University in 1977.

Diller, Matthew

Closing Session

Matthew Diller is dean of Fordham Law School and the Paul Fuller Professor of Law. He is one of the nation's leading voices on access to justice issues and a prominent scholar of social welfare law and policy.

Dean Diller has lectured and written extensively on the legal dimensions of social welfare policy, including public assistance, Social Security, and disability programs, and on disability law and policy. His articles have appeared in the *The Yale Law Journal*, *UCLA Law Review*, *NYU Law Review*, *Fordham Law Review*, *Texas Law Review*, and *Michigan Law Review*, among other publications, and he is widely cited as an expert by the media, including *The New York*

Times, The Washington Post, The Wall Street Journal, Bloomberg, and National Law Journal. He has taught a range of law school classes, including Civil Procedure, Administrative Law, Social Welfare Law, and Public Interest Law.

In addition to his work as an administrator and scholar, Dean Diller is a member of the New York State Permanent Commission on Access to Justice and is chair of the commission's Committee on Law School Involvement. He also serves on the board of The Legal Aid Society of New York and is co-chair of the Council on the Profession at the New York City Bar Association, where he has served as a vice president and member of the executive committee. In addition, Dean Diller is a member of the Judicial Institute on Professionalism in the Law and a fellow of the American Bar Foundation. He has also served on the boards of Legal Services NYC, where he was vice chair, the National Center for Law and Economic Justice, and Volunteers of Legal Service.

Dean Diller received an A.B. and a J.D., both magna cum laude, from Harvard University, where he was an editor of the *Harvard Law Review*. After clerking for the Honorable Walter R. Mansfield of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, Dean Diller worked as a staff attorney in the civil appeals and law reform unit of The Legal Aid Society from 1986 to 1993. Dean Diller began his teaching career at Fordham Law in 1993 and was named the Cooper Family Professor of Law and co-director of the Louis Stein Center for Law and Ethics. From 2003 to 2008, he served as the associate dean for academic affairs. Prior to being appointed dean of Fordham Law in 2015, he served as dean at the Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law from 2009 to 2015.

Dunlap, Veronica N.

Panelist, Law Schools – Legal Services Partnership Projects in the Covid Era: Confronting a Crisis Learning for the Future

Veronica is the New York Program Director at Pro Bono Net where she spearheads LawHelpNY and related technology initiatives that empower New Yorkers in need to resolve their legal problems and strengthen the work of advocates serving them. In addition, she is a volunteer attorney with NYCLA on a project aimed at restoring the civil rights of people with criminal convictions.

Prior to joining PBN, Veronica served as the Director of Strategic Initiatives at the National Network for Safe Communities at John Jay College where she designed and implemented projects that aimed to reduce bias in policing, and managed communications and digital strategies.

Before law school, Veronica performed on stages around the world as a classically trained dancer. She is a proud graduate of both George Washington University, where she received a B.A. in International Affairs and Fordham University School of Law where she received her Juris Doctor & M.B.A. in Finance.

Veronica received the 2016 Heroine of Excellence Award for her work in social justice advocacy and is a 2017 Council of Urban Professionals Fellow. Further, Veronica received the 2019 New York County Lawyer's Association Pro Bono Honors Award for her dedication to public service and the 2020 Outstanding Woman Lawyer in Public Service Award from the National Bar Association.

Fisher, Hon. Fern A.

Panelist, Law Schools – Legal Services Partnership Projects in the Covid Era: Confronting a Crisis Learning for the Future

Judge Fisher is the Special Assistant for Social Justice Initiatives to the Dean of the Maurice A. Deane School of Law. Until July of 2017, she was Deputy Chief Administrative Judge for New York City Courts and served as the Director of the New York State Courts Access to Justice Program. Judge Fisher’s career started in the Civil Court as a Legal Services attorney practicing in Manhattan Housing Court. She served as Deputy Director of Harlem Legal Services, Inc. and as an Assistant Attorney General of the New York State Department of Law. For four years, she provided pro bono legal services to Harlem-based community organizations as a project director of the National Conference of Black Lawyers. In 1989, she was appointed Judge of the Housing Part of the Civil Court, and later, in 1990, was elected to the Civil Court where she served as Deputy Supervising Judge. Judge Fisher was elected in 1993 to the Supreme Court of the State of New York. After serving in both the City and the Matrimonial Parts of Supreme Court, in December 1996 she was appointed Administrative Judge of the Civil Court where she served until March 2009 when she was appointed to her current position. Judge Fisher received her B.A. summa cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa in 1975 from Howard University and received her J.D. in 1978 from Harvard Law School.

Flagg, Marco

Keynote Dialogue

Marco Flagg works to develop community-centered outreach strategies and policy solutions at the Center for Law and Justice (CFLJ). He grew up in Albany, NY and spent over a decade in Beijing and Shenzhen, China - where he worked with international NGOs, produced documentaries, taught ESL classes, and studied Mandarin Chinese.

His years abroad amongst a diverse international community gave him a chance to develop rich communications skills that span languages, culture, and media. He is excited to work with Dr. Green and his colleagues at CFLJ to develop social justice campaigns that directly impact the lives of community members and destroy racist systems of oppression.

Gundlach, Jennifer A.

Panelist, Reflections on the Pro Bono Scholars Program and Beyond - A Proposal for a Lawyers Justice Corps as an Alternative Pathway to New York Bar Admission

Jennifer is the Emily and Stephen Mendel Distinguished Professor of Law and Clinical Professor of Law at the Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University. In the past, she has also served as the Vice-Dean, as well as Senior Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and for Experiential Education. Professor Gundlach was a civil litigator in Washington, D.C. for several years before she began teaching full-time. Professor Gundlach currently teaches Civil Procedure, Pre-Trial Litigation, Disability Law, and the Pro Bono Scholars Seminar. She also directs the School’s Pro Se Legal Assistance Program in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York in Central Islip. Her research and scholarship interests draw on social science and educational theory to inform and improve law school teaching, curricular reform, and access to justice.

Gupta, Hon. Vanita

Conference Introduction and Call to Action

Vanita Gupta is the 19th United States Associate Attorney General and serves as the third-ranking official at the Department of Justice. Associate Attorney General Gupta supervises multiple litigating divisions within the Department of Justice, including the Civil Division, Civil Rights Division, Antitrust Division, Tax Division, and Environmental and Natural Resources Division. She also oversees the grantmaking components of the Department, including the Office of Justice Programs, the Office on Violence Against Women, and the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services; and supervises the Office of Information Policy, the Community Relations Service, the Executive Office for United States Trustees, and the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission.

Associate Attorney General Gupta previously served as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the nation's oldest and largest coalition of non-partisan civil rights organizations in the United States.

Before serving in that capacity, from October 15, 2014, to January 20, 2017, Associate Attorney General Gupta served as Acting Assistant Attorney General and Head of the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division. Appointed by President Barack Obama as the chief civil rights prosecutor for the United States, Associate Attorney General Gupta advanced a wide range of civil rights enforcement matters.

Prior to her tenure leading the Civil Rights Division, Associate Attorney General Gupta served as Deputy Legal Director and the Director of the Center for Justice at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU). In addition to managing litigation, Associate Attorney General Gupta created and led the ACLU's Smart Justice Campaign aimed at promoting bipartisan justice reform while keeping communities safe. She began her legal career as an attorney at the NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund.

Associate Attorney General Gupta graduated *magna cum laude* from Yale University and received her law degree from New York University School of Law, where later she taught a civil rights litigation clinic for several years.

Green, Dr. Alice

Keynote Dialogue

Dr. Alice Green founded the Center for Law and Justice, a civil rights organization, in 1985. She has a doctorate in criminal justice and three master's degrees – education, social work, and criminology. The Center provides community education on civil and criminal justice, legal guidance and advocacy, crisis intervention, and community planning and organizing around criminal justice, civil rights, and civil liberties issues of particular concern to poor communities and those of color.

In 1985, Governor Cuomo appointed Dr. Green to membership on the Citizens Policy and Complaint Review Council of the New York State Commission of Corrections. A year later, with Senate approval, he appointed her to the position of Deputy Commissioner of the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives. She was put in charge of strategic planning, policy, and information. After leaving state service, she became Legislative Director for the New York Civil Liberties Union where she had served as Director of their Albany Office in 1982.

Alice Green, an adjunct professor at the University at Albany, has also taught at Russell Sage and Siena College. She began her career as a secondary school teacher and social worker. For many years, she directed Trinity Institution, a youth and family services center in Albany's South End. While there, she also did community organizing and founded the South End Scene, one of the longest published Black newspapers in Albany.

Dr. Green writes and lectures on racism and criminal justice and often does commentary and analysis for several newspapers and television and radio programs. With Dr. Frankie Bailey, she co-authored the book, *Law Never Here, A Social History of African American Responses to Issues of Crime and Justice*, (1999 Greenwood Press) and *Wicked Albany*(2009) and *Wicked Danville*(2011 History Press), two books about Prohibition.

In 1997 she founded and is now President of the Paden Institute and Retreat for Writers of Color located in the Adirondack town of Essex, New York. There, writers are provided technical assistance and a free environment for writing.

Alice Green is a member of the board of directors of the of the New York State Defenders Association, the Vice President of Senior Hope, an alcohol and drug counseling program and member of the Advisory Board of the Capital District Chapter of the NYCLU. She is a founder of the African American Cultural Center of the Capital Region. For over 20 years she worked as a prison volunteer.

In recognition for her work, Dr. Green has received numerous awards from several local and state organizations including the NAACP, Rockefeller College, National Organization for Women, New York State Bar Association, the University at Albany, the New York Defenders Association, the New York Civil Liberties Union, Social Justice Center, Citizen Action . Social Justice Center and the Albany Rotary Club. She and actor Danny Glover were co- recipients of the John Brown Freedom of Justice Award, and she received the Community Service Award from St. Rose College and most recently, the Literary Legend Award from the Albany Public Library Foundation.

Hayat, Norrinda Brown

Facilitator, Preserving Housing, Assisting Tenants

Professor Hayat is the Director of the Housing and Tenant Solidarity Clinic at Rutgers Law School on the Newark Campus. Professor Hayat also teaches courses in Property Law, Critical Race Theory and Landlord Tenant Law. Her scholarship focuses on the intersection of race, gender and access to housing and law and has been placed or is forthcoming in the *California Law Review*, the *Brooklyn Law Review*, the *NYU Journal of Law and Social Change*, the *Michigan Journal of Race and Law*, and the *Clinical Law Review* among others. She is a recognized expert on housing law issues and has written op-eds and been interviewed for various news outlets, including the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, *Shelterforce* and the *New Jersey Star-Ledger*.

Prior to law teaching, Professor Hayat spent almost a decade in government practice at the United States Department of Justice in the Civil Rights Division as a trial attorney advocating on behalf of victims of housing discrimination. She is engaged in professional service on various committees, including being co-chair elect of the Executive Committee of the Clinical Section of the American Association of Law Schools (AALS), which is the largest section in the AALS. Professor Hayat was awarded the Junior Faculty of the Year award by the Society of American Law Teachers (SALT) in 2021.

Professor Hayat earned her B.A. from Dartmouth College and her J.D. from University of Virginia School of Law.

Herrera, Luz E.

Panelist, Law Schools – Legal Services Partnership Projects in the Covid Era: Confronting a Crisis Learning for the Future

Luz E. Herrera is a Professor of Law and Associate Dean for Experiential Education at Texas A&M School of Law. Dean Herrera promotes entrepreneurial efforts to address the access to civil justice gap.

Before entering academia, Prof. Herrera ran her own practice and founded Community Lawyers, Inc., a non-profit organization that encourages access to affordable legal services and develops innovative opportunities for legal professionals in underserved communities. These experiences have influenced her scholarship that promotes legal “low bono” service delivery models and post-graduate support programs for lawyers starting their own law firms. Dean Herrera currently serves as a special advisor for the American Bar Association’s Commission on Hispanic Legal Rights and Responsibilities.

Prior to her current position, Dean Herrera was the Assistant Dean for Clinical Education, Experiential Learning and Public Service at UCLA School of Law. She has also taught as a visiting a visiting clinical professor at the University of California, Irvine School of Law, an assistant professor at Thomas Jefferson School of Law, a visiting professor at Chapman University School of Law and a Senior Clinical Fellow at Harvard Law School. In her various academic positions, Dean Herrera encouraged innovation and promoted access to justice through experiential learning.

Dean Herrera is a graduate of Stanford University and Harvard Law School.

Jeng, Mindy

Panelist, Reflections on the Pro Bono Scholars Program and Beyond - A Proposal for a Lawyers Justice Corps as an Alternative Pathway to New York Bar Admission

Mindy is Administrative Counsel for the Office of Court Administration (OCA), the administrative arm of the New York Unified Court System (UCS). Working as part of OCA’s Executive Office, Ms. Jeng provides advice and counsel on varied legal issues affecting the administration and operation of the courts. Ms. Jeng began her career as a litigation associate at Simpson Thacher and Bartlett. She then worked as a law clerk and special projects counsel for Chief Judge Jonathan Lippman. She has functioned as Executive Director of the Pro Bono Scholars Program for the New York State Courts since 2016 and represents UCS, judges, and other court officials in litigation in the federal and state courts. Ms. Jeng received an A.B. degree from Princeton University and her J.D. degree from Stanford Law School.

Kaufman, Eileen

Panelist, Reflections on the Pro Bono Scholars Program and Beyond - A Proposal for a Lawyers Justice Corps as an Alternative Pathway to New York Bar Admission

Eileen Kaufman is Professor of Law at Touro Law Center. She graduated with highest honors from Skidmore College and received her J.D. and LL.M. from New York University School of Law. Before joining the faculty at Touro, Professor Kaufman served as managing attorney at Westchester Legal Services where her work included major class actions and law reform relating to government benefit programs.

Professor Kaufman was Touro's Vice Dean from 1996-2000, the founder of Touro Law's summer program in India and the co-director of Touro Law's summer program in Israel. She teaches Torts, Constitutional Law, Evidence, Sex-Based Discrimination, and Civil Liberties in an Age of Terrorism. Among her professional activities, Professor Kaufman served as the co-President of the Society of American Law Teachers, the Reporter for the New York Pattern Jury Instructions Committee, the chairperson of the Bar Admission and Lawyer Performance Committee of the American Association of Law Schools, the co-chair of the Committee on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar of the New York State Bar Association, a member of the Committee on Legal Education and Admission to the Bar of the Association of the Bar of the City of New York and the New York State Judicial Institute on Professionalism in the Law. She currently serves on the Board of Directors of the Tibet Justice Center.

Maligno, Thomas

Facilitator, Ensuring Delivery of Civil Legal Services in the Covid Era – Blueprints for Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Management

Tom is the Director of Pro Bono and Public Interest at Touro College Jacob D. Fuchsberg Law Center and Executive Director of its William Randolph Hearst Public Advocacy Center (PAC), which was created by Touro Law in 2007 to bring together non-profit legal advocacy agencies to provide services to the community while providing opportunities for students to participate in pro bono work and gain hands-on legal training. Housed within the law school, the Center provides furnished offices to the advocacy groups. He oversees the Public Advocacy Center and works with its agencies and Touro Law students.

In addition to working with the PAC, Tom has developed a wide range of public interest career opportunities for Touro Law students and graduates and has been a highly visible supporter of pro bono activities at the law school. He is the advisor for the Public Interest Law Organization of Touro (PILOT) and works with the organization in securing summer fellowships. Beyond helping students to fulfill their pro bono requirements, Tom has been instrumental in helping students develop an understanding of the value of pro bono work. Student fellows defend the victims of domestic violence, guard the legal interests of children, and work with advocacy groups on a broad spectrum of poverty and civil rights issues. At Touro Law, Tom uses the same creative energy for which he is known and applies it to the provision of pro bono work by students and PAC agencies. He serves as a role model for students and those in the community and is a strong advocate for public interest and pro bono work. He instills these values in our students and in everyone he meets.

During his more than 40-year career in public interest law, Tom has received numerous state, local and national awards for his efforts in pro bono and public interest work. He has been part of the organized pro bono movement since 1978 when he helped create the Pro Bono Project on Long Island and his leadership was integral in creating a nationally recognized volunteer effort. His ability to bring together the private bar, public interest community, government, and legal services contributed to the success of the project. In 1989, Mr. Maligno left the Pro Bono Project to become the Executive Director of Nassau Suffolk Law Services, one of the largest legal services programs in the country. During his tenure, the organization was often acknowledged for its creative ways of assisting clients. Tom has a nationwide reputation for promoting pro bono representation and is a consultant for the American Bar Association, helping to organize pro bono efforts in numerous communities across the United States. He is also the leader of the organized pro bono effort of both local bar associations; the Nassau County Bar Association and the Suffolk County Bar Association.

Most recently, Tom has been a leader in Touro Law Center's disaster response for both Hurricane Sandy and the COVID pandemic. He helped create our disaster response hotline for Hurricane Sandy which was the predecessor to Touro Law's nationally recognized Disaster Law Clinic. In response to his efforts, he was asked by FEMA to become a senior attorney advisor to assist them in reforming the disaster response system. Tom has also been an integral part of building a network of immigration advocates for Long Island and has been a leader in building that coalition to better serve this growing population.

McGovern, Kelly

Panelist, Rural Access to Justice | Providing Civil Legal Assistance in Rural Communities

Kelly is the Director of Pro Bono Affairs at Legal Assistance of Western New York, Inc.® (LawNY), where she manages pro bono initiatives and opportunities, internship programs, and volunteer engagement across LawNY's fourteen counties. Kelly and her pro bono team recruit, support, and supervise volunteers who have a variety of skill levels, from college students to retiring attorneys. She works closely with pro bono attorneys, legal services providers, and academic institutions on pro bono matters.

Kelly graduated from Hobart and William Smith Colleges in 2003 with a Political Science degree. She received her JD from Syracuse University School of Law with a Concentration in Global Law and Policy in 2006 and was admitted to practice in New York State in 2007.

Kelly was previously a LawNY staff attorney, and she handled primarily public benefits and eviction prevention cases. She represented clients at unemployment insurance benefits and other administrative hearings for 13 years and continues to supervise LawNY staff members who practice in this substantive legal area. She has also convened LawNY work groups focused on employment law, regional pro bono work, and assisting limited English proficient clients.

Kelly serves on the New York State Bar Association's Committee on Legal Aid, the 6th and 8th Judicial Districts' Pro Bono Committees, the Rural Justice Initiative Working Group, and the New York State Chief Judge's Attorney Emeritus Program Advisory Council. She is also the co-chair of the statewide Pro Bono Coordinators' Network meeting and is on the Steering Committee for the New York State Bar Association's 2022 Partnership Conference.

Niebel, William J.

Facilitator, Preserving Housing, Assisting Tenants

Bill Niebel is an Adjunct Professor of Law and Director of the Tenants Advocacy Practicum at Cornell Law School and a Staff Attorney at Legal Services of Central New York, where he has practiced since 2015. Mr. Niebel graduated from the University of South Dakota Law School in 2005. After law school, he was admitted to the Iowa bar and began focusing on landlord-tenant law as a Staff Attorney at Iowa Legal Aid. In 2009, he prevailed in the Iowa Supreme Court, in the landmark case of *War Eagle v. Plummer*, 775 N.W.2d 714 (2009). That decision invalidated the Iowa statute that allowed certified mail notice of an eviction hearing, as a violation of due process. Mr. Niebel moved to New York and worked at the Legal Aid Society of Northeastern New York for three years, in Albany and Saratoga Springs, defending many evictions in city and justice courts. He also served as Associate General Counsel in the Watchtower (Jehovah's Witnesses) Legal Department for three years, working in its Civil Rights and Litigation groups. Mr. Niebel is currently admitted to practice in New York, and the U.S. District Court, Northern District of New York.

Ouellette, Alicia

Conference Welcome

Alicia Ouellette is the 18th President and Dean of Albany Law School.

As a leader in legal education, Dean Ouellette has championed the value of law schools as drivers of change in communities, society, and the lives of students and graduates. As President and Dean, she has presided over Albany Law School's execution of a new strategic plan, fulfillment of an institutional affiliation with the University at Albany, expansion into online graduate programs, and completed a record-setting fundraising campaign, *We Rise Together: The Campaign for Albany Law School*.

Prior to her appointment as President and Dean, she served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Intellectual Life and a Professor of Law. Before joining the law school in 2001, Dean Ouellette was an Assistant Solicitor General in the New York State Attorney General's Office and a law clerk to the Honorable Howard A. Levine at the New York Court of Appeals.

As a scholar, Dean Ouellette focuses on health law, disability rights, family law, children's rights, and human reproduction. Her book, *BIOETHICS AND DISABILITY: TOWARD A DISABILITY CONSCIOUS BIOETHICS*, was published in 2011 by Cambridge University Press. She has authored numerous articles published in academic journals such as the *American Journal of Law and Medicine*, *American Journal of Bioethics*, *Nevada Law Journal*, *Hastings Law Journal*, *Indiana Law Journal*, and *Oregon Law Review*.

She has presented to distinguished audiences around the globe, including at the Yale School of Medicine and the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland.

In September 2020, Dean Ouellette was appointed to New York Governor's COVID-19 Vaccine Distribution and Implementation Task Force.

Dean Ouellette has served in leadership positions for numerous professional and community organizations, including as chair of the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Section for Deans, secretary and a board member for the Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities (CICU), secretary and a board member for the Burdett Birthing Center in Troy, N.Y., and a board member for the University at Albany's Institute for Health and Human Rights.

An alumna of Hamilton College, Dean Ouellette graduated *magna cum laude* in 1994 from Albany Law School, where she was editor-in-chief of the *Albany Law Review*.

Paul, Alison

Facilitator, Rural Access to Justice | Providing Civil Legal Assistance in Rural Communities

Alison serves as Montana Legal Services Association's Executive Director, a position she has held since January of 2011. She is responsible for the overall management and operations of MLSA. Ms. Paul graduated from the University of Kansas School of Law, then spent 7 years in private practice in Chicago. Ms. Paul began her career with MLSA as a staff attorney in 1999, becoming MLSA's Deputy Director in 2003. In 2005, the National Legal Aid and Defender Association awarded MLSA's Executive Director Alison Paul the Innovations in Technology Award, and in 2012, Ms. Paul was one of only six legal aid program directors invited to participate in the first White House Forum on civil Legal Aid. Ms. Paul currently serves on the Board of Directors of the National Legal Aid and Defender Association, and the Montana Nonprofit Association. Ms. Paul also serves on the Montana Supreme Court Access to Justice Commission.

Pritzker, Hon. Stan L.

Facilitator, Rural Access to Justice | Providing Civil Legal Assistance in Rural Communities

Justice Stan L. Pritzker was appointed to Third Department on May 29, 2017. He graduated *magna cum laude* from the State University of New York Buffalo with a bachelor's degree and received a master's degree in social work. Thereafter, he attended the evening program at St. John's School of Law.

For nearly 20 years, Justice Pritzker was engaged in private practice. In 2004, he was elected to the County Court of Washington County where he presided in County, Family, Surrogate's, and Drug Court. In 2007, he was designated as an Acting Supreme Court Justice. He was then elected as a Supreme Court Justice for the Fourth Judicial District in 2013. Justice Pritzker has served on a variety of committees during his professional career. From 2007-2014, he was a member of the Family Court Rules Advisory Committee. He also chaired the Washington County Bar Association Public Defender Committee and has been appointed as a member to the Unified Court System's Second Special Commission on Fiduciary Appointments. From 2015-2017, he served as president to the Washington County Bar Association.

In addition to his committee work, Justice Pritzker received certification from the Advanced Science & Technology Adjudication Resource Center (ASTAR) in 2013. He was recognized from 2011 through 2020 by Southern Adirondack BOCES for providing internships for local high school students. Presently, Justice Pritzker is the Third Department representative for Attorney for Child Advisory Committee. He is also a participant and member of Board of Directors for the National Courts and Science Institute and was a co-chair of the NYS Bar Association Task Force on Rural Justice.

Rogerson, Sarah F.

Moderator, Law Schools' Response to Community Needs

Professor Rogerson directs the Albany Law School Immigration Law Clinic, an experiential course through which students represent immigrant victims of crime including child abuse and neglect, domestic violence, and sexual assault. Her students also regularly participate in related legislative advocacy and community outreach initiatives. Professor Rogerson worked as a public interest attorney in Newark, New Jersey and has represented immigrant adults and children in cases involving torture, domestic violence, and human trafficking at a human rights non-profit in Dallas, Texas. Her scholarship is focused on the intersections between domestic violence, family law, race, gender, international law and immigration law and policy.

Professor Rogerson has her LL.M. from Southern Methodist University, her J.D. and M.A. from Seton Hall University, and B.A. from Hillsdale College.

Sanin, Rebecca

Facilitator, Ensuring Delivery of Civil Legal Services in the Covid Era – Blueprints for Emergency Preparedness and Crisis Management

Rebecca is an energized and forward-thinking executive, passionate about transformational planning and a thoughtful and equitable approach to regional human service provision, which . A lifelong Long Islander, Rebecca has been an advocate and public servant dedicated to bolstering opportunities for Long Islanders, as well as an enthusiastic leader dedicated to solving local issues and driving progress throughout Long Island and New York State.

In her first five years as President/CEO of the Health and Welfare Council of Long Island., Rebecca refocused attention on the critical needs of families and children across Long Island, bolstering the services HWCLI provides to support them. As she develops new relationships and nurtures existing ones, Rebecca emphasizes HWCLI's regional capacity building that impacts underserved communities in the region. Using her background in government and strong community ties, Rebecca has engaged valuable stakeholders and policy makers into the broader dialogue addressing equity across Long Island. She is a strong advocate for systems change and believes that Long Island, as America's first suburb can lead on effectively eradicating suburban poverty.

Rebecca has proven to be a steadfast and unwavering leader, spearheading local human service coordination responses to the pandemic, the federal shutdown, natural disasters, and other crises. She led the region's 2020 Census count to ensure that Long Island receives the much-needed federal dollars and representation it deserves. With more than two decades of experience, Rebecca has built her solid reputation in public service and remains deeply engaged in policy, strategic planning, and cross-sector coalition building to meet the needs of families and nonprofit businesses.

While serving as an Assistant Deputy County Executive for Suffolk County Executive Steve Bellone for five years, she oversaw the multi-faceted constituent service response to Superstorm Sandy and helped lead the performance management team that worked to modernize county government and create an environment of continuous improvement. Rebecca also chaired the Task Force to Prevent Family Violence and took the lead on managing improved policies and practices for Suffolk County employees on sexual harassment, discrimination, and workplace violence.

As a distinguished Stein Scholar, Rebecca earned a Juris Doctor from Fordham University and holds a Master's in Developmental Psychology from Teachers College, Columbia University where she was named a fellow at the National Center for Children and Families. Rebecca is the recipient of numerous awards and honors and is recognized as a top 100 influential leader in the Long Island region.

Rebecca has continued building on the foundation of her own education, while helping others succeed-and has served as an adjunct professor at local Long Island colleges and on public health, nonprofit and utility advisory boards where she has mentored the next generation and build internship opportunities and connections to help mold the next generation of leaders through first-hand experiences.

Seidman, Jennifer

Panelist, Preserving Housing, Assisting Tenants

Jen is a rising third-year student at Cornell Law School. As a volunteer with the Tenants Legal Hotline and a legal intern with the Tenants Advocacy Practicum, she has provided legal advice to tenants in Ithaca and has represented tenants in cases against former landlords to retrieve wrongfully withheld security deposits. In her position as the Tenants Rights Committee for Cornell's chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, Jennifer has been a part of creating a Tenants Rights Guide and the Ithaca Eviction Court Monitoring Program.

2022 Pro Bono Scholars

Panelists, Reflections on the Pro Bono Scholars Program and Beyond - A Proposal for a Lawyers Justice Corps as an Alternative Pathway to New York Bar Admission

Emily Harwell, Cornell Law School '22

Sandile Magagula, Cornell Law School '22

Marisa Pagan-Figueroa, Cornell Law School '22

Rachel Skene, Cornell Law School '22

Nicole Wong, Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University '22

Wagner, Kristen

Facilitator, Addressing the Emergent Civil Legal Needs of Immigrants in New York State

Kristen is a graduate of Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University and Smith College. In law school, Kristen participated in the Immigration Justice Clinic, was Co-President of the Public Interest Law Scholarship Organization, and Managing Editor of the Pace International Law Review.

Kristen has worked in a variety of settings that have allowed her to pursue a diverse career in immigration law, including the New York State Bar Association, Legal Services of the Hudson Valley, and the Regional Immigration Assistance Center for Region 3 in New York. Across her various roles, Kristen's passion for serving indigent immigrant New Yorkers has never wavered.

When she's not connecting individuals with the immigration resources they and their families need, she is coordinating legal services and private attorneys to deliver Pro Bono legal services to New York's immigrant communities.

Whitlow, John

Panelist, Law Schools – Legal Services Partnership Projects in the Covid Era: Confronting a Crisis Learning for the Future

John is an Associate Professor at the CUNY School of Law, where he co-directs the Community and Economic Development Clinic (CEDC), supervising the CEDC's Anti-Displacement Practice Area. Prior to joining CUNY's faculty, John was an Assistant Professor at the University of New Mexico School of Law, where he co-founded and co-directed the school's Economic Justice Clinic and taught constitutional law, and a Visiting Clinical Instructor in NYU Law School's Law, Organizing, and Social Change Clinic. Before entering academia, John was a Supervising Attorney at Make the Road New York, where he oversaw the organization's housing and public benefits legal services and worked on a range of law and policy reform initiatives, and a Staff Attorney at the Urban Justice Center's Community Development Project (now TakeRoot Justice), where he represented tenant associations, grassroots non-profits, and worker-owned cooperatives. John began his legal career as a Staff Attorney in the Eviction Prevention Unit of Bedford-Stuyvesant Community Legal Services.

John's research interests – racial capitalism, law and political economy, law and organizing, gentrification/displacement, housing justice – have been shaped by his experience as a community lawyer in New York City and Albuquerque, New Mexico, and by his upbringing in Baltimore, Maryland.

John's writing has appeared in popular and academic forums, including The New York Times, the Albuquerque Journal, Counterpunch, the Law and Political Economy Blog, the Fordham Urban Law Journal, the South Atlantic Quarterly, and the CUNY Law Review. John was the Inaugural Visiting Faculty Fellow at Yale Law School's Law and Political Economy Project and a Faculty Fellow at the CUNY Graduate Center's Center for Place, Culture, and Politics; and he holds a visiting appointment at Pompeu Fabra University's Public and Social Policy Center. John currently serves on the board of directors of the Action Lab, an organization devoted to supporting grassroots, national, and international movements for transformative social change. He previously served on the boards of Communities Resist, Queens Legal Services, and the Bushwick Housing Independence Project, and was a tenant representative on New York City's Housing Court Advisory Council.

John holds a B.A. and a certificate in comparative international economic development from Johns Hopkins University, an M.A. from the New School for Social Research, and a J.D. from the CUNY School of Law.

Williams-Isom, Hon. Anne

Moderator, Keynote Dialogue

Anne Williams-Isom was appointed Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services in December 2021 by then Mayor-elect Eric Adams and assumed office on January 1, 2022.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom has more than twenty-five years of leadership and management experience in large, complex organizations, where she has served children, families, and underserved communities. She has been an educator, a nonprofit executive, a government agency leader, and a practicing attorney.

Most recently, she served as the James R. Dumpson Chair in Child Welfare Studies at Fordham University's Graduate School of Social Service and as the Chief Executive Officer for the Harlem Children's Zone (HCZ). Before leading HCZ, she served for thirteen years at the NYC Administration for Children's Services, where she held leadership roles including Deputy Commissioner for Community and Government Affairs.

Deputy Mayor Williams-Isom holds a bachelor's degree in political science and psychology from Fordham University, and a J.D. from Columbia Law School and a Doctorate in Ministry from the New York Theological School. She is a native New Yorker and lives in Harlem with her husband of thirty years, Phil, along with her three children and ninety-one-year-old mother.

PRO BONO SCHOLARS WORK GROUP BREAKOUT SESSIONS REPORT

Breakout Session 1: Program Data Collection, Assessment and Analysis

Law School professionals, legal aid providers, and law students participated in this breakout group. We discussed the data the program is collecting currently, which is non-uniform. Each school has their own way of doing mid-point and final assessments, as well as tracking where the students do their programs. We do not have an accurate picture of the program. Right now, pro bono scholars stay in touch with their placements and providers are trying to stay in touch with them when they have job openings and encourage them to apply.

Data that would be helpful to collect and analyze in the future includes:

- What were barriers to the work during the placement?
- What are student and alumni perceptions of feasibility of public interest work post-grad, considering high cost of law school & low pay in public service jobs?
- What was the weekly check-in like with scholars and supervisors? How did they get feedback? How often were they meeting? Expectation of experience vs. reality?
- Are alums still in touch with placement site?
- If pbsp alums went to a firm, did they connect pro bono work to the placement of the pbsp post-grad?
- How many students migrate from big law to public interest? Ask the question of whether or not the PBSP influenced this decision if so? How many years until this happens? Are they working in the same substantive area of law as their pro bono scholars work?
- Was there another PBS at your placement and what support could you give each other?
- Did the pro bono scholar take a clinic or any course with client-centered work before?
- How did early bar admission help the Pro Bono Scholars in their careers?

This breakout group created a list of recommendations related to data tracking, uniformity across the Pro Bono Scholars Program in different schools and placements, and creating the pipeline of pro bono:

1. **Create a uniform survey for all pro bono scholars and pro bono scholar alumni to go out once each year.**
 - Jennifer Gundlach created a Qualtrics sample survey that we reviewed in real time. Breakout group participants added and helped edit this survey, which included many of the questions above.
 - These surveys should be distributed from NY OCA through Mindy Jeng's office, rather than a particular school.

2. Change the Pro Bono Scholars Program Timing of hourly completion.

- Since the short break between the Bar and beginning at the placement has been a significant barrier for students, the Pro Bono Scholar Program should allow for some hours to be completed in the fall semester to count toward the Spring semester.
- A one-week training and orientation in the Fall Semester, in coordination with the legal service providers, would be ideal.
- Part of this one-week orientation should be a session with the Chief Judge, highlighting the background of the program and the impact.
- This one-week intensive training in the fall could cover important topics like client interviewing, trauma-informed lawyering, and wellness. These introductory training sessions are anticipated to have an enormously beneficial impact during the Spring placement.
- Information and preparedness on wellness and preventing burnout IN THE FALL, prior to taking the bar was also noted as an important objective.
- Legal service providers highlighted the enormous benefit this one-week training could have on their programs, client work, and ability to maximize student efficiency in the Spring. Additionally, connecting supervisors with students in the Fall, builds a relationship earlier and connects the students in anticipation of the program.

3. Create joint recruitment and outreach programs, across law schools, to increase participation in the Pro Bono Scholars Program.

- Pro Bono Scholar alumni from multiple schools could participate in live programs or record a video sharing their inspiring experience and a pitch for participating in the program.
- Law schools should share information about respective requirements to participate in the program. Academic Deans should focus on increasing number of participants, rather than gatekeeping. GPAs should not be a factor in participation because students with low GPAs might particularly benefit from the program's networking and job placement opportunities.
- Create a pathway for Alumni of the Pro Bono Scholars Program to stay connected.
- Create a LinkedIn group for all pro bono scholar alums to participate in.
- Offer opportunities for pro bono scholar alumni to teach a class session during the course and/or to pair with current scholars as mentors.
- Information about Debt Forgiveness and financial awareness re: taking positions in public interest could be shared in this group.

Breakout Session 2: Program Ideas, Improvements, Expansion

The second breakout session group discussed problems associated with the bar exam, including: racial inequity, barriers to access, disparities in the bar success for applicants based on race, disproportionate impact on woman of color, demoralizing impact on those who don't pass (especially those who are already suffering from imposter syndrome). Professor Eileen Kaufman's description of how the Lawyers Justice Corps addressed these problems was met with considerable enthusiasm among the participants in this working group. Several participants emphasized how the proposal addresses the fact that the bar exam stands as a tremendous barrier to lower income students who typically have to take out loans for bar prep and go without income during the time they're studying for the bar exam.

The group reviewed questions about the logistics and specifics of the Lawyer Justice Corps:

- What is the impact on supervisors?
- What is the timeline?
- Does this idea overburden legal providers? Would it add to or overwhelm legal aid organizations? Is it possible to have practice orders for all participants?
- What funding exists for additional supervision required for the program?
- What happens if a student is found "not ready" for practice by a supervisor and therefore not certified? How to address potential biases of supervisors and outside evaluators?
- What if the applicant leaves before the program is over?

Professor Kaufman emphasized the critical importance of building rigorous training, supervision and evaluation into the program. Rubrics are already being developed by Professor Debby Merritt and IAALS, who are working with states developing supervised practice pathways to licensure. These rubrics will be based on the actual competencies required for practice and will help ensure consistency of grading. The working group also discussed the possibility of hiring clinical professors to help train the supervisors and assist in evaluation. Clinicians used to be used to train the supervisors in the Pro Bono Scholars program and there was agreement that that should be restarted.

Other alternatives to the bar exam were discussed including efforts underway in different jurisdictions, such as Oregon, whose Supreme Court has approved in principle a curricular-based pathway and a post-graduation supervised practice pathway.

This workgroup discussed how to make progress in getting the idea circulated in NY. Enlisting the support of bar associations and public interest providers should serve as an important starting place.

Finally, just as the first workgroup, this group highlighted the benefits of allowing greater flexibility in the current pro bono scholars program, such as allowing hours in the Fall semester to be counted toward the total 520 hours in the Spring semester.

