



Northern Illinois University

Your Future. Our Focus.

# NIU College of Law Clinic Clips

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## CLINICAL PROGRAM MISSION

Our mission is to provide hands-on learning opportunities for law students to advocate on behalf of real clients under the supervision of clinical faculty, who are experienced lawyers. Through the clinic's commitment to social justice and providing free legal services, our students' advocacy and hard work can dramatically improve the life circumstances of people in need.

## CLINICAL ASSISTANT PROFESSOR COLLEEN BORACA RECOMMENDED FOR PROMOTION AND LONG-TERM CONTRACT

Clinical Assistant Professor Colleen Boraca has been recommended for promotion to Clinical Associate Professor of Law and for a six-year contract. The recommendation goes to the Provost for approval.



Professor Boraca joined the NIU College of Law in 2014 and directs NIU's Health Advocacy Clinic in Aurora, IL. The clinic is an interdisciplinary partnership between NIU College of Law, Hesed House and Aunt Martha's Health Center.

Professor Boraca was honored as Marquette University's Klinger College of Arts and Sciences 2017 *Young Alumna of the Year*. In 2014, The *Chicago Daily Law Bulletin* named her as one of "40 Under 40" Illinois attorneys to watch. In 2011, Professor Boraca was a recipient of the Chicago Bar Foundation Sun-Times Public Interest Law Fellowship, an award that recognizes commitment to achievement and integrity

J.D., *cum laude*, with a certificate in health law from the School of Law. She graduated with an H.B.A., *cum laude*, in Political Science and Communication Studies.

## STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

### HEALTH ADVOCACY CLINIC (AURORA)



**Alivia Hatten-3L; Summer 2018-Fall 2018**

Alivia Hatten is a 3L at the NIU College of Law. Alivia wanted to go to law school because of her passion to help others. She thinks that the legal profession provides an excellent avenue for her to help others navigate through difficult times in their lives and to give them a sense of hope. When asked why she chose to participate in the Health Advocacy Clinic (HAC), Alivia responded, “My family is involved in the medical field. When I learned that the Health Advocacy Clinic was a medical-legal partnership with the local clinic, I was inspired to see how that partnership works to help the clientele it serves.” Alivia enjoyed her time at the HAC so much during the summer that she came back for the fall semester. Her most memorable moment at the HAC involved one of her clients yelling at her during a phone call. She said, “It sounds silly to say, but that experience was an excellent teaching lesson. Instead of having my first difficult client experience in the real world, I was able to have it in the comfort of the clinic, where I could vent about it with my professor afterwards. It helped me identify the proper tools to deal with challenging clients in the future.” While Alivia is sad that she is leaving the HAC, she knows that the students who are coming next semester are going to have one of the most incredible and memorable experiences of their law school careers.

### PRISONER RIGHTS PROJECT (ROCKFORD)



**Jamie Bellah-3L; 2018 - 2019**

I'm 38 and law will be a second career for me. I'm married and have two children, one of which is in college in Florida.

I chose law school because I have always admired lawyers as problems solvers and individuals who can help people see their way through what is often the most difficult times in their lives.

I chose to participate in two clinics because I found the experience incredibly helpful in pulling all of the things I've learned in law school into reality. It's one thing to know what the law says, but quite another to put it to use in real life. I want to graduate as close to "practice ready" as possible, and the clinics make that possible. In the Civil Justice clinic, I was able to help domestic violence victims get orders of protection and draft wills for estate planning clients. In the Prisoners' Rights Project, I am working with my partner, Alonte Holliday, to help a federal prison inmate bringing a Constitutional claim in federal court. We are currently in the discovery phase, but participating in litigation brings a whole new perspective to my education that I find incredibly helpful.

My most memorable experience so far is when we got an email telling us that our discovery responses had been dropped off to the office in Rockford. It felt like Christmas! It was so exciting to get to the office and find several hundred pages of documents to peruse to find that one piece that tells our client's story.

### **CRIMINAL DEFENSE CLINIC (ROCKFORD)**



**Avi Fagan – 3L; Fall Semester 2018**

Avi Fagan is a third year law student participating in the Criminal Defense Clinic. After spending several years working day jobs to support his musical endeavors with local bands, he graduated from the University of Illinois at Chicago in 2016 with a degree in Criminology, Law, and Justice. Avi is the third of four brothers and is the third to go to law school in pursuit of a career as a criminal defense attorney. Having worked for his father, his older brothers, and their partners at their Des Plaines, IL criminal defense firm, Avi's interest in criminal law grew into a passion to pursue a career in the law. While Avi had observed court many times and worked as a law clerk at the firm, he was eager to gain practical experience and put the knowledge and thought processes he had acquired at law school to use in a real court environment. Under the mentorship of Professor Paul Cain, Avi has interviewed prospective clients, appeared in bond court, written and plead motions, and even negotiated a settlement along with his fellow clinic

student Mike Biggott. Learning the clinic's procedures as well as those of the Winnebago County courts, helping real clients with real problems, and working with the other students at the clinic have all contributed to an overwhelmingly positive experience that has only strengthened Avi's desire to work in criminal law. Next semester Avi plans to experience the other side of the criminal court process in an externship with the Arlington Heights village prosecutor's office.

### CIVIL JUSTICE CLINIC (ROCKFORD)



**Victor Zamora – 3L; Fall Semester 2018**

It was a pleasure to work at the Zeke Giorgi Legal Clinic because I grew up in Rockford. I will be returning to work in Rockford after graduation at Reno & Zahm. It has always been a dream of mine to become an attorney and getting the chance to attend a law school near my family made my decision to attend NIU College of Law even easier. I decided to join the Civil Justice Clinic because I had the opportunity to help make a difference in the area I grew up in all of my life. It has always been my goal to help the people in Rockford in any way possible.

The clinic gave me real-life experience while also giving back to my community. The most memorable experience while working in the clinic was working with a World War II veteran. After I finished executing a Will for my client he was so happy working with me that he brought some of his World War II medals out and started sharing stories about his war experience. It was eye-opening to see how grateful he was just for getting a Will done.