MEET THIS SEMESTER’S CLINICAL STUDENTS!

CRIMINAL DEFENSE CLINIC (ROCKFORD)

Four students (Spencer Chikahisa, Lauren Edmunds, Robert Perrone and Laura Peters) are enrolled in the Criminal Defense Clinic. They are representing clients charged with criminal trespass, possession of a controlled substance, mob action, retail theft, aggravated battery, DUI, aggravated fleeing, and aggravated assault. The charges include both misdemeanors and felonies. Meet the four students and see what they have to say:

"I joined the criminal defense clinic because I wanted to apply what I've learned in the classroom in a practical setting. The clinic will help me gain experience while also helping those in need. I hope this experience will help me develop my lawyering skills so that I can be better prepared in my legal career." -- Spencer Chikahisa

“I am in the Criminal Defense Clinic because I believe that people are more than the worst thing they have ever done. I want to use what I have learned in school to help people that need it most, and in the clinic I get to help people and expand my practical experience at the same time.” -- Lauren Edmunds

“I am taking the criminal defense clinic in order to enhance my skills of helping others. I have always enjoyed giving back to those who wouldn’t afford it and now each case feels very personal and allows for me to give everything I can to each person. In addition, this will help immensely down the road in order to help with drafting documents, as well as speaking in front of a real judge while advocating for my client.” -- Robert Perrone

“On an intellectual level, I knew that the people coming before the court were not necessarily hardened criminals. I knew they were more than the charges against them. I knew that they were people with lives and concerns outside the justice system. But, I realized that it’s one thing to know all that and quite another to see it and experience it in person. (Client name) surprised me in that he reacted much the same way I think I would if I were in his shoes (with absolute terror). I know not all my clients will be as nervous and remorseful and grateful as (Client name), but I’m glad he was my first client because he reminded me that I’m there to help people, not prejudge them or let my own nerves get in the way.” -- Laura Peters
Seven students (Carlos Arteaga, Cassandra Crandall, Lu Harmening, Mitch Hixenbaugh, Kaitlyn Lisner, Tia McMeans, Vaughn J. Richardson, Megan Rooney) are enrolled in the Civil Justice Clinic. They are working on Order of Protection cases for survivors of domestic abuse and estate planning for seniors. The work includes drafting and arguing motions, investigating facts, amending petitions for order of protection, drafting Freedom of Information Act requests for police records, and subpoenaing documents and witnesses for trial. Students also draft estate-planning documents, and interview and counsel their elderly clients.

"I enjoy that I learn the skills to use when I am working with real life clients." -- **Carlos Arteaga**

“I decided to participate in the Civil Justice Clinic because I wanted the opportunity to gain experience with litigation and transactional work. This clinic gives me the perfect opportunity to see which type of practice I am drawn to.”

-- **Cassandra Crandall**

"The Journey From Reading to Doing." -- **Lu Harmening**

"Doing a legal clinic is an awesome experience. It is a rewarding feeling to be able to apply the skills learned in the classroom to real cases with real people who need our help." -- **Mitch Hixenbaugh**

“Participating in the Civil Justice Clinic allows me to actually practice law. I say this in the way we practice anything we want to get better at. With each week I continue to gain the knowledge, experience, and confidence I need to become the lawyer I want to be. One with focus, empathy, and a sharpened skill set ready for all that's ahead.” -- **Kaitlyn Lisner**

“The clinic has provided me with the opportunity to learn by doing. Engaging with clients while under the supervision of Professor Vaughn encourages professionalism and best practices. The clinic gives students invaluable real world context for our legal education.” -- **Tia McMeans**

"The clinic shifted my mindset from a classroom mentality to a practice mentality, and I am grateful for the opportunity to make this shift in law school rather than on my first day of practice. Under the careful guidance of Professor Vaughn, I have learned how to manage deadlines, client expectations, and demands from my employer. The Civil Justice Clinic combines everything I learned in two years of law school and brought it to life in one semester. For me, it reinforced why I wanted to become a lawyer in the first place." -- **Vaughn J. Richardson**

“I'm glad to have the opportunity to be in the Civil Justice Clinic this semester because I've been looking forward to getting to know members of the community and advocating for those members who would otherwise be voiceless in the justice system.” -- **Megan Rooney**
Eight students (Jessica Johnson, Seth Koll, Jared Krueger, Jill Lackore, Kate McIlvanie, Emily Rosenberger, Jennifer Valencia-Salas, Adam Wood) are enrolled in the Health Advocacy Clinic. Students will work on obtaining Social Security disability benefits for their clients who suffer from various physical and mental health conditions. The Social Security case may be at the initial application stage, at the hearing stage or on appeal. Students may also work on advanced care planning for clients, such as helping them complete Powers of Attorney for Health Care.

**Emily Rosenberger** - When asked why she chose the Health Advocacy Clinic, Emily said her background in nursing inspired her to pursue health law; she is excited to learn more about what health law entails and to understand the process of Social Security cases.

**Kate McIlvanie** - Kate chose the Health Advocacy Clinic because she is interested in learning how to navigate the complexities of Social Security cases. Overall, she is excited to further develop her legal skills while working in a legal aid clinic.

**Jared Krueger** - Jared is looking to explore a different area of law, so he chose the Health Advocacy Clinic to learn about a new field. He is most excited to meet new people over the course of the next semester.

**Adam Wood** - Because he is currently employed with a Social Security practitioner, Adam chose the Health Advocacy Clinic because he is interested in working with the Social Security process more. He is most excited about working directly with clients who need help.

**Jill Lackore** - When choosing which clinic location to study with for the semester, Jill said she was looking for a clinic that would provide her with an experience that she has never had before. She is excited to get to know the people at Hesed House and to learn their stories.

**Jennifer Valencia-Salas** - Jennifer picked the Health Advocacy Clinic because is interested in getting to know the Aurora community better. She is most excited to get to know the people that work and live at Hesed House.

**Seth Koll** - As a current EMT, Seth is interested in combining his two passions for the medical and legal fields. He is excited to learn more about health law, and is passionate about helping people who really need it.

**Jessica Johnson** - Much of Jessica’s past legal experiences have been involved with criminal cases, so she chose to explore a different world in the health law field. She is excited to explore a completely new field and to see if she would be interested in a career in health law.
Four students (Greg Benson, Monica Prisco, Perrin Rademacher, Lizandra Gomez-Ramirez) are enrolled in the Prisoners’ Rights Project. The students will represent prisoners who have filed cases in Federal Court for violation of their rights. Past claims have included excessive force. The students will meet with and interview their clients in prison or conduct telephone interviews with their clients. Students will review discovery received from defendants and will draft Eventually students will conduct depositions and prepare for a jury trial.

“I am participating in the Prisoners' Rights Project because I believe it will be a great experience to learn about both criminal and civil law. I have always been interested in helping the marginalized in society and doing public interest work. I am excited to help real clients and make a difference.” -- Monica Prisco

“I'm in the Prisoners' Rights Project because I'm passionate about civil rights law and it's a great opportunity to get experience in the federal court system.” -- Perrin Rademacher

“I wanted to do the Prisoners’ Rights Project to gain valuable experience in civil rights law and preparing a case for federal trial.” -- Lizandra Gomez-Ramirez

**CLINICAL PROGRAM FACULTY**

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