



# Clinical Education Program

*Providing law students with practical, cutting-edge experience*

## Immigration Law Clinic Student Views Immigration Through a Personal Lens

Immigration Law Clinic student Dinora Orozco knew that she wanted to be in the clinic even before coming to law school. That is because its mission is very personal to her. Dinora, a second year law student, also happens to be undocumented.

Dinora was born in La Barranca, San Marcos, Guatemala in February 1998. She was born into a happy family--a mom, a dad, and two older sisters. Family circumstances forced both of her parents to leave school early: her dad after 6th grade, her mom after 3rd. As a result, her parents made their living as farm workers.

In February 1998, shortly after Dinora was born, her father made the impossible choice to leave his family to pursue a better life in the United States. After arriving and obtaining work as a farm worker in Homestead, Florida, he sent for Dinora and her mother in 2000. Dinora's parents made the difficult decision to leave her two older sisters temporarily in Guatemala to be cared for by relatives. Her sisters arrived four years later under the care of an aunt, but not before being stopped at the border.

Dinora grew up living in constant fear of an ICE raid. She knew that at any given moment, her parents could be arrested and deported. This had a profound effect on her. Throughout her high school and college career, she continued to feel the pain of being undocumented, through unjust policies that targeted immigrants. Despite the challenges, she thrived academically. After graduating from the University of Miami, where she founded a student organization called Lucha Latina to empower Central American Women, Dinora took a leap of faith, left Florida, and came to St. Louis to study law at WashULaw.

Because Dinora was brought into the United States as a child, she can attend school and work lawfully under DACA. Her future, however, is by no means certain. Under DACA, she has no clear path forward to citizenship. Instead, she is forced to reapply every 2 years and hope that the program continues to exist. Despite this, Dinora is determined to help other immigrants. As a student in the Immigration Law Clinic under **Professor Katie Meyer**, Dinora is working on the frontlines to assist immigrants with asylum requests and other applications to remain safely and lawfully in the U.S.

Each time she touches a case, Dinora reflects on how she has known someone in exactly the same position who didn't get the help they needed. She reflects on the peril that her own family is in. She laments the failures of the system, but now knows there are attorneys trying to improve the situation and that she can use her legal knowledge to make it better for others in similar situations.

While Dinora has found a love of labor and employment law at WashULaw, she knows that she will always use the immigration law knowledge that she has learned to assist immigrants on a pro bono basis, and to help those, who like her family, are simply striving for a better life.



Dinora introducing Justice Sonia Sotomayor at WashULaw, April 2022.

## Clinical Education Program Offerings

Appellate Clinic

Civil Rights & Mediation Clinic

Congressional & Administrative Law Externship

Criminal Justice Clinic

Entrepreneurship & Intellectual Property Clinic

First Amendment Clinic

Government Lawyering Externship

Immigration Law Clinic

Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic

Intl. Justice & Conflict Resolution Externship

Judicial Clerkship Externship

Lawyering Practice Externship

Low Income Taxpayer Clinic

New York Regulatory & Business Externship

Post-Conviction Relief Practicum

Prosecution Clinic

Semester-In-Practice Externship

Wrongful Conviction Clinic

## First Amendment Clinic Scores Big Wins Against Unlawful Obstruction Ordinances



First Amendment Clinic Fellow Tobin Raju with our disabled vet client

The First Amendment Clinic (FAC), directed by **Professor Lisa Hoppenjans**, obtained a \$97,042 settlement on behalf of an unhoused, disabled veteran in connection with a challenge to St. Charles, Missouri’s solicitation and obstruction ordinances. The municipality repeatedly arrested and cited the veteran under these ordinances for standing on medians or grassy areas near roadways holding a sign with the words “HOMELESS DISABLED VET.” The solicitation ordinance violated the First Amendment by regulating only certain expression as solicitation on the basis of content. The obstruction ordinance was unconstitutionally vague because it targeted conduct merely “tending to hinder or impede” passage on public pathways. In direct response to the clinic’s lawsuit, the municipality also amended one of the challenged ordinances and repealed the other in order to address the First Amendment and due process problems the clinic identified.

The FAC also represented two musicians in a successful challenge to University City, Missouri’s obstruction ordinance and related policies that were used to prohibit musicians from playing music on public sidewalks in a popular business district. The clinic asserted the municipality’s ordinance and policies violated the First Amendment and Due Process Clause. Shortly before trial was set to begin, the federal district court granted, in part, the clinic’s motion for summary judgment in the musicians’ favor, holding that the city violated the musicians’ rights under both the First Amendment and Due Process Clause. The remaining claims for relief were dismissed as part of a settlement between the plaintiffs and municipality that included a payment to the musicians.



Professor Lisa Hoppenjans and one of our musician clients

## Recent Faculty Publications

**Karen Tokarz**, Director of the Civil Rights & Mediation Clinic:

Curated the ninth and tenth volumes of the *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy* “New Directions in Clinical Education & Dispute Resolution” series, which has featured articles by over 125 domestic and International clinicians and dispute resolution experts in the past 15 years.

**Peter Joy**, Director of the Criminal Justice Clinic:

*The Ethics of Trump’s Shadow Lawyers?*, 69 WASHINGTON UNIV. J. LAW & POLICY 127 (2022) (co-author)

*Satoru Shinomiya’s Contributions to Clinical Legal Education*, in FESTSCHRIFT HONORING PROFESSOR SATORU SHINOMIYA (Nihon Hyoron Sya 2022)

*Paying Witnesses’ Attorneys*, 37 A.B.A. CRIM. JUST. 52 (Fall 2022) (co-author)

*Controversy in Queens*, 37 A.B.A. CRIM. JUST. 56 (Summer 2022) (co-author)

*Prosecutorial Misconduct and Mistrials*, 37 A.B.A. CRIM. JUST. 56 (Spring 2022) (co-author)

# New Happenings at WashULaw

## Immigration Law Clinic Launches New Fellowship Program

The Immigration Law Clinic, directed by **Professor Katie Meyer**, is proud to announce the launch of a new multi-year legal fellowship program. The Nimick Forbesway Foundation Fellowship Program will train attorneys to become tomorrow's immigration law champions and clinicians. The first fellow will begin in early 2023. Through this program, the clinic will increase its capacity to both represent immigrants and teach students. The fellows will gain hands-on experience in the dynamic and complicated practice of immigration law and in clinical teaching methods. The clinical program is grateful for the trust and support of the Nimick Forbesway Foundation in funding this new initiative.



**Jessica Strauser** will join WashULaw as the inaugural Nimick Forbesway Foundation Fellow. Jessie was previously a Staff Attorney at the disability Law Center of Virginia (dLCV). At dLCV, Jessie represented individuals with disabilities in legal and administrative proceedings, conducted investigations of abuse and neglect, and assisted with systemic disability rights reform efforts. Jessie graduated from William & Mary Law School in 2020. As a law student, Jessie represented clients in numerous clinics, including William & Mary's Immigration Law Clinic.

## Former Immigration Law Clinic Students Selected for Prestigious Fellowships

Two recent graduates of the Immigration Law Clinic were recently selected for prestigious immigration law fellowships. Katherine Vega (JD '21) received a 2-year Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner Fellowship to fund her work with immigrants at Legal Aid Chicago. Grace Day (JD '22) received a Justice Fellowship from the Immigrant Justice Corp to fund her work with at-risk immigrant youth at The Door in New York City. Both Katherine and Grace credit their time in the Immigration Law Clinic for furthering their passion to work with immigrants and giving them the skills needed to stand out among a strong applicant pool.

## Prosecution Clinic Students Return as Full-Time Prosecutors

Three recent Prosecution Clinic graduates were recently sworn in as new prosecutors in the St. Louis City Circuit Attorney's Office. Sydney Beecher (JD '21), Kiersten Heiman (JD '22), and Sarah Dickey (JD '22) each spent a semester in the clinic, later returning as advanced students. These experiences cemented their desire to become prosecutors, and they all recently returned to the St. Louis City Circuit Attorney's office to begin their careers as full-time prosecutors. The Prosecution Clinic is directed by **Professors Rob Huq, Chris Desilets, and Chris Hinckley**.

Sydney Beecher (JD '21), Kersten Heiman (JD '22), and Sarah Dickey (JD '22) are sworn in as Prosecutors in St. Louis.



# Recent Faculty Publications

**Daniel Harawa, Director of the Appellate Clinic:**

*Whitewashing the Fourth Amendment*, 111 *Geo. L.J.* (forthcoming 2023)

*Weaponizing Race*, 20 *Ohio St. J. Crim. L.* (forthcoming 2022) (invited essay)

**Bob Kuehn, Professor of Law:**

*An Empirical Analysis of Clinical Legal Education at Middle Age* (co-author), 70 *J. LEGAL EDUC.* (forthcoming 2022)

*The Economic Value of Law Clinic Legal Assistance*, *CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION*, May 9, 2022.

*Law School Specialty Program Ranking Credibility*, April 21, 2022. Available at SSRN: <https://ssrn.com/abstract=4089766>

*Shifting Law School Faculty Demographics*, *CLINICAL LEGAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER*, January 3, 2022.

## Pop-Up Volunteer Estate Planning Clinic Held

WashULaw held its inaugural Volunteer Estate Planning Clinic this summer. Students in the clinic, directed by **Associate Dean Sarah Narkiewicz**, worked with volunteer attorneys to assist lower-income clients with the drafting of Wills, Healthcare Directives, Financial Powers of Attorney, and Beneficiary Deeds. While these are essential services that everyone needs, they are usually financially out of reach for lower-income individuals. It was an honor to be able to help these individuals, and students greatly benefited from one-on-one mentoring from volunteer attorneys.

Not only did this work benefit individual clients and their families, but it also benefited the St. Louis area as a whole. One of the motivations in holding the clinic was to improve the huge land vacancy problem in St. Louis. About one in five parcels of land in St. Louis is vacant. One of the primary drivers of this vacant land issue is the fact that in many poor neighborhoods, land passes without clear title, due to the absence of legal planning. The work of the clinic was a small but vital step forward in correcting this problem.

## Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic Cleans Up St. Louis

Our Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic, directed by **Professor Elizabeth Hubertz**, representing a neighborhood organization as part of its environmental justice project, sued to compel the cleanup of an industrial site in north St. Louis. The site, situated directly across the street from the neighborhood's largest park, is littered with trash, overgrown weeds, abandoned tractor trailers, and a large pile of moldering mattresses. The property was not only unsightly, but dangerous, in that it improperly stored flammable materials, lacked legally required fire safety devices, and had previously caught fire. After legal demand letters went unanswered, students, under the supervision of clinic professors, brought and filed a nuisance action, engaged in motion practice, attended hearings, and ultimately obtained injunctive relief, and an award of attorneys' fees. Working with Legal Services of Eastern Missouri, the team won an order requiring the property owners to remove all fire hazards, clean-up and remove the offending materials, ensure the continued maintenance of the site, and pay nearly \$22K in attorneys' fees.



## Wrongful Conviction Clinic Rights Wrong For The Unjustly Convicted

Wrongful Conviction Clinic client, Mike Politte, was released in April after 23 years in prison for his wrongful conviction for the murder of his mother, Rita Politte, thanks to the work of our Wrongful Conviction Clinic students. Mike is thriving – he quickly obtained his driver’s license and a car and is working as a union carpenter. Most importantly, he is relishing every day of hanging out with his dogs. Even though Mike is home, our on Mike’s case because while he is free, he has always been justice for his mother and found. Clinic students are now conducting witnesses), researching and drafting his his upcoming evidentiary hearing in state



Mike Politte, Megan Crane and Mike's Sister

with his sisters, his nieces and nephews, and current clinic students are still hard at work is not yet exonerated. Mike’s ultimate goal this can’t happen until the true murderer is further investigation (including interviewing pleadings, and strategizing and preparing for court. For more on Mike’s story, [click here](#).

This spring, the clinic, directed by **Professors Megan Crane and Trisha Bushnell** also represented a 32 year old man who has been in prison since he was 17 for a murder he did not commit, for purposes of his parole hearing. While the client was initially sentenced to life in prison, he recently had his first chance at parole thanks to a Missouri law passed in August 2021 making all juvenile offenders, convicted of second-degree murder or a lesser crime, eligible for parole after serving 15 years in prison. The client is a poet, a screenwriter, and an impressive mature man with an almost spotless prison record (a near impossible feat when you enter an adult prison as a teenager). Thankfully, the Parole Board saw the impressive man the client is today and granted him parole on his first shot. He will go home to his family next summer. You can read one of his beautiful poems [here](#).

## Appellate Clinic Argues Before Circuit Courts



This past year, students in the Appellate Clinic, directed by **Professor Daniel Harawa** have briefed and argued cases in the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth and Sixth Circuits. The cases span a variety of issues, from direct criminal appeals to habeas cases and civil rights litigation. The students also got to meet with judges from the Missouri Court of Appeals and the United States Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit to learn more about what makes for effective appellate advocacy.

Professor Daniel Harawa and students on the courthouse steps following argument.

## Extern Explores Venture Capital Law in NYC

New York Business and Regulatory extern, Eitan Agagi, is externing this fall in NYC with Prelude Capital, a multi-manager hedge fund advisor with allocations in excess of \$9 billion in the US, the UK, and China. Eitan is learning the ins and outs of venture capital law first hand. His supervisor and WashULaw alum, Michael Gallagher (JD '14), has taken an academic and hands-on approach in teaching Eitan about contract drafting and negotiation strategy. Notably, Eitan has drafted formation documents, vendor contracts and NDAs. He has also performed agency regulation and market research. This externship is directed by **Lecturer in Law Hilary Von Rohr**.

## Low Income Taxpayer Clinic Helps Elderly Disabled Woman Stay in Her Home

The Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (LITC), directed by **Associate Dean Sarah Narkiewicz**, has been busy this semester representing an unprecedented number of taxpayers in cases ranging from audits to collections cases to innocent spouse issues. Notably, the LITC was able to secure an offer in compromise for an elderly woman in extremely frail health. The client, who had worked hard all of her life, incurred a tax liability of over \$65,000 when she was forced to liquidate her retirement account to pay for housing and medical expenses. LITC students worked with the client to tell her story to the IRS and advocated for a reduction of the debt. The clinic was able to settle the \$65,000 debt for \$1, allowing her to make some much-needed repairs on her home, and relieving the client of undue stress that was further impairing her health.

The LITC has also been working diligently with incarcerated taxpayers to ensure that they receive the Economic Impact Payments, to which they are entitled, but in many cases have not received. The LITC has assisted these taxpayers with overcoming a multitude of obstacles to receiving their payments, including lack of access to tax return preparation and identity theft.

The LITC students were also happy to participate once again in the St. Louis Tax Court Calendar Call program, through which students assist pro se litigants with their Tax Court cases.



LITC Students at Tax Court Calendar Call

## Semester-In-Practice Extern Gains First Trial Win as a Public Defender

This semester, Jonathan Rowe (JD '23) is serving as an extern for the Colorado Public Defender's Office under the Semester-in-Practice Externship, directed by **Lecturer in Law Laura Bannish**. Jonathan has gained considerable experience, including a first trial win. He was given the opportunity to assist in the defense of a client charged with reckless driving. Jonathan questioned the jury panel and successfully argued that two potential jurors should be struck for cause. He also cross-examined the prosecution's main witness, and delivered the closing argument. After 45 minutes of deliberation, the jury came back with a not guilty verdict. While the win was an incredible experience for Jonathan, he was most grateful for the learning experience the trial offered and is looking forward to improving his litigation skills.

## Recent Faculty Awards

**Karen Tokarz**, Director of the Civil Rights & Mediation Clinic received the Focus St. Louis What's Right with the Region Award for the court and community eviction mediation work of the WashULaw Civil Rights & Mediation Clinic, in conjunction with the St. Louis Mediation Project, which she co-founded. The St. Louis Mediation Project received a \$1.4 million grant from the Missouri Housing Development Commission to expand its work on pre-filing eviction mediations over the next three years.

Additionally, Professor Tokarz was recently awarded the 2022 Academy of Missouri Mediators President's Award for meritorious service to the community through mediation and dispute resolution, in recognition of her eviction mediation initiatives.

Professor Tokarz was also the recipient of a 2022 Mound City Bar Association (MCBA) Community Service Award in recognition of her work on the recent volume of the WashULaw Journal of Law and Policy celebrating the MCBA's Centennial. The Mound City Bar is the oldest African-American bar association west of the Mississippi River.

## Post-Conviction Relief Clinical Practicum Provides Relief for Capital Clients

The Post-Conviction Relief Practicum, directed by **Professors Jennifer Merrigan** and **Joseph Perkovich**, has been hard at work to provide relief for clients. On January 21, students in the Post-Conviction Relief Clinical Practicum helped to secure the release of Qahir Trice. Trice and five co-defendants (all Black men under the age of 21) were sentenced to life without parole on the basis of testimony of one alleged, unindicted co-defendant, about whom the district attorney hid evidence and whose testimony was incentivized and highly dubious. When professors and students got involved in his case, they found multiple constitutional violations and errors. As a result of their work, Mr. Trice was able to return home to his children and grandchildren, who supported him for the nearly three decades that he was behind bars.

In April, the clinical practicum students and professors assisted Leroy Cotton in winning commutation after spending 40 years in prison. Mr. Cotton was sentenced to life without parole after, at the age of 18, he pick-pocketed a man who died a week later. He returned home to his daughters and brother, all of whom stood by his side for over four decades.

In August, the professors and students won a motion for Rule 60(b) relief for Steven Lazar, an innocent man sentenced to life without parole. The federal court reopened his habeas case because the government made repeated misrepresentations to the court that two alternate suspects (who were seen entering the victim's home before the murder) had been excluded. In fact, police had failed to investigate them, and had instead focused solely on Mr. Lazar. In his 12 years in prison, he has never received a disciplinary violation, but has spent his time working in the law library and trying to prove his own innocence. Currently the clinic is litigating his habeas corpus petition.

## Entrepreneurship and Intellectual Property Clinic Design Legal Tools for Aspiring Co-ops

Students in the Entrepreneurship and Intellectual Property (EIP) Clinic, directed by **Professors Jonathan Smith** and **Tore Gianino**, are working to create legal tools for businesses in the St. Louis metropolitan area that are interested in converting to a worker-owned cooperative structure. A worker-owned cooperative (sometimes referred to in short as simply a “co-op”) is a business operated and owned by the people who work for the business. While structures vary, the hallmarks of co-ops are democratic decision making and distribution of profits in proportion to each worker-owner's labor contribution. These hallmarks present unique legal challenges for businesses, including how to set-up effective management structures, how to compensate worker-owners for special contributions to the business (such as the contribution of impactful intellectual property), and how to finance the transition from traditional ownership to cooperative ownership.

To help address these challenges, students of the EIP Clinic have been tasked with interviewing businesses who are in various stages of converting to a co-op. Then, with more empathetic understanding of the challenges that co-op owners face, the students are tasked with building tools that help bridge the gap between co-op owners and the law that they wish to better understand. In creating these tools, EIP Clinic students apply human-centered design principles to brainstorm, prototype, and generate a tool that can be tested and ultimately deployed by the clinic to serve the community. Overall, this project allows clinic students to interact with current and prospective co-op owners in the St. Louis region and address real organizational, contractual, and intellectual property challenges faced by co-ops. The project is a complement to the clinic's direct-client work, and it provides an opportunity for students to proactively contribute to an emerging sector in the St. Louis business ecosystem.

# WashU Law

## LEADING INNOVATION IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

49 Years of Clinical  
Education Leadership

New Pop-Up Estate Planning  
Clinic in 2022

18 Law Clinics and  
Externships

89.6% of Students Take a  
Clinic or Externship

100,000 Hours of Free Legal  
Assistance Each Year

48.3% Participate in Two or  
More Clinics or Externships