

## **From Student to Young Associate: Collaborations that Encourage Pro Bono**

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### **Brief Description:**

Partnerships between law firms and law schools are springing up across the country. These partnerships provide firms greater on-campus visibility, deliver needed legal services and inspire graduates to continue public service. This workshop will identify a number of models for collaborative ventures including pro bono partnerships, summer and school year public interest internships/ externships, and post-graduate fellowships. Panelists will engage participants in a discussion of the challenges in working with law school constituencies and help them to develop strategies to tackle them.

### **Topical Outline:**

- I. Why develop Law Firm – Law School Pro Bono Partnerships?
  - a. Benefits for Law Firm
    - i. Marketing exposure
    - ii. Firm prestige associated with projects dedicated to social justice for the poor
    - iii. Extra pair of hands for research
    - iv. Enables firm to take on projects wouldn't ordinarily accept
  - b. Benefits for Law Students
    - i. Opportunity for students to get "in the door" and bypass competitive recruiting
    - ii. Opportunity to exercise legal judgment
    - iii. Opportunity to coordinate/ lead team
    - iv. Attorney supervision of law student volunteers
    - v. Role models/ inspiration/ socialization: signals to law students that pro bono practice is an integral and important part of their lives as lawyers
  - c. Benefits for Law Schools
    - i. Alternative to academic clinic model
    - ii. Structured pro bono opportunity
    - iii. Access to firm resources
    - iv. Attorney supervision of law student volunteers
    - v. Visible support from the top levels
    - vi. Leveraging of available resources
    - vii. More students interested in performing pro bono service
  - d. Benefits for the World
    - i. Access to justice: provision of needed legal services for low income clients

- ii. Exposes high powered lawyers to issues of social justice
- iii. Recognizes that pro bono practice requires that the lawyer be competent in that area of law
- iv. Provides excellent service to underserved populations

## II. Models of Effective Law Firm and Law School Pro Bono Partnerships

- a. Hunton and Williams Pro Bono Partnership with UVA School of Law
  - i. Pro Bono Immigration Pilot in 2004
  - ii. Program expansion-formal affiliation with the law school
  - iii. Hiring of full-time supervising attorney
  - iv. In-kind donation of Assistant Dean's time
  - v. Pro Bono attorney supervision and case handling
  - vi. Legal Aid Justice Center work with the Partnership
    - 1. Client intake and referrals
    - 2. Office space
    - 3. Law student supervision
    - 4. Training
- b. Washington University Civil Justice Clinic: Partnership with Sonnenschein
  - i. Description of the Partners
    - 1. Washington University Civil Justice Clinic
    - 2. Casework: Domestic violence cases, guardian ad litem in domestic cases alleging child abuse, housing cases, complex appellate cases
    - 3. Sonnenschein Law Firm's commitment to pro bono practice
    - 4. Recent hiring of a lawyer to oversee the firm's national pro bono efforts
  - ii. The Partnership
    - 1. Clinic functions as a case screener
    - 2. Clinic functions as trainer to interested pro bono lawyers
    - 3. Law Firm takes cases that are overflow from Clinic intake
    - 4. Law firm takes cases that are beneficial to the court but not a part of the Clinic's traditional docket
    - 5. Complex cases benefit from firm resources
    - 6. Requires a clinic office manager who is willing to monitor the referral process
    - 7. Challenge: Avoiding taking on firm conflicts
    - 8. Ensuring high quality legal representation
  - iii. Training
    - 1. Essential to train the firm lawyers in the practice
    - 2. Often dealing with lawyers who have no courtroom/client experience
    - 3. Can use students in the training
    - 4. Always available for consults from firm members regarding cases
  - iv. Interaction with Law Students and Faculty
    - 1. Discussions about case strategy
    - 2. Lawyers learning from law students!
    - 3. Faculty presence in law firms for training
  - v. Benefits to the Clinic
    - 1. Case Coverage: More cases and case handling during clinic downtime

2. Relationship with courts
  3. Heightened standard of practice
  4. Firm prestige associated with clinic dedicated to social justice
  5. More students interested in being a part of the clinic
- c. Philadelphia Model
- i. Law schools work with organizations through bar association
    1. Public interest section
    2. Law school outreach committee
  - ii. Law schools work with firms through firm pro bono coordinator
    1. Saul Ewing LLP – large firm in Philadelphia approved budget for full-time pro bono counsel and pro bono department (assistant and operating budget).
    2. Pair summer program students with attorney to work on individual cases
- d. Seattle University Law School Model
- i. Access to Justice Institute – 3 models of pro bono internships in law firms
    1. Dorsey & Whitney – Large firm with designated pro bono partner
      - a. Paid internship for approx 300 hrs
      - b. The student is supervised by the pro bono partner
      - c. The student sets the time depending on class schedule by semester
      - d. The student has an office and an assistant
      - e. Works with all lawyers on their pro bono cases
    2. Lane Powell - Mid-size firm with designated pro bono partner
      - a. Paid internship
      - b. Team of students work on impact litigation under the supervision of the lead attorney
      - c. Students work at the law offices
    3. Foster Pepper Scheffelman – Mid-size firm with a pro bono committee
      - a. Paid internship for one student
      - b. Rule 9 requirement
      - c. A designated project that the pro bono student intern will work on

### III. Challenges of Working with Law Student Volunteers – Past, Present and Future

- a. Law students gone at end of semester/ summer
- b. Supervising students requires more time/ energy than it would take to do work yourself
- c. Sustaining interest and excitement
- d. Recruitment of pro bono attorneys and law students
- e. Case acceptance policies
- f. Competition with other legal services programs
- g. Geographical separation
- h. Institutionalization
- i. Burnout
- j. Quality control

- IV. Strategies to Tackle Challenges of Working with Law Student Volunteers
  - a. Structure pro bono projects that have built in trainings
  - b. Create projects in conjunction with pro bono organizations
  - c. Set up pro bono projects with distinct phases
    - i. Interviewing
    - ii. Research
    - iii. Document review
    - iv. Summarize depositions
  
- V. Strategies to Overcome Resistance from Pro Bono Attorneys Hesitant to Involve Students in Supporting Their Pro Bono Work
  - a. Requires top down support sanctioned by senior partner/executive committee
  - b. Provide substantive training and support
  - c. Provide ongoing access to experts

**Website Links:**

1. Hunton and Williams Pro Bono <http://www.hunton.com/firm/firm.aspx?id=5116>
2. Saul Ewing Pro Bono [http://www.saul.com/about\\_us/probono.aspx](http://www.saul.com/about_us/probono.aspx)
3. Seattle University School of Law Access to Justice Institute  
<http://www.law.seattleu.edu/accesstojustice>
4. Sonnenschein Pro Bono [http://www.sonnenschein.com/firm\\_facts/pro\\_bono/index.html](http://www.sonnenschein.com/firm_facts/pro_bono/index.html)
5. University of Virginia School of Law Pro Bono Project  
<http://www.law.virginia.edu/home2002/html/publicserv/probono.htm>
6. Washington University School of Law Civil Justice Clinic  
<http://law.wustl.edu/Clinics/Civiljustnew/index.html>

**Bibliography:**

1. Deborah Rhode, Colloquium, Deborah Rhode's Access to Justice, 123 Fordham Law Review (3), December 2004.
2. Deborah Rhode, Pro Bono in Principle and in Practice, 53 Journal of Legal Education (3), September 2003.
3. Symposium on Innovations in Pro Bono Practice, 72 University of Missouri-Kansas City Law Review (2), Winter 2003.