

ABA/ NLADA 2006 Equal Justice Conference

Blueprint for a Multi-Lateral Approach to Involving Law Students in Pro Bono

Session Developers:

- Alfred J. Azen, Executive Director, PA IOLTA Board
- Colleen F. Coonelly, Director of Litigation Training and Pro Bono, WolfBlock

Facilitators:

- Robert M. Brenner, Executive Director, Southwest Pennsylvania Legal Services/ Adjunct Professor of Law, University of Pittsburgh Law School
- Karen L. Forman, Pro Bono Counsel, Saul Ewing, Philadelphia, PA
- Eve Biskind Klothen, Assistant Dean for Pro Bono and Public Interest Programs, Rutgers University School of Law-Camden, New Jersey
- Kathleen Cramer Lawrence, Public Interest Law Fellow, The Dickinson School of Law of The Pennsylvania State University, Carlisle, PA
- Jane Muller-Peterson, Professor of Law, The Dickinson School of Law of The Pennsylvania State University, Carlisle, PA
- Kathy E. Ochroch, Pro Bono Counsel, Blank Rome LLP, Philadelphia, PA
- Stefanie Fleischer Seldin, Managing Attorney, Philadelphia Volunteers for the Indigent Program
- Sara Woods, Director of Public Service Careers & Pro Bono Programs, Villanova University School of Law

Brief Description:

Law schools, law firms, and legal service organizations afford law students a variety of means to represent indigent clients under the close guidance of experienced practitioners. This session will be highly interactive with several facilitated small groups in which participants will have the opportunity to share and compare effective practices for forging partnerships among law schools, law firms, and public interest organizations; developing successful pro bono programs and trainings for students; and sharing resources among the pro bono community to improve the delivery of legal services to the poor.

Topical Outline:

I. Summary of "Best Practices" Employed in Pennsylvania

A representative of each of the four categories describes what they and their counterparts are doing to instill and nurture the pro bono ethic in 21st century lawyers by enlisting and supporting law students and new lawyers to engage in pro bono work and/or the representation of indigent persons.

A) Law Firm Pro Bono Counsel- Coonelly, Forman, Ochroch

- Survey incoming summer associates in the Spring about their interests and work within the firm to line up pro bono assignments before the summer associates arrive
- Assignments on existing matters

- Summer associate research projects e.g., ADL model

B) Bar Association Pro Bono Referral Organization Representative, together with Executive Director of IOLTA, a funder of such programs and of law school programs - Azen, Seldin

- VIP's summer associate day

C) Law School Pro Bono Program Directors- Klothen, Woods

- The Philadelphia Area Law School Consortium- e.g., co-sponsored Edward V. Sparer Symposium:
- Villanova's Lawyering Together Program
- Rutgers Pro Bono Research Associate Project
- Cross-school pro bono projects to meet a specific identified gap in the network of legal services delivery for the poor -- e.g. Immigration
- Joint trainings for students and lawyers involved in pro bono projects e.g. leadership training
- Joint programming for law students and the public interest community including a public interest reception and recognition event e.g. First Monday and Bar Reception

D) Law School Clinical Programs/Externships - Brenner, Muller-Peterson

- Clinical courses
- Pitt Law School's Legal Services Practicum

II. Small group exercise:

Break into 4 groups if total number of participants exceeds 35; break into 2 groups (1 & 2 combined; 3 & 4 combined) if total number of participants is 35 or less.

Participants break out into one of the four categories listed above. The panelists in each category lead an interactive survey. Distribute a set of questions about what ways and means could be used to achieve specified goals.

A "reporter" from each group compiles the results and conclusions for a report back during the plenary session.

1. How to involve law students in pro bono work?

- courses, clinics, externships, collaborations with practicing attorneys

2. How to keep new lawyers engaged in pro bono as they make the transition from law student to lawyer?
 - connect & engage alumni in their schools' pro bono programs
3. What are the major successes of projects/ formats you've used?
4. What have been the major challenges that you have faced in implementing your program?
5. What can be done to facilitate communication between and among law schools, law firms, legal services, and pro bono referral organizations in a particular city or area?
6. What role can the bar association play in the facilitation of this communication?
7. What new ideas do you have?
8. How can the local Bar Association work as a convenor and a source of communication assistance between and among law schools, law firms, legal services, and pro bono referral organizations?
9. Identify the most important elements in creating partnerships
10. How to motivate, guide, and support law students to engage in public interest and pro bono work as students and, later, as lawyers.
11. How to forge partnerships and connections among law schools, law firms, and public interest organizations to foster the commitment of law students and to sustain and support it when those students are lawyers.
12. How to connect with and share resources with professionals at law schools, law firms, and public interest organizations who are working in the area of pro bono in order to improve the delivery of legal services to the poor.

III. Plenary session

Reporting of survey results and summary of conclusions from discussions within the subgroups. Questions and answers.

Follow-up report of the session will be e-mailed to all participants who request it from Sara Woods Director of Public Service Careers & Pro Bono Programs
Villanova University School of Law: Woods@law.villanova.edu

Selected Website Links:

Law Schools:

Dickinson

<http://www.dsl.psu.edu/academics/publicinterest.cfm>

Rutgers:

<http://camlaw.rutgers.edu/site/probono/probono.shtml>

Villanova

<http://www.law.villanova.edu/administration/alumnirelations/lawyeringtogether.asp>

Also on the main home page click on "News," then "Lawyering Together Celebrates 5 Year Anniversary"

<http://www.law.villanova.edu>

Pittsburgh:

http://www.palegalservices.org/finder/southwestern_pa_legal_aid.htm

<http://www.law.pitt.edu/academics/programs/clinic.php>

PA IOLTA Board:

<http://www.paiolta.org/>

Philadelphia Volunteers for the Indigent Program:

<http://www.phillyvip.org/>

Law firms:

BlankRome

<http://www.blankrome.com/BR/probono/kochroch.asp>

SaulEwing

http://www.saul.com/about_us/probono.aspx

WolfBlock

http://www.wolfblock.com/wbroot/prob_intro.asp

Other Law School Pro Bono Resources

ABA Directory of Law School Public Interest and Pro Bono Programs

<http://www.abaprobono.org/lawschools>

American Association of Law Schools Pro Bono Project

<http://www.aals.org/probono/project2.html>