

Welcome to the Pro Bono Honors Program. Your packet contains the following forms:

1. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION
2. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
3. STUDENT INFORMATION WORKSHEET

To be completed and returned as soon as you have selected your Volunteer Placement.

4. AGREEMENT TO SUPERVISE

Note: There are two forms. One is for placements that are pre-approved by the Law School, the other is for placements that you generate. One of these two forms must be completed and returned as soon as you have selected your Volunteer Placement. We must have an Agreement to Supervise before we can begin to process your participation.

5. STUDENT LOG

To be completed and returned at the end of your pro bono service.

When you have completed your pro bono service, you will receive additional forms that ask you to evaluate your experience and that request your certificate.

SOUTH TEXAS COLLEGE OF LAW

Pro Bono Honors Program
Catherine Greene Burnett
Director
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1303 San Jacinto
Houston, TX 77002
(713) 646- 1831
(713) 646-1744

PRO BONO HONORS PROGRAM PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Goals and Mission

The South Texas College of Law Pro Bono Honors Program seeks both to encourage professionalism by providing pro bono public service opportunities for students and to recognize this service by a formal certificate program.

History

Both faculty and students of South Texas College of Law have a long, sustained history of public service and pro bono commitment. Founded in the 1920s as an “access” law school, South Texas College of Law historically has recognized a commitment to justice as one of its primary missions. In the words of Founding Dean J. C. Hutchenson, Jr.: [the mission is]... To develop “lawyers capable of reasoning broadly and abstractly and of testing by the same general touchstone, conformity to right and justice, every question [that] may arise.”

This sentiment has been ratified and reaffirmed throughout the law school’s history. For example, in the 1990s, the Board of Trustees highlighted pro bono service when it added to the law school’s Mission Statement this aspiration: “To contribute to the betterment of the bench, bar, and society through programs of instruction, scholarly research, and service to the community.”

Student commitment to pro bono activity had been recognized in two primary ways. First, through the annual service projects of the various, robust student organizations. And second, through the hours worked in academic internships and clinical programs far exceeding the requirements for course credit. The magnitude of those contributions of public service and pro bono hours formed, in part, the basis of the “SBA of the Year” award for 1999 - 2000 by the American Bar Association. This culture of giving and service by students extends to the present.

In 2000 a faculty-student ad hoc task force considered the question of a mandatory pro bono program for the law school. Although that task force recommended against a required program after vigorous open forums, surveys and debate, it highlighted the law school’s many decade tradition of service. The ad hoc Task Force then became a permanent part of the law school as the Access to Justice and Public Service Committee. It proposed a voluntary program to be administered through the Student Bar Association and to support initiatives of the Texas Access to Justice Commission. In 2002, all students were solicited to participate.

In creating the Pro Bono Honors Program, the law school continues the tradition of service and strives to inculcate students with the norms and values of the profession. Concerning public service

and pro bono commitment, these norms are reflected in:

- The American Bar Association’s MacCrate Report, which identified as a core value STRIVING TO PROMOTE JUSTICE, FAIRNESS, AND MORALITY. Building on earlier recognition that a lawyer is a member of a profession that bears “special responsibilit[ies] for the quality of justice,” the MacCrate Report recommended that “a lawyer should be committed to the values of : [2.2] *Contributing to the Profession’s Fulfillment of its Responsibility to Ensure that Adequate Legal Services Are Provided to Those Who Cannot Afford to Pay for Them.*”
- The American Bar Association’s Rules of Professional Conduct Rule 6. 1
- The Texas Rules of Disciplinary Conduct, which state in their preamble: *A lawyer should render public interest legal service. The basic responsibility for providing legal services for those unable to pay ultimately rests upon the individual lawyer, and personal involvement in the problems of the disadvantaged can be one of the most rewarding experiences in the life of a lawyer. Every lawyer, regardless of professional prominence or professional workload, should find time to participate in or otherwise support the provision of legal services to the disadvantaged. The provision of free legal services to those who are unable to pay reasonable fees is a moral obligation of each lawyer as well as the profession generally. A lawyer may discharge this basic responsibility by providing public interest legal services without a fee, or at a substantially reduced fee, in one or more of the following areas: Property law, civil rights law, public rights law, charitable organization representation, the administration of justice, and by financial support for organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means.*
- The Texas Lawyer’s Creed, which acknowledges that “A lawyer owes to the administration of justice personal dignity, integrity, and independence. . .[And] Should always adhere to the highest principles of professionalism,” and which asks for the following pledge: “ *I commit myself to an adequate and effective pro bono program*”.
- The State Bar of Texas Pro Bono College, which was created in 1992 to recognize those attorneys who have far exceeded the State Bar’s aspirational pro bono goal in their efforts to address the vast unmet legal needs of the poor by providing a significant number of hours of eligible pro bono service during the previous year.

Program Requirements

Students are eligible to participate in the Pro Bono Honors Program after completing the first thirty hours required for graduation. Students are required to commit a minimum of fifty hours of service to the project, with no less than ten hours in a given semester.

Students may perform their pro bono work at a pre-approved placement. Students may also initiate placement opportunities and have them approved by the Program Director.

Upon completion of fifty hours of service students are awarded a Pro Bono Honors Program certificate and a notation is made on the student’s official South Texas College of Law transcript.

Thanks and Acknowledgments

The design of this program has been influenced by the law school's existing Public Interest Clinic, its Access to Justice and Public Service Committee, the California Western School of Law Pro Bono Honors Program, and the Dedman School of Law Public Service Program.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT PRO BONO HONORS PROGRAM

- Must I complete all fifty hours in the same semester?**
No. Your pro bono service may occur during any, or all, semesters following completion of your first year (thirty credit hours) of law school.
- What are the minimum and maximum hours of service required for a certificate?**
There is no upper limit on hours of pro bono service under the Honors Program. The minimum requirement for certification is fifty hours of service.
- Are there opportunities for part-time students?**
Absolutely. Frequently bar associations and community service organizations sponsor one or two-day events designed to provide outreach or direct representation to targeted areas of the community that have been historically under served by the legal profession. Examples include projects such as the Will-A-Thon or Ask a Lawyer programs.
- Do all my hours of service have to be at the same program or with the same organization?**
No. Participating students may elect to offer pro bono assistance in a variety of venues. The only restriction is the requirement that students commit at least ten hours to any placement organization or selected project during the semester of service.
- If I elect to work for a particular organization as part of the Pro Bono Honors Program, am I precluded from seeking an academic internship at that same placement.**
No. The Pro Bono Honors Program and Academic Internships are two distinct programs, even though they have many overlapping placements and similar components in their missions and implementation. Although a student may chose to pursue an Academic Internship in the same venue as the Pro Bono Honors Program, hours worked for that organization may only be counted one time and accrued toward satisfying the requirements of one program. It may be, however, that after exposure to a particular placement through the Pro Bono Honors Program, a student will elect to return to that organization for an Academic Internship under the Public Interest Clinic or vice versa. However, despite the common elements of both programs, they also have distinct goals. The focus of Academic Internships includes the development of lawyering skills and transition into the profession. For that reason, students are encouraged to consult with the Academic Internship Program in selecting a placement, realistically assessing existing lawyering skills, and developing an action plan to develop or hone those skills during the internship experience.
- I don't think I will be able to complete the fifty hours required for certification during the last two years of law school. But, I want to give something back to the community. Can I use the Pro Bono Honors Program to help find a service opportunity even though I never plan to request a certificate?**
Yes. The Pro Bono Honors Program is committed to identifying opportunities for students to contribute pro bono service whenever possible. The certificate is only one aspect of that program. The only restriction is that we ask for a minimum ten-hour commitment to any organization or project.

- I want to do pro bono service but I don't know what organization to pick or what I have to offer at this stage in my legal education. What should I do?**
Many students, and even some practitioners, find themselves in this position. The impulse for public service is there. The stumbling block is identifying who needs that service and whether your education and professional experiences make you the right person to provide it. Helping you find answers to those questions is one of the services that the Pro Bono Honors Programs provides. We maintain a list of approved placements as well as the option for you to find and identify your own placement not on that list. The needs and demands of the wide range of placement opportunities can benefit from a wide range of lawyering skills. For example, some placements may emphasize interviewing and counseling, while others may benefit more from research or from document drafting.
- When can a student begin work on the public service graduation requirement?**
After completing the first year of law school (30 credit hours).
- How many hours of pro bono service are required for certification?**
A minimum of fifty hours is required over two years of law school. Students may work as many hours above that minimum as time and interest permit.
- What kind of pro bono service qualifies for certification?**
- **Work must be law-related.** (Clerical work is appropriate only to the extent needed to carry out the overall legal task.)
 - **Work must be uncompensated.** (Students may not receive monetary compensation, academic credit or other tangible benefits for performing service.)
 - **Work must be adequately supervised.** Ultimately, an attorney must be responsible for the student's work, and the student must be directly supervised on a day-to-day basis by an attorney, or other lay person with expertise in the relevant subject matter area, who is responsible for:
 - assigning the particular task to the student;
 - taking steps to assure the task's successful completion, including training, oversight and provision of model forms or other documentation;
 - conducting an exit interview with the student; and
 - completing the Program's mandatory evaluation form about the student.
 - **Examples of approved placements include** work for legal service organizations on behalf of nonprofit community groups, and for government offices responsible for protecting the right of individuals raising important public interest concerns. Work done for attorneys in private practice must be *pro bono* work on behalf of a person or group ordinarily unable to secure legal representation.
- Do judicial clerkships count toward meeting the requirement?**
No.
- Does work qualify for holders of or candidates for political office?**
No.
- May I develop my own public service placement/s?**
Yes, BUT IT MUST BE PRE-APPROVED OR NO CREDIT TOWARD CERTIFICATION WILL BE GIVEN.

Pre-approved pro bono placement information is available in the office of the Pro Bono Honors Program, located in the office of the Associate Dean of Clinical Studies - Suite 236T.

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PRO BONO HONORS PROGRAM PROGRAM INFORMATION WORKSHEET

Student Name: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone: _____

To be Completed by Students

_____ Semester 20 _____

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Proposed Placement</i> | <i>Pre Approved</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Student Generated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Agreement to Supervise</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Log</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Supervisor Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd |
| <i>Notice of Approval</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |

_____ Semester 20 _____

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Proposed Placement</i> | <i>Pre Approved</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Student Generated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Agreement to Supervise</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Log</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Supervisor Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd |
| <i>Notice of Approval</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |

_____ Semester 20 _____

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| <i>Proposed Placement</i> | <i>Pre Approved</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Student Generated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Agreement to Supervise</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Log</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Supervisor Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd |
| <i>Notice of Approval</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | | | | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| _____ Semester 20 _____ | | | | | | |
| <i>Proposed Placement</i> | <i>Pre Approved</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Student Generated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Agreement to Supervise</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Log</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Supervisor Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd |
| | | | <i>Notice of Approval</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------------|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| _____ Semester 20 _____ | | | | | | |
| <i>Proposed Placement</i> | <i>Pre Approved</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Student Generated</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | <i>Agreement to Supervise</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Log</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Supervisor Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd | <i>Student Evaluation</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Rcvd |
| | | | <i>Notice of Approval</i> <input type="checkbox"/> | | | |

TOTAL HOURS: _____

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**PRO BONO HONORS PROGRAM
AGREEMENT TO SUPERVISE**

| | |
|---------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Student Name _____ | Anticipated Graduation Date: _____ |
| Address _____ (Street) | Zip Code _____ (City, State) |
| Telephone Number _____ | E-mail Address _____ |

Sponsoring Organization _____

Address _____

Contact Person _____

Telephone Number _____ Fax Number _____ E-Mail _____

Proposed Assignment _____

Estimated Total Hours of Work: _____ (may be modified during course of placement)

Proposed Semester of Placement: _____

Student: *If your Supervisor is not the Contact Person, please list your Supervisor's name(s) and phone numbers(s) below.*

Supervisors Name(s): _____

Phone Number(s): _____

E-Mail(s): _____

| | |
|--|----------------|
| I agree to perform all tasks in a professionally responsible manner. _____ | |
| _____ | Student |
| I confirm that the above student will receive professional supervision. I acknowledge that the student has not been admitted to the Bar, and cannot represent or provide legal advice to the organization, program or its clients, and that the organization will not rely on the student's work product in taking any action or forbearing from any actions that may subject the organization, program or its clients to legal liability. I confirm that the student will not receive financial compensation for work performed during the placement. I further agree that I will complete an evaluation of the student's performance at the conclusion of the placement. | |
| _____ | _____ |
| Date | Contact Person |

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PRO BONO HONORS PROGRAM (OPTIONAL) STUDENT INITIATED PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITY

| | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Student Name _____ | Anticipated Graduation Date _____ | |
| Address _____ | | |
| (Street) | | |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| (City) | (State) | (Zip Code) |
| Telephone Number _____ | E-mail Address _____ | |
| Date _____ | | |

Caution Students: *Do not begin working at this placement until (1) it has been approved by the Director, (2) an Agreement to Supervise has been returned to the law school, and (3) you have been notified by the Pro Bono Program Director that you may begin.*

1. Sponsoring Organization or Individual Firm _____
2. Type of Organization (Please Circle)

| | | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------------|-------------|
| Bar Association | Government | Mediation | Other _____ |
| Firm (Pro Bono work) | Legal Services Corp | Non Profit | |
3. Supervising Attorney/Contract Person: _____
Title: _____
4. Address: _____
5. City _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____
E-mail _____ Fax Number _____

DESCRIPTION OF PLACEMENT

6. Briefly describe sponsoring organizations (and attach a brochure, if available) _____

7. Briefly describe the placement (include substantive area and lawyering skills tasks - - attach additional sheet if necessary) _____

8. Subject Area (Please Circle All That Apply)

| | | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Bankruptcy | Education | Labor Law |
| Children's Rights/Juvenile Law | Employment Law | Legislative Analysis |
| Citizen Rights/Human Rights | Entertainment Law | Minorities |
| Civil Rights/Human Rights | Environmental Law | Non-Profit |
| Constitutional Law | Family Law | Poverty Law/Public Benefits |
| Consumer Protection | General Pro Bono Practice | Prisoner Cases |
| Contracts | Health | Prosecution |
| Criminal Law | Housing | Tax |
| Decedents Estates/Probate | Immigration | Women's Rights |
| Disability | Indian Law | Other: _____ |
| Economic Community Dev. | International Law | |

9. Type of Work (Please Circle All That Apply)

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| Administrative Hearing | Investigating | Teaching |
| Arbitration | Legislative Reform | Training |
| Case Management | Mediation/Dispute Resolution | Trial Preparation |
| Discovery | Negotiation | Writing |
| Interviewing | Research | Other: _____ |

10. Type of Client (Please Circle All That Apply)

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| American Indian | Government, County | Individuals with a Terminal Illness |
| Artists | Government, State | Institutional Reseidents |
| Children | Government, Federal | Legislator |
| Criminal Defendants | HIV - Positive Individuals | Non Profit Organizations |
| Custody Cases | Homeless Individuals | Prisoners |
| Elderly | Homeowners | Victims of Domestic Violence |
| Employees | Indigent Clients | Women |
| Government, City | Individuals with Disabilities | Other: _____ |

11. Will the student be employed by the Sponsoring Organization or Individual Firm during the period of the proposed placement? Yes _____ No _____

12. Are there any law school courses or training prerequisites required? Yes ____ No ____

____ If so, please list _____

13. Are there any law school courses or training prerequisites recommended? Yes __ No __

____ If so, please list _____

14. What, if any, training will be provided by the sponsor? _____

15. Comments: _____

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PRO BONO HONORS PROGRAM STUDENT LOG

Name _____

_____ Semester 20 ____

Anticipated Graduation Date _____

E-mail Address _____

Placement Name _____

Please be specific when recording Nature of Work - - include a brief description of the subject matter and legal issue being addressed. However, at all times maintain client confidentiality.

Note: *A new log is required for each semester of Pro Bono Honors Program activity.*

| Date | Nature of Work | Time |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

| Date | Nature of Work | Time |
|-------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ |

