

Supervised Externship Program

Reflecting on Legal Practice



AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY

WASHINGTON COLLEGE of LAW

LAW

WASHINGTON, D C

The WCL Externship Program offers more than 600 field placements in state and federal agencies, courts, and the country's premier public interest organizations.



Students in the Externship Program earn academic credit while gaining practical experience. Externs can draft briefs, research legal issues, conduct client interviews, engage in trial preparation, and participate in policy discussions.

The Supervised Externship Program at American University Washington College of Law (WCL) provides one of the most exciting and enriching opportunities available to law students. Long recognized as one of the premier centers of experiential learning through its clinical programs, WCL continues this tradition by providing law students the opportunity to receive academic credit for experiential learning in the workplace.

experience

Supervised Externship Program

Each year, approximately three hundred WCL students integrate practical experience with the theory of the classroom by receiving academic credit for work experience and related academic supervision. They are placed in legal positions at local, state, and federal government agencies, not-for-profit organizations, courts, and law firms engaged in *pro bono* matters. The law school's location in Washington, D.C., and its proximity to governmental and non-governmental organizations ensures that the Externship Program can provide students with a wide variety of valuable work experiences. Externship students can then bring this experience back to the classroom for critical analysis and reflection.

Externship students are placed in field placements throughout the academic year, as well as during the intensive summer session. Simultaneously with their work in the field, students take part in externship seminars taught by full-time faculty members and adjunct professors with specialized practice expertise.

mentoring

Field Placements

WCL students provide a tremendous resource for legal institutions in the Washington, D.C. area. Each year, hundreds of students undertake a wide variety of responsibilities in their field placements, including researching and briefing legal issues, drafting memoranda, conducting client and witness interviews, and assisting in trial preparation. The students commit to work between 10 and 20 hours during the academic year and full-time during the summer. They bring their academic training and their excitement and enthusiasm for legal practice to their externship employers. Their supervising attorneys have the opportunity to engage in rewarding mentoring relationships with their externs, which adds significantly to the value of the practical experience the students gain through their externships.

Externship field placements must meet the following requirements:

- The field placement must be a not-for-profit organization. This includes local, state, and federal government agencies, all courts and judicial institutions, non-profit organizations, as well as many trade and lobbying groups. Field placements may include for-profit law firms if the students are assigned exclusively to *pro bono* matters.
- Students must be supervised by an attorney and must be engaged in substantive law-related work.
- Field placements must arrange for regular contact between the student and the attorney field supervisor, including offering the student constructive and timely feedback on assignments and discussing the work of the agency or organization.
- Students may not receive monetary compensation for their work.

Students earn one (pass/fail) field credit for completing 140 hours of fieldwork during the semester, two credits for completing 210 hours of fieldwork, and three credits for completing 280 hours of fieldwork.

Externship Program staff provide counseling to assist students in selecting externships that meets the students' educational and professional needs, taking into account their particular interests and career aspirations. Students are free to choose any placement that meets the Program's criteria. The Externship Program provides access to an electronic database of over 600 employers in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area that have hosted externs in the past, or have specifically requested that students apply for positions. Students may review the evaluations of other WCL students who were previously placed in externship positions to determine whether the placement will meet their needs.



Extern Stefanie Sanger JD '05 and The Honorable Judge Stephanie Duncan-Peters, Superior Court of the District of Columbia, review jury instructions.

NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LONG-DISTANCE EXTERNSHIP PROGRAMS — *across the nation and around the globe*

WCL offers two exceptional summer programs for students who wish to extern outside of Washington, D.C. Students may earn academic credit for fieldwork in organizations throughout the United States, as well as overseas, linked to faculty supervisors and their classmates via the latest distance-learning technologies.

Students gather in mid-May for a 3-day intensive seminar, which prepares them for their fieldwork, and again for three days in mid-August to “debrief” their experiences. During the field placement portion of the program, students and WCL supervising faculty are linked via an Internet “virtual classroom” for continuing discussions of the students’ experiences.

National externships have included the ACLU in California, the Louisiana Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Neighborhood Legal Services Association in Pennsylvania, and the Office of the Mayor in New York City. Students enrolled in the International Externship Program have worked in countries such as Costa Rica, Italy, Poland, the Netherlands, Australia, Ireland and Thailand.

skills

“ My externship was my first legal experience. I had the opportunity to work on a report that was released to Congress, and to learn first-hand about the interaction between the branches of government. Potential employers ask me about my externship experience all the time — it’s an essential piece of my resume.”

GINA M. BECK JD '05

EXTERNED FOR THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE,

NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS & INFORMATION ADMINISTRATION

reflection

The Educational Experience

The Externship Program promotes learning through encouraging active reflection on students' field placements. Although the various field placement employers give students realistic experiences of legal work, the law school faculty is primarily responsible for achieving the program's educational goals.

Students participating in the Externship Program must receive some form of faculty supervision to receive academic credit for their field placements. They may participate in a three-credit graded seminar, or a one-credit pass/fail seminar (summer only), or may be individually supervised by a faculty member for one credit.

Students in externship seminars meet weekly to share perspectives on the work experience and to discuss assigned readings selected to promote reflection. Some of these seminars are open to the students in a wide range of field placements, while others are organized around placements in particular specialty areas (such as international or environmental law). In all of the seminars, however, the instructional emphasis is on the lawyering experience, rather than on substantive legal doctrine. In connection with their seminars, students write in a variety of formats, including informal responses to reading assignments and longer reflective papers.

A crucial component of the educational experience is intensive supervision by WCL faculty. Students are required to maintain reflective journals throughout their field placements. In addition to leading the externship seminars, faculty meet regularly with externship students in smaller groups to explore the students' personal experiences of work in greater depth and detail — often taking the student's journal entries as a starting point. These sessions may, in turn, enrich the larger seminar meetings.

The Supervised Externship Program demands much from both students and faculty members. But, it promises much as well. The Program assures that, in addition to learning "on the job," students learn to think and reflect more critically about the work of a lawyer — and about themselves as lawyers — in a structured educational setting.



EXTERNSHIP FAIR

Each spring, WCL organizes the Externship Fair, which attracts hundreds of government, judicial, and public interest employers. The Externship Fair provides an informal environment in which students may learn about the participating organizations and make valuable contacts with the attorneys attending the event. In turn, representatives of those employers can meet with students interested in working with them. Employers may register to participate in the Externship Fair by visiting the Externship Program web site, or by contacting the Externship Program office.

analysis

"My externship allowed me to build upon my curricular studies in a dynamic professional setting. It reinforced my Civil Procedure and Legal Rhetoric course work and provided me with invaluable practical experience."

KRISTEN E. UHL JD '04

**EXTERNSHIP AT THE OFFICE OF THE HONORABLE JUDGE SARAH L. WILSON,
U.S. COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS**



Past Externship Field Placements

Below are some of the organizations that have benefited from WCL student externs in the past:

NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATIONS

Air Transport Association of America
American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee
American Bar Association
American Civil Liberties Union
American Center for International Labor Solidarity
American Corporate Counsel Association
American Enterprise Institute
American Land Title Association
American Public Welfare Association
American Red Cross
American Society of International Law
American Trial Lawyers Association
Animal Legal Defense Fund
Amnesty International
Anti-Defamation League
Asia Foundation
Asian Pacific Legal Resource Center
AYUDA Legal Services
Carnegie Endowment
Casa Alianza (Costa Rica)
Center for Democracy and Technology
Center for International Environmental Law
Center to Prevent Handgun Violence
Center for Women's Rights (Poland)
Centro para Accion en Derechos Humanos (CALDH) (Guatemala)
Chesapeake Bay Foundation
Children's National Medical Center
Civil Rights Forum on Communications Policy
Commission on Real Property Claims for Refugees and Displaced Persons (Bosnia)
Defensoria del Pueblo
Democratic Policy Committee
District of Columbia Workers' Rights Project
Earth Justice Legal Defense Fund
Fannie Mae
Global Survival Network
Greater Boston Legal Services
Greater Washington Exploratory Committee
Greek Helsinki Monitor (Greece)
Health Policy Solutions
Hogar Hispano-Catholic Charities Diocese of Arlington
Indian Law Resource Center
Indiana Civil Liberties Union
Information Technology Association of America
Institute for Justice
Institute for Policy Studies
Institute for Women's Policy Research
International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
International Human Rights Law Group
Investor Responsibility Research Center
Kaiser Permanente
Kinship Care Legal Aid Society
Lawyers for Children America
Legal Aid Society, Brooklyn Neighborhood Office
Legal Aid Society of the District of Columbia
Legal Counsel for the Elderly
Legal Services of Northern Virginia
Manna, Inc.
Maryland Trial Lawyers Association
McAuley Institute
Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund
Motion Picture Association of America
NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund
National Abortion Federation

The Externship Program works closely with the Office of Career Services to provide students with guidance and assistance in finding placements.



National Albanian American Council
National Association of Broadcasters
National Association of College and University Attorneys
National Association of the Deaf Law Center
National Association of Homebuilders
National Association of Securities Dealers
National Collegiate Athletic Association
National Council for Adoption
National Endowment for the Arts
National Gay and Lesbian Task Force
National Institute for Science, Law, and Public Policy
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women and Families
National Trust for Historic Preservation
National Whistleblower Center
National Wildlife Federation
National Women's Law Center
Nature Conservancy
Neighborhood Legal Services Program of D.C.
New South Wales Public Advocacy Center (Australia)
Overseas Private Investment Corporation
People for the American Way
Polish American Congress
Recording Industry Association of America
Servicemembers Legal Defense Network
Smithsonian Institution
Society to Prevent Trade in Stolen Art
Street Law
Tahirih Justice Center
Washington Area Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs
Washington Area Lawyers for the Arts
Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless
Women Empowered Against Violence (WEAVE)

Women, Law, and Development International
World Service Authority
Youth Law Center
Zacchaeus Free Legal Clinic

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

Executive Office of the President
Executive Office of the Vice President
U.S. Agency for International Development
U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia
U.S. Attorney for the Middle District of Florida
U.S. Civil Rights Commission
U.S. Commodities and Futures Trading Commission
U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission
U.S. Department of Agriculture
U.S. Department of Commerce
U.S. Department of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense (NAVY JAG in Italy)
U.S. Department of Education
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development
U.S. Department of Interior
U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Department of Labor
U.S. Department of State
U.S. Department of Transportation
U.S. Department of Treasury
U.S. Department of Veterans Appeals
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission
U.S. Federal Communications Commission

Past Externship Field Placements, continued

U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission
U.S. Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service
U.S. Federal Trade Commission
U.S. House of Representatives
U.S. International Trade Commission
U.S. Library of Congress (Copyright Office)
U.S. Marshals Service
U.S. National Labor Relations Board
U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Patent and Trademark Office
U.S. Postal Service
U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission
U.S. Senate
U.S. Small Business Administration
U.S. Trade Representative

STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Alaska Governor's Office
Alexandria, Virginia, Public Defender Office
Anoka, Minnesota, Public Defender's Office
Arlington, Virginia, Office of the Commonwealth Attorney
Boston, Massachusetts District Attorney's Office
Council of the District of Columbia
D.C. Congressional Delegation
D.C. Corporation Counsel
D.C. Financial Control Board
D.C. Public Defender Service
Massachusetts Attorney General's Office
Montgomery County, Maryland, Public Defender Service
Montgomery County, Maryland Public Schools
Montgomery County, Maryland, State's Attorney Office
Nashville Public Defender Office
New Haven, Connecticut, State's Attorney Office
New York State Attorney General's Office
Prince George's County, Maryland, Public Defender Service
Prince George's County, Maryland, State's Attorney Office
Rhode Island Office of the Public Defender

JUDICIARY

D.C. Court of Appeals
D.C. Superior Court
Delaware Court of Chancery
Fairfax, Virginia Domestic Relations Court
Maryland Court of Special Appeals
Middlesex County Probate and Family Court (Massachusetts)
U.S. Bankruptcy Court
U.S. Court of Appeals
U.S. Court of Federal Claims
U.S. Court of Veteran's Appeals
U.S. District Court for the Central District of California
U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia
U.S. District Court for the District of Guam
U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon
U.S. District Court for the District of Puerto Rico
U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania
U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida
U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

Center for Justice and International Law
Inter-American Commission on Human Rights
Inter-American Development Bank
International Center for Trade and Sustainable Development
United Nations Department of Economic & Social Affairs
United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
United States Export-Import Bank
Organization of American States
World Bank

LAW FIRMS (PRO BONO PROJECTS)

Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson
Goldstein & Howe, PC
Gordon, Silberman, Wiggins & Childs
Greenberg Traurig
Henrichsen Siegel, PLLC
Passman & Kaplan
Patton Boggs LLP
Piper Rudnick LLP

“ While I was a student at WCL, externships gave me the opportunity to try out different areas of practice and forms of lawyering, making me competitive in the post-graduation job hunt. My second job out of law school is at one of my former externships. Now I am the attorney in charge of recruiting and selecting our office’s law clerks and I turn to WCL’s Externship Program to find top-notch candidates.”

JAMES A. FERG-CADIMA, ESQ. WCL '01
LEGISLATIVE STAFF ATTORNEY
MEXICAN AMERICAN LEGAL DEFENSE FUND (MALDF)



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

W A S H I N G T O N , D C

WASHINGTON COLLEGE OF LAW

EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM

4801 Massachusetts Avenue, NW Suite 413

Washington, DC 20016-8181

202.274.4200 Tel

202.730.4591 Fax

externship@wcl.american.edu

www.wcl.american.edu/externship

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage

PAID

Permit No. 1158

Washington, DC

WASHINGTON

COLLEGE of LAW

An equal opportunity, affirmative action university.