

Laurel Rubin Rural Externship Advocacy Program (REAP)

Autumn Semester/Quarter 2013

A Collaborative Project of the Access to Justice Law School Relations Committee

REAP is a collaborative externship program sponsored by the Washington Alliance for Equal Justice and all three Washington law schools - University of Washington, Seattle University, and Gonzaga University, now joined by the University of Idaho College of Law

Through this unique public service opportunity, offered only once a year and designed to address the much needed legal education and assistance for farm workers at the end of the harvest season (August – November) students will help expand access to justice for migrant and seasonal farm workers, who are among the poorest and most vulnerable group of workers in the U.S. With approximately 289,000 farm workers and family members, Washington has the fourth largest population of migrant and seasonal farm workers in the country.

This externship honors Laurel Rubin, who was a young, talented legal aid lawyer and advocate for farm worker justice. Laurel died tragically on her way to meet with clients in Southeastern Washington. Laurel was passionately committed to advocating for farm worker justice and helping farm workers obtain some measure of fairness and respect. Despite working in a somewhat isolated and rural community, Laurel's good will, intelligence, and tenacity quickly established her promise as a justice fighter and admired community asset. Her memory lives on in this statewide collaborative program through the training of law students advocating for farm worker justice.

Major Service & Learning Components:

- *Professional Skills:* Students will develop professional skills including client counseling; legal research and writing; negotiations; development of case strategy; oral advocacy; and Spanish language capabilities through community outreach activities.
- *Direct Advocacy.* Students will get direct advocacy experience through presentations; client intakes and interviews; actual case handling, which may include negotiations, legal writing, and hearings, as appropriate. Advocacy subject matter may include employment and labor, immigration, occupational safety and health, private housing, civil rights, and family law. In the course of their advocacy students will also be exposed to ethics and professional responsibility, evidence, civil procedure, and administrative law issues.
- *Supervision and Peer Support.* Students will receive mentoring and supervision from a supervising attorney at the host program, as well as peer-to-peer support among the cohort of three.
- *Case Reviews & Joint Seminars.* The educational experience will include both individual case reviews between the supervising attorney and student, and the joint seminars described below. Students have the option of writing a faculty-supervised paper at the end of the term.
- *Academic Supervision.* Each of the three in-state schools will provide a faculty advisor to the program. These faculty will partner with the supervising attorneys in organizing and leading seminar sessions. The seminars can be done in-person and by videoconference.

Student Reviews

“It’s hard to be a student and feel like you are making a difference, but this experience has changed my view...Everyone has their own story of how they got to the United States, and yet my experience on outreach in the fields taught me so much about the disconnect and conditions farm laborers experience. Shouldn’t they be treated like any other worker, with equal rights, in the United States? Every week I learned something new... it was incredibly interesting to interact with students from the other law schools, especially during the student-led seminars.” -- Lorien Barrett, Gonzaga University School of Law Graduate and ‘09 REAP Extern with Northwest Justice Project

“It’s been amazing – in terms of professional development I grew so much. I had my own caseload, developed a variety of skills as an advocate – everything from client counseling, research and writing skills (since I got to work on an appellate brief). I also got to work with different types of advocates, which meant learning about different approaches to problem solving. This experience changed my life, and this experience turned out to be a dream job I wish I could keep.” --Jessica Hertz, Seattle University School of Law Graduate and ‘09 REAP Extern with Northwest immigrant Rights Project

“Working with clients on outreach and then participating in the seminars was an interesting contrast, particularly, when the seminars challenge you to think about whether what you’re doing is social service or social change. This experience made me think about that often. For example, one of the hardest things to realize is that retaliation against farm workers is a reality they live with -- knowing that no matter how many reassurances you try to give a client about their rights, it’s never an absolute because you can’t guarantee that exercising their legal rights is necessarily going to address the day-to-day issues they’re going through.” -- Nick Marritz, University of Washington School of Law, William Gates Public Service Scholar and ‘09 REAP Extern

Preliminary Schedule of Seminars & Training

- Orientation to Alliance for Equal Justice & Standards of Practice (community expectations, cultural competency, professionalism, ethics) (Lecturers: Law School Faculty & Legal Aid Staff)
- Immigration (Lecturer: NWIRP)
- Employment discrimination and retaliation (Lecturer: NJP/CLS)
- Worker Health and Safety, including pesticides and farm worker housing (Lecturer: NJP/CLS)
- Wage and hour (Lecturer: David Marks, private practitioner)
- H-2A guest worker program, Migrant and Seasonal Agricultural Worker Protection Act (Lecturer: NJP/CLS)
- Civil Procedure & Administrative law (Lecturers: Law School Faculty)
- Racial Justice & Community Lawyering (Lecturers: Law School Faculty)

Placement: The Access to Justice Law School Relations Committee, together with the Laurel Rubin Farm Worker Justice Project, is proud to announce the continuation of this unique externship program,

which will place three bilingual (Spanish-speaking) law students in the Yakima Valley, with **Northwest Justice Project, Northwest Immigrant Rights Project, and Columbia Legal Services**. The students will work under the supervision of a team of experienced legal aid attorneys during the autumn academic term assisting farm workers on a wide variety of civil legal issues.

Academic Structure. This unique externship is offered only once a year, and specifically designed to address the much needed legal education and assistance to farm workers at the end of the harvest season (August – November). Students are eligible for their school’s maximum academic credits for the autumn term. ***All participating students will receive help arranging for co-housing; more details will be shared after confirmation of selection.*** The cohort will receive substantive training from private and legal aid practitioners on a wide array of legal subjects, along with academic seminars conducted by law school faculty. Students must have a high proficiency in Spanish to be considered for this externship. Gonzaga University, Seattle University, the University of Washington and the University of Idaho have designated faculty externship sponsors; please check with your externship and public service offices for details. Students may be required to complete a contemporaneous externship seminar for academic credit as set out in their law school’s Externship Program guidelines for field supervisors, faculty, and students.

Student Selection: The cohort of three students will be selected from Gonzaga University (GU), Seattle University (SU), and the University of Washington (UW). We will also consider students from the University of Idaho College of Law. Students interested in applying for this externship should submit their resume, cover letter, list of two references as soon as possible, as placement is on a rolling basis. **Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis, but preference will be given to those who submit by March 15th in order to allow for telephone interviews, selection and timely registration for autumn externship credits with your school.** Please email application packet to lori.isley@columbialegal.org.