

2010 Equal Justice Conference

Harnessing Law Student Energy to Serve Clients and Cultivate the Next Generation of Public Interest Advocates

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Program Description

The recession has strained program resources even as client needs rise. Enthusiastic, committed law students are now key assets in ensuring continued access to justice. Our experienced presenters will explore innovative models in training and supervising law students; share concrete tips on maximizing efficiency; and facilitate dialogue about models for students to effectively serve clients. Presenters will also explore the dual goal of student programs: the delivery of legal services by law students and instilling the commitment of pro bono service in future lawyers.

Program Outline

- I. Welcome and Introductions
 - A. Presenter Intros
 - B. Overview of Program Format and Objectives

- C. Overview of Handouts
- II. Brief Review of Recruiting Best Practices
- A. Conceptualize Your Program
 1. How many students do you need?
 2. What types of work will they be doing?
 3. Do you have the office resources – desks, phones, etc. – to support the number of students you would like to hire?
 - B. Draft a detailed, bullet-pointed job description. Be honest about salary/funding, issues. Post the description, and include other information about recruiting, on your website. Keep website data current.
 - C. Circulating Your Job Description
 1. Use law school career services contacts. Local public interest job fair?
 2. PSLawNet – www.pslawnet.org – is a free online public interest job database with over 200 subscribing law schools.
 - D. Select the right recruiters/interviewers from your organization.
 - E. Set up a formal system to receive and respond to inquiries and job applications.
 - F. Remember that the students are interviewing you, too!
 1. Interview process must be administered equitably
 2. Even students who do not take positions will form an impression based on contacts with your staff.
- III. Innovative Law Student Training & Supervision Models – A Closer Look at Programs in Tucson and Glendale, CA
- A. Tucson: Law Student Participation in Southern Arizona Legal Aid's Volunteer Lawyers Program –
 1. Goal of program is to maximize efficiency by creating discreet student projects that serve community needs and supplement the work of SALA's staff attorneys.
 2. Overview of Service Center Clinic – law students assist pro se litigants with family law pleadings, trial prep, post-decree issues and drafting motions
 3. Overview of Minor/Guardianship Project – law students work with pro se clients in probate court
 4. Overview of Bankruptcy Reaffirmation Clinic – law students analyze reaffirmation agreements for pro se petitioners and offer recommendations to the Court as Friends of the Court
 - B. Glendale, CA – Law Student Opportunities at Neighborhood Legal Services of LA County
 1. Overview of Clinic Staffing Model
 2. Emphasis on Placing Students in Individual Units
- IV. Concrete Tips for Effective Supervision and Maximizing Student Efficiency -
- A. Orientation

1. Create a welcoming environment.
 2. Straightforward explanation of supervision infrastructure, ethical guidelines, office and case management procedures, etc. Cover everything from the dress code to the nuances of observing client confidentiality.
- B. Establish Supervision Meeting Schedule and Preferred Means of Communication
 - C. Learn Your Students' Goals and Expectations. Time and Resources Permitting, Offer Opportunities for Professional Development: courtroom observation, bar association meetings, networking opportunities with other public interest attorneys, etc.
 - D. Offer Feedback, Formally and Informally. Conduct a Performance Review at Midpoint.
 - E. Open Door Policy! Students Shouldn't Feel Too Intimidated to Ask Questions or Seek Out New Assignments During Downtime.
 - F. Additional Lessons from the Tucson Model

V. Facilitated Discussion – Sharing Do's and Don'ts