Public Interest Law Project

Nova University

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Dear Faculty Colleagues:

As you may have gathered from our brochure circulated to the law school community last month, we are off and running. This project had been on my back burner for several years, and I am delighted to be making some real progress.

Our purpose is to encourage our students in their pursuit of public interest law work during their tenure at the Law Center, as well as after graduation. In the process, we are gathering information about public interest work being done nation-wide, state-wide, in South Florida, and here at the Law Center. All too often, the right hand had not known what the left hand was doing. In short, there has been a tremendous need for an umbrella organization, or a clearinghouse, to encourage and direct students.

By developing a resource book of public interest opportunities, we are preparing ourselves for the student, who, for example, expresses an interest in children's rights and wants to know what's offered at the Law Center as well as out in the job market; or the student who says that she'll be in Brevard County during the summer and wants to know what public interest work is going on; the student who wants to do public interest work after graduation.

Our resource book is currently broken down into the following categories:

I Introduction
II Opportunities at the Law Center
III Federally-Funded Legal Services Programs
IV Non-Federally-Funded Legal Services Programs
V Public Defender Offices
VI AIDS Issues
VII Animal Rights
VIII Children's Rights
IX Consumer Protection
X Disability Law
XI The Elderly
XII Employment Discrimination
XIII Environmental Protection
XIV Farmworkers
XV Gay and Lesbian Rights
XVI The Homeless
XVII Housing Discrimination
XVIII Immigration
XIX Institutionalized Persons
XX Municipal Services
XXI Women's Rights

(over)
We need faculty help in several ways:

1. When a student expresses an interest in "public interest work" (however defined), please route him/her our way.

2. Be sure that PILP knows of public interest-oriented opportunities for which you are responsible here at the Law Center, e.g., a particular course, seminar, workshop, or clinical program.

3. If you handle occasional public interest cases or projects, e.g., hurricane relief, and could use student help on an ad hoc basis, please let us know.

4. If you recommend out-placements (with agencies or with private attorneys) for students on an ad hoc basis, e.g., students who have completed Mike Flynn’s Consumer Protection seminar, please let us know.

5. There are several public interest graduate fellowships now available nation-wide, e.g., Skadden and NAPIL, and we are working closely with Mary Carchio to encourage students to apply. Faculty guidance, in writing proposals/applications and providing letters of reference, will be crucial.

6. At least three funds at the Law Center will be available to provide summer stipends for students to do public interest work. Please encourage students to apply and send them our way.

7. Please keep us informed about what you’re doing and plug our project to your students.

8. Finally, if you would be interested in working toward creating a Loan Repayment Assistance Program for our graduates who go into underpaid, public service work, please contact us.

Thanks for helping,

Michael M. Rooke-Ley

MMR/ld