

THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE CLINIC:

Pepperdine Caruso School of Law

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BUILDING SOMETHING NEW

The Community Justice Clinic had a client with a good idea; the idea created a tricky problem that required a creative solution. The clinic students had never handled such a matter before, so they were reluctant to volunteer. The professor often told the students that a lawyer's process is more important than the lawyer's expertise, and bringing process and judgment to a problem will yield the necessary expertise to serve the client. A brave student raised her hand and said she would try.

The client's idea was to build a hospital ward in an African nation. The client is a U.S. nonprofit who works to advance access to healthcare for women in developing countries and to train doctors to expand local capacity. When the client asked its local partners in Africa what they needed

This article is part of the special section, "Legal History in the Making: Innovative Experiential Learning Programs in California Law Schools," in *California Legal History*, vol. 17, 2022 (see editor's introduction on page 3).

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most, they replied that a full ward for the care and treatment of patients would be the next necessary foundation to expand and sustain their work. The good idea created the tricky problem of a U.S. nonprofit executing and financing the transaction to ensure that the ward would rise on the campus of the public hospital in Africa. It would require comparative legal research, cultural competence, trustworthy partners, clear expectations, and speed. The brave student raised her hand and volunteered to try.

This is the heart of clinical education, a courageous, novice student stepping into vital work that will affect the trajectory of a client's life, work, liberty, dreams, rights, and goals. The stakes are high, and the experience transforms law students into lawyers. Under supervision, clinic students move from "thinking like lawyers" to being lawyers in the service of clinic clients.

In this case, the student started researching contract laws and forms that would satisfy state and foreign jurisdictions, developing draft contracts between the nonprofit client, the local partner hospital, and the contractor. The student had never drafted a contract on her own before, and this was a critical challenge. The professor supervised the student's work as she developed the contracts in a cycle of research and preparation, drafting and editing, reviewing and reflecting on the work product. The client had many questions, and when the student completed the draft, she and the professor shared their concerns that they might have missed important details in drafting a contract for use in a distant jurisdiction.

The professor reached out to a former graduate student, then a young lawyer in the other country, to ensure that the contracts would be workable, understandable, and enforceable in the other country. The clinic class discussed how cultural competence, humility, and benevolent assumptions are necessary for excellent lawyering, and being mindful of one's own limitations and blind spots is essential to avoid mistakes and shortcomings. So the professor and the student, with the client's permission, engaged the pro bono services of the foreign lawyer who "translated" it into local form with Commonwealth English, ensuring that it conformed to local practice. The clinic student was gratified and encouraged when the local lawyer did not change any of her substantive work.

Within a few weeks of her raising her hand to volunteer, the parties had signed the contracts. Within eighteen months, the hospital ward was complete, and the parties organized a grand opening. Since then, hundreds of women have received free health care, and young doctors and nurses have expanded and improved their practice. The student grew in confidence and capacity, too. She learned important lessons about drafting contracts, but she learned more about the client, complex sets of interests, cross-cultural and foreign practice, and how to progress from problematic idea to practical solution. Her classmates learned from this process during case rounds in the weekly seminar, and the professor learned from tackling an ambitious new project in the clinic.

FOUNDING THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE CLINIC AT PEPPERDINE CARUSO SCHOOL OF LAW

In 2013, after a season of discernment and introspection about its clinical programs, the Pepperdine University School of Law, now Caruso School of Law, welcomed a new clinical professor and director of clinical education, this author, onto the law faculty with the rare opportunity to design and launch a clinic from scratch. The faculty considered the existing clinics, curricular gaps, and community needs and decided to develop the Community Justice Clinic.¹

The Community Justice Clinic expanded the scope and reach of the existing clinics in its practice, clientele, and teaching objectives. Its primary work is serving as general counsel to nonprofits, nongovernmental organizations, community and religious organizations who are serving marginalized and vulnerable neighbors in California, the United States, and around the world. Students learn corporate, transactional, and policy practice while handling matters involving incorporation, governance, tax exemption, transactions, intellectual property, compliance, policy, and human rights.

¹ Jeffrey R. Baker, *Case Rounds: Lessons from Launching a New Clinic at Pepperdine*, CLINICAL LAW PROF BLOG (Oct. 24, 2014), https://lawprofessors.typepad.com/clinic_prof/2014/10/case-rounds-lessons-from-launching-a-new-clinic-at-pepperdine.html.

In 2014, the Community Justice Clinic joined the law school's five existing clinics: Legal Aid Clinic, Ninth Circuit Appellate Advocacy Clinic, Mediation Clinic, Special Education Advocacy Clinic, and the Refugee and Asylum Clinic. Since then, the school has launched several more clinics: Restoration and Justice Clinic, Low Income Taxpayer Clinic, Startup Law Clinic, Disaster Relief Clinic, Faith and Family Mediation Clinic, and the Religious Liberty Clinic. The Appendix at the end of this article provides a brief history and description of each of these innovative legal clinics.

The faculty decided that the Community Justice Clinic ought to diversify the educational and practice experiences in the clinical program. The existing clinics were and are valuable and effective, but they all represented individuals and provided experiences that were largely variations on litigation practice. This is vital work, but it is not the only work. Recognizing demand for corporate, transactional, and policy practice for organizations, and perceiving great demand among potential clients, the Community Justice Clinic has served scores of clients on hundreds of matters since it launched in 2014. It has developed a practice among nonprofits, nongovernmental organizations, community and religious organizations who are devoted to human rights, social justice, economic development, environmental sustainability, and access to education and healthcare among marginalized and vulnerable communities. Its practice has expanded beyond Southern California to include national, foreign, and international clients around the world.

Every Pepperdine legal clinic serves two major purposes. First, the clinics teach law students how to practice and how to be lawyers in client-centered practices designed for their professional formation, critical reflection, and essential, transferable experiences. Second, they each serve clients in great need with pro bono, public interest practice to advance access to justice in our communities, to instill an ethic of pro bono service and public citizenship in students. Each clinic has a different scope and focus of practice and different styles of lawyering, so that students can explore and learn about the profession, practice, and themselves.

At Pepperdine Caruso School of Law, the clinics are part of a robust experiential learning program. To graduate, all students must complete at least fifteen units of experiential learning courses, and they may fulfill this requirement with custom paths through clinics, field placements, and simulation courses that ensure they are as ready as possible for excellent,

ethical practice when they graduate. The law school adopted this standard when the California State Bar was considering such a requirement for all law schools in the state, but, even when the state bar abandoned those proposals, the law school kept it as a commitment to the students' formation and readiness.

Specifically, the Community Justice Clinic meets these objectives with a practice focused on corporate, transactional, and policy work for organizations devoted to justice, charity, development, and empowerment within and among communities in need. It offers students experience as general counsel to corporations, advancing charitable and corporate purposes, advising on compliance, designing and executing transactions, and empowering clients with analysis and guidance for their own justice work.



EVERY SEMESTER SINCE FOUNDING THE COMMUNITY JUSTICE CLINIC, PROFESSOR BAKER HAS ASKED STUDENTS TO SIGN THIS CALIFORNIA STATE FLAG AS A SYMBOL OF THEIR COMMITMENT TO ITS CLIENTS AND COMMUNITIES AND THEIR CAREERS AS PUBLIC CITIZENS ADVANCING ACCESS TO JUSTICE. THIS FLAG HANGS IN THE CLINICAL OFFICES AT PEPPERDINE CARUSO SCHOOL OF LAW AND BEARS THE SIGNATURE OF ALMOST EVERY STUDENT IN THE CLINIC SINCE 2014.

Photo: Jeffrey R. Baker

Clinical Pedagogy and Practice

Throughout the history of clinical legal education in the United States, clinical professors and programs have balanced the twin goals of practice and pedagogy. The earliest clinics were essentially legal aid offices auxiliary to law schools in which students assisted supervising attorneys with traditional practice, learning on the job. In time, drawing from many sources, clinical professors began to develop more specific and critical methods of teaching and supervision. This began to shift the emphasis toward pedagogy. Even now, law school clinics exist across a spectrum of programs that emphasize the legal services they can offer to clients and those that prioritize teaching and student formation. This is not a controversial debate but a fundamental decision at the foundation of a school's programs that informs its approach and development.

At Pepperdine Caruso School of Law, the clinics prioritize pedagogy and design the practice to serve teaching. Good teaching and training requires good lawyering and effective, excellent practice, so the clinical faculty design their practices, select clients, and choose cases that will advance the students' formation while providing competent, ethical service to clients. This necessarily requires some limitation to the scope and complexity of the practice, because the supervising professors aim to give the students as much independence, autonomy, responsibility, and client contact as possible. By establishing clear expectations with clients about work on discrete matters, students can assume central responsibility for their work and the client relationship in the clinic. This serves the clients well and accelerates the students' learning and training.

At the heart of clinical pedagogy are the methods of non-directive supervision and reflective practice. Non-directive supervision is an approach through which a teacher does not give orders that a student must follow but leads a process of questions, analysis, and inquiry that leads a student to make their own assessments and decisions about a matter, issue, or problem. For example, if a client asks a student whether a certain transaction will risk its tax-exempt status, the professor will not tell the student what to say or what to do to find out. Rather, the professor will ask the student how the student plans to approach the question, what the student plans to do to analyze the issue, and determine the answer or advice for the client. The professor will be available for guidance, advice, direction,

and encouragement, but the student will bear principal responsibility for research, analysis, counsel and communication with the client. The professor will review and approve the final product, but the student should bear the weight of obligation, anxiety, responsibility, and duty to the client. This ensures good service to the client while moving the student through emotional, cognitive and professional development.

Alongside non-directive supervision, good clinical pedagogy relies on constant reflective practice.² This is a progressive cycle of preparation, performance, and reflection at every phase of a student's experience. The objective is to equip a student with judgment and wisdom sufficient for the critical decisions and challenges they will face in practice. With each new matter or task, the professor will guide the student's preparation, with direct training and persistent inquiry about the student's work. Then, the student will perform the task, largely without direct supervision, so that they must rely on themselves and their own preparation for the moment. When the task is complete, the student returns to the supervisor to reflect on the performance and outcome, with critical questions and observations about what went well or poorly, with clear lessons to implement in the future. With countless variations and context, the students and teacher engage in this cycle in each new context so that the student gains the benefit of the experience, with deepening wisdom, maturing judgment, and cautious confidence that will flourish beyond the clinic course.

TEACHING THEORIES, METHODS, AND THE THIRD APPRENTICESHIP

At the heart of the Community Justice Clinic is the work of teaching and training students how to be excellent, ethical lawyers through non-directive supervision and reflective pedagogies. In essence, this means that the supervising professor generates opportunities for students to practice with extensive client contact, reflection, and critical, creative independence to help clients solve problems and achieve their goals. The basic role of any lawyer is to meet and know a client, spot their problems and issues,

² See Timothy Casey, *Reflective Practice in Legal Education: The Stages of Reflection*, 20 CLINICAL L. REV. 317 (2014).

identify their goals, map a path forward toward that goal, then accompany the client on that path.

In theoretical terms, this is the “third apprenticeship” of professional education. In 2007, the book, *Educating Lawyers: Preparation for the Practice of Law*, edited by William Sutton and others, commonly known as the Carnegie Report, outlined three critical components of legal education and training. Each of these components are necessary and build on one another toward the preparation of young lawyers. The first is the Cognitive Apprenticeship, composed of doctrinal classes that teach substantive law and how to analyze it. These are usually traditional law school classes that teach students to “think like a lawyer.”

The second is the Practice and Skills Apprenticeship, composed of simulations, legal research and writing, trial advocacy, moot courts and technical skills. These are technical courses that teach students how to do things that lawyers do with craft, skill, and precision.

The third is the Professional Identity and Purpose apprenticeship. These courses and experiences synthesize knowledge of the law with lawyerly technique and craft in the service of a client. This involves actual experience so that students learn how to “be a lawyer,” not merely to think like one. This is the role of law school clinics, to lead students through the process of analyzing the law and practicing their skills in the service of real clients with whom they must communicate and collaborate.

In technical terms, the Community Justice Clinic’s syllabus includes program learning outcomes and student learning outcomes that conform to the university’s curricular assessment systems. From the Spring 2022 syllabus, these are the program learning outcomes for the Community Justice Clinic. Students will demonstrate:

- Knowledge and understanding of substantive law;
- Proficiency in legal analysis and critical reasoning;
- Proficiency in legal research and in written and oral communication;
- Professional lawyering skills;
- A knowledge and understanding of a lawyer’s moral, ethical, and professional responsibilities; and
- Awareness of their responsibility to society, including providing pro bono services.

And these are the student learning outcomes setting out goals for students in the clinic:

- Use their substantive knowledge of the area of law in which they practice, including nonprofit formation, governance and compliance, and the areas of law necessary to advocate and advise clinic clients;
- Practice research, writing and professional communication skills;
- Practice critical lawyering skills, including analysis and case evaluation, interviewing, fact gathering, negotiating, advising, counseling and advocating for clients and causes;
- Demonstrate judgment, wisdom, discipline and legal decision-making practices;
- Operate within the dynamics of practice with real clients, adversaries, courts, lawmakers and related professions and continue students' preparation to join the profession;
- Prepare for their formation as ethical, effective professionals;
- Assess the role of lawyers in our social, political and legal systems;
- Identify and assess issues of justice, morality and ethics in their practice, the law and the communities in which they work;
- Relate toward their own sense of calling, vocation and practical interest in their future work;
- Appraise their role and performance as a professional and engage with discipline and deliberation in self-criticism, lifelong learning and growth; and
- Prepare for practice and progress toward professionalism by sharing lessons, insights and experiences gleaned by other students in other field placements.

In practical terms, the goal of the clinic is for students to be as ready as they can be to serve clients when they graduate with competence and confidence, to learn and adapt with wisdom and sound judgment, to communicate with clarity and compassion, to bring their knowledge and skills to bear in the service of a client who trusts them. This means that students must understand and bear the ethical and moral weight of a client's life, liberty, family, fortune, and dreams, even as they practice clear communication, strategic and tactical decision making, research and analysis, drafting and editing, advocacy and negotiation, advice and counsel.

To these ends, the clinic begins each semester with a front-loaded schedule of substantive law and technical skills, then progresses toward sessions in which students gain more experience, responsibility, and time for reflection and work during class. In the second week of class, students must learn the basics of the laws governing nonprofits in California and the United States. To accelerate their training, however, the students must teach this to each other. The professor assigns pairs of students to prepare presentations on various aspects of nonprofits, corporations, and tax law then present these to each other. The students must study and learn the substance, and they also gain practice in communication, research, and collaboration with each other early in the semester. This exercise combines the first and second apprenticeships in short order to prepare them for contacting their clients together.

In the next early class sessions, students discuss the role of lawyers and relationships with clients, with a specific focus on the steps and ethics of taking on a new client and beginning a new matter. In clinical teaching, students often benefit from observing the discrete component parts of a process and relationship, even if those components are rarely discrete or linear in real life. In these exercises and discussions, the teacher and students are able to examine and discuss the intricate beats of client communication and counsel, so that when they reach out for their first interviews, they have a better sense of the expectations and dynamics necessary for a strong start.

Across all of the early sessions and throughout the course, the professor and students consider and examine the ethics and rules of professional responsibility that govern the practice and guide their work with clients. This begins with a strident discussion of confidentiality and the policies that govern data security and practices in the legal clinics. These conversations continue in their richest depth as issues and situations arise with clients and matters, especially involving conflicts of interests, moral qualms, and truth telling. Students begin to see that ethical issues do not announce themselves but arise in any context and case, requiring vigilance and principle to maintain an ethical practice.

Strong writing is essential to any law practice. In the Community Justice Clinic, virtually all of the students' work product and service to clients is in writing: research memos, opinion letters, articles of incorporation and

bylaws, leases and contracts, and other documents. The professor commits an early class session on good style, form, and advice for effective legal writing, emphasizing accessibility and clarity for readers in multiple contexts. Much of the best teaching and learning happens in the latter phases of the semester when the students submit drafts for review and approval from the professor. Then the professor can offer constructive critiques, suggestions, edits and revisions with detailed explanations of guidance.

Case rounds are the signature pedagogy of clinical legal education in the United States.³ These are facilitated discussions in which students present their work for clients to the rest of the class, seeking constructive feedback, posing questions, identifying issues, and sharing lessons that they have learned in their work. In rounds, students will learn from each other and accelerate their own experiences by receiving insights from each other. This may be a simple round of updates and questions from students, or it may be a deeper, focused conversation on a specific theme emerging from the students' cases, or a long discussion of a single case. In the Community Justice Clinic, most class sessions include rounds in some form, and many sessions are only extensive case rounds. Once students have covered the basics of the law and skills they will need in the clinic, the greatest teaching and learning in the clinic comes during rounds. In rounds, students must communicate and critique their own work, and they will recognize the vital value of collaboration with their peers.

During the latter half of the semester, the professor assigns the students to choose one of their clients and to tell their stories to the class. This is an exercise in intentional storytelling with multiple functions. To answer certain intentional questions during their presentations, the students must research their clients' origins, missions, purposes, personalities, and contexts. They examine the charitable and justice work that the clients undertake in their communities, then locate the discrete legal matters the clinic is handling within the larger contexts of the clients' histories. This makes an implicit lesson specifically explicit for the students, that knowing the client well will make the discrete legal work more meaningful and valuable

³ See Susan Bryant & Elliott Milstein, *Rounds: A "Signature Pedagogy" for Clinical Education?*, 14 CLINICAL L. REV. 195 (2007); Elizabeth Cooper, *The Case for Structured Rounds*, in TRANSFORMING THE EDUCATION OF LAWYERS: THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CLINIC PEDAGOGY (Carolina 2014).

to the client. It emphasizes the need to know a client well. By discussing the clients' work, the stories spark rich and serious discussions about the issues of injustice, inequity, coercion, and struggle that their constituents face, and it deepens the students' understanding of lawyers' work in the world. The students recognize more clearly that their discrete legal tasks contribute to critical work for human dignity and access to justice.

Throughout the semester, the students and professor enter into focused, personal conversations about life as a lawyer, squaring careers with personal values, finding meaning in their vocations and employment, and developing wisdom and resilience. The legal profession has a long history of tendencies toward poor mental health, failing relationships, depression, substance abuse, vicarious trauma, and burnout.⁴ The hope of these discussions is to equip students with honest expectations about the realities and pressures of the profession, then to equip them with hope, perspectives, and ideas that may enable them to chart fruitful, vibrant, and healthy paths through meaningful careers.

The Community Justice Clinic uses a formative assessment tool three times during the semester. This is a rubric with a comprehensive list of lawyering skills and virtues based on the work of Shultz and Zedeck.⁵ For each skill and attribute, the teacher or students may assess their readiness as “developing,” “competent,” or “exemplary.” This assessment is formative and has no bearing on the students' grades or credit for the course. Rather, the objective is to give students a sense of the scope and expectations for the profession and the work they need to do to be ready for practice after graduation. The professor gives the students the blank form at the beginning of the semester with instruction only to read and consider it so that students can calibrate their own objectives for improvement. At the mid-term, the professor asks the students to evaluate themselves honestly and confidentially, for their own motivation, admonition, and critique, and to

⁴ Brittany Stringfellow Otey, *Buffering Burnout: Preparing the Online Generation for the Occupational Hazards of the Legal Profession*, 24 S. CAL. INTERDISC. L.J. 147 (2014), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2434766.

⁵ Marjorie Schultz & Sheldon Zedeck, *Predicting Lawyer Effectiveness: A New Assessment for Use in Law School Admission Decisions*, CELS 2009 4th Annual Conference on Empirical Legal Studies Paper (2009), https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=1442118.

help the professor identify areas to cultivate for each student. At the end of the term, the professor evaluates each student based on supervising and observing them all semester. This a parting reflection from the professor, often with a personal note to encourage the student in their next steps toward practice after graduation.

PRACTICE

The Community Justice Clinic has a client-centered practice, meaning that it supports its clients' visions, goals, and missions. The clinic does not seek to advance specific causes itself, but it pulls alongside its clients who are working in their communities to advance social justice, human rights, economic development, access to resources, and empowerment for people who are often excluded. To strengthen and support its clients, the Community Justice Clinic offers three main practice areas: corporate practice, general transactional and civil practice, and policy research. The clinic does not litigate, but it does advise clients on litigation and represents clients in negotiations and related matters.

Corporate Practice

The daily work of the clinic is incorporation and governance of nonprofit corporations. Clinic students assist clients by guiding them through the steps for launching public benefit corporations in California, from drafting and filing articles of incorporation and crafting and adopting bylaws to filing required forms with the California secretary of state and the attorney general. Once incorporated, students assist clients in their applications for tax exempt status with the Internal Revenue Service and the California Franchise Tax Board. Among many others, the clinic has helped incorporate tax-exempt, public benefit corporations that provide after-school tutoring and mentorship for public school students in under-resourced neighborhoods in Los Angeles; that accelerate access to temporary housing for people vulnerable to eviction; that advance market-based approaches to soil conservation and resilient agriculture; that provide sustainable gardening projects in homeless shelters.

The clinic also advises clients on compliance and good governance. Many clients are small nonprofits whose founders and directors are related

or work closely together, and this can raise issues of loyalty and conflicts of interest. The clinic often advises clients how to structure their boards, officers, and transactions to avoid risk to tax-exempt status and to maintain sound, ethical practices. This is good lawyering for students to identify and navigate ethical and legal issues arising across complex and dynamic relationships. For example, a team of students helped a newly incorporated nonprofit draft a compliant contract between it and an affiliated for-profit real-estate company, where several of the board members overlapped, to provide some housing units specifically for women and teens who had become homeless.

In one particularly challenging case, clinic students advised a church and helped revise its bylaws after extended, vitriolic litigation among its members; several members claimed a right to depose a minister and raised hard questions about who was a member and who could lead the community. The clinic students met with the church leadership after that litigation ended to help the community draft and adopt standards and rules that would bring clarity, fairness, and peace to the community and its hard decisions in the future.

General and Transactional Practice

The second thread of practice in the clinic is advice and representation in general civil and transactional practice. This does not include litigation, but it does include contracts and leases, negotiations with potential opponents, and assisting clients with other matters that are essential to their charitable and justice work in the world.

For example, a client had an idea to develop a mobile app to provide access to medical care and information to indigenous women in Central and South America. The client had a counterpart organization in Central America and leadership from the indigenous communities it sought to serve. Because many of the women were able to communicate best with cell phones, even at great distances from urban centers and traditional hospitals and clinics, the nonprofit began work to develop an app to promote telehealth and connection with doctors and nurses. The clinic researched and advised the client on digital privacy laws in U.S., international, and local jurisdictions where they planned to launch the app. That research

informed the design and deployment of the technology that would potentially help thousands of indigenous women in outlying villages.

In another case, the clinic represented a small, nonprofit farm with missions to advance farmworker rights and opportunities; promote sustainable, organic, small-scale agriculture; and feed its community, which has few resources. The clinic helped negotiate multiple leases for farmland with owners, and a student worked up a sales agreement for a large, refrigerated container when the client relocated its principal farming operations.

As clients mature, the clinic takes on new issues and matters that arise long after incorporation. For some clients, this has meant expanding into areas of intellectual property and more sophisticated business matters. The clinic has developed a reliable, basic practice in applying for trademarks to create new value for nonprofit clients as they advance in their work.

Policy and Research Practice

The Community Justice Clinic is a client-centered practice and does not seek or adopt specific positions or projects on its own. Very often, its clients engage the clinic to research and analyze policies that will advance their work for social justice and human rights. Clinic students have researched constitutional and statutory laws on behalf of a homeless shelter looking to navigate a thicket of issues to ensure safety, public health, and access to its facilities while dignifying the rights of people inside and outside the shelter. For another client, clinic students have evaluated U.S. policies and practices related to asylum-seekers and refugees under international human rights laws and treaties.

Another client works with counterpart organizations and civil-society groups in multiple developing nations. To support its work, the Community Justice Clinic has undertaken multiple projects to research and document civil rights and entitlement laws in various countries with work product that the client then shares with partners in the field to empower people in great need. In collaboration with an international client and several partner clinics in South America, the clinic has undertaken critical research on human trafficking laws in every nation in the Americas, to support the work of law reform and remedies for people in coerced and exploitative labor across borders.

CONCLUSION

In its first eight years, about one-hundred and fifty law students in the Community Justice Clinic have served about sixty clients on hundreds of matters. Students gain experience, insight, and formation through practice with organizations with diverse needs. The clients improve and expand their capacities for service, charity, and justice among people and communities in great need. This advances the law school's missions of education and service, and it instills competence, confidence, and virtue in young lawyers with commitment to excellent, ethical, generous practice as public citizens.

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APPENDIX: THE LEGAL CLINICS AT PEPPERDINE CARUSO SCHOOL OF LAW

THE LEGAL AID CLINIC

The Legal Aid Clinic was Pepperdine's first clinical program, launched through student initiatives in 2001 to serve clients on Skid Row in Downtown Los Angeles. Its director, Professor Brittany Stringfellow Otey, was a third-year law student in the inaugural clinic and returned after a couple of years of practice to lead the clinic for the next two decades of teaching and practice. The Legal Aid Clinic operates at the Union Rescue Mission to serve hundreds of clients each year with a general civil practice to help people break cycles of homelessness and extreme poverty.

THE NINTH CIRCUIT APPELLATE ADVOCACY CLINIC

The Ninth Circuit Appellate Advocacy Clinic is a collaboration with the firm of Horvitz and Levy in Los Angeles and the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The clinic directors are partners at the firm, first Jeremy Rosen, now Curt Cutting. They work with the appeals court's pro bono referral panel to identify meritorious cases by pro se appellants who need able counsel. Under supervision, students receive the record, write principal and reply briefs, and handle oral argument before the Ninth Circuit. These are typically civil rights cases, often representing prisoners. The clinic has a remarkable record of success while providing rare appellate experience for law students.

THE MEDIATION CLINIC

The Mediation Clinic, now under the direction of Professor Stephanie Blondell, was the first clinic in the law school's Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution. The Mediation Clinic operates in several courthouses of the Los Angeles Superior Court to mediate small claims between pro se litigants. Students receive intensive mediator training before attending docket calls in small claims court; there they mediate cases, usually under court order or direction, before the parties try their cases. They have a very high settlement rate, assisting parties achieve positive outcomes, relieving the courts' dockets, and providing exceptional experience for future litigators and mediators.

THE SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVOCACY CLINIC AND THE REFUGEE AND ASYLUM CLINIC

The Special Education Advocacy Clinic and the Refugee and Asylum Clinic both provided important practices and student experience in the early years of the law school's clinical program. The Special Education Advocacy Clinic, under the direction of former Professor Richard Peterson, represented public school students and their families in cases seeking reasonable accommodations for disabilities in public schools. These were often negotiations or administrative proceedings to protect the students' civil rights and assure access to education under the law. The Refugee and Asylum Clinic, under the general direction of former Judge Bruce Einhorn, represented clients in cases for asylum and immigration determinations in immigration courts. For funding and structural concerns, the law school wound up both of these valuable clinics by 2016.

THE RESTORATION AND JUSTICE CLINIC

In 2015, Professor Tanya Asim Cooper joined the faculty to launch the Restoration and Justice Clinic with a practice serving victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking. Its practice includes civil hearings and trials on behalf of victims of intimate partner abuse and significant work with expungements and vacatur on behalf of liberated victims of human trafficking in Los Angeles.

THE LOW INCOME TAXPAYER CLINIC

In 2016, with a significant, ongoing grant from the Internal Revenue Service, the law school began the Low Income Taxpayer Clinic under the direction of Professor Isai Cortez; it also practices on Skid Row and provides critical advocacy for poor clients seeking relief from burdensome tax debts or penalties that keep them from rising from poverty and homelessness. This provides students with experience in tax practice and advocacy in administrative law.

THE STARTUP LAW CLINIC

In 2017, the Palmer Center for Entrepreneurship and the Law founded the Startup Law Clinic under the direction of Professor Sam Wu to provide

expert legal services to new businesses in the technology sector, assisting them with incorporation, finance, and protecting intellectual property. This provides experience for students interested in entrepreneurship, incorporation, and the business matters of new enterprises.

THE DISASTER RELIEF CLINIC

Later in 2017, after Hurricane Harvey struck Texas, the law school experimented with a pro bono project to assist clients with remote FEMA appeals. After several wildfires, including the catastrophic Woolsey Fire in Malibu and on the Pepperdine campus, the law school founded the Disaster Relief Clinic under the supervision of this author and Professor Sophia Hamilton, to provide services to clients suffering losses from natural disasters.⁶ Students gain experience in client-centered, trauma-informed, triaged practice with FEMA and insurance matters, rental and housing issues, and rebuilding challenges. The clinic continued until 2022, when the law school decided to pause it but to maintain resources, finances, and forms to relaunch it quickly when the next inevitable natural disaster strikes Southern California.

THE FAITH AND FAMILY MEDIATION CLINIC

In 2018, with a gift from Chavi Hertz and in collaboration with the Jewish Divorce Assistance Center, the law school started the Faith and Family Mediation Clinic under the direction of Professor Sarah Nissel and Yona Elishis. This is an innovative practice providing mediation services to Orthodox Jewish families in divorce proceedings simultaneously in civil and religious courts, providing students with intense experience in family law, cross-cultural and interreligious practice.

THE RELIGIOUS LIBERTY CLINIC

In 2022, the law school founded the Religious Liberty Clinic in the Nootbaar Institute for Law, Religious and Ethics, in collaboration with the Becket Firm and Jones Day, and under the direction of Professors Eric Rassbach and Michael Helfand. The clinic has an amicus brief practice

⁶ Jeffrey R. Baker, Christine Cerniglia, Davida Finger, Luz Hererra & JoNel Newman, *In Times of Chaos: Creating Blueprints for Law School Responses to Natural Disasters*, 80 LA. L. REV. 423 (2020).

for organizations and communities with stakes in First Amendment free exercise and establishment cases. The students gain experience in sophisticated appellate practice and advocacy under the supervision of expert specialists.

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