WILLIAM S. RICHARDSON SCHOOL OF LAW
LAW STUDENT PUBLIC SERVICE
(PRO BONO) PROGRAM

Pro Bono Program
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WILLIAM S. RICHARDSON SCHOOL OF LAW

OVERVIEW--LAW STUDENT PUBLIC SERVICE (PRO BONO) PROGRAM

Introduction

The preparation of lawyers who recognize the importance of their public service obligations is an important objective of the William S. Richardson School of Law. In 1992 the William S. Richardson School of Law adopted a Law Student Public Service graduation requirement. The class of 1995 was the first graduating class obliged to fulfill the requirement. The Law Student Public Service (better known as "Pro Bono") Program introduces the concept of pro bono service to law students and is an integral part of the academic program at the law school. It provides law students the opportunity to address unmet legal needs in the community while enriching their legal education.

The Pro Bono Program at the William S. Richardson School of Law was one of the first law school pro bono programs in the nation and is thought to be the first student-initiated mandatory program in the nation. In April 1991, a student organization, Advocates for Public Interest Law, presented a formal proposal to the faculty. Recognizing both the long tradition in the legal profession to serve the underprivileged and to ensure legal access for all as well as a national movement in its infancy toward mandatory pro bono service in the legal profession, the student leaders wanted the law school to foster in all law students a life-time professional commitment to public legal service by creating a pro bono graduation requirement.

Students are required to locate and to provide law-related pro bono work under the supervision of an attorney, law school faculty or dean, or other supervisor, as approved by the Pro Bono Program Director. The definition of law-related pro bono work is construed liberally and includes law related work with any federal, state, or local government agency, court or legislature. Law students are encouraged to provide a portion of their pro bono service for indigent clients. The pro bono work is meant to be law-related in nature, not clerical or administrative. Additionally, an evaluation component that encourages the student to discuss and evaluate his or her experience with the Pro Bono Program Director is built into the program.

Successful completion of the pro bono service requirement is a condition for graduation. The pro bono requirement began with the entering class of August 1992. All law school admittees are given notice of the pro bono graduation requirement when acceptance letters are sent to them.

Pro Bono Program Contact Information

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Pro Bono Program Guidelines

1. Except for transfer students, law students who enroll in the William S. Richardson School of Law must complete 60 hours of law-related pro bono service as a graduation requirement. Transfer students must complete a total of 10 hours of pro bono service for every semester enrolled in the William S. Richardson School of Law.

2. Law students are solely responsible for locating pro bono work and qualified supervisors and for the timely submission of required documentation, including registration forms, time sheets, student evaluations and supervisor evaluations. Students are required to maintain their own copies of all paperwork submitted. The deadline for graduating students for completion of their pro bono requirements, including submission of all required documentation, is the last scheduled day of classes of the semester of graduation. Due to past student abuses, effective with the 2004-2005 school year, students are required to file a petition to the faculty to request any extension of the deadline, based on extraordinary circumstances.

3. Except for certain restrictions on the first year law student and preadmission student pro bono activity, the 60-hour requirement may be fulfilled during one or more semesters and during the winter, spring, and summer recesses. First year law students may only perform approved pro bono service starting with the winter recess of their first year after completion of examinations for the first semester. Non-matriculated pre-admission students are authorized to perform up to 12 hours pro bono service during the spring semester and up to 20 hours during the summer recess, and only with the pre-approval of the Pre-admission Director.

4. The 60-hour pro bono work requirement may be fulfilled with one or more approved agencies, individuals, organizations, or projects. Students are encouraged to perform at least 20 hours of pro bono service with an organization receiving funding from the State of Hawai‘i Judiciary’s Indigent Legal Assistance Fund or with an attorney or organization providing similar legal services to indigent clients in Hawai‘i or in another jurisdiction.

5. Pro bono work must be approved by the Pro Bono Program Director. To confirm that the placement will be approved, students are encouraged to seek approval in advance of commencement of their pro bono work. For pre-admission students, pro bono work must be approved in advance by the Pre-admission Director prior to submission to the Pro Bono Advisor. Students are required to maintain their own copies of all paperwork submitted.

Pro Bono Work Criteria

1. Law-related pro bono work must conform to one of the following criteria:
   a. Indigent Legal Assistance--Poverty Law: Legal services in civil and criminal matters of importance to a client who does not have the financial
resources to compensate counsel, including legal services with state and federal public defenders offices;

Legal services provided to organizations receiving funding from the State of Hawai’i Judiciary’s Indigent Legal Assistance Fund (ILAF) meet this definition. Examples of ILAF providers are: Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline, Hawai’i Disability Rights Center, Kokua Legal Services, Inc., Legal Aid Society of Hawai’i, Na Loio—Immigrant Rights and Public Interest Legal Center, Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation, Senior’s Law Program (Kaua‘i), University of Hawai’i Elder Law Program, Volunteer Legal Services Hawai’i.

b. Civil and Public Rights Law: Legal representation involving important interests belonging to every citizen or to a significant segment of the public;

c. Non-Profit/Public Organization Representation: Legal service to charitable, religious, civic, and educational institutions in matters in furtherance of their organizational purpose.

d. Government Legal Services: Legal service in the executive, legislative, or judicial branches of government.

e. Administration of Justice: Activity, whether under bar auspices or otherwise, which is designed to increase the availability of legal service, or otherwise improve the administration of justice;

f. Legal Education: Activity under the auspices of a law faculty member or dean which is designed to improve or enhance teaching skills, or assist students with their legal education.

g. Environmental Law: Legal representation of environmental organizations dedicated to the protection, preservation, and wise use of the environment;

h. Native Rights Law: Rights that emanate from the status of native people including Hawaiians as an aboriginal people and from the political status of the Hawaiian Kingdom prior to 1893.

2. Pro bono work must be uncompensated and must not be work done in fulfillment of a requirement for any other academic credit and must be work for which the supervisor does not charge a fee, or charges a substantially reduced fee or is working on behalf of a non-profit, public interest, or governmental organization or law school.

3. Pro bono work must be law related, must be supervised by an attorney, a law school
faculty member, law school dean or other qualified supervisor and should be approved in advance by the Pro Bono Program Director. Law students are not authorized to act as supervisors.

Pro Bono Program Director

1. The Dean of the Law School designates a faculty member to serve as the Law School Pro Bono Program Director.

2. The Pro Bono Program Director:
   a. Provides guidance, counseling and assistance to law students and authorized supervisors concerning placement as well as questions about and/or problems with the Pro Bono Program;
   b. Supervises pro bono program staff, maintains records of the progress of each law student and submits pro bono completion notices to students and to the assistant dean;
   c. Maintains a list of agencies, individuals, organizations, and projects that qualify for placement under the pro bono criteria and distributes information about the Pro Bono Program and possible pro bono opportunities to law students;
   d. Is the approval authority for law student pro bono work that satisfies the pro bono criteria. Note that only the faculty may grant extensions to the pro bono service completion deadline for graduation. Such extensions are only granted for extraordinary circumstances upon petition by the student to the faculty.

Pro Bono Program Committee

1. The Dean of the Law School appoints at least three persons from the law school community to serve on the Law School Pro Bono Program Committee. One of the members is the Pro Bono Program Director.

2. The Pro Bono Program Committee:
   a. Rules upon law student appeals concerning law student proposals for pro bono work projects or concerning credit for service provided;
   b. Make general policy decisions to assist the efficient administration of the
program;

c. Amend provisions of pro bono service policies, without reducing any requirements, for the purpose of enhancing the efficient operation of the Law Student Public Service Program.

**Pro Bono Program Office and Administration**

The Pro Bono Program has its office in the law school building and employs administrative staff under the supervision of the Pro Bono Program Director. The program is currently housed in the office of the University of Hawai‘i Elder Law Program (UHELP). The program record keeping system utilizes both electronic records and paper files. It is the student’s individual responsibility to provide required registration forms, time sheets, and student and supervisor evaluation forms. Students are required to maintain their own copies of all paperwork submitted. Students are reminded of their obligation through their initial welcome packets, formal orientation presentations and periodically through e-mail.

Although law students are required to secure their own placements, the Pro Bono Program Director provides guidance and counseling to law students, maintains a list of potential pro bono placements in binders of agencies for student review and post requests for services electronically to all law students. Potential supervisors should note that the program has been well received by the community and requests for services sometimes out-pace student supply.

**Ground Rules/Professional Responsibility/Confidentiality**

Students participating in the William S. Richardson School of Law Pro Bono Program are not covered by the so called "student practice rule" of the Rules of the Hawai‘i State Supreme Court, thus they may not give legal advice, or make formal appearances in court or otherwise engage in the practice of law. Nevertheless, many of the students during the course of a pro bono placement work on actual cases involving real clients. Law students should be aware that, even though they are still students and not licensed attorneys, the Code of Professional Responsibility still applies because they are working under the supervision of a licensed attorney. Hawai‘i’s Rule of Professional Conduct 1.6 expressly states that a lawyer and those working for the lawyer may not reveal information relating to representation of a client unless the client consents or the disclosure is otherwise permitted. Finally, law students are warned that an attorney violating this rule risks revocation of his or her license to practice law. A law student violating this rule risks not being licensed.

**Outcomes and Experiences**

The Pro Bono requirement includes an obligation that students and supervisors complete registration, time sheet and evaluation forms which includes the nature of the supervising agency and scope of work, the number of hours of service performed, and other evaluation data.
Among the non-profit legal services agencies served have been the Legal Aid Society, Volunteer Legal Services Hawaii, Domestic Violence Clearinghouse and Legal Hotline, Native Hawaiian Legal Corporation, an Immigration Law Project, and the University of Hawai‘i Elder Law Program as well as other law related organizations such as American Civil Liberties Union. Law students have served in both Hawai‘i and federal courts. Law students provided services under the supervision of attorneys in various county, state and federal departments and agencies including the City and County of Honolulu and other counties’ Corporation Counsels, Office of Hawaiian Affairs, the Hawai‘i Department of the Attorney General, the U.S. Attorney’s Office, the Hawai‘i Civil Rights Commission, and the Equal Employment Opportunities Commission. Students also provided pro bono services in several mainland states, U.S. Territories, and several foreign countries such as China, Thailand, Cambodia, Japan, and Scotland. Finally they provided extensive services under the supervision of private practice attorneys and law school professors who were engaged in pro bono service projects.

Since the inception of the program, law students have provided an average of approximately 75 hours of service each. Some have completed exactly 60 hours and several have provided over 300 hours of legal services to various organizations and agencies. In recent years, with a graduating class increasing to approximately 100 students this equates to over 7,500 hours of pro bono legal services per year. Over the initial ten-year life of the program, we have exceeded 50,000 hours of pro bono services provided by law students as a result of the program. The William S. Richardson School of Law has garnered substantial recognition, respect and appreciation from the community as a result of this innovative program. The faculty, in adopting a pro bono graduation requirement as well as enforcing its guidelines, has acknowledged a long-term commitment to the program as well as to the ideal.

Forms

These are forms currently being used in the Pro Bono Program. Forms are available in electronic format at http://www.hawaii.edu/probono and in paper format in the Associate Dean's Office. Students are required to submit a registration form, time sheets, student’s evaluation and supervisor’s evaluation and to maintain copies of all paperwork submitted.

To open, right click on link. These forms are Microsoft Word documents.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FORM</th>
<th>WHEN NEEDED</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Letter to Supervisor</strong>: Information to potential supervisor; understanding of supervisor of Pro Bono Program ground rules.</td>
<td>To be submitted to potential supervisor along with registration form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Registration Form</strong>: Information about proposed work; agreement of supervising attorney and student; Pro Bono Program Director’s approval</td>
<td>Before starting new pro bono work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Sheet</strong>: Records hours of service and types of work done. Requires signature of student and supervising attorney.</td>
<td>Whenever significant service is finished. Separate time sheets must be kept for each agency the student serves.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student's Evaluation:</strong> of pro bono experience</td>
<td>Upon completion of service for a given agency/supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Supervisor's Evaluation:</strong> of pro bono experience</td>
<td>Upon completion of service for a given agency/supervisor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student Petition to Faculty</strong> (No specific format but must be based on extraordinary circumstances)</td>
<td>To request an extension of the deadline to complete pro bono service as well as to submit all required pro bono paperwork.</td>
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