Experimental Externship Proposal

Rural Domestic Violence Legal Services
Legal Aid Services of Oregon, Klamath Falls Regional Office

Summary of proposed externship

Representing victims of domestic violence in a rural setting at the Klamath Falls Regional Office of Legal Aid Services of Oregon (LASO) for a full-time externship during the Fall, Spring or Summer Semesters.

Legal work to be performed by extern

The extern will work with low-income, rural victims of domestic violence, stalking, and sexual assault in Klamath County. The extern will assist in obtaining and enforcing restraining orders as well as providing other assistance related to family law matters.

Rural victims of domestic violence often have difficulty accessing legal services because of the distances involved and related transportation difficulties, a lack of information about services, limited treatment options, and the challenges inherent in attempting to protect domestic violence victims in closely-knit, remote communities. Legal advocates in this setting must confront these distinctive features of rural practice. Thus the extern will learn about representing victims of domestic violence in this unique setting, gaining insight into the practical challenges of providing legal services to domestic violence victims in a rural environment.

Proposed term(s) and number of placements

Fall, Spring and Summer; one placement per semester.

Credit hours

12 units of Pass/Fail credits representing 40 hours per week at the placement over the 14-week Fall or Spring Semester.

6 units of Pass/Fail credits representing 40 hours per week at the placement over the 8-week Summer Semester.

Responsibility for awarding or denying course credit rests with the faculty supervisor.
Faculty supervisor

Merle Weiner

Field supervisor and relevant qualifications:

Marla Cummins, Regional Director of the Klamath Falls LASO office.

Prior to her position with the LASO, Ms. Cummins was in private practice in Klamath Falls and had been the Court Administrator and Chief Clerk for the Klamath Trial Court. Supporting Ms. Cummins in her externship supervision will be Robin Selig, a family law specialist with the State Support Unit, administered by the Oregon Law Center, and Pat Vallerand, Domestic Violence/Family Law Clinic Supervisor, Lane County Legal Aid and Advocacy Center.

Writing requirement

The extern shall submit to the faculty and field supervisors a weekly reflection journal. At the end of the term the extern shall submit to the faculty supervisor, the field supervisor, and the Director of Clinics and Externships (Director) a five-page, double-spaced paper of approximately 2,500 words reflecting on the externship experience.

A full-time extern during the Fall or Spring Semester must also submit to the faculty and field supervisors at the end of the term a major paper or similar research or work product related to the field placement. The faculty supervisor must approve the paper topic in advance.

Course component

Over the course of the semester, the extern shall participate remotely in regularly scheduled tutorials with the faculty supervisor and/or the Director.

Evaluation of extern

Mid-semester and at the end of the term, the field supervisor will submit to the faculty supervisor and Director a written evaluation of the extern.

Student eligibility

Students must have completed at least 30 credits of law school courses in the regular classroom setting and be in good academic standing with a grade point average of at least 2.0 to participate in this externship. Prior enrollment in the Domestic Violence Seminar, Family Law, Evidence and Trial Practice is strongly encouraged but not required.
In addition, the extern must have access to a car to participate in the externship.

The faculty supervisor will select the extern after reviewing submitted applications.

Reimbursement

Pursuant to a grant from the Klamath Medical Service Bureau Foundation Board, the extern may receive up to $1,000 reimbursement for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. The extern must provide to the faculty supervisor proof of expenses through submission of a travel log and receipts in order to receive reimbursement. Reimbursement is contingent on the availability of grant funds.

Date of submission to Curriculum Committee: March 11, 2008
Submitted by: Joe Metcalfe, Merle Weiner