

California Western School of Law Offers Diverse Programs

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California Western programs enrich law school experience, community

As a law school devoted to the big picture, California Western hosts a number of institutes, centers and programs that enrich students' law school experience while enabling California Western to have a substantive impact on the broader society. Professors and students involved in the programs shape real-life legal events — whether freeing wrongfully convicted inmates in California or offering pro bono legal advice to the indigent and underserved in San Diego.

The California Innocence Project is a clinical program dedicated to the release of wrongfully convicted inmates and providing an outstanding educational experience for the students enrolled in the clinic. Founded in 1999 as a part of the national network of Innocence Projects, CIP reviews more than 2,000 claims of innocence from California inmates each year.

Co-directed by Justin Brooks and Jan Stiglitz, with assistance from Litigation Coordinator Alex Simpson, the program has secured the release of five men serving a total of 75 years behind bars for crimes they did not commit.

Students who participate in the year-long clinic work alongside CIP staff attorneys on cases where there is strong evidence of factual innocence. They assist in investigation and litigation by locating and re-interviewing witnesses, examining new evidence, filing motions, securing experts and providing support to attorneys during evidentiary hearings and trials.

The Community Law Project at California Western is part of a unique medical-legal pro bono initiative developed in partnership with UCSD and other organizations, including the Third Avenue Charitable Organization. This purpose of the law project is to provide basic legal advice, information and referral services for those without access to the justice system, who cannot afford private legal services, who have a small problem requiring prompt preventative care, or who would just benefit from a candid discussion with legal counsel. The project's client base includes children, indigent individuals and families, immigrants, the working poor, the abused, the elderly, the disabled, those who do not speak English as their first language and the homeless.

Coordinated by professor Linda Morton and Executive Director Anaheeta Kolah, the Community Law Project operates in cooperation with its partners to provide social, medical and legal services each week at First Lutheran Church in downtown San Diego. Locating services in the same place at the same time is convenient for clients, whose problems tend to be interconnected. The project allows California Western law students and attorney volunteers to use their classroom learning and legal expertise to contribute to this integrated med-law delivery system.

To learn more about California Western School of Law and its programs, visit www.CaliforniaWestern.edu