“We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give.”

—Winston Churchill
Open Letter from Dean Nick Allard

Dear Students,

Brooklyn Law School has a tradition of innovation, and this innovative spirit is clearly evident in the breadth of pro bono projects flourishing here.

I am enthusiastic about the work students are doing in all these projects, and believe in their importance not only because of the positive impact they have on members of the community but also the practical experience students gain through the help they provide.

Finally, I am proud that BLS students have been working to fill the justice gap created by the economy and drastic cuts to legal services organizations since long before the 50-hour pro bono requirement for admission to the New York bar was mandated by New York’s Chief Judge.

I commend the students, law school faculty and staff, and partner organizations that make these projects possible. I look forward to following your accomplishments!

Nick Allard
Joseph Crea Dean and Professor of Law
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Support and Training from the Public Service Office

The Public Service Office (PSO) offers guidance, funding, and support to pro bono projects. The PSO promotes awareness of available opportunities, helps students brainstorm new projects, and makes sure they are ready before being launched, provides essential training, and helps iron out issues as they arise.

Finding a Project: If you are interested in participating in a pro bono project, the best place to start is the Pro Bono Fair. The Fair is held once per semester, in August and January. At the Fair, each pro bono project staffs a table, answering questions and providing information on how to get involved. If you don't want to wait until the next Fair to get involved, look through this brochure and contact the projects directly or the PSO to see which projects are best for you.

Developing a Project: The PSO will provide you with step-by-step information on developing, launching, and funding a new project.

Pro Bono Resource Center: Located on the first floor of 1 Boerum Place, this space is available for pro bono students to have trainings, meetings, client interaction, and social events.

Training: Each pro bono project provides its own training, tailored to the type of work and the individuals it serves. In addition, the PSO schedules workshops throughout the academic year. These workshops focus on building the skills required for participating in nearly any project—skills that will also serve you well in your public service internship or job.

Client Intake and Interview Workshops
Learn how to effectively communicate and interact with clients to conduct successful interviews when working with pro bono projects.

Vicarious Trauma and Self-Care Workshop
Learn to recognize and manage the internalized emotional stress of working with clients in traumatic situations.

Introduction to Public Interest Law
This (one-week) intensive course covers many aspects of public service law and career readiness.

We look forward to seeing you at these events and many others throughout the year!
New York State 50-hour Pro Bono Requirement

The New York State Court of Appeals recently instituted a pro bono requirement for admission to the New York State Bar. The rule (22 NYCRR 520.16) requires persons seeking admission to the New York State Bar after January 1, 2015 to complete at least 50 hours of pro bono legal work prior to filing an application.

A few of the major features of the rule are as follows:

• The rule affects all applicants who are admitted to the bar on or after January 1, 2015.

• The requirement is a condition of admission, not of graduating, and is imposed on individual applicants to the bar, not on law schools. Accordingly, you will need to complete the required affidavit (link below) as part of your application materials for the New York bar.

• The rule requires each applicant to perform “at least 50 hours of law-related pro bono work.” Work performed for credit or for stipend may count. Further details about qualifying work are provided in the answers to questions 11 through 25 of the FAQ document linked below.

New York State Bar Admission: Pro Bono Requirement FAQs:
nycourts.gov/attorneys/probono/FAQsBarAdmission.pdf

Affidavit as to Applicant’s Compliance with the Pro Bono Requirements, Including Certification by Supervisor:
nycourts.gov/attorneys/probono/baradmissionreqs.shtml

For more information, students can contact the Public Service Office at 718-780-0689 or email publicservice@brooklaw.edu. Information is also available on BLS Connect.
Brooklyn Community Bail Fund (BCBF): Pretrial Justice Fellowship

BCBF is an innovative nonprofit that seeks to end the unnecessary incarceration of indigent misdemeanor defendants due to the inability to pay small amounts of bail. Throughout the Fall semester, participating students will attend seminars covering a variety of topics related to criminal justice policy, bail reform, and the impact of money bail on incarcerated individuals and their loved ones. Come Spring, students will work as Pretrial Justice Fellows in BCBF’s office, located in DUMBO, Brooklyn. Fellows will participate in all areas of BCBF’s operations, including determining client eligibility and paying bail; liaising between clients and public defenders, social workers, and third-party service providers; and assisting in the formulation and communication of policy recommendations. The Pretrial Justice Fellowship is affiliated with Brooklyn Law School’s new Criminal Justice Center; Fellows will have the opportunity to be a part of the Center’s activities, if they wish.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Brooklyn Community Bail Fund Pro Bono Project.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Brooklyn Community Bail Fund, www.brooklynbailfund.org; Brooklyn Law School’s Criminal Justice Center.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: There will be four (4) mandatory trainings throughout the Fall semester. In the Spring, students are expected to commit eight (8) hours per month, on average. Students interested in paying bail will need to be licensed by the New York State Department of Financial Services.

CONTACT: Email liana.goff@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Any full-time or part-time students interested in an innovative approach to criminal justice reform. This project may also be of interest to students interested in criminal defense and/or working in a public defender office.
Brooklyn Law Alternative Spring Break Trip (BLAST)

BLAST is a great opportunity for Brooklyn Law School students to spend their spring break working with legal services and other public interest organizations across the United States. Students work intensively with one another and colleagues in new communities to provide much-needed legal assistance for one week. Students interested in participating in BLAST apply to the BLS Public Service Office and are responsible for assisting in fundraising for and planning the alternative spring break trips. In previous years, students worked at the Miami-Dade County Public Defender’s Office, Miami Community Justice Project, Catholic Charities of Atlanta, Gideon’s Promise in Atlanta, and #Cut50, Rebuild the Dream’s incarceration reform initiative in Oakland.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Public Service Office.


WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Two to three trips will take place over spring break of 2017. Fundraising and planning meetings will take place before spring break. In addition, students involved in the project will be expected to contribute to planning and fundraising leading up to the spring break trips.

TRAINING: Specific training on the legal area of the project will occur once trip destinations are selected.

CONTACT: Email Karla Cabral, karla.cabral@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Any 1L, 2L, or 3L student who is looking to gain hands-on legal experience somewhere outside of New York City.
Brooklyn Trafficking Intervention Pro Bono Project (BTIPP)

Trained Brooklyn Law School JD and LLM students perform immigration intakes for foreign-born individuals who have outstanding cases in the Brooklyn Human Trafficking Intervention Court. Students will receive training and supervision from Sanctuary for Families attorneys.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Sanctuary for Families.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Wednesdays, 9:30am-12:00pm and 1:00-3:00pm at the Kings County Criminal Court at 120 Schermerhorn Street in Brooklyn. Students may assist at as many or as few clinics as they like, but will benefit most (as will the clients) after attending more sessions and developing familiarity with the issues. New participants, including part-time students, are welcome to begin participating at the beginning of each semester.

TRAINING: Trainings are held in the beginning of the fall and spring semesters. Trainings usually last from 10:00am–1:30pm in a Brooklyn Law School classroom. Dates, times, and locations will be announced prior to the training, and lunch will be provided.

CONTACT: Email Alexandra Ferlise, alexandra.ferlise@brooklaw.edu, or Anastassia Zimina, anastassia.zimina@brooklaw.edu, for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Any full-time JD or LLM students with a desire to address the needs of foreign-born individuals in the Brooklyn Human Trafficking Intervention Court. Students gain experience in direct services and exposure to legal issues involving women and immigration.
Civil Legal Advice and Resource Office (CLARO)

Assist volunteer attorneys advising consumer debtors, including victims of identity theft and predatory lenders and collectors. Help consumers through the daunting process of self-representation, learn New York civil procedure, gain experience working with clients, learn consumer law, and gain an understanding of financial justice issues affecting low-income Brooklyn residents.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: CLARO Student Action Group (CLARO/SAG).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP), Kings County Civil Court.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Thursdays, 2:30-4:30pm and 6:00-8:00pm at the Kings County Civil Court at 141 Livingston Street. Students may assist at as many or as few clinics as they like, but will benefit most (as will the clients) after attending four or more clinic sessions and developing familiarity with the issues and civil procedure involved. New participants, including part-time students, are welcome to begin participating year-round.

TRAINING: Because hands-on training has proven to be the best method to learn at CLARO, students are welcome and encouraged to begin attending sessions as soon as they desire. They will be paired with attorneys who informally guide the law students through the process. In addition, a short, non-mandatory training is held at Brooklyn Law School in the early fall, which is conducted by CLARO attorneys and current law school participants. On-site mentoring and training manuals are available at each clinic for any students who are unable to attend the training or choose to join CLARO throughout the year.

CONTACT: Email Daniel Wolf at daniel.wolf787@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Any full-time or part-time students with a desire to address the critical legal needs of low-income Brooklyn residents, as well as those with specific interest in debtor-creditor law, consumer protection, economic justice, direct services, or civil procedure. Student volunteers also get exposure to legal issues regarding banking and commercial paper.
Courtroom Advocates Project (CAP)

Assist and advocate for victims of domestic violence seeking orders of protection in New York City family courts. Students help domestic violence survivors file petitions and maintain contact as necessary to ensure that the petitioner returns for his or her next court date. Students may also advocate for the petitioner before the judge on the return date.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Legal Association for Women.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Attorneys from Sanctuary for Families and the New York Legal Assistance Group supervise volunteer advocates.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: One full day in family court on Mondays through Fridays, as well as an opportunity to return to court with the petitioner on his or her return date.

TRAINING: One four-hour mandatory intensive training session. The training is offered during the fall semester at Brooklyn Law School. The same training is also offered during the fall and spring semesters at other New York-area law schools.

CONTACT: Email bls.law.cap@gmail.com or one of the BLS CAP Coordinators—Valerie Geffrard, valerie.etienne@brooklaw.edu, or Alyssa Paddock, alyssa.paddock@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in court experience and exposure to NY civil procedure who want client contact and/or experience in domestic violence law.
Criminal and Police Records Accuracy Project (CP-RAP)

CP-RAP seeks to help individuals avoid or ameliorate the collateral consequences of criminal justice involvement, particularly in the areas of employment and public benefits. Working directly with criminal defense attorneys and the re-entry coordinator at Brooklyn Defender Services, student volunteers review RAP sheets, clear up errors, and apply for certificates of relief from civil disabilities (CRDs), or certificates of good conduct (CGCs), where appropriate.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: CP-RAP.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Brooklyn Defender Services (BDS).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Students work in the offices of BDS in Downtown Brooklyn. Clients are identified by BDS staff who have clients with RAP sheet issues or who wish to apply for a CRD or CGC. Initially, students work with attorneys, re-entry services providers, and clients to ensure that all RAP sheet errors are effectively removed; meeting times/locations vary greatly depending on the particular RAP sheet. Throughout the term of participation, BDS attorneys and re-entry staff will provide training and support on correcting RAP sheet errors and how to obtain CRDs and CGCs.

TRAINING: Students must attend a training conducted by a criminal defense attorney and the re-entry coordinator at BDS.

CONTACT: Email liana.goff@brooklaw.edu or kenneth.zwerin@brooklaw.edu for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Any full-time or part-time students interested in criminal practice and/or criminal justice reform.
CUBE Consultation Center (CCC)

CCC is a pro bono project of Brooklyn Law School’s Center for Urban Business Entrepreneurship (CUBE). Pro bono student volunteers travel to various New York City neighborhoods to participate in brief advice clinics aimed at providing both new and existing small businesses with pro bono assistance. The project sets up consultation centers, staffed by students and BLS alum attorneys, to provide much-needed pro bono legal resources for small business owners and entrepreneurs. These events focus particularly on reaching start-ups and new businesses run by women and owners from immigrant and diverse backgrounds. During these consultations, students assess the needs of the small business owners and entrepreneurs; provide them with valuable brief advice and information related to contracts, entity formation, and leases; and, as needed, refer them to legal representation.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Center for Urban Business Entrepreneurship (CUBE).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: BLS CUBE-affiliated Clinics: Community Development Clinic, Urban Economic Development Clinic, Corporate and Real Estate Clinic, Brooklyn Law Incubator and Policy Clinic.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: CUBE Consultation Centers will be held approximately once per month in different locations around the city, and particularly around Brooklyn. Students can volunteer their time at any or all of these consultations.

TRAINING: Students must attend a training session at Brooklyn Law School (or other offered location) prior to pro bono involvement.

CONTACT: Email Michael Seiden, michael.seiden@brooklaw.edu, or Samantha Banton, samantha.banton@brooklaw.edu, for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Students with interest in business law, entrepreneurship, real estate, and community development. Students who are interested in gaining experience performing consultations and improving communication skills with clients.
Economic Justice Coalition (EJC)

EJC advocates provide meaningful assistance to low-income New Yorkers in crucial public assistance matters while gaining experience in representation at administrative hearings. Student advocates work with clients regarding denial, delay, reduction, or termination of public assistance benefits. They also conduct research and interviews, draft written communications, negotiate with city and state agencies, and appear on behalf of clients at hearings before administrative law judges.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: EJC is administered in partnership with The Legal Aid Society and Sanctuary for Families.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Participation slots are periodical-ly available at 14 Boerum Place, the Office of Administrative Hearings at the New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance. As scheduling permits, student advocates will meet with a supervising attorney and receive direction in assisting and representing a client. The minimum time commitment is one half-day assisting clients; further participation will allow for direct student advocacy at hearings and the ability to take on a greater level of responsibility in handling individual client matters.

TRAINING: On-site mandatory benefits advocacy trainings at BLS will be scheduled early in both the fall and spring semesters; voluntary advanced and/or topical trainings may be scheduled throughout the term.

CONTACT: Look for flyers and emails with training dates, or email Samantha Tucker, samantha.tucker@brooklaw.edu, for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone seeking experience providing direct services to low-income populations and underserved families. EJC will be particularly compelling to those interested in public interest advocacy, oral advocacy, administrative law, public benefits law, homeless rights, and housing law. Meet face to face with clients to discuss the city’s adverse action on their public benefits to advise them of how best to make their case to city workers and administrative law judges, including how to gather evidence and advocate for their case at a fair hearing.
Education Law and Policy Society (Ed Law)

Ed Law seeks to strengthen educational opportunities for all students, with particular emphasis on U.S. public education reform. Its aim is to advance dialogue, prepare leaders, raise awareness in the legal community, and create opportunities for students to effect positive change by coordinating pro bono activities with other student groups, advocacy organizations, legal advocates, and other schools. Ed Law offers members opportunities to assist in litigation, policy research, and service projects and gain access to education law leaders. Ed Law members participate in A Law Student for a Day, a shadowing program where members serve as mentors in sharing the law school experience with high school students interested in pursuing careers in law and education.

Ed Law members can also contribute by organizing and participating in panels on life goals, obstacles, and lessons with students at Queens Academy High School.


WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Periodic activities throughout the year (schedule TBD).

TRAINING: Provided for each pro bono activity sponsored by Ed Law.

CONTACT: Email Taofik Hassan, taofik.hassan@brooklaw.edu, or Erik Vande Stouwe, erik.vandestouwe@brooklaw.edu, for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in education law, children’s rights, and policy work.
Elder Law and Guardianship Pro Bono Project (ELG)

Elder law is a rapidly expanding field concerned with all legal issues related to elderly individuals. As people live longer than ever before, seniors and their families face many long-term planning considerations and decisions concerning a variety of personal matters. ELG provides education, support, and aid to seniors and guardianship petitioners who face these issues from their unique perspectives. Working alongside attorneys with the Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, students will be trained to give presentations about types of guardianships, the guardianship process, and the responsibilities of guardians. Students will assist clients in drafting guardianship petitions. Initial trainings and projects will begin in Fall 2016. Students will work with each other and the supervising faculty member in creating a resource book for adults who are older and/or who have disabilities that will include publicly available legal documents that outline their rights in health care, financial, and end-of-life decisions. The resource book will be shared with community centers throughout New York City, including senior centers and health clinics.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Students can volunteer as much or as little time as they wish throughout the school year. Students working with guardianship petitioners will meet with their clients at the Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project at 44 Court Street, just a few blocks from BLS.

TRAINING: A two-hour training will be held in the early fall.

CONTACT: Email Alycia Egan-Dolan, alycia.egan-dolan@brooklaw.edu, or Morgan Mickelsen, morgan.mickelsen@brooklaw.edu, to get involved.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in elder law, disability law, health law, and developing public speaking skills. Students will gain experience drafting legal documents.
Foreclosure Legal Assistance Group (FLAG)

FLAG is a partnership between Brooklyn Law School students, the BLS Public Service Office, the Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, and Kings County Supreme Court. FLAG’s mission is to assist homeowners in Kings County facing foreclosure. FLAG provides homeowners entangled in foreclosure litigation with information about New York’s unique foreclosure process. FLAG offers students an opportunity to provide meaningful assistance to members of our community, learn about foreclosure law, attend foreclosure settlement conferences, and gain direct exposure to the mandatory foreclosure litigation process, sharpening essential interpersonal skills through hands-on experience.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Foreclosure Legal Assistance Group.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons (2:00pm–4:00pm) at the Kings County Supreme Court building on the 9th floor. While regular participation is encouraged, we are flexible to accommodate students’ schedules.

TRAINING: Students attend a one-hour training at Brooklyn Law School in the fall.

CONTACT: Email jed.russell@brooklaw.edu, samantha.banton@brooklaw.edu, or brigitte.sykes@brooklaw.edu, or visit FLAG’s booth at the BLS Pro Bono Fair. FLAG welcomes all full- and part-time students. Part-time students should note, however, that FLAG only meets in the afternoon.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in foreclosure law, housing law, economic justice, helping fellow members of our community, and refining interviewing and counseling skills.
Immigrant Visa Assistance Project (IVAP)

Students participating in IVAP assist immigrant victims of crime with U-visa and Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) applications. U-visas are a form of immigration relief available to victims of enumerated crimes who have cooperated with law enforcement, and VAWA self-petitions provide the same for survivors of domestic abuse. IVAP provides students with the opportunity to interview clients, draft affidavits, and learn practical lawyering skills related to immigration practice. Students will be supervised by upper-class students and attorneys through Safe Horizon, Justice for Our Neighbors, and Catholic Charities.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Immigrant Visa Assistance Project.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Safe Horizon, Justice for Our Neighbors, and Catholic Charities.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: About 15 hours total over the course of the semester, for training, interviews, and writing the affidavit, with flexible scheduling.

TRAINING: Attendance at one training session, offered at BLS, is required.

CONTACT: Email Katrina Myers, katrina.myers@brooklaw.edu, or Naoufal Zouak, naoufal.zouak@brooklaw.edu, for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in immigration law and/or serving survivors of domestic violence and asylum seekers.
Kings County Supreme Court Assistance Center for the Unrepresented (ACU)

ACU is an advice-only program through which students can assist litigants in Kings County Supreme Court. Litigants are referred to ACU by court personnel and library staff. Students perform intakes, inform litigants of the scope of the program, and have litigants complete the limited scope agreement. Intakes are reviewed by the supervising attorney. Depending on the nature and complexity of each individual’s questions or issues, some litigants are referred to law students who help them fill out court forms, find appropriate resources on the LawHelp website, and/or refer them to other programs where applicable. Litigants with more or less complex issues will be referred to a LawHelp self-help terminal or volunteer attorney. ACU is a great way for students to get hands-on experience conducting intakes and interacting with clients. Students also learn about the myriad legal questions and issues raised by litigants in Kings County Supreme Court and assist litigants with their court papers and legal research.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Brooklyn Law Students for the Public Interest (BLSPI).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: ACU is open on Mondays and Fridays from 11:30am–2:30pm. Individual students can participate as their schedules permit.

TRAINING: Trainings will be provided before the start of student involvement.

CONTACT: Email probono@blspi.org for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Students who wish to get more hands-on direct client experience, help low-income individuals navigate the court system, and learn about the many areas of civil law that affect members of the Brooklyn community.
LGBTQ Brooklyn Legal Assistance Project

The LGBTQ Brooklyn Legal Assistance Project is a weekly drop-in clinic serving LGBTQ individuals living in Brooklyn. A practicing attorney and at least one student provide legal consultations and referrals to LGBTQ-affirming legal and social service organizations.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: OUTLaws.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: LeGal, Brooklyn Community Pride Center.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Student involvement varies based on individual schedules; however, students involved in the project are expected to attend at least one two-hour clinic.

TRAINING: TBD.

CONTACT: Email Rachel Russell, rachel.russell@brooklaw.edu, or info@le-gal.org for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in assisting LGBTQ individuals.
Law Students for Reproductive Justice (LSRJ): Abortion Clinic Legal Observing

LSRJ is a student-led, student-driven national non-profit network of law students and lawyers committed to fostering the next wave of legal experts for the reproductive justice movement. Reproductive justice connotes collective efforts to address and overcome the roots of reproductive oppression, while constructing legally tenable, realistically accessible avenues for informed, consensual, unobstructed decision making about education, sex, contraception, sterilization, abortion, procreation, birth, and parenting.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS Chapter of Law Students for Reproductive Justice.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Local abortion clinics, primarily Choices in Queens, with support and training from the National Lawyers Guild and the New York Civil Liberties Union.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Throughout the semester, approximately monthly. Legal observing occurs on Saturday mornings from around 7:00–11:00am.

TRAINING: Trainings will be held once per semester at BLS, dates TBD—please follow our emails. You need to be trained as a Legal Observer through the National Lawyers Guild and also join us for a clinic-specific training.

CONTACT: Email LSRJ Pro Bono Chair Tanvee Trehan at tanvee.trehan@brooklaw.edu and join the LSRJ listserv.

OF INTEREST TO: Students who are passionate about reproductive rights, reproductive justice, women’s rights, health-care accessibility and on-the-ground participation in access.
The Legal Aid Society Community Justice Unit (CJU)

The CJU, formally known as the Anti-Gun Violence Unit, aims to expand efforts to curb violence throughout the five boroughs of NYC, incorporating various initiatives focused on community education and addressing the root causes of violence before they result in poor outcomes in the community. Through this project, students will facilitate voting rights workshops throughout NYC and help the CJU expand its citywide voting rights initiative. Students will be trained on who is eligible to vote, how to register, which officials are elected (versus appointed), and the roles that these elected officials play in our government. Once trained, students will be able to sign up to co-lead voting rights workshops.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Brooklyn Law Students for the Public Interest (BLSPI) and The Legal Aid Society.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Voting workshops will take place over the summer and throughout the next school year. Individual students can participate as their schedules permit.

TRAINING: Training will be provided before the start of student involvement.

CONTACT: Email probono@blspi.org for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Students who wish to get more involved in the community, help individuals understand their voting rights, and learn more about who is eligible to vote, how to register, which officials are elected (versus appointed), and the roles that these elected officials play in our government.
Motivating Youth Through Legal Education (MYLE)

BLS students coach high school students to prepare for three constitutional law debates throughout the year. Coaches help the students read and understand Supreme Court decisions and craft an argument to be delivered to a panel of law students and attorneys who act as judges at the debate competition. All law student coaches meet for a lunch meeting to work through the constitutional law questions together, and later meet for group preparation sessions with the high school students before each debate.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS MYLE.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Legal Outreach, a non-profit organization providing support to low-income junior high and high school students, sponsors and supervises the debate program. The debate program is just one element of the larger Legal Outreach program in which the high school students participate.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: There are three debates throughout the school year, each requiring a minimum of six hours of preparation with your student and three hours to judge each debate. Scheduling meetings with the high school students is flexible and done based on the law student coach’s schedule. Both full- and part-time students are welcome!

TRAINING: Brief mandatory coach training at the beginning of the year, at BLS.

CONTACT: Email Jaime Freilich, jaime.freilich@brooklaw.edu, or Seth Grantier, seth.grantier@brooklaw.edu, for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in youth, teaching, constitutional law, debate or mentoring.
National Lawyers Guild (NLG): Legal Observation at Protests

The Legal Observer program is part of the comprehensive legal support coordinated by the NLG to ensure that people can express their political views without unconstitutional disruption or interference by the government. Legal Observers work with NLG attorneys who represent individual activists and political organizations and play a distinct role separate from that of participants at demonstrations and protests. They are trained to promote police accountability by witnessing and documenting police. Documentation includes arrests, abuse, or civil rights violations.

The presence of Legal Observers helps discourage police abuse, and the information collected by Legal Observers is used in all stages of defending arrestees and in lawsuits against the police or other government agencies when a person’s rights are violated.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS National Lawyers Guild (NLG).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: New York City Chapter and the National Office of the NLG.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: As appropriate and as each student chooses before and during elections and protests or street actions.

TRAINING: Held at BLS each semester, date TBD. Contact brooklynnlg@gmail.com with questions.

CONTACT: Email the BLS National Lawyers Guild at BrooklynLawNLG@gmail.com.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in progressive politics and First Amendment issues.
Pipeline to Diversity Mentorship Project (PDMP)

PDMP seeks to empower and assist minorities from underrepresented communities through e-mentorship to understand the demands of law school and prepare for the law school application and admissions process. PDMP seeks to inspire students to excel academically, succeed professionally, and positively impact the community. PDMP matches undergraduate students with law students for informal mentoring and guidance. Mentors provide guidance in entrance essay writing, LSAT prep, negotiating scholarship packages, and more.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Black Law Students Association (BLSA).

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: U.N.I.T.E. Mentoring. This is an organization that matches high school and college students with mentors to shape tomorrow’s leaders into spiritually, culturally, and intellectually aware individuals.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Mentors will commit to one full school year (September through May). At a minimum, mentors and mentees should meet regularly at least two times a month via Skype or Google Chat. We encourage mentoring pairs to communicate as often as they wish.

TRAINING: A short, mandatory training is held at Brooklyn Law School in the early fall; the training focuses on the program goals and the activities or projects that mentors will complete online with mentees. Ongoing non-mandatory training of mentors will be provided throughout the year to assist mentors with issues and concerns that may come up throughout the course of their relationship. Individual support sessions will be provided upon request.

CONTACT: Contact Taylor Poe, taylor.poe@brooklaw.edu, or Chelsea-Leigh Flucus at chelsea-leigh.flucus@brooklaw.edu to get involved.

OF INTEREST TO: Any full-time or part-time students with a desire to invest in producing a more diverse legal community.
Promoting Justice for Immigrants Facing Detention (PJIFD)*

Participants will provide legal support to individuals and families who are currently detained and can observe and document proceedings at the 26 Federal Plaza and Varick Street Immigration Courts. Advocates will assist clients during interviews and proceedings, conduct intakes, ensure due process for clients, and prepare documents in support of clients’ claims. PJIFD offers students an opportunity to provide meaningful humanitarian assistance to clients, interview clients, and learn about immigration practice. PJIFD will lead a spring break trip to an out-of-state detention center.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: BLS-PJIFD will work in collaboration with (PENDING) Raices and (PENDING) the American Friends Service Committee.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Students will visit detention centers. Visits will be coordinated with the participating organization and are expected to last approximately 3–6 hours, once a month.

TRAINING: A three-hour web training session is required; there are also opportunities for advanced training. Observers are required to attend a one-hour training session.

CONTACT: Watch for notices around school or contact Armando Arballo, armando.arballo@brooklaw.edu, or Marvin Esquina, marvin.espana@brooklaw.edu. General trainings are usually held in September and January.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in getting a glimpse into immigration law and issues with the immigration system, as well as those dedicated to immigrants’ rights and wanting intake and writing experience.

*Project is subject to changes depending on organization collaboration
Resilience Advocacy Project (RAP): Youth LEAP & GO Girls

RAP runs youth leadership programs in partnership with schools and community-based organizations. RAP uses what is learned from this on-the-ground work to advocate for improvements in youth- and poverty-related laws, policies, and government systems.

RAP’s Youth Leadership Empowerment and Advocacy Project (Youth LEAP) and GO Girls Project are free semester- and year-long programs serving low-income high school students from under-resourced schools throughout Brooklyn and Manhattan. The programs train these young people to become “peer advocates” for other teens in their communities, providing legal rights training and basic referrals for critical anti-poverty social services like healthcare and tutors.

Law students teach RAP participants about the New York City government, constitutional and poverty law, health and family rights, and advocacy skills in weekly two-hour workshops. Youth LEAPers design and launch a social justice project aimed at solving a real-world problem in their communities. Projects have included community resource centers, meeting with city leaders, and conducting youth rights workshops for other teens. GO Girls projects analyze a health justice problem impacting participants’ peers and work with local policymakers to make the city’s health policies better for vulnerable girls. In addition to leading this work, law students meet with dynamic lawyers from around the city to showcase their groups’ work.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS Resilience Advocacy Project.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Resilience Advocacy Project Youth LEAP & GO Girls.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Students may commit to working with RAP for one or two semesters. Time will be spent training teen advocates while building and sustaining a youth-led network of advocacy resource desks in the City’s poorest communities. RAP project sessions are delivered two hours per week.

TRAINING: Law students are prepared by a thorough training at the beginning of the year and are given ongoing support throughout the year.

CONTACT: Sign up for training in the fall. Email Katie Crisona, kathryn.crisona@brooklaw.edu, or Elliana Openshaw, elliana.openshaw@brooklaw.edu, or visit www.resiliencelaw.org.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in any of the following: youth, education, family law, benefits and housing, community/empowerment lawyering, social justice, and general public interest.
Second Chance Project

The Second Chance Project helps parents with a finding of child neglect on their records to move forward in their lives. Students in this project will help clients request administrative reviews, request and advocate in fair hearings to amend clients’ records with the New York State Office of Children and Family Services’ Statewide Central Register (SCR), and file motions to vacate neglect findings or request suspended judgments so that clients’ records do not limit their employment opportunities.

Clients of Brooklyn Defender Services’ Family Defense Practice (BFDP) usually have neglect cases filed against them for issues related to poverty, domestic violence, mental illness, or addiction. During the court proceedings, families engage in supportive and rehabilitative services to help them address the challenges they face. These services may include parenting classes, individual or family therapy, or drug treatment. In many cases, parents consent to a finding of neglect because the court process is so long and difficult and they want their cases to be resolved quickly. Reports of child neglect are entered in the SCR, which is searchable by employers in fields such as child-care, teaching, social work, and nursing. Especially for clients who work or for young clients who hope to get a GED or go to college, findings of neglect and reports in the SCR can interfere with their work opportunities—even where the reports are unrelated to their employment.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Brooklyn Defender Services Family Defense Practice.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: 10-12 hours total for letter writing and attending the hearing, plus 2 hours of training.

CONTACT: Email Michael Myones, michael.myones@brooklaw.edu, for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in family law, criminal defense, or poverty law or those wanting to work directly with clients and get experience in court.
Suspension Representation Project (SRP)

New York City public school students who receive long-term suspensions in elementary, middle and high school are hurled into the “school-to-prison pipeline.” SRP’s goal is to advocate for students to keep them in school and on a path to graduation. SRP is a consortium of student organizations from ten NYC law schools—each composed of law student advocates who are dedicated to protecting the educational rights of young people in the five boroughs. SRP provides advocates with comprehensive training on interviewing and counseling, hearing procedures, direct and cross examination techniques, rules of evidence, burden of proof, and developing a “theory of the case” so that they can effectively represent students and their families in front of hearing officers at NYC Department of Education Superintendent Suspension Hearings. New advocates are always paired with experienced advocates and can turn to the BLS SRP Executive Board for support and guidance at any time.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS Suspension Representation Project.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Suspension Representation Project (of NYU Law).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Each case requires 5–10 hours of time (including preparation and the hearing itself). All Suspension Hearings are scheduled for 8:30am on weekdays. Advocates must be available between 8:30am and 2pm on days they sign up to take a case. Hearings are usually finished by 1:00pm but can go longer. Part-time students with flexible daytime commitments can participate in SRP.

TRAINING: Advocates must attend one training session before they can take a case. Trainings are held in the fall and spring at BLS as well as at other law schools in the consortium.

CONTACT: Email BLS Chair, Brian Hoffman, srpbrooklyn@gmail.com, for more information. You can also visit www.suspensionrepresentation.org or the BLS SRP Facebook page, www.facebook.com/blssrpr.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in education law, children’s rights, juvenile justice, direct client representation, administrative law, or trial advocacy skills.
Uncontested Divorce Project for Battered Women and Indigent Clients

Following a training by a Sanctuary for Families attorney, students are assigned a client and then conduct interviews, prepare divorce petitions, file the court papers, and conduct follow-up meetings with the client. A separate training, conducted by an attorney with the Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project, will enable students to regularly assist clients in self-represented uncontested divorces. Students will aid their clients in initiating their uncontested divorce and through entry of judgment. Male and female volunteers are welcome.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Legal Association for Women.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Sanctuary for Families (SFF) and the Brooklyn Bar Association Volunteer Lawyers Project (VLP).

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: The trainings are offered in the fall in order to allow sufficient time for students to complete all the necessary steps during the academic year. Students may choose between working with SFF or the VLP. The SFF pro bono project works exclusively with battered women, while the VLP project serves low-income clients. To complete either pro bono project, students need to devote an average of about 10 hours to the petition. Two students will partner to meet with a client approximately twice throughout the academic year and can complete the divorce paperwork on their own time. Both projects are flexible and can be done at the student’s and client’s convenience. Part-time students can also participate in either project.

TRAINING: Two-hour trainings for both projects take place in the fall at BLS, usually during October (domestic violence awareness month).

CONTACT: Look for flyers and emails in the fall for the training date or email Legal Association for Women Pro Bono Chair Amanda Lipari, amanda.lipari@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in public interest work, family law, helping low-income members of our community, or working with victims of domestic violence. Students will develop skills in interviewing, direct client contact, and preparing all petitions for divorce actions. Participation also counts toward the fifty-hour pro bono requirement for the New York Bar.
Unemployment Action Center (UAC)

Want to try cases? Want to help real people in real need? Every year, tens of thousands of New Yorkers lose their jobs unexpectedly and sometimes unfairly. For many, unemployment insurance is the only thing keeping their needs met and their families provided for. UAC advocates represent unemployed workers in mini-trials concerning their rights to unemployment benefits. Advocates do everything lawyers do, including interviewing and advising clients, conducting direct and cross-examination of witnesses, and delivering arguments to administrative law judges. Workers represented by UAC advocates prevail in 66% of cases, compared with only 33% for unrepresented workers. UAC’s vital service thus doubles a worker’s chances of obtaining benefits, while also giving students meaningful and worthwhile experience in the art of advocacy.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS Unemployment Action Center.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: The citywide Unemployment Action Center, which distributes available cases among participating schools.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Scheduling is flexible. Advocates may choose cases that fit their schedules and may take as many or as few cases as they wish. Opportunities are available for part-time students, including those with daytime commitments.

TRAINING: Advocates will be ready to represent clients after a short training that includes a mock client interview and mock hearing. Training sessions will be held several times throughout each semester. In addition, experienced advocates are usually available for advice or assistance on cases.

CONTACT: Email Naoufal Zouak, naoufal.zouak@brooklaw.edu, Dylan Weeks, dylan.weeks@brooklaw.edu, or uacbrooklaw@gmail.com for information on upcoming trainings.

OF INTEREST TO: Those interested in trial and appellate advocacy, labor and employment law, workers’ rights, and direct legal services.
Veteran Advocacy Project (VAP)

Working in coalition with the Urban Justice Center, VAP is devoted to representing and supporting veterans throughout the New York City area. We create awareness and, through our advocacy and pro bono work, seek to provide American veterans with the basic necessities they have earned. These include VA benefits, housing, health care, and income.

Opportunities include conducting intake interviews with veterans to determine legal needs, representing veterans at public benefits fair hearings in front of administrative law judges, and assisting Urban Justice Center attorneys with other legal issues veterans might face, such as discharge upgrades.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: Law Students for Veterans’ Rights.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATION: Urban Justice Center’s Veteran Advocacy Project.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Students are free to volunteer as much or as little time as they wish! We welcome both full-time and part-time students. Client intake interviews occur every Wednesday from 12:00–2:00pm at the Brooklyn Veterans Center, just a five-minute walk from BLS. We suggest that volunteers sign up for at least one 30-minute intake shift per month, although we understand student availability is dependent upon schedules. Whether or when to take on a fair hearing is entirely up to each individual volunteer and is not mandatory.

TRAINING: A BLS alum from the Urban Justice Center will provide a one-hour training in both the fall and spring that focuses on conducting intake interviews and representing veterans at fair hearings.

CONTACT: Email Anne Conroy, anne.conroy@brooklaw.edu, for more information.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone who is passionate and enthusiastic about supporting those who have supported us and wants to be able to provide services to veterans directly. Anyone interested in litigation and improving their client interviewing or representation skills. Students gain hands-on experience advocating for clients by representing them in administrative proceedings. Additionally, students interested in working with individuals with mental illnesses and handling public benefits issues will find this opportunity invaluable.
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)

Launched in 2002, Food Bank for New York City’s Tax Assistance & Financial Services Program provides hard-working low-income New Yorkers with free tax preparation services, helping them get the refunds and credits to which they are entitled. These include the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC)—a key piece of the public safety net, which alone can be worth up to $8,293 for families. More information is available on the Food Bank’s website at http://foodbanknyc.org/our-programs/income-support/free-income-tax-services.


PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Internal Revenue Service (IRS) & Food Bank for New York City.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: From late January to mid-April. Students set their own schedules for volunteering at the nearby Free Tax Assistance site (located one block from BLS), which is generally open Monday to Thursday (10:00am–7:00pm) and Friday to Saturday (9:00am–5:00pm). Most students choose a four-hour block once a week. Opportunities are available for part-time students, and schedules are flexible.

TRAINING: In January, students are required to pass a two-part training course to become a certified income tax preparer. Part I is the IRS’ online VITA certification program in basic tax law. This is taken independently, according to the student’s schedule. Part II is a one-day classroom training at a nearby location that applies the course material to real tax returns. BLS students can attend the training together as a group or individually according to their own schedule. No prior accounting or tax knowledge is necessary. Every return is double-checked by a VITA professional to ensure accuracy.

CONTACT: Join the BLS Tax Law Association and/or contact Charles Healy, charles.healy@brooklaw.edu, or Eli Reizes, elchonon.reizes@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Anyone interested in tax law, client contact, economic justice, financial services, and assisting underserved families.
Youth Court

Design and develop a training program in conjunction with other Youth Court participants and administrators from local community high schools. Participants attend Youth Court sessions to work with young people in developing advocacy skills and general legal knowledge. BLS Youth Court participants develop mentoring relationships with high school Youth Court participants.

ON-CAMPUS SPONSORING ORGANIZATION: BLS Youth Court.

PARTICIPATING ORGANIZATIONS: Local schools with pre-existing Youth Courts.

WHEN, FOR HOW LONG, AND HOW OFTEN: Co-teach a class of Youth Court participants in a local high school for a two-hour time block a few times per semester. No need to commit to teaching every visit, although a continued presence in the project is preferred.

TRAINING: Attend a training on campus to learn about school-based Youth Courts and principles of restorative justice and learn about the different subject areas to be taught. Practice teaching your assigned modules with peers to become comfortable with the subject matter.

CONTACT: Erin McMullan at erin.mcmullan@brooklaw.edu or Mackenzie Warner, mackenzie.warner@brooklaw.edu.

OF INTEREST TO: Students interested in restorative justice, education, working with youth, and juvenile justice.
On-Campus Non-Legal Volunteer Opportunities

Brooklyn Law Students for the Public Interest (BLSPI)

BLSPI is a student-run nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization at BLS that encourages and enables student participation in public interest and public service legal work. BLSPI provides both legal and non-legal opportunities for engagement at BLS. BLSPI organizes a number of charity drives throughout the year, often working with other student groups, including blood drives, canned food drives, clothing drives, Halloween candy drives for children living in domestic violence shelters, and voter registration drives. BLSPI will also organize a number of days of service this coming year.

CONTACT: If interested in joining BLSPI’s email list to learn about ongoing initiatives, please contact info@blspi.org.

Student Bar Association

Race Judicata
*(The SBA in partnership with the Urban Assembly School for Law and Justice)*

Race Judicata is an annual 5K Run/Walk held by law schools and law firms across the nation to benefit causes selected by each sponsoring group. The BLS Race Judicata is held in Prospect Park in the spring as a fundraiser for the High School for Law and Justice. The Race is held in honor of Professor Barry Zaretsky, a bankruptcy and commercial law professor at BLS as well as an avid runner. Last year’s race raised over $5,000. This is a social as well as charitable event. Get your heart pumping, run (or walk) with your friends and the larger BLS community, and benefit a school working hard to bring youngsters previously relegated to very poor schools up to grade level and looking forward to college.

CONTACT: sba@brooklaw.edu.