

# **USD School of Law Pro Bono Service Recognition -- Policy and Process**

## **Purpose**

To encourage participation in and commitment to an attorney's professional responsibility for pro bono legal service from the beginning of each law student's career.

## **Practice**

To recognize at commencement those University of San Diego School of Law students completing the following minimum number of hours of pro bono legal service during their law school career:

In accordance with the ABA model rules standard for professional responsibility (and best practices at other law schools), a minimum of 100 hours of pro bono legal service

These students receive our thanks, listing in the Awards Ceremony Program, a certificate, and the right to wear a white cord signifying this accomplishment at commencement.

## **Parameters**

To qualify as pro bono service, a student must do one or more of the following:

- A. Work in a legal position providing services to those unable to pay for them. To qualify under this section, the student must work:
  - In a legal position (as legal intern, clerk, or legal clinic personnel)
  - Under the supervision of a practicing attorney
  - Providing services to those who cannot afford them and/or would not normally be able to receive them
  - Without receiving any kind of compensation (including a community service grant) or class credit for the work.
- B. Work in a legal position seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights, or for charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organization in matters in furtherance of their organizational purposes. To qualify under this section, the student must work:
  - In a legal position (as legal intern, clerk, or legal clinic personnel)
  - Under the supervision of a practicing attorney
  - At an organization where paying the student would significantly deplete the organization's economic resources or would otherwise be inappropriate
  - Without receiving compensation (including a community service grant) or class credit for the work.
- C. Work in one of the legal clinics organized and administered by the student organization Pro Bono Legal Advocates (PBLA). To qualify under this section, the student must:
  - Make at least a semester long commitment to the legal clinic
  - Fulfill his or her obligation by working the hours/schedule committed to, unless a change to the schedule is requested and approved by the clinic chair due to unforeseen circumstance, such as illness or family emergency. (Note: a lot of homework does not qualify as an unforeseen circumstance.)
- D. Work in activities for improving the law, the legal system, or the legal profession. The following types of work qualify under this section:
  - Targeted efforts to promote an improvement in a specific law or area of law
  - Creating or implementing a program to increase diversity in the legal profession or at the University of San Diego School of Law

- Work by the SBA Community Service Chair and/or work by a student organization's Community Service Chair to create opportunities for law students to become involved in serving the community
- Work by PBLA clinic chairs coordinating and supporting their clinics

The requirements for this section are based on the ABA Model Rules of Professional Responsibility Rule 6.1, with some modification to account for the unique situation of law students.

### **Procedure**

To get credit for pro bono service, students must:

- 1) Find a project or opportunity meeting one of the 4 sections above.
- 2) If unsure whether a project will qualify under the policy or, after beginning work, email the PBLA Chair, SBA Community Service Chair, and/or the SBA President.
  - a. If the work falls under A or B above:
    - i. A brief description of the opportunity, including information about how it meets the requirements listed above
    - ii. The name, telephone number and/or email address for the supervising attorney
    - iii. The range of dates committed to work
  - b. If the work is in a PBLA clinic which falls under section C above:
    - i. The name of the clinic
    - ii. The name and email address of the clinic chair
    - iii. The schedule commitment
  - c. If the work falls under section D above:
    - i. A brief description of the project, including information about how it meets the requirements of the section
    - ii. The name, telephone number and/or email address of the person verifying the work. This should be:
      1. The SBA President for the SBA Community Service Chair's work
      2. The Student Organization President and/or a contact at the charitable organization work for a student organization Community Service Chair's work
      3. A professor or practicing attorney who participated in or oversaw the work for any other project
- 3) The PBLA Chair, SBA President and SBA Community Service Chair all have the authority to approve a qualifying pro bono project. Once they have done so, they will forward that approval to The Office for Student Affairs, Room 206, at lawstudentaffairs@sandiego.edu.
- 4) At the end of each semester, the student needs to report his or her pro bono hours. This is done by:
  - a. Under sections A & B, submitting a simple statement of hours (total, not itemized), with the supervising attorney's approval, to The Office for Student Affairs, above.
  - b. Under section C, submitting hours to the PBLA clinic chair
  - c. Under section D, submitting a simple statement of hours (total, not itemized), with the appropriate approval under 2-c-ii above, to The Office for Student Affairs.