The University of Wisconsin Law School's Prosecution Project is a clinical experience open to second-year law students. It has historically consisted of four parts:

1. a three-credit spring seminar which provides an in-depth understanding of the role and ethical obligations of the prosecutor in the criminal justice system,
2. a two-credit spring trial advocacy course to prepare students for their summer externship,
3. a ten-week summer externship in a Wisconsin prosecutor's office, and,
4. a two-credit fall seminar to reflect upon the summer experience.

Students accepted into the project go through an intensive training process to allow them to learn and contribute in a trial-level placement in a Wisconsin prosecutor's office. The purpose of the project is the development of competency, craftsmanship and creativity in responding to the challenges facing our criminal justice system by providing a unique educational experience. For the past several years, a number of Wisconsin counties have participated in the project, co-sponsoring law student summer externships. This partnership between the university and the counties provides a challenging experience for the student and helpful assistance to local prosecutors. As such, it reflects the "Wisconsin Idea" at its best — with the university learning from and serving the community.

Students in the spring seminar explore the ethical, administrative, and legal responsibilities of the prosecutor. Specific attention is given to development and implementation of prosecution goals, the charging decision, pretrial practice, the plea negotiation system, sentencing, and the prosecutor's relationship to other actors in the criminal justice system.

The trial advocacy course helps student develop the skills necessary to represent the state in a variety of courtroom settings.

During the summer, students work full-time in a Wisconsin prosecutor's office. Students are certified to appear in court under Chapter 50, the Wisconsin Supreme Court's Student Practice Rules, and contribute in a number of ways, including drafting charging documents, conducting research, representing the state at pretrial conferences, initial appearances, and trying misdemeanor and traffic cases. Students learn and contribute by and directly participating in the local criminal justice system.

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1 With the retirement of long-time Prosecution Project director, Ben Kempinen, the Law School is currently in the process of hiring a replacement for the 2018 placement year. As a result, some details may change with regard to the structure of the courses or other aspects of the Project. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the Remington Center’s Director, Adam Stevenson, at adam.stevenson@wisc.edu or 608-262-9233.
At least once each year the project director visits local offices to meet with the extern and the district attorney’s staff. Continuing contact serves to strengthen the project and strategies for achieving its educational and service goals.

In the fall, students have historically been required to enroll in a seminar to reflect on the students' summer experiences and continue to review the ethical responsibilities of a practicing lawyer. In the past, this class satisfies the Professional Responsibility requirement for graduation.

Second-year students are eligible to apply for the Prosecution Project. Participation begins with the spring preparation class(es) in the students' second year, continues through the summer, and is completed with the fall semester in the students' third year.

Prerequisites for the project are (1) completion of at least 45 credits before the summer of 2018 and (2) both Introduction to Substantive Criminal Law and Introduction to Criminal Procedure.

The application process commences in the fall, with program interviews in late October through November. Students may sign up for an interview by stopping by Room 4318 of the Remington Center at the Law School. Enrollment and placements are determined by the end of the semester when the exact number of funded placements is known.

At present, summer externs work full-time for ten weeks, receiving a financial stipend of approximately $2950 for their work. On occasion, students have been allowed to earn credits rather than pay during the summer. Requests of this nature are considered by the project on a case-by-case basis. Typically, the ten-week internship could convert to up to eight credits, seven clinical credits and one directed research credit, although enrollment for fewer credits is also possible. In addition, placements in Milwaukee County have historically only been open to those seeking the credit option.

For more information, please contact Adam Stevenson, Director, Frank J. Remington Center, Law School Room 4318J, (608) 262-9233, or adam.stevenson@wisc.edu.