Dear Friends:

This year was another lively year for the UW Law School Pro Bono Program. I want to highlight a few of our Pro Bono Projects which were either extended or developed in the school year of 2015-2016. We are delighted to report that our Veterans Law Center has expanded its reach. In May of 2016 we received approval from both the national VA as well as the University of Wisconsin—Madison to establish a third monthly clinic at the William Middleton VA Medical Center in Appleton. Establishing that clinic is the result of a two-year collaborative project among our program, the law school and the VA Medical Center. We also developed a new Pro Bono Project in collaboration with the National Lawyers Guild to provide training and a Pro Bono Project for students interested in legal observation of protests both in the state of Wisconsin and nationally. These are just a few of the new projects that our Program developed through the year due to the passionate belief of staff and students and attorneys that pro bono service reflects the very best of our legal profession.

During this year we were inspired by the number of students who wanted to meet with us to find out if, and how, they could translate their interests and their passion into a new pro bono project. That self-motivated drive reflects the Law in Action motto of our law school and is testimony to the civic-mindedness of our students. In the same vein, our staff were delighted to serve as an intermediary for dozens of community members in Madison as well as people across the state who contacted us because they needed legal help and didn’t know where else to turn. We are, ultimately, all neighbors and we share the same finite resources. The volunteers (both students and attorneys) who staff our projects are testimony to this spirit of community.

Warmly,

Laura C. Smythe, M.A., M.A., J.D.
Director, UW Law School Pro Bono Program
Volunteers of the Semester

Meghan Mandlman and Brandon Tillman were, respectively, our Fall and Spring Volunteers of the Semester. Meghan participated in the Restorative Justice Project clinic and, after completing her time in the clinic, chose to fulfill her commitment to her work and clients by staying on her four cases and putting in more than 170 hours of pro bono time. Brandon created several Pro Bono projects which continue to operate and also worked with Professor Scharrer to provide a lecture to undergraduate students on campus about restorative justice and also helped to prepare and present 6 hours of content about restorative justice to local high school students.

What our students have to say

When friends, family members, and co-workers ask me what classes or opportunities I have enjoyed most about my time in law school, one of the first things I tell them about is the volunteer trip I went on with the law school’s pro bono program, Legal Assistance for Disaster Relief. During winter break of my 1L and 2L years, I traveled with a group of my colleagues to New Orleans to spend a week with practicing attorneys in the city. I had the chance to spend my time volunteering with the Orleans Public Defender (OPD), an organization tasked with defending clients in Orleans Parish, Louisiana, while some of my colleagues worked with various non-profit legal organizations in the city.

As a 1L, with only one semester of classes under my belt, the LADR trip provided a unique way to get some practical, hands-on, legal experience. The supervising attorneys at OPD provided training on the criminal justice system in Louisiana, discussed cases with us, and assigned tasks for us to work on for those cases. I had the chance to draft motions, meet with clients, assist in some of the preparation for cases, and research relevant legal issues. Had I not been a part of the LADR trip, these are experiences and skills I might not have gained so early in my law school career.

My time in New Orleans gave me a glimpse into the life of a public defender working in a large city. I was initially drawn to the LADR trip because of this—I had been interested in criminal law prior to law school, and this provided the perfect opportunity to see what a career in like. I am grateful for the experiences I had during both years and I would highly encourage students to apply.

~ Samantha Richie

Would you or someone you know like to partner with the Pro Bono Program? If so, please contact us!
Volunteers of the Semester

A New Pro Bono Project: NLG Legal Observer Program

By Dan Schneider, former chair of the UW National Lawyers Guild and Initiator of this new Pro Bono Project.

If you’re ever in or near a protest, or see footage from one on the nightly news, you might notice an occasional neon green hat popping out from the middle of the crowd. You’ll notice that the person isn’t chanting with the other marchers, and seems to be doing more crowd-scanning and note-taking than protesting. That’s because they aren’t a protestor at all: they’re a legal observer. And they may have been trained at UW.

Legal observers are attorney-trained volunteers who attend protests as neutral observers - as their name implies - in order to ensure that individuals are able to express themselves without unjust interference by law enforcement. Their presence is primarily meant to serve as a deterrent to unconstitutional activity (thus the attention-grabbing neon green hats). In some cases, legal observers may be asked to serve as witnesses in a protestor’s civil or criminal trial. But their main job is, as their name implies, to observe, and make sure that those engaged in group expression may do so without unjust interference by law enforcement. Through the law school’s chapter of the National Lawyers Guild (NLG), the pro bono Legal Observer Program formally launched in May of 2015 to provide students, faculty, and community members with the basic training and tools they need to serve as legal observers for protests in their community. Since its launch, the program has held four trainings for over 100 people, and served at protests in Madison to the benefit of well over 1,000 people.

The Legal Observer Program is the institutional name for the law school’s incarnation of the NLG’s national Legal Observer Program. The National Lawyers Guild’s Legal Observer Program is a 49 year old program that aims to protect the civil liberties of community organizers, activists, and protesters when they express their political views in the public sphere. Since being trained in 2015, I have had the opportunity to serve as a legal observer on multiple occasions, both in Wisconsin and two other Midwestern states. Indeed, that’s one of the best parts about the program—a trained legal observer can take their skills anywhere in the country, and help provide an important service for local activists wherever they go. These experiences helped me to form bonds with community organizations in Madison (and elsewhere), allowed me to assist in the important work of modern movements for social justice, and allowed me to exercise two of the most important skills a lawyer can have: watching and listening carefully.

Too often, attorneys, academics, and law students worry whether they can effectively give back to the places where they work, teach and learn. In my experience, the Legal Observer Program has been an excellent way to do so, providing a flexible opportunity for people of all experience levels to get involved in local activism while putting their most fundamental legal skills to work.
DCBA Student Pro Bono Award: Brandon Tillman & Tiffany Woelfel

Each year, the Dane County Bar Association celebrates and honors attorneys, law students, law firms and organizations providing pro bono legal services in Dane County. In May 2016, this prestigious award was given to two students due to their exceptional Pro Bono service. **Brandon Tillman** and **Tiffany Woelfel** both received the Student Pro Bono award from the DCBA.

**Brandon Tillman** began his pro bono service as a CASA volunteer with the Dane County Court Appointed Special Advocate program in his first year of law school. In his second year (and he graduated after only two and a half years), he envisioned, designed and created a new Pro Bono project to meet with high school students twice per month to discuss and teach conflict management skills. In addition, in coordination with the Black Law Students Association at the law school, Brandon created a mentorship component with the participating students to pair each high school student with either a graduate student or a law school student.

**Tiffany Woelfel** was involved in a wide variety of pro bono projects in her three years in law school. Among her many activities, she volunteered with the Veterans Law Clinic, Legal Intervention for Non-Violence Clinic and Wills for Heroes. In her second and third year she coordinated and participated in the Legal Assistance for Disaster Relief trip to New Orleans to provide pro bono assistance to the Orleans Public Defenders office. This trip was made by 37 law students. Tiffany served over 120 hours in just these two trips to New Orleans. Tiffany also coordinated the Indian Wills Caravan in her second year and there were 10 students involved in that trip.

**A Hearty Congratulations to both Brandon and Tiffany!**
Congratulations 2015-2016 Pro Bono Society Inductees!

Pro Bono Society inductees have completed a minimum of 50 hours (Tier 1) or 100 hours (Tier 2) of approved pro bono service.

**Tier 1**

Caitlin Holzem
Yingying Hu
Trent Koerner
Katherine Kratcha
Shin-Yen Lee
David Malkus
Cameron Marston
Olivia Mote

Gina Nugent
Aissa Olivarez
Kahini Ranade
Samuel Robins
Bryan Sandford
Paul Schinner
Vaughn Schmid
Ian Tenderholt

Brandon Tillman
Loredana Valtierra
Yi Zhou
Sarah Zwack

**Tier 2**

Laura Bachman
Russell Brown
Lara Carlson
Forrest Crawford
Caitlin Fish
Neal Fitzgerald
Nolan Franti
Curtis Hinca
Stephanie Kreager

Meghan Mandlman
Janelle Ramsel
Maura Ross
Christopher Russell
Molly Stacy
Anne Terrien
Da Wang
Thomas Wilson
Tiffany Woelfel
2015 Fall Reception

We had an exciting program at our Pro Bono Reception in 2015. State Bar Pro Bono Coordinator Jeff Brown was one of our honored guests. He spoke about the state of Pro Bono work in Wisconsin. And we had two more esteemed guests, Attorney Jennifer Binkley and Judge Juan Colas, who debated with great passion the merits of making Pro Bono work mandatory for both law students and attorneys in the state of Wisconsin. We enjoyed a wonderful evening with community guests, law school administration and faculty and law school students.

2016 Spring Pro Bono Pizza Panel

On January 30, nine pro bono student volunteers and supervisors gathered together to present information regarding the various pro bono projects in which they are involved. The Pro Bono Program hosts this event every year in order to acquaint 40-50 students with available opportunities and to give them a chance to interact with peers, attorneys, and organization leaders who are involved in pro bono work. This year we had more than 50 students attend and a few faculty members as well. It’s a great venue for showcasing the important work our students do outside of class.
In the Academic Year of 2014-2015 – we had 5 students who dedicated more than 150 pro bono hours during their three years of law school. In this Academic Year of 2015-2016 – we again had 5 more students who dedicated more than 150 pro bono hours during their law school career. These students, and our Pro Bono Program staff, were delighted to be invited to spend an evening with Wisconsin State Bar President and UW Law School Professor Ralph Cagle. He and his wife hosted us for a lovely dinner at their home and we spent a wonderful evening with them and with Dean Raymond celebrating the achievements of these students and talking with the students about their plans after graduation. Some of these students were not only taking classes and providing service to their community, they were also working at paying jobs and caring for families. We think it is important to recognize the remarkable choices these students made every day.

Our Pro Bono Program is dedicated to creating a unique way to thank the students who go above and beyond our Pro Bono Program Honor Society recognition levels of 50 hours of service and 100 hours of service. As we wrap up another year we look forward to honoring the next group of students who reflect so very well on the spirit of Law in Action. Stay tuned!  ~Laura Smythe

Pro Bono Program Statistics

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<th>2015-2016</th>
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<tr>
<td>Total Hours</td>
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<td>Total Students</td>
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<td>Pro Bono Society Winter Graduates</td>
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<td>Pro Bono Society Spring Graduates</td>
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Community Placements

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<td>ABC For Health, Inc.</td>
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<td>Community Immigration Law Center (CILC)</td>
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<td>Community Justice, Inc. (CJl)</td>
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<td>Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA)</td>
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<td>Dane County Time Bank Youth Court</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indian Wills Caravan</td>
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<td>Law and Entrepreneurship Clinic</td>
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<td>Legal Action of Wisconsin</td>
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<td>Legal Intervention for Non-Violence Clinic</td>
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<td>National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC)</td>
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<td>Other/ Various projects</td>
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<td>Ready to Rent</td>
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<td>Tenant Resource Center (TRC)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unemployment Appeals Clinic (UAC)</td>
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<td>UW IJC &amp; CILC Bilingual Program</td>
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<td>Veterans Law Center (VLC)</td>
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<td>Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program</td>
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<td>Wisconsin Wills for Heroes</td>
<td>70</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Matt Lantta and Puck Tsai
UW LAW SCHOOL
PRO BONO PROGRAM
2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT

Contact us!
probonodirector@law.wisc.edu

Visit us online!
law.wisc.edu/probono

2015-2016 Student Advisory Committee
Michelle Brandemuehl, National Immigrant Justice Center
Lara Carlson, Ready to Rent
Sara Conrad, Unemployment Appeals Clinic
Erik Eisenheim, Student Bar Association
Matthew Hefti, WI Assoc of Criminal Defense Lawyers
Anthony Moore, Veterans Law Center
Amanda Parent, Wills for Heroes
Dan Schneider, Legal Observer Program
Tom Wilson, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance
Tiffany Woelfel, Legal Assistance for Disaster Relief

Consider donating!
Gifts made to the Pro Bono Program support UW law students as well as the community organizations and individuals served through student efforts. Donate to the Pro Bono Program via check or online payment through the Economic Justice Institute:
law.wisc.edu/eji/giving.html.

Special Thanks To:
Dane County Bar Association
Dean Margaret Raymond
Economic Justice Institute
Legal Action of Wisconsin
Marquette Law School
State Bar of Wisconsin
UW Law School Career Services
UW Law School Communications
UW Law School Copy Shop & IT Department
UW Law School Alumni Relations & External Affairs

ON THE COVER
Clockwise from the top: Law School, Amanda Meyers and State Bar Pro Bono Coordinator Jeff Brown; Students at 2016 Pizza Panel; Prof. Ben Kempinen at 2015 Pro Bono Reception.