



SCHOOL OF LAW

# Pro Bono Program

## **STUDENT HANDBOOK**

### **2019-2020**

#### **CONTENTS**

I.	WHAT IS PRO BONO? .....	2
II.	WHAT COUNTS AS PRO BONO AT UNC SCHOOL OF LAW? .....	2
III.	HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?.....	3
IV.	STUDENT ORGANIZATION PROJECTS.....	5
V.	WHO TO CONTACT .....	6
VI.	PRO BONO HOURS .....	7
VII.	GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT .....	9
VIII.	JOINING THE PRO BONO BOARD .....	10
IX.	NEW YORK BAR PRO BONO REQUIREMENT .....	11

## **I. WHAT IS PRO BONO?**

Pro Bono is short for the Latin *pro bono publico*, meaning “for the public good.” Pro bono work uses professional skills to provide services to those who are unable to afford them.

The mission of the UNC School of Law Pro Bono Program is to assist attorneys who provide high quality, low cost legal services to individuals in need and to create a lifelong commitment to Pro Bono work among UNC School of Law students.

## **II. WHAT COUNTS AS PRO BONO AT UNC SCHOOL OF LAW?**

1. The following criteria must be met for a student's work to qualify as pro bono for the purposes of recognition by the UNC School of Law Pro Bono Program:<sup>1</sup>
  - a. The law student must engage in law-related activities;
  - b. The law student's work must be supervised and/or approved by an attorney where supervision and/or approval includes, at a minimum, attorney review of student work product;
    - i. If a student is certified in a special area of law that allows them to perform law-related activities then they need not be supervised by an attorney as long as their activity is within the scope of their certification;
    - ii. Students performing any presentation qualifying as Pro Bono (such as Know Your Rights presentations) must have an attorney present to supervise the presentation and answer any questions about the legal information provided
  - c. Receiving, or expecting to receive, class credit for law-related activities precludes these activities from qualifying for pro bono credit. Receiving monetary compensation for law-related activities precludes these activities from qualifying as pro bono credit (See exception in Summer Hours policy.);
  - d. The law-related services must be provided to the client for free or at a substantially reduced rate (whether reduced rate work will qualify as pro bono may depend on several factors, including the actual rate being charged the client, whether or not the attorney would bill for work performed by students, the economic factors preventing the client from obtaining full-rate services, and the population affected by the legal issues involved); AND
  - e. The law related activities must be on behalf of:
    - i. person(s) of limited financial means; OR
    - ii. person(s) with limited access to legal representation; OR

---

<sup>1</sup> Note that the definition of pro bono differs for some State Bar admission requirements.

- iii. nonprofit, civic, community, religious, or governmental organizations
2. The following activities are expressly excluded from qualifying for Pro Bono credit:
- a. Work done on law journals;
  - b. Work resulting in submission of writing into competition or other journals;
  - c. Work on law related symposiums, conferences, and panel discussions;
  - d. Work completed as a Research Assistant or Teaching Assistant;
    - i. Except that a student who works as a Research Assistant with a professor during the summer and whose work primarily involves providing legal services to qualifying clients may log up to 25 Pro Bono hours per the Summer Hours policy.
  - e. Work performed as a result of work required for enrollment in a clinic or externship for credit;
    - i. Except that a student who has successfully completed an externship and then elects to continue working with the externship employer may count the additional hours of work performed as Pro Bono credit.
  - f. Any and all fundraising activities;
  - g. Electioneering work performed for a partisan organization during a political campaign where the main objective of the work is to elect a specific candidate or candidates into office; AND
  - h. Education of children in grades K-12 about the law or the legal system through an organized program, the purpose of which is to introduce children to the law.

### **III. HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?**

#### **1. ATTORNEY PROJECTS**

The Pro Bono Board actively solicits pro bono projects from attorneys and organizations interested in student assistance. These projects are regularly posted on the bulletin board near the student lockers. Projects will vary in the type of work to be completed, the time commitment expected, and the location where work should be completed. Students will be able to find this information, as well as a brief description of each project, on the sign-up forms. Projects are open to all students unless the posting notes experience or skills required. Projects are assigned first come, first served. Once students have committed to a project, the Attorney Projects Coordinator will email them with the contact information for their supervising attorney.

NOTE: Signing up on the bulletin board is a commitment to complete the project, not an expression of interest.

## **2. WINTER AND SPRING BREAK PROJECTS**

Winter Break projects allow students to work individually with attorneys during their longest break in the academic year. The Pro Bono Board works to find projects in a variety of different substantive areas and throughout the state and nation. On a sign-up day in November, students select their projects on a first come, first served basis. Every year, over 100 UNC law students complete pro bono work during Winter Break. Spring Break projects will be made available a few weeks before Spring Break, and sign-ups are typically done online.

## **3. SPECIAL TRIPS**

The Pro Bono Program organizes Special Trips for students during fall, winter, and spring breaks. The goal of trips is to address the specific legal needs of communities within North Carolina, especially in more rural areas. Many past trips have included the opportunity to draft wills, advance directives, powers of attorney and health care powers of attorney for low-income senior citizens. Interest meetings are held for each trip, and participants are selected by application. Trip participants are required to attend a meeting and training prior to the trip. Trip expenses are covered by the Pro Bono Program, but participants will participate in some fundraising efforts.

## **4. STUDENT GROUP PROJECTS**

Student group projects are supported and created by student organizations. These projects offer opportunities for students to interact and engage in pro bono projects related to their specific interest areas. Students work with attorneys and organizations to create and support pro bono opportunities on issues ranging from criminal law to environmental law. Student organizations work with the Pro Bono Board's Student Group Projects Coordinator to ensure that projects comply with State Bar regulations. *See Section IV, Student Organization Projects.*

## **5. SPECIAL PROJECTS**

The Pro Bono Program manages ongoing projects and one-time projects throughout the year. Information about projects and sign ups is shared regularly in weekly emails from Class Coordinators.

- a. **UNC CANCER PRO BONO LEGAL PROJECT:** One Friday per month, students and supervising attorneys interview clients at the NC Cancer Hospital and provide them with critical end-of-life documents. For more information, contact Special Projects Coordinator Liliya Oliferuk.

- b. **LAWYER ON THE LINE:** A partnership with Legal Aid of North Carolina, students work with supervising attorneys to counsel clients via telephone about issues in housing, employment, and expungement law. For more information, contact Special Projects Coordinator Jacob Brannon.
- c. **ADDITIONAL SPECIAL PROJECTS:** Each semester, the Pro Bono Board organizes additional special projects. In the past, these have included Wills for Heroes with the North Carolina Bar Foundation, a day trip to assist with FEMA appeals for hurricane survivors, and more. Be sure to read the weekly emails from Class Coordinators to learn of these opportunities.

#### **6. DEVELOP YOUR OWN PROJECT**

If students cannot find an existing project that suits them, or if they discover an unmet legal need that a new pro bono project could address, the Pro Bono Program encourages them to start their own project. These projects are typically individual or smaller scale projects. To begin this process, we encourage students to fill out the [DIY Pro Bono Project Form](#) and contact their Class Coordinator.

### **IV. STUDENT ORGANIZATION PROJECTS**

Student organizations work closely with the Pro Bono Board's Student Group Projects Coordinator to ensure that projects comply with State Bar regulations. Student organization projects must partner with attorney supervisors and/or organizations outside of the law school. Student organizations (and the Pro Bono Program) may not take on cases for direct representation, and partner organizations and attorneys must be responsible for any client files, ongoing representation, and malpractice coverage.

Prior to a student organization conducting a pro bono project, student organization leaders must submit a project proposal form online and submit a faculty advisor approval form. The Student Group Projects Coordinator will arrange a meeting with the Director of Pro Bono Initiatives, student organization leaders, and the faculty advisor (if available). Project information will also be confirmed with the attorney supervisor for the project. Following approval, the project will be entered into the MyCarolinaLaw system for hours logging.

Each April, one student organization project is honored as the Student Group Project of the Year at the Pro Bono Publico Awards ceremony.

## V. WHO TO CONTACT

If you have questions or concerns about a project or opportunity, we encourage you to reach out to a member of the Pro Bono Board.



Student Director:  
[Alex Rutgers](#)



3L Class Coordinator:  
[Wilson Greene](#)



2L Class Coordinator:  
[Cayla Rodney](#)



1L Class Coordinator: TBD



Alumni Outreach Coordinator:  
[Laura Medlin](#)



Attorney Projects Coordinator:  
[Andrew Benton](#)



Public Relations Coordinator:  
[Chloe Altieri](#)



Special Trips Coordinator:  
[Maria Carisetti](#)



Special Trips Coordinator:  
[Sam Spalding](#)



Special Projects Coordinator:  
[Jacob Brannon](#)



Special Projects Coordinator:  
[Liliya Oliferuk](#)



Student Group Projects  
Coordinator: [Channell Coleman](#)



Winter & Spring Break Projects  
Coordinator: [Cameron Ervin](#)

## VI. PRO BONO HOURS

### 1. HOW TO LOG YOUR HOURS:

Log hours online on MyCarolina Law. Click this [link](#) for a tutorial. If you are still having trouble, contact your Class Coordinator.

### 2. WHAT YOU SHOULD LOG:

- Substantive work on the project
- Training (upon participation the project, you may log hours spent on training)
- Travel time if the project is beyond Chapel Hill
- Correspondence with supervising attorney

NOTE: Projects will sometimes have an estimated time when you sign up. Log the time that you actually spend on the project, not the estimated time.

### 3. SUMMER HOURS POLICY:

- a. With respect to Summer Break, limiting credit for Pro Bono work is consistent with the concept that Pro Bono work is legal work often performed in addition to one's regular employment. However, the Pro Bono Board still wishes to recognize the substantial efforts of students who perform public interest legal work during their summer internships at no cost or at low wages.
- b. Students may receive Pro Bono credit for work during the summer break if the work qualifies under the definitions in Section II and the student is paid (in salary, stipend, or grant) less than one and a half times the minimum wage of the jurisdiction where the work is being done.
  - i. For the purposes of determining minimum wage, "jurisdiction" means state or U.S. territory. If the work is performed in another country, then a student can earn Pro Bono credit if the student earns less than one and a half times the minimum wage of North Carolina.
- c. Maximum Number of Hours: students will receive no more than twenty-five hours of credit for working during the summer. Students may exceed the twenty-five hour limit *only if* (1) service is work completed as a continuation of work done in the academic year and unconnected to summer employment, or (2) service is in addition to and unconnected to the student's current employer. This specifically excludes split summers (e.g., the student may not log 25 hours for each employer).

#### **4. FACILITATOR HOURS:**

- a. The Pro Bono Board wishes to recognize the efforts of students who work towards facilitating Pro Bono opportunities for their peers with the understanding that facilitator work may not be legal in nature.
  - i. Students, including but not limited to Pro Bono Board members, student organization Pro Bono Coordinators, and outstanding student participants, may receive credit for up to ten hours each semester for their work facilitating Pro Bono work for other students. These “nominal hours” may include, but are not limited to, coordination with supervising attorneys and administrative work that furthers the Pro Bono work of students.

#### **5. RECOGNITION:**

- a. Recognition is awarded to students meeting the following hours thresholds:
  - 50 hours: transcript notation
  - 75 hours: transcript notation, recognition as a 3L at the Pro Bono Publico Awards ceremony, and invitation as a 3L to a special celebration with alumni
  - 100 hours: transcript notation, recognition as a 3L at the Pro Bono Publico Awards ceremony, invitation as a 3L to a special celebration with alumni, and recognition at graduation
- b. College Cup: The 1L college earning the most points through participation in pro bono, hours logged, and attendance at Pro Bono Program events will be awarded the College Cup and a celebration at the end of the school year.
- c. Pro Bono Publico Awards: Each April, the Pro Bono Program presents Pro Bono Publico Awards to the 1L, 2L, 3L, Student Group, and Faculty Member, and Alumnus of the Year in addition to the Sylvia K. Novinsky Award recognizing a graduating student. Graduating students who completed 75 or more hours are also recognized.

#### **6. WHY LOG YOUR HOURS:**

##### **a. It Helps You**

ABA Model Rule 6.1 encourages all lawyers to commit at least 50 hours per year to Pro Bono work. When you do Pro Bono work as a lawyer, you will have to keep track of those hours – start practicing now while you are a student! Some states, including New York, also require pro bono hours for admission to the bar.

##### **b. It Helps the Community**

There is a great need for free legal services in the North Carolina community and beyond. Knowing how students are consistently participating in Pro Bono work



allows area attorneys to confidently offer more Pro Bono projects, projects that reach unmet legal needs in our own backyard.

**c. It Helps the Pro Bono Program**

Having an accurate record of student involvement lets the UNC Pro Bono Program better evaluate student opportunities for involvement, enabling us to provide even more meaningful student Pro Bono experiences in the future.

**d. It Helps UNC School of Law**

Being able to point to an accurate record of student participation lets UNC Law better communicate with attorneys and alumni, which in turn provides more opportunities for student networking and professional development.

Additionally, a strong showing of Pro Bono hours helps the school continue to encourage qualified, compassionate students to apply and fulfill the law school's mission "to instill lifelong ethical values, dedication to the cause of justice and a lasting commitment to pro bono and public service."

## **VII. GUIDELINES FOR PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT**

### **1. STUDENT CONTRACT**

All students who have signed up for a project from the Attorney Projects bulletin board, a Winter Break project, a Spring Break project, or other similar projects that students may undertake through the Pro Bono Program have agreed to comply with the terms of the [Pro Bono Contract](#).

### **2. PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS**

The guidelines listed below are intended to remind you of some of the basic standards of professional behavior expected from students working on pro bono projects. This list, however, is by no means exhaustive. If you encounter a problem or an ethical dilemma, please do not hesitate to contact the Pro Bono Board's Student Director. Failure to meet professional expectations may result in a meeting with the Director of Pro Bono Initiatives or the Assistant Dean for Student Development.

- a. Keep in mind that while you are doing legal work, you are not an attorney. Your work must be approved by supervising attorneys, and you must inform clients that you are a law student acting under the supervision of a licensed attorney.

- b. Any case information must be kept confidential. You may only discuss cases with the supervising attorney and other student volunteers also working on the project.
- c. Stay in consistent touch with the Pro Bono Program Class Coordinator and with your supervising attorney. This means that if, for example, you will be late meeting with the lawyer or if you have a problem that you need to discuss with the lawyer, you should call the lawyer to let them know about it.
- d. Take deadlines seriously. If you cannot meet a deadline, communicate this information to the supervising lawyer as well as to the Class Coordinator from your class.
- e. If you sign up for a project, you must complete the project unless there is an emergency situation preventing you from doing so. If you cannot complete the project, you must contact your Class Coordinator immediately.
- f. Be professional in all communications with your supervising attorney and Class Coordinator. All e-mails should be formal and free of spelling and grammatical errors.

## **VIII. JOINING THE PRO BONO BOARD**

### **1. 1L Class Coordinator:**

In September, the Pro Bono Board will select a 1L Class Coordinator from the first-year class. The 1L Class Coordinator is responsible for educating classmates about pro bono opportunities and recruiting students for projects. The 1L Class Coordinator maintains contact with the students as they work on projects, verifies that work hours submitted by students qualify as pro bono work, and manages the College Cup competition.

The selection process consists of a written application and interview by the Pro Bono Board. An interest meeting will be held in late August or early September, and any questions should be directed to the Student Director of the Pro Bono Board.

### **2. Pro Bono Board Positions for 2Ls and 3Ls**

Each Spring, the Pro Bono Board advertises and solicits applications for open positions on the board within the UNC School of Law student body. Board terms are based on the academic year.

Prior to open board selection in the Spring, the Pro Bono Board's Student Director is selected from the pool of students who have previously served on the Pro Bono Board. Current Pro Bono Board members may also apply to remain on the board through an internal selection process. Remaining board positions are advertised in Class Coordinator emails and at an interest meeting in the Spring. The selection process consists of a written application and interview by the Pro Bono Board. Any questions should be directed to the Student Director of the Pro Bono Board.

## **IX. NEW YORK BAR PRO BONO REQUIREMENT**

Admission to the New York Bar requires 50 hours of pro bono service. Information about the New York Pro Bono Requirement may be found on this [website](#). The [Frequently Asked Questions](#) page is quite extensive and will likely answer most of your questions.

The website also contains the [Form Affidavit of Compliance](#) that you will need to have completed by the supervising attorney for your pro bono hours. Note that this form must be completed by your supervising attorney, not UNC School of Law.

It is important to understand that the New York Bar's definition<sup>2</sup> of pro bono is different from the UNC School of Law Pro Bono Program's definition of pro bono. Some notable differences include:

- Most clinic and externship experiences done for credit DO count as pro bono for New York Bar admission. This is often the best choice, as you will only have to complete one form.
- Travel time to/from projects do not count for New York Bar admission.
- Participation in VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) likely does not count for New York Bar admission.

---

<sup>2</sup> Information about the New York Bar is current as of June 2019. Applicants for admission to the bar are responsible for ensuring that they review and comply with the latest version of the rules.