Dear Friends:

The Academic Year 2013-2014 was an exciting year for our program and confirmed that there is a growing energy and interest both within our school and in our community for law students to be of help meeting the growing need for legal assistance in Madison and throughout the state of Wisconsin. Every year more of our students express an interest in “practicing” law before they are licensed to practice law. They increasingly serve in more than one pro bono project during their time in law school and they are starting to create their own pro bono projects due to their enthusiasm to be of help and to apply what they have learned in the classroom.

Our Pro Bono Program had a great year last year with 110 students participating in Pro Bono projects and more than 4,065 hours dedicated to serving underrepresented people. Because of this steadily-increasing participation – the Pro Bono Program initiated a second tier to the Pro Bono Society (created in the 2011-2012 academic year). Inside this report is an article outlining the second tier of recognition which many of our students are striving toward and achieving.

In the Spring of this last academic year, our program’s director – Ann Zimmerman – announced her intention to retire. Laura Smythe, the author of this article, was hired during the Summer of 2014 and, as an alum of the University of Wisconsin Law School, is delighted to a part of the philosophy of service that reverberates throughout the law school and that is revealed in its motto: “Law In Action.”

We recognize, and deeply appreciate, the continuing support of our law school administration, the Wisconsin State Bar, local and state judiciary, local law firms and individual attorneys. Your support makes our program possible and enriches the education of our students while improving the lives of so many within our community.

Thank you!

Warmly,
Laura C. Smythe, M.A., M.A., J.D.
Director, UW Law School Pro Bono Program
Pro Bono Program at a Glance

The Pro Bono Program has grown a great deal since it was created in 2007. Beginning in the 2013-2014 academic year, a law student was chosen to serve as the program's Coordinator. Alexandra Bentzen, served in this role until May 2014, when Amanda Meyers took over for 2014-2015. Additionally, a new student position, held by senior undergraduate Carolyn Staats, was created in early 2014 to address the administrative needs of the VLC. In August of 2014, attorney Laura Smythe, replaced Ann Zimmerman as the program’s Director. Clinical Professors Ben Kempinen and Marsha Mansfield continue to be a constant in the program as the program's Academic Advisors.

What our students have to say

The Pro Bono, and vicariously the multitude of opportunities to actually use your legal knowledge to make a difference in the community, is one of the most important differences about the UW law program. I volunteered with the Unemployment Appeals Clinic during my first year. What a fantastic experience! I took on clients, did research, went to a hearing and won a case. Not only was it a great learning experience for me, I was able to have a very real impact on someone else’s life when we were able to reverse the decision to deny unemployment insurance. Also, having that actual connection to the community, to my client, kept me going when I wondered what I was doing spending all of my time studying. My experience was a very small speck in the amount of work I heard about people doing through Pro Bono opportunities during the year. While I would probably have volunteered at some point during law school, the Pro Bono Program will ensure that I continue doing so 1) so that I get all my hours in but 2) because there is such a wealth of information and opportunities that comes from the program.

_Bridget Laurent, JD Candidate, December 2014_

Volunteering with the Veterans Law Center has been the most personally significant and meaningful work I have done through my entire time in Law School. I would like to take this time to thank everyone who has so generously supported VLC. I would like to especially thank our volunteer attorneys, without whom we would be lost. I have no inspiring words to offer that have not already been said. However, I will say that it is has been my privilege and honor to have been involved with VLC.

_Andrew Brooks, JD Candidate, May 2015_
Pro Bono Program Opportunities and Community Partners

Advocacy and Benefits Counseling (ABC) for Health, Inc. is a Wisconsin-based, nonprofit public interest law firm dedicated to linking children and families, particularly those with special needs, to health care benefits and services.

The Community Immigration Law Center (CILC) provides legal information regarding immigration to individuals and groups who might otherwise not have access to the legal system through walk-in legal clinics, know-your-rights presentations, and other community outreach activities.

Community Justice, Incorporated (CJI) is a non-profit law firm that works with low-income families and individuals to secure fair representation in court, protecting the legal rights of those who would otherwise face the system alone.

Dane County Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) is a local non-profit organization that provides volunteer advocates to abused and neglected children who are under the protection or authority of the Dane County Courts.

The Dane County TimeBank Youth Court provides a positive alternative to the juvenile justice system so youth can willingly take responsibility for their actions and by working with law enforcement, schools and neighborhood groups make amends and build healthy and productive relationships.

The Indian Wills Caravan is an alternate break trip throughout Wisconsin, where students and attorneys prepare wills and other estate planning documents at no charge for eligible tribal members.

Legal Action of Wisconsin Inc. (LAW) is a non-profit law firm that provides civil legal representation to achieve justice for low-income people and advocates for empowerment and systemic change that helps low-income people access their legal rights.

Legal Assistance for Disaster Relief (LADR) is a law student organization that travels to locations in the United States that have recently suffered from a major natural disaster to work for local non-profits assisting direct and indirect low-income and indigent victims of the disaster.

The Legal Intervention for Nonviolence Clinic (LINC) is a free legal clinic that assists clients of Domestic Abuse Intervention Services (DAIS) in addressing some of the unique legal challenges posed by our communities.

Midwest Environmental Defense Center (MEDC) is a nonprofit environmental organization working to protect the land, air, and water resources of the upper Midwest through legal and regulatory advocacy.

NIJC Dodge County Detention Facility Trips are facilitated by the National Immigrant Justice Center (NIJC) and the Immigrant Justice Clinic (IJC) to provide legal information and representation to detainees at the Dodge County Detention Facility in Juneau, WI.

Ready to Rent’s goal is to help jail inmates prepare for the rental application process, learn their legal rights and options for finding housing with a criminal record, and anticipate and avoid common rental problems.

The Sunshine Legal Clinic is a free legal clinic that works to improve access to legal services for individuals in and around Sun Prairie who could otherwise not afford them.

The Tenant Resource Center (TRC) is a nonprofit, membership organization that educates tenants and landlords about their rental rights and responsibilities while unlocking the door to affordable housing and keeping families safe in their homes through housing counseling, referrals, and mediation.

The Unemployment Appeals Clinic (UAC) is a volunteer organization staffed by law students and supervising attorneys, who assist unemployed community members, most of whom cannot find legal help elsewhere, file unemployment appeals claims.

The UW IJC & CILC Bilingual Legal Volunteer Program Volunteers use their bilingual abilities to assist the IJC and CILC with providing legal services to non-English speaking immigrants in our community.

The Veterans Law Center (VLC) is a free legal center staffed by volunteer lawyers, paralegals and law students that serves low-income veterans and their families, providing brief legal advice, information and referrals on a variety of civil legal matters.

The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program provides free tax preparation to low and moderate income individuals and families.

The Western District of Wisconsin Opportunity, through the Pro Bono Program and the Western District of Wisconsin Bar Association Pro Bono Committee, lets students sign up to be matched with an attorney who is working on a pro bono case in the Western District of Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin Wills for Heroes Program’s volunteer lawyers and students prepare wills and other estate planning documents free of charge for eligible first responders and their spouses or domestic partners.

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

Andrew Brooks was the Pro Bono Program Volunteer of the Fall 2013 Semester for his pro bono work with the Veterans Law Center (VLC). Andrew is one of the VLC Student Coordinators and has contributed over 100 hours to the VLC in that role.

Liz Bradley was the Pro Bono Program Volunteer of the Spring 2014 Semester for her pro bono work with the Community Immigration Law Center (CILC). In addition to volunteering for CILC, Liz took on a supervisory role for the 2013-2014 school year.

Congratulations 2013-2014 Pro Bono Society Inductees!

Pro Bono Society inductees have completed a minimum of 50 hours of approved pro bono service.

Jair Alvarez
Alexandra Bentzen
Kelliann Blazek
Cary Bloodworth
Anita Boor
Andrew Christopherson
Kimberly Hardtke
Kenny Ho
Jacob Jokisch
Siely Joshi
Mohammad Khaleelullah
Vanessa Kuettel
Courtney Lanz
Kevin Ladye
Kimberly Leung
Jennifer Limbach
Yu-Jui Liu
David Maes
Breanna Magallones
Thomas McDonell
Lia Ocasio
Brendan O’Connor
Patrick O’Neill
Jennifer Pusch
Jason Reed
Megumi Saito
Paris Scott
Jaclyn Shelton
Tatiana Shirasaki (LLM)
Laura Steigerwald
Nicole Williams

Pro Bono Society Inductees pose for a picture with their purple cords.
DCBA Student Pro Bono Award: Liz Bradley

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 2014, Liz Bradley received the Student Pro Bono award from the DCBA.

Liz has volunteered with a number of different Pro Bono Program opportunities, including Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), the Community Immigration Law Center (CILC), and the Immigrant Justice Clinic (IJC). She has contributed over 90 hours to these opportunities. Further, Liz has been a volunteer with the Pro Bono Program since the beginning of her 1L year.

State Bar of Wisconsin Outstanding Public Interest Law Student Award: Andrew Brooks

Andrew Brooks, a VLC Student Coordinator, was selected to receive the State Bar of Wisconsin's 2014 Public Interest Law Student of the Year Award. This award recognizes a law student's exceptional service to public interest law concerns.

Andrew, an Army veteran, has been committed to veterans legal services since entering law school in 2012, contributing his time and talents to the Veterans Law Center, as well as co-chairing the Veterans Legal Society at UW Law School.

Former Pro Bono Program Director Ann Zimmerman stated that Andrew has easily contributed hundreds of hours to the Veterans Law Center, and he "is always eager to be of assistance and incredibly reliable. He earns the respect of all who meet him with his quiet confidence, yet he is never arrogant and deflects any attempts by others to recognize his efforts."

State Bar of Wisconsin Pro Bono Organization of the Year: Veterans Law Center

The Veterans Law Center (VLC) was selected to receive the 2014 Pro Bono Organization of the Year award through the State Bar of Wisconsin. This award recognizes exceptional pro bono service in its targeted community. The VLC was nominated for its innovative delivery of legal services to an underserved segment of the population. Over 100 veterans have been served in the VLC’s first year of operation, and the staff and volunteers are looking forward to serving more people every year.
Events

2013 Annual Fall Reception
On Thursday, September 12, the Pro Bono Program hosted its 4th Annual Fall Reception. The Reception celebrates pro bono volunteers and emphasizes the impact that pro bono work has on our communities and our lives. The Honorable Louis B. Butler, Jr., who spoke about New York’s 50-hour pro bono requirement, was the Keynote Speaker for the Reception. Dane County CASA Director Mary Beth Collins and 2L Law Student Mary Bryn Concannon spoke about what pro bono means to them. Dean Raymond presented the first Honorary Pro Bono Society Membership to Community Justice Attorney Jennifer Binkley.

2014 Spring Pro Bono Pizza Panel
On January 30, pro bono Volunteers and Supervisors gathered together with students to discuss pro bono opportunities while dining on pizza. The Pro Bono Program hosts this event every year in order to acquaint students with available opportunities and to give them a chance to interact with peers and attorneys who are directly involved in the opportunities.
Two Tiers for the Pro Bono Society

In September 2014, we added a second level of recognition to the Pro Bono Society. We now recognize students for contributing over 50 and over 100 hours of pro bono service. We made this change to encourage students to continue submitting their time once they reach 50 hours and to recognize their substantial contributions to pro bono service. In Winter 2014, we had 1 student attain over 100 hours and for Spring 2015 we will have at least 9!

The Last of the AmeriCorps VISTA

Davis Runde’s (2013-2014 VLC Administrator) departure in July 2014 marked the last of our VISTA-funded service members. For 2014-2015, we created an undergraduate student intern position to fill the role of VLC Administrator and Attorney & Paralegal Coordinator. Our first intern is Carolyn Staats, a senior undergraduate majoring in Psychology and Social Welfare. Carolyn will be with us until she graduates in May 2015.

Pro Bono Program Statistics

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UW LAW SCHOOL
PRO BONO PROGRAM
2013-2014 ANNUAL REPORT

Contact us!
probonoprogram@law.wisc.edu

Visit us online!
law.wisc.edu/probono

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

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.

ON THE COVER
Clockwise from the top: Students pose with the gargoyle to tell us why they do pro bono; Guests mingle before the 2013 Annual Fall Reception; Students enjoy pizza at the 2014 Spring Pizza Panel; After a training session, students sign up to participate; Dean Margaret Raymond converses with retired Taylor County Judge Gary Carlson and Former Pro Bono Program Director Ann Zimmerman at the 2013 Annual Fall Reception; Lia Ocasio shares with us why she does pro bono.