

CLINIC NEWS

The newsletter of the Texas Tech University School of Law Clinical Programs

CLINICAL PROGRAMS HONOR STUDENTS DURING RECOGNITION EVENT

INSIDE THIS EDITION

From the Desk of Larry Spain	2, 11
From the Desk of Terri Morgeson	3
From the Desk of Miranda Rhyne	4, 8
From the Desk of Patrick S. Metz	5, 7
From the Desk of Joe Stephens	6, 8,
From the Desk of Allison Clayton	9
From the Desk of Patrick S. Metz	10, 11
Honors and Awards	12, 13
Faculty & Staff Support Pro Bono	13
Pro Bono Awards	14
Information Session/Where Are They Now?	15
Words From Our Students	16
Snapshot Corner	17, 18
Faculty & Staff	19



The annual Student Recognition Event was held on April 28th in the Lanier Auditorium.



Most clinic students were present and recognized with a purple/silver cord for their dedication and participation in the clinical programs. Director Larry Spain welcomed and congratulated the students on another successful year. Dean Nowlin was also present to congratulate the students on a great year and support the Clinical Programs!



and represented hundreds of clients with equal access to justice.

Students recognized participated in the Advanced ADR Clinic, Tax Clinic, Civil Practice Clinic, Family Law Clinic, Criminal Defense Clinic, Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic, Capital Punishment Clinic, and Innocence Clinic.



The Clinical Programs has been recognizing students for many years for their participation, dedication, and commitment to representing low income individuals in the community who cannot otherwise afford to retain the services of an attorney. Since the inception of the Clinical Programs which began with the LITC in April 2000, students have participated in the programs and contributed thousands of student hours





From the Desk of Larry Spain - Director of Clinical Programs and Civil Practice Clinic

During the spring semester, the following eight students continued their work in the Civil Practice Clinic: **Matthew Amunrud, Chase Chamberlain, Samuel Dick, Sydney Dumas, Abby Dye, Megan Goracke, Katie Master, and Meagan Vlasak**. Each of these students took seriously their professional responsibility for representing the interests of their clients with their particular legal problem.

Over the course of the spring semester, a total of 10 new client cases were undertaken, 22 cases were completed and closed, and 9 cases remain open and will be carried over to the next academic year. This academic year, students were able to participate in evening in-person Pro Bono Clinics sponsored by Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas in addition to their individual casework. This allowed students to be exposed to the substantial need for

free legal services to individuals in the community with a variety of legal problems through interviewing prospective clients.

Each of the students have been kept busy carrying an individual caseload of 3-4 clients at most times throughout the semester and assumed primary responsibility for the representation of clients in matters involving family law, disability claims, wills and other advance planning documents, and other civil matters. Over the course of the academic year, the students gained valuable lawyering skills which have prepared them well for entering the legal profession. It was a pleasure witnessing the confidence they gained in representing clients over the course of the past year and I enjoyed working with each of them and expect great accomplishments from them in the future.

I also wish to acknowledge the valuable assistance and administrative support of **Melissa Vasquez** and **Nancy Mojica** in support of the Civil Practice Clinic as well as all of the other clinical programs.

(Continued on page 11)



Clinic has been a great experience. I've gained a lot of confidence through representing clients in real-life situations. Being able to ask Professor Spain questions anytime was always very helpful in navigating my cases and communicating with clients. I'm thankful for my time in the Civil Clinic.

Matthew Amunrud
Civil Practice Clinic

CIVIL PRACTICE CLINIC

- Focuses on development of professional skills and values in a closely supervised clinical setting
- Students will assume individual responsibility for representing actual clients in all phases of client representation in social security disability claims, family law, wills and advance planning, housing issues, consumer and civil rights claims and other civil cases of interest to students
- Classroom component will provide instruction in substantive and procedural law applicable to cases handled by the Clinic as well as ethical issues and professional values; professional skill development; and case rounds
- Students have individual supervisory sessions with faculty and maintain a reflective clinic journal.



Pictured L to R:
Back row: Chase Chamberlain, Matthew Amunrud, Sam Dick, Professor Spain.
Front row: Sydney Dumas, Megan Goracke, Katie Master, Meagan Vlasak, and Abby Dye.

Congratulations to the following students selected for the **Civil Practice Clinic** for the 2025-2026 academic year:

Jonah Burch, Franco Flores, Chance Fraser, Josie Hudson, Aaron Kruger, Loryn McFall, Ariana Marin, and Samuel Mauceri.



From the Desk of Terri Morgeson- Director, Family Law Clinic

My second year as the Director of the Family Law Clinic was memorable and just flew by. This was a year of many firsts. We had our first two male students in the clinic, Hagan Gardiner and Harlan Burk, and Samantha Beirne gave birth to our first clinic baby, Franklin.

This year's winner of the Outstanding Clinic student award was Carlie McCleery. Carlie had had three contested hearings in one week. Most notably, she won a protective order by getting a confession on the stand.

Other clinic standouts were Ashley Trujillo, Izabelle Mendoza, Vanessa Jones, Breuklyn Nivens, and Fernandez Roman. These students handled contested matters, from

custody cases and divorces to happy matters like adoptions, like true professionals.

Ash will be remembered for stepping up and accepting/taking over a particularly tense case. Izzy will be remembered for handling an aggressive client and for the most service attempts. Vanessa and Fernanda tied for the most difficult client. Harlan issued our first arrest warrant, and Hagan won the award for the most resets in a case. Samantha wins for dealing with the most difficult mediator (did I mention she was growing a tiny human too). Lastly, Breuklyn handled all administrative matters, much to my delight. I also have to give a huge shoutout to Carlie and Izzie. They both worked well past the end of the semester and into finals to see their cases til the end.

I had a big bunch this year and I often thought we might be moved because of how loud we got, but it all worked out. I will miss them all.

"I am just being honest."



My experience with the Family Law clinic has been very fulfilling. It has been very rewarding to know that I am helping people as a qualified representative. Additionally, I've been able to learn a lot of things that you do not get to learn through case law and course work, which has diminished the stress I had of going into the real world.

Fernanda Roman
Family Law Clinic

FAMILY LAW CLINIC

This is a full-year 12 credit hours (6 per semester—2 for classroom component and 4 for case work) course limited to 8 students. Students accepted into the clinic must be registered for both Fall and Spring semesters.

Students assume primary responsibility under faculty supervision of all phases of representation in assigned cases in family law and housing matters. The course focuses on the development of professional skills and values in a closely supervised clinical setting, including interviewing and counseling, case analysis and planning, problem solving, fact investigation, negotiation and mediation, document drafting, written and oral advocacy.

Classroom component will provide instruction in substantive and procedural law applicable to cases handled by the Clinic as well as ethical issues and professional values; professional skill development; and case rounds.



Pictured L to R:

Back: Samantha Beirne, Hagen Gardiner, Carlie McCleery, Harlan Burk.
Front: Ashley Trujillo, Breuklyn Nivens, Vanessa Jones, Professor Morgeson, Izabelle Mendoza, and Fernanda Roman.

Congratulations to the following students selected for the **Family Law Clinic** for the 2025-2026 academic year:

Palak Dave, Jordyn DeAnda, Mya Garcia, Christopher Kerr, Allison Monacelli, Emily Walden, and Madison Wright.



From the Desk of Miranda Rhyne - Director, Low- Income Taxpayer Clinic

The Tax Clinic is proud to announce the conclusion of a successful spring semester, with ten student attorneys qualified to practice before the Internal Revenue Service (IRS): Jacie Birkenfeld, Jacob Durland, James Holdridge, Kasha Ross, Kolton Looka, Meagan Watson, Morgan Hammel, Priyanka Pudasaini, Ryleigh Waldo, and Savannah Monterrey. This academic year, Tax Clinic students discovered the compelling human stories behind the numbers. Beyond tax forms and regulations, they learned that each client's situation presents unique challenges and often unexpected twists. By serving as dedicated advocates and skillfully presenting their clients' stories to the IRS, our students

achieved significant financial relief this year for local taxpayers, securing over \$150,000 in refunds and reducing tax burdens by more than \$140,000. Their work extended beyond direct client representation, as they provided vital free tax return preparation services to hundreds in our community.

Meagan, recipient of this year's Ann and Robert J. Burbidge Tax Clinic Award, embodies exceptional professionalism, strong interpersonal skills, and a proactive dedication to her clients' well-being. Her outstanding advocacy has already resulted in more than \$49,000 refunded to taxpayers and over \$54,000 in reduced tax debt, including successful settlements in several United States Tax Court cases. With her dedicated work on two pending settlement negotiations, Meagan is on track to save clients an additional \$200,000+ in tax debt.

(continued on page 8)

LOW-INCOME TAXPAYER CLINIC

This is a full-year 10 credit hours (5 per semester—2 for classroom component and 3 for case work) course limited to 8 students. 2-4 students can possibly be accepted for both summer sessions and students earn a total of 4 credit hours (2 per session).

The Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic was formed in April 2000 to provide professional skills training to law students and to provide law students the opportunity to gain practical experience in administrative proceedings before the Internal Revenue Service and in judicial proceedings before the United States Tax Court. The clinic serves residents in the West Texas Panhandle area of Texas and Eastern New Mexico by offering representation to taxpayers who are unable to obtain professional tax counsel. Students develop important lawyering skills by interviewing and counseling clients, conducting factual investigations, legal research and analysis, negotiating compromises, drafting documents and litigating.

Students are responsible for their own caseloads but are closely supervised by the clinic director. The director of the clinic assists the students in all phases of their clinical education.

Congratulations to the following students selected for the ***Low -Income Taxpayer Clinic*** for the 2025-2026 academic year:

Ehson Ali, Jasper Bretenbach, Grace Lee, Shereen Mathews, Rollins Mayfield, and Luke Ursone.



Pictured L to R:

Meagan Watson, Savannah Monterrey, Kaylie Jackson, Jacie Birkenfeld, Priyanka Pudasaini, James Holdridge, Professor Miranda Rhyne, Jake Durland, Kolton Looka, Morgan Hammel, Ryleigh Waldo, and Kasha Ross.



From the Desk of Patrick S. Metze - Director, Criminal Defense Clinic

As is our custom, the students in the 2024-2025 Criminal Defense Clinic (CDC) were busy all year representing real people in real cases in real time. This year, the students handled 123 cases for 80 clients. Of these cases, 36 are still pending, 40 were disposed of through some type of negotiated plea, and 47 cases were dismissed. Cases consisted of 103 misdemeanors and 20 felonies. This is an average student caseload of almost 25 cases and 16 clients per student, which is double the number of clients and cases promised in the clinic catalogue. These numbers do not take into consideration the 29 cases for 22 clients which were handled by the student attorneys during the year and transferred to other attorneys -mostly at the end of the year when the students ran out of time. Students handled all phases of representation from an initial interview through appearance in court.

Members of the clinic represented clients in the Lubbock Municipal Court, before the Justice of the Peace, in the Magistrate Court, in both Lubbock County Courts at Law, and in all three felony District Courts of Lubbock. Clinic students during the

Spring semester were: Sydney Allison, Aiya Almzayen, Mitchell Barry, Kalee Gore, and Katherine Jost. Please congratulate everyone for all their hard work. These students are trained and ready for the practice of criminal law.

During the school year, these students performed over 2600 hours of pro bono representation of the poor. I am grateful for the tireless and invaluable help of Professors Dwight McDonald, Joe Stephens, and Terri Morgeson who helped guide the students all year. The wide variety of cases, along with the collaborative nature of our clinics, gives the students exposure to the daily challenges of the criminal defense practitioner well in advance of graduation. Most students agree their clinical experience ranks among their best experiences in law school. During the weekly two-hour classroom component, students shared with each other their accomplishments on their cases, their goals, fears and concerns. By freely sharing and participating in these open class discussions, students assisted each other in the learning experience and helped formulate strategies, themes and theories of their cases, while learning to perform very complicated and sophisticated legal analysis.

Collaborative class discussions were often very spirited and were always an enjoyable exchange of ideas. We are there to learn

(Continued on page 7)

CRIMINAL DEFENSE CLINIC

This is a full-year 12 credit hours (6 per semester - 2 for classroom component and 4 for case work) course limited to 8 students.

Students accepted into the clinic must be registered for both Fall and Spring semesters. The CDC provides a community service by representing defendants in criminal cases who would otherwise be unable to afford their own legal representation.

Cases involve misdemeanors, felonies, and juvenile offenses in Lubbock County and the surrounding metropolitan area.

Prerequisites include: Students must be 3L status, not be on academic probation.

Recommended 3L courses include Texas Criminal Procedure, Trial Advocacy, Evidence, Criminal Procedure, and Professional Responsibility, and/or moot court or mock trial experience.

Students may not be concurrently enrolled in this class and another clinic or externship; all other qualifications being equal, students with no prior clinical or externship for credit experience are given preference for placement in the CDC; students may not have outside employment if enrolled in this clinic, however, exceptions can be made; and students may not sit for the February bar exam.



Pictured L to R:
Mitch Barry, Aiya Almzayen, Sydney Allison, Professor
Dwight McDonald, Katherine Jost, Professor Patrick
Metze, and Kalee Sue Gore.

Congratulations to the following students selected for the **Criminal Defense Clinic** for the 2025-2026 academic year: Roger Advincula, Callighan Ard, Ellen Fisher, Diana Garcia, Kashmala Khan, Bridget Pembroke, Tristan Perez, and Ashanty Wilson Bishop.



From the Desk of Joe Stephens - Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic

Leading the Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic this year has been a masterclass in what determined advocacy can accomplish. Jose Covarrubias, Ethan Jimenez, and Victor Lopez have continued our clinic's formidable presence across rural Texas courtrooms where legal resources are scarce and defendants often stand alone. Since January, we've closed over 200 cases while traveling thousands of miles across ten remote counties. The countless hours they've spent reviewing discovery, drafting motions, and preparing arguments have yielded results I never expected from student attorneys.

Their impact tells a powerful story: approximately 70% of our closed cases ended with charges dismissed, rejected, or significantly reduced. We've secured the release of 46 clients from jail—people who can now return to their families and jobs instead of waiting behind bars. Each student has personally handled more than 40 cases, from roadside marijuana stops to complex felonies, learning to navigate the unique personalities and procedures of ten different

county courthouses. When we prepare for trial, prosecutors take notice—every single case we've set for trial has been dismissed before reaching a jury. These aren't easy victories; they come from meticulously examining police reports, challenging evidence, and humanizing clients who are often written off by the system.

Our Advocates

Ethan possesses a fire that has burned powerfully this past year, and watching him learn how to harness it—to couple with the advocacy he is so naturally talented at—has been one of the more rewarding experiences of my teaching career. It was no surprise that he secured our clinic's first dismissal this year—negotiated on the courthouse lawn just one week into class—but witnessing him hone and tailor his skills has been truly instructive.

Victor has, in so many ways, been my teacher this year. There is a quiet meticulousness to his work that has allowed him to catch details that have led to transformative results for his clients. One young client was facing two separate charges that prosecutors were adamantly pursuing when Victor received the case. Months of patience and strategy

(Continued on page 8)

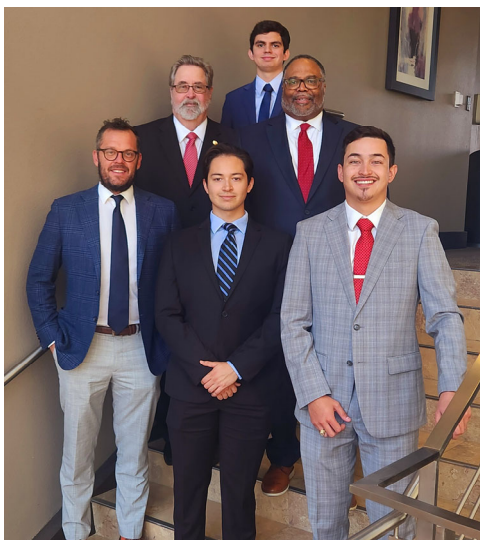
CAPROCK REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDER CLINIC

This is a full-year 12 credit hours (6 per semester - 2 for classroom component and 4 for case work) course limited to a maximum of 8 students. Students accepted into the clinic must be registered for both Fall and Spring semesters. The CRPDO provides a community service by representing defendants in criminal cases who would otherwise be unable to afford their own legal representation. Cases involve misdemeanor and juvenile offenses in a 10 county region. Students are closely supervised by Joe Stephens.

Prerequisites include: Students must be 3L status, not be on academic probation.

Recommended courses include Texas Criminal Procedure, Trial Advocacy, Evidence, Criminal Procedure, and Professional Responsibility, and/or moot court or mock trial experience.

Students may not be concurrently enrolled in this class and another clinic or externship; students may not have outside employment if enrolled in this clinic, however, exceptions can be made; and students may not sit for the February bar exam.



Pictured Back to Front:

Jose Covarrubias, Professor Patrick Metze, Professor Dwight McDonald, Professor Joe Stephens, Victor Lopez, and Ethan Jimenez.

Congratulations to the following students selected for the **Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic** for the 2025-2026 academic year:

Caleb Barkman, Anthony Bomar, Marley Gamble, Jakob Gomez, Holland Pombrio, and Mary Ricker.

From the Desk of Patrick S. Metze Director, Criminal Defense Clinic (continued from page 5)

and enjoy our work. Several learning environments are available to the students, including mandatory office hours leading to collaborative learning. The students work in close proximity, sharing ideas and developing strategies while keying off the knowledge of their peers. It is my hope this becomes a custom that will follow them into practice as the criminal defense bar freely shares knowledge and experience with younger attorneys. Other experiential learning was courtesy of the criminal defense bar from throughout Texas and the United States. The Lubbock Criminal Defense Lawyers Association Clifford Brown Award for 2025 was awarded to **Sydney Allison** for her “excellence in the art and science of criminal defense advocacy.” This year, the Professors’ Special Awards of Distinction named **Kalee Gore** and **Aiya Almzayen** as **2025 RGDS Champions**, for their creativity, dedication and commitment to their clients. There was significant effort and professionalism

shown this year by all members of the Clinic. I hope the experience was meaningful and a jumpstart to a successful practice in criminal law. Additionally, all my students showed a real interest in *pro-bono* work and I know that such a commitment to the poor will continue throughout their entire careers. Or at least it better. Also, it is my sincere wish that each student remembers Texas Tech Law fondly with particular affection for their clinical experience. As I tell the students, practicing law is about treating each client as a valuable individual, doing their very best for each client one at a time, representing that client to the best of their ability, and ethically seeking Justice by holding the State to their burden. Preparation is the key. Remember to **RGDS** and all you need is that Gold Card. While studying for the Bar this summer, no drama, pass the Bar and stay in touch. Come back often.

Where Are They Now?

Laycie Duncan (CRPDO '23) – is working in criminal & juvenile defense right here in Lubbock, at the Wanner Law Firm with Chris Wanner and Haley Hickey!

Malik Williams (Civil Defense '24) – is practicing at Family Legal Services of the South Plains in Lubbock, Tx.

Darren M. Garcia (CRPDO '23) – is currently practicing criminal defense law out of Mission, Texas at the Law Office of Carlos A. Garcia, PLLC.

Connor Beique (Tax Clinic '23) - After graduation, went to Houston, Texas and began his legal career at a boutique Estate Planning

and Probate law firm. The firm specializes in estate tax planning.

Tabitha Dwyer (Civil Practice Clinic '23) - works at Disability Rights Texas in Lubbock and practices education and disability rights law. She is an Equal Justice Works fellow, and her fellowship project focuses on representing special education students who have been illegally disciplined at school in rural areas of West Texas.

Sarah Kennel (CRPDO '24) is practicing criminal law at Hurley, Guinn, Singh, & VonGonten here in Lubbock, TX.

ADVANCED ADR CLINIC

- Students receive intensive mediation and conflict resolution skills training and course qualifies as the 40 hour basic mediation training
- Students will have the opportunity to observe mediations, co-mediate and solo mediate actual disputes through the Lubbock County Dispute Resolution Center
- Class format will consist of a combination of lecture, class discussion and interactive participation, skills exercises, mediation role plays, videotape review
- The course will provide students with the opportunity to develop skills essential to effective problem-solving that can be integrated in the practice of law as well as advise, counsel and prepare clients for mediation.

Congratulations to the following students selected for the **Advanced ADR Clinic** for the 2025 Fall semester:

Jacob Bitter, Libby Gear, Maria Celeste House, Kristin Meurer, Hannah Napier, Hannah Peters, Gunner Purcell, Mercedes Reed, Brooke Segal, Prince Stewart, Henry Teccsi, Autumn Watterson, and Benjamin Wulfe.

From the Desk of Miranda Rhyne Director, Low Income Taxpayer Clinic (continued from page 4)

Jacie's exceptional talent for detective work and her knack for uncovering crucial details were instrumental in all her cases, ultimately leading to a significant victory in securing a reduced penalty for an elderly taxpayer facing financial hardship. This positive outcome marked the Tax Clinic's first appearance in United States Tax Court under Clinic Director Miranda Rhyne.

Beyond these individual accomplishments, the Tax Clinic's overall success was powered by the diverse talents and dedicated efforts of all our students, who secured meaningful outcomes for their clients through compassionate and competent representation. Jake and Morgan excelled in client interactions, demonstrating exceptional interpersonal skills, empathetic advocacy, and the ability to build strong rapport even in challenging circumstances. James and Priyanka both brought sharp analytical minds to complex tax issues, with James specializing in canceled debt relief and amended returns, and Priyanka excelling in research and

creative problem-solving. Kasha and Ryleigh's intellectual curiosity and proactive engagement, supported by strong organizational skills and developing problem-solving and legal analysis abilities, uniquely positioned them to excel in translating complex tax issues into digestible concepts for their clients. Kolton and Savannah both brought a direct and effective approach to their work, with Kolton maintaining composure under pressure and Savannah utilizing keen insight and technical skills for comprehensive case analysis.

To my students: The journey we've shared this year has been deeply impactful, both in the tangible results you achieved for your clients and in the professional and personal growth I've observed in each of you—an experience that has immensely enriched my own. I'm grateful to have known and worked with such a remarkable group. I wish you all nothing but lasting success and genuine contentedness in your careers!

From the Desk of Joe Stephens, Director Caprock Region Public Defender's Clinic (Continued from page 6)

later—skills Victor is so naturally good at—led to each case being dismissed in court. It was a clinic in knowing your case and your audience, and Victor has proven himself a natural master of both.

Jose was a superstar all year, and his numbers were staggering: not only did he *close* more than 40 cases, he handled over 70 (more than half at his personal request). He orchestrated resolutions ranging from outright dismissals to thoughtfully crafted dispositions that often caught prosecutors off-guard. He consistently stayed a step ahead with his research, with the questions he anticipated, and offered a lesson in out-preparing the opposition. He was the recipient of our clinic award, well-deserved through his remarkable consistency and diligence.

The Real Classroom

There's something profound about rural criminal

defense that classroom walls can't contain. On these backcountry roads, my car became our mobile classroom, turning long drives into strategy sessions and critical reflection. The work demands everything—early mornings, late nights, and the courage to stand tall in unfamiliar courtrooms where you're the outsider fighting for the underdog.

But it's precisely in these small-town courthouses, far from law school spotlights, where the real magic happens. I've watched Jose, Ethan, and Victor find their authentic voices as advocates. They've learned through *practice*—arguing motions, negotiating with prosecutors, and earning their clients' trust one conversation at a time. This is where theory meets humanity, where legal principles become tools for justice, and where students become lawyers who will change their communities for decades to come.



From the Desk of Allison Clayton - Director, Innocence Clinic

Still Fighting. Still Winning. Still Covered in Paper Cuts.

Dear Friends,

Spring 2025 opened the same way any good semester should: with a road trip, a stack of legal pads, and a copier begging for mercy. We kicked things off by copying thousands of pages of records—because when it comes to wrongful convictions, the truth is usually buried somewhere in the fine print or buried in a recording (and often under a layer of courthouse dust).

Back on campus, we got straight to work. We've been in collaboration with several District Attorneys' Offices, pushing forward through the steady rhythm of organizing

records, mapping timelines, finding of evidence, and double-checking every scrap of paperwork for the clues no one else thought to notice. It wasn't always glamorous, but it's the kind of slow, steady work that changes lives.

And this semester, a life *did* change. After years behind bars, one of our clients was released into the free world after almost 20 years behind bars. That moment itself was unforgettable—but we didn't stop there. The student attorney working on his case secured a residence (after several weeks of very tense back and forth with the parole officer). Then, thanks to the help of the Board of the Innocence Project of Texas, we have furnished his place from top to bottom and stocked it with essentials to make sure he wasn't just free—but supported. The transformation wasn't just legal; it was human. And it reminded us all that justice isn't just about the courtroom—it's about rebuilding lives with dignity and care.



The innocence clinic has been the best experience in my law school career by far. I am so grateful to have gotten to do this work while still a student. They say that if you do what you love that you won't work a day in your life and that is exactly what doing innocence work is like.

Robin Heinz
Innocence Clinic

Pictured L to R:

Professor Patrick Metze, Max
Seger, Eva Lynch, Professor
Allison Clayton.

Sitting L to R: Alex Blair, Robin
Heinz, and Aimee Hernandez.



Congratulations to the following students selected for the **Innocence Clinic** for the 2025-2026 academic year:

Eden Babovec, Marcus Braymer, Kaitlyn Mires, and Grace Slauterbeck.

INNOCENCE CLINIC

This is a full-year 12 credit hours (6 per semester - 2 for classroom component and 4 for case work) course limited to 4 students.

Students accepted into the clinic must be registered for both Fall and Spring semesters. The *Texas Tech Innocence Clinic*, working in conjunction with the Innocence Project of Texas, provides a clinical opportunity to students interested in post-conviction appellate criminal law. The Texas Tech Innocence Clinic provides legal representation and investigative services to individuals seeking to prove their innocence of felonies for which they have been convicted.

Prerequisites include: Students must be 3L status, not be on academic probation.

Recommended 3L courses include Texas Criminal Procedure, Trial Advocacy, Evidence, Criminal Procedure, and Professional Responsibility, and/or moot court or mock trial experience.

Students may not be concurrently enrolled in this clinic and another clinic or externship; all other qualifications being equal, students with no prior clinical or externship for credit experience are given preference for placement in the clinic; students may not have outside employment if enrolled in this clinic, however, exceptions can be made; and students may not sit for the February bar exam.



From the Desk of Patrick S. Metze - Director, Capital Punishment Clinic

The Regional Public Defender for Capital Cases office (RPDCC) welcomed it's sixteenth Capital Punishment Clinic this past Spring semester. This office is the only statewide defender for capital cases with eight regional offices throughout Texas. All of their clients are in the unenviable position of prolonged incarceration ~ generally single celled ~ alienated from family with little hope of eventual release. This semester two students were chosen from those that completed the Fall 2023 and 2024 Capital Punishment Seminar. Completion of the seminar indoctrinates the chosen students into the unique world of the capital defender. The students chosen this year were third year students **Areesha Hemani** and **Andie Keefer** who spent over 500 hours during the semester in completing this clinical experience.

Working in the RPDCC office downtown, the students were immediately assimilated into the framework of not only the capital trial teams assigned to each case, but into the entire fabric of the office. They were instructed in the various office protocols, as well as the roles of the fact investigators, the

mitigation specialists, and the line attorneys. With that limited exposure, they were quickly utilized by all the RPDCC staff and morphed immediately from observer to valued contributor. Assignments include the mundane (research and drafting motions), the nerve wracking and the exhilarating. Biweekly office staffings are a critical communication technique utilized by the RPDCC. Each case is thoroughly discussed, and various strategies are vetted with all staff members participating. The students not only attended the staffings, but were a regular contributor to the development of the mitigation and litigation plans for each client. They were a real part of the team. This is a unique opportunity given to only a few to view a capital trial from the defense perspective. Whereas the RPDCC focused on the "how to" aspect of defending the capital case, many discussions emphasized the "why" aspect ~why the defense teams function in a particular way. Methodology and its underlying foundation is critical to the success of the capital defense practitioner and is literally a matter of life and death for the client. During the semester the students saw progress in many capital cases and fully participated as a member of the trial teams. The students participated in trial preparation in anticipation of jury selection in several cases and saw the preparation in the actual process of choosing a death penalty jury.

(Continued on page 11)

Words from our Students!!

I have had the privilege of being involved with the Criminal Defense Clinic this school year. Through clinic, my dream of becoming a public defender has already begun. I have been able to represent indigent defendants in Lubbock County from the point that they are arrested until their case is completed. My biggest accomplishment so far is successfully filing a writ of habeas corpus to have one of my client's previous cases dismissed pursuant to an agreement that was originally not followed by the District Attorney's Office. Overall, this experience has made me think practically about how to approach each of my cases individually.

Sydney Allison
Criminal Defense Clinic

Being part of the capital punishment clinic has been an invaluable experience. I was able to grow professionally by having hands on experience with our clients and their families and friends. I feel more prepared and confident going forward into the legal profession because of this clinic and I am so grateful!

Andie Keefer
Capital Defense Clinic

In clinic, I learned how to be confident in my abilities and knowledge. I learned ways to connect with clients. I gained confidence in trusting my instincts and being brave and bold both in and out of court.

Kalee Sue Gore
Criminal Defense Clinic

Pictured L to R: Professor Patrick Metze, Andie Keefer, and Areesha Hemani.



From the Desk of Patrick Metze Director, Capital Punishment Clinic (continued from page 10)

In her application for the clinic, one student wrote, “The death penalty has a history of racist application, targets disabled populations, and is overall incredibly cruel. I’m applying for the Capital Punishment clinic because I believe that no one deserves to die at the hands of the government and especially one that is not interested in justice or deterrence, but rather arbitrary punishment. I took Capital Punishment seminar last year where I learned the history of capital punishment and how, historically, it targets Black and Latino men. Wrongful convictions and deaths are also prominent features of the capital punishment system and I find it imperative to use our skills as attorneys and law students to fight against an unjust system and keep clients from being executed. One of the reasons I entered law school was to be able to do meaningful and challenging work aiding indigent communities and I believe working with this clinic would absolutely accomplish that..” The other

student wrote, “...this clinic will help me understand the inner workings of criminal law by providing me with a unique experience. The clinic’s ability to give me hands-on experience in case preparation, courtroom proceedings, and high-stakes legal research is unique and valuable. Despite my current skill set and knowledge of legal practice, I believe this clinic can help me broaden my horizons. There are viewpoints and systematic issues I have yet to witness. Through this clinic, I can become more open and understanding of how socio-economic facts, racial discrimination, and mental health impact our legal system.” These philosophies carried forward during their time in the clinic. We all wish these students well and thank them for their diligent work.

From the Desk of Larry Spain, Director Clinical Programs and Civil Practice Clinic (Continued from page 2)

RECENT CASES OF INTEREST

Megan Goracke was able to obtain a court order for issuance of delayed certificate of birth for a 65 year old woman who was born at home and never had a birth certificate after Vital Statistics rejected her application for a delayed certificate of birth because various documents that she had furnished along with her application contained inconsistencies regarding the spelling of her name and date of birth. A valid certificate of birth was needed for her to renew her personal ID as well as to apply for social security benefits.

Katie Master was able to obtain an Order from the Court correcting her 59 year old client’s birth certificate as to her date of birth which had been mistakenly entered by her physician at the time of birth and whose records had been destroyed. She needed a corrected birth certificate to match up with her other legal documents in order to obtain a passport.



Matthew Amunrud was recognized during the Law School Honors and Awards Program with the **Ann and Robert J. Burbridge Civil Practice Clinic Award** given to the top student in the Civil Practice Clinic for her exceptional service to clients and demonstrated lawyering skills.

Cody Clayton was recognized during the Law School Honors and Awards Program with the **Anne and Robert J. Burbridge Advanced ADR Clinic Award** for his demonstrated mediation skills as selected by the faculty teaching the Advanced ADR Clinic.



CLINIC STUDENTS RECOGNIZED DURING SPRING HONORS AND AWARDS CEREMONY

The Annual Honors & Awards Ceremony was held on April 22nd. Students were recognized during an evening reception. Congratulations to clinic students who were honored with the following awards:

Samuel Dick (Civil Clinic) is the recipient of the *U.V. Jones Excellence in Legal Research Award* which is given annually to the 2L or 3L student who has successfully completed the Law Library's 20-hour extracurricular Excellence in Legal Research Program during that academic year and received the highest overall average on the final assessments for the courses they took.



The following Clinical Programs students were also recognized with *Excellence in Legal Research*: **Harlan Burk** (Family Law Clinic), **Abby Cheek** (ADR Clinic), **Samuel Dick** (Civil Clinic), **Breklyn Nivens** (Family Law Clinic), **Cassidy Terrazas** (Fall '23 ADR Clinic), and **Meagan Watson** (Tax Clinic).

Jacie Birkenfeld (Tax Clinic) is the recipient of the *Edward R. Smith and Norton Baker Tax Award* which is an award presented to a student who intends to practice in the tax area and is permanently endowed by Karl Clifford ('72) and Steve Krier ('77).



Sydney Paige Allison (Criminal Defense Clinic) is the recipient of the *Brendan Murray Public Service Award* which is funded by the Student Bar Association honoring a Lubbock native, Brendan Murray, who was a second-year law student when he passed in 2006. Recipient is selected based on his or her service to underserved populations, disability rights, defense and representation of low-income families, and volunteer work.

Jose Covarruvias (CRPDO Clinic) was recognized as the recipient of the *Robert J. and Ann Burbridge Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic Award*. This award is given to a student of the Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic who has provided zealous advocacy for those accused of committing crimes in rural or underserved communities of Texas, diligently promoted the causes of justice and equality, and fought to protect the Constitutional obligation to provide legal assistance to the poor.



Sydney Allison (Criminal Defense Clinic) is the recipient of the *Clifford W. Brown Award*. This award recognizes excellence as a student attorney in the Texas Tech Criminal Defense Clinic and is funded by the Lubbock Criminal Defense Lawyers Association.



Samuel Dick (Civil Clinic) was recognized as the recipient of the *George W. and Sarah H. Dupree Award*. This award is an endowed award given to the member of the graduating class who, in the opinion of the student's colleagues, best exemplifies the ability desired in one soon to join the legal profession.

Meagan Watson (Tax Clinic) is the recipient of the *Ann and Robert J. Burbridge Tax Clinic Award*. This award is given to the top student in the Tax Practice Clinic. This student exemplifies professionalism and goes above and beyond to represent their client. It is funded through a generous bequest gift by Ann Burbridge, long-time registrar of the law school, and her husband Robert.



Carlie McCleery is the recipient of the *Ann and Robert J. Burbridge Family Law Clinic Award* which recognizes the top student in the Family Law Clinic who exemplifies professionalism and goes above and beyond to represent their client.

Breklyn Nivens (Family Law Clinic) and Niya Williams are the recipients of the *Robin M. Green and Paulina M. Jacobo Endowed Scholarship* which was created to honor the memory of Robin Green, who was a member of the Law School's first class. He was a passionate advocate for education, voter rights, and equal treatment under the law. The scholarship is awarded to students who have demonstrated a commitment and contribution to diversity, equity, inclusion, community, and engagement.



CLINIC STUDENTS RECOGNIZED DURING SPRING HONOR AND AWARDS LUNCHEON (Continued from page 11)

Matthew Amunrud is the recipient of the *Ann and Robert J. Burbridge Civil Practice Clinic Award* which recognizes the top student in the Civil Practice Clinic who exemplifies professionalism and goes above and beyond to

represent their client.



Alexandra Blair (Innocence Clinic) is one of the recipients of the *Excellence in Service Award* which is an award donated by Donna L. Courville ('94) and Judge Lee Ann Reno ('94) which recognizes a

third-year law student who is a current member of any law review, a current or former member of the Board of Barristers, an SBA office, or class officer, and has excelled in overall service to the law school.

Robin Heinz (Innocence Clinic) is the recipient of the *Jack Wade Nowlin Innocence Clinic Award* which is awarded to a student attorney in the Texas Tech Innocence Clinic.

Cody Clayton (ADR Clinic) was recognized as the recipient of the *Ann and Robert J. Burbridge Advanced ADR and Mediation Award* for his demonstrated mediation skills as selected by the faculty teaching the Advanced ADR Clinic.



Samuel Dick (Civil Practice Clinic) and Noah Zavaletta were the recipients of the *Fortney Award for Ethics* which was established by graduates Russell Devenport, Judge Lincoln Goodwin, and Michael Holley to honor students who consistently display outstanding moral and ethical conduct.

Eva Lynch (Innocence Clinic) is the recipient of the *William R. Moss Award* which is given to a student whose has demonstrated outstanding performance in a trial advocacy course.

CONGRATULATIONS to all award recipients!

Well deserved by all!!!

ELMA MORENO PRO BONO AWARD

The ***Elma Moreno Pro Bono Award*** (aka *Graduating Pro Bono Student of the Year Award*) was created in 2000 by Professors Timothy and Daisy Floyd and is named in honor of Elma Moreno, original coordinator for the Private Attorney Involvement Program for Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas. She is currently the Legal Assistant/Office Manager for the TTU School of Law Clinical Programs and Director of Pro Bono Projects. The award is funded by the first award recipient and managing attorney at Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas, Tamara Duncan (2000). Recipient gets a cash award



and a plaque in addition to their name being added to the plaque which is displayed at TTU School of Law. The *Elma Moreno Pro Bono Award* and the *Graduating Pro Bono Student of the Year Award* were combined into one award during the Spring 2018 Honors & Awards ceremony and continues to recognize a law student whose pro bono activities best exemplify the lawyer's obligation to ensure equal access to justice.

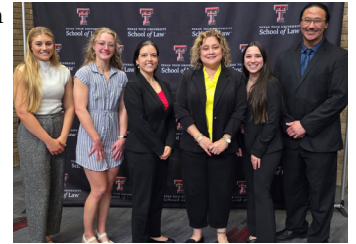


Congratulations Robin Heinz and Cassidy Terrazas who were selected as the recipients of the ***Elma Moreno Graduating Pro Bono Student of the Year Award*** demonstrating a steadfast commitment to pro bono work throughout their time in law school.

STUDENTS RECOGNIZED DURING PRO BONO AWARDS LUNCHEON



Congratulations to the following students who were recognized with the *Pro Bono Honors Award* for completing at least 60 hours of pro bono work over three years where at least half of their hours were legal-related pro bono: Mackenzie Ballard, Sam Baquet, Bailee Barton, Ashley Boyce, Shelby Curry, Cannon Echols, Kalee Sue Gore, Morgan Hammel, Brettney Jones, Fallon Jones, Katherine Jost, Bailey King, Sarah Kronenberger, Kolton Looka, Ericka Lopez, Izabelle Mendoza, Carlie Rae McCleery, Casey



Mounho, Breuklyn Nivens, Priyanka Pudasaini, Charlene Rawlings, Maycee Redfearn, Morgan Register, Emily Roberts, Hunter Robinson, Courtney Stephens, Michelle Sutton, Aimee Vasquez, and Niya Williams.

Congratulations to the following clinic students recognized with the

Pro Bono Achievement Award

for completing 150 plus hours of legal-related pro bono work over three years: Sydney Allison, Aiya Almzayen, Edith Anthony, Richard Bailey, Margaret Boomer, Harlan Burk, Cody Clayton, Sydney Dumas, Nura Elhentaty, Ashton Endsley, Audrey Flemmons, Hagen Gardiner, Lauren Hamic, Robin Heinz, Kealie House, Vanessa Jones, Dallas Kennedy, Eric Kluckowski, Caleb Kunde, Clarissa Landa, Joshua Legg, Victor Lopez, Joshua Mendez, Savannah Monterrey, Justin Pennington, Seth Paulger, Christopher Schraer, Cassidy Terrazas, Meagan Vlasak, Autumn Watterson, and Noah Zavaletta.

Thank you for your service to Tech Law!



THANKS TO FACULTY AND STUDENTS SUPPORTING PRO BONO

The Law School faculty traditionally co-sponsors Pro Bono Clinics held during the months of September and February in association with Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas. Thanks to the following faculty who participated in these clinics during the month of February along with our clinic students: **Dwight McDonald; Terri Morgeson; Rob Sherwin; and Larry Spain.**

Thank you to students who volunteered their time at the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance site during tax filing season along with the **Tax Clinic students, Professor Miranda Rhyne, Professor Terri Morgeson, and Melissa Vasquez:** Diana Garcia, Grace Lee, Bridget Pembroke, Kenna Chavez, Shereen Mathews, Brendan Carter, Benjamin Fonville, Jasper Breitenbach, Marcus Braymer, Hayden Marriott, and Cassidy Terrazas.



CLINICAL PROGRAMS HOST INFORMATION SESSION FOR 2025-2026 ACADEMIC YEAR

The Clinical Programs hosted an information session and completed their selection process for 2025-2026 academic year. The session was well attended by 120 students interested in applying to participate in one of the clinical courses during the upcoming academic year. The student selection process begins in late January of each Spring semester to fill all slots available in the clinical programs. A total of 62 slots needed to be filled for the 2024-2025 academic year.

Clinic directors provided information on the following clinics:

- Advanced ADR Clinic (Fall 2025 semester)
- Civil Practice Clinic
- Criminal Defense Clinic
- Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic
- Family Law Clinic
- Innocence Clinic
- Tax Clinic



- Veterans Clinic
- Immigration Clinic

This was also the first time, Students got the chance to meet the new Director of the Veteran's Clinic, Max Maxwell, albeit via ZOOM.

Current clinic students were available to answer questions after the session.



Although a great number of students attended the session, 71 students applied to participate in one or more clinics. Students are allowed to rank their choices while completing the application. All clinic slots were filled.

We look forward to the new group of students to participate in clinics during the 2025-2026 academic year!



CONGRATULATIONS to the 2025-2026 clinical program students! We are looking forward to having you in the clinics. See you during Clinical Programs orientation!

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

Tracie Geiger (Civil Practice Clinic '20) - Clerks for the Court of Criminal Appeals in Austin, Texas.

Amanda Smith (Tax Clinic '23) - is a Classification Attorney in the Austin Chief Disciplinary Counsel Office at the State Bar of Texas

Ben Casey (ADR Clinic - Fall '22) - practicing civil law, including business & commercial litigation, labor & employment law, intellectual property, receiverships, appeals, and even constitutional law in Lubbock. The law firm is one of maybe two or three in Lubbock that regularly goes to federal court (on purpose!) so there is never a dull moment.

Taylor Seaton (Innocence Clinic '22) - is practicing at Dean Boyd Law Firm in Amarillo, Texas.

Megan Gower (CDC '24) is currently practicing criminal law at the King Law Firm P.C., in Lubbock, Texas.

Payton Tompkins (Saunders) (Civil Practice Clinic '23) - is currently practicing in Seattle, Washington doing civil litigation and religious nonprofit matters.

Klaryx Martinez (Tax Clinic '23) is currently practicing at Daspit Law Firm in San Antonio and specializing in personal injury cases. She is handling New Mexico cases for now and soon Oklahoma and is planning to take the Texas Bar in July.

Alyssa Douglass (CDC '22) is currently practicing criminal law as a Public Defender for the Dallas County Public Defender's Office.

Joelle Gonzalez (Innocence Clinic '19) is an assistance Appellate Defender for New Mexico Public Defender's Office in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

WORDS FROM OUR STUDENTS

The clinic experience has given me a better perspective on what people in my community are experiencing, and how my small participation in pro-bono clinics can make a difference in their lives. There are so many people in Lubbock or surrounding areas who are one bad break from upending their lives, so paying for legal representation is basically out of the question. My experience has taught me to give more grace and patience to people in general, because we are not all starting from the same place. Some of our clients are barely keeping the lights on or kids fed, so helping take care of a legal matter can really help their stress levels and help them move forward with what is most important. I'm thankful we can provide a service to people who would likely not receive help otherwise. Clinic has been one of the most valuable experiences during law school and I'm always encouraging 1L and 2L students to start thinking about applying to clinic.

Abby Dye
Civil Practice Clinic

Working in the criminal defense clinic has been one of the most challenging yet rewarding experiences of my law school journey. Visiting clients weekly has allowed me to build relationships with the clients and become deeply familiar with their cases. Advocating for the best possible outcomes has not only been fulfilling but has also boosted my confidence as a future attorney. This semester, I've gained valuable experience by negotiating with prosecutors, filing motions, appearing in court, and conducting client interviews, among many other tasks.

Mitchell Barry
Criminal Defense Clinic

My experience as a member of the family law clinic has been extremely beneficial to my growth as an advocate. As a future family law attorney, it is crucial that I gain experience running my own cases during my final year of law school. Learning the intricacies of family law under the tutelage of Terri Morgeson has undoubtedly prepared me for my upcoming career. Handling cases from start to finish with an appropriate amount of oversight has enabled me to think and act like an attorney and gain real-world experience. The hours I have worked as a member of the clinic will have me ready to hit the ground running post-bar. While law students don't always make the best decisions with their time, deciding to apply to the family law clinic was the best decision I made at TTU Law.

Harlan Burk
Family Law Clinic

Clinic has been so fulfilling this year! Taking on cases where clients genuinely need assistance and getting to learn through those experiences has been a priceless experience so far. We love our clinic team and the support we get from all of the faculty and staff.

Katie Master
Civil Practice Clinic

My time in the Tax Clinic has been invaluable. The hands-on experience advocating for clients has made me a more competent and confident representative. Overall, it's been a fantastic opportunity to apply my education in a real-world setting. And I've loved every minute.

Meagan Watson
Tax Clinic

The Criminal Defense Clinic has provided an invaluable opportunity to immerse myself in the practice of law while still in law school. Through hands-on experience, I've gained critical insights and developed skills that will serve me throughout my legal career. The clinic has not only allowed me to learn from my mistakes, but it has also taught me how to navigate challenging interactions with colleagues and clients. These experiences have been instrumental in preparing me for the complexities of real-world legal practice.

Aiya Almazayen
Criminal Defense Clinic

In Family Law Clinic, I had the opportunity to gain experience how to better conduct myself with my clients. It has been a pleasure to help those who do not have the resources to go and pay for an attorney. My clients have all been so thankful and kind. Each client has expressed how big of an impact us taking their case has had on their lives and they have been so respectful and appreciative. I feel that I have gained more practical knowledge on what the actual steps of 'lawyering' are.

Hagen Gardiner
Family Law Clinic

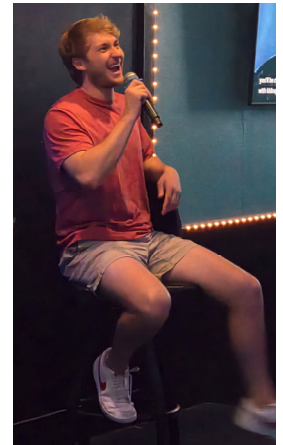
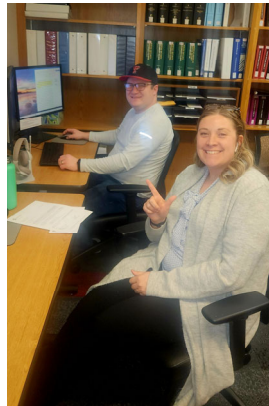
My experience with the civil clinic has been phenomenal. I've been able to gain real life experience by helping real people solve their legal problems. While regular law school classes do a great job teaching the principles and theories of the law, I'm so grateful to be in the clinic where I can learn the practical step-by-step practice of law as well.

Chase Chamberlain
Civil Practice Clinic

On behalf of the Clinical Programs Faculty and Staff we thank the students for everything they have done and providing high quality representation to their clients!

For more information on the Clinical Programs, please visit:
<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/law/clinics-and-externships/clinics/index.php>

SNAPSHOT CORNER



SNAPSHOT CORNER



On behalf of the Clinical Programs Faculty and Staff we thank the students for everything they have done and providing high quality representation to their clients!

For more information on the Clinical Programs, please visit:

<http://www.depts.ttu.edu/law/clinics-and-externships/clinics/index.php>

CLINIC DIRECTORS:

Larry R. Spain
Director of Clinical Programs
Civil Practice Clinic
Advanced ADR Clinic

Terri M. Morgeson
Family Law Clinic

Miranda Rhyne
Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic

Patrick S. Metze
Criminal Defense Clinic
Capital Punishment Clinic
Caprock Regional Public
Defender Clinic
Innocence Clinic

INSTRUCTORS:

Allison Clayton
Innocence Clinic

Dwight McDonald
Criminal Defense Clinics

Gene Valentini
Adjunct Professor
Advanced ADR Clinic

Joe Stephens
Chief Public Defender
Caprock Regional Public
Defender Office

STAFF:

Melissa Vasquez
Unit Manager for Clinical
Programs/Office Manager

Nancy Mojica
Senior Business Assistant

Sally Moreno
Senior Business Assistant for
CRPDO

Kaylee Jackson
LITC Community Outreach
Coordinator

***Congratulations to all students who passed the
February Bar Exam!***

Job well done!!!

**On Behalf of the
CLINICAL PROGRAMS
FACULTY AND STAFF**



Good Luck with the Bar Exam!



Pictured L to R

Standing: Professor
Dwight McDonald,
Professor Donnie Yandell
(Retired), Professor Larry
Spain, Elma Moreno
(Retired), Melissa
Vasquez, Professor
Allison Clayton,
Professor Patrick Metze,
Adjunct Professor Gene
Valentini (not pictured
Joe Stephens)
Sitting: Professor Terri
Morgeson, Nancy Mojica,
Sally Moreno, Kaylee
Jackson, and Professor
Miranda Rhyne

CLINIC NEWS

Spring 2025 Edition

3311 18th Street, Lubbock, Texas 79409

(806) 742-4312