



**FALL 2025**

# CLINIC NEWS

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

## STUDENTS BEGIN FALL SEMESTER WITH CLINICAL PROGRAMS ORIENTATION

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The Clinical Programs welcomed all students during orientation week! Clinic students were required to attend orientation during the week prior to the first day of Fall classes. The Advanced ADR (Advanced Alternative Dispute Resolution) Clinic began with forty (40) hours of basic mediation training starting on Monday, August 11th with Professor Larry Spain and Adjunct Professor and Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution of Lubbock County, Gene Valentini to twelve students.



This year was especially busy with the initiation of two new clinics. This year marks the start of the Immigration Clinic and the Veterans Law Clinic. While renovations were underway to fit these two clinics on the East side of the law school, everyone in the clinics made room and worked together. By the time orientation came around, both Professor Caudillo and Professor Maxwell were ready to start their new teaching journeys.



The Tax Clinic and the Criminal Clinics consisting of the Criminal Defense Clinic, the Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic, and the Innocence Clinic held their orientation on August 14th and 15th. Civil, Family Law, Immigration and Veterans Law Clinic Students all completed Orientation on Friday, August 15th. During orientation, the Criminal Defense Clinic students were also able to visit some of their clients in jail thus beginning their representation.

Melissa Vasquez, conducted the afternoon orientation with both Family Law and Civil Practice Clinic students. Students were provided with information on Clinical Programs Policies and Procedures, as well as software programs to be used during the academic year for document assembly, data base entries, and timekeeping. The information provided to all clinic students gives them a jump start with providing representation to their clients beginning with the first day of classes. All students (with the exception of the Tax Clinic, the Advanced ADR Clinic, and the Veterans Law Clinic students) are provided their third year trial card by the State Bar of Texas and makes it official for them to represent their clients under the supervision of their professors and instructors. On the other hand, a Special Appearance Authorization letter from the Internal Revenue Service authorizes Tax Clinic students to practice before the IRS during the semester.

As reported in articles provided in this edition of *Clinic News* by each clinic director, students have done an outstanding job during the Fall semester and we look forward to another successful Spring Semester!

We look forward to seeing many students at the Clinical Programs Mandatory Information Session scheduled for Monday, January 26th, as we begin our selection process for 2026-2027 academic year.



## FROM THE DESK OF LARRY SPAIN

DIRECTOR OF CLINICAL PROGRAMS AND CIVIL PRACTICE CLINIC

During the fall semester, eight students were enrolled in the Civil Practice Clinic:

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

Over the course of the semester, a total of 26 new client cases were undertaken, 17 cases were completed and closed, and 16 cases remain open and will be carried over to the spring semester along with additional cases to be taken over the break. In addition to assuming responsibility for assigned cases, each of the students participated in evening Pro Bono Clinics sponsored by Legal Aid of NorthWest Texas where they conducted intake for individuals seeking legal representation. This allowed the students to be exposed to a wider variety of legal matters experienced by individuals who

cannot afford access to legal counsel.

Each of the students were kept busy carrying an individual caseload of 3-4 clients at most times throughout the semester and assumed primary responsibility for the representation of assigned clients in matters involving family law, consumer law, housing, social security claims, wills and other advance planning, and other civil matters. Several of the students were able to complete divorces for clients from start to finish over the course of the semester while others will be ready for a final hearing immediately after the semester break.

I look forward to working with these students over the course of the Spring semester as they continue to develop their lawyering skills and confidence in representing clients.



Professor Larry Spain teaches Civil Practice Clinic, Family Law, Professional Responsibility, and Advanced ADR Clinic.

Before joining the faculty at Texas Tech, Professor Spain was the Director of Clinical Programs at the University of North Dakota School of Law for eighteen years, where he established several new clinical programs and expanded the range of clinical opportunities available to students. Prior to entering legal education, he worked for several legal services programs in Nebraska.

In addition to law teaching and legal practice, he has also been active in the field of alternative dispute resolution, serving as Chair of the Governing Board of a university-affiliated community dispute resolution center as well as being a frequent trainer and practitioner in mediation skills. He currently serves on the Advisory Board for the Office of Dispute Resolution for Lubbock County.

"Working in the civil clinic has been one of the most enjoyable and rewarding parts of my law school journey, offering real-world experience that deepened my learning in ways the classroom never could. The skills and insights I gained here are ones I'll carry with me throughout my entire career."

*Aaron Kruger  
Civil Practice Clinic*



**Pictured L to R:**

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

## FROM THE DESK OF LARRY SPAIN AND GENE VALENTINI

### ADVANCED ADR CLINIC

Twelve students were enrolled in the Advanced ADR Clinic during the Fall Semester: **Jacob Bitter, Libby Gear, M.C. House, Kristin Meurer, Hannah Napier, Hannah Peters, Gunner Purcell, Mercedes Reed, Noah Stewart, Henry Teccsi, Autumn Watterson, and Benjamin Wulfe.**

Each of the students completed 40 hours of basic mediation training prior to the start of fall classes qualifying them for appointment as an impartial third party under Chapter 154 of the Texas Civil Practice and Remedies Code. As a result, when classes began, students were initially able to observe experienced mediators conducting mediations before serving as either a co-mediator or solo mediator in a variety of disputes through the Office of Dispute Resolution for Lubbock County.

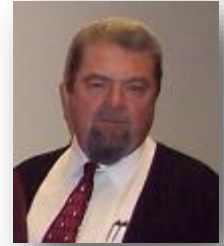
Most of the mediations were court ordered from the various District, County Court at Law, and Justice Courts of Lubbock County and Lubbock's Municipal Court. Referrals from law enforcement, Lubbock City Prosecutor, and Lubbock County Criminal District Attorney were also often mediated by students.

More than 270 hours of mediation services were provided by the students over the course of the semester. Mediations were conducted with parties participating either in-person, by telephone, or via Zoom.

The types of cases mediated included the following:

Justice of Peace Referrals	56
Family	38
Diversion	19
Criminal	18

(continued on page 11)



D. Gene Valentini is the Director of the Office of Dispute Resolution of Lubbock County, an administrative entity that manages an innovative ADR System, which began in 1985. He is also responsible for the statewide USDA mediation program. A mediator since 1981 and an active trainer for the past twenty plus years, Gene is the Master of Dispute Resolution for the courts of Lubbock County, Dean of Texas' ADR System directors and also co-teaches the Fall ADR course.

### WORDS FROM OUR STUDENTS:

"My time in the Alternative Dispute Resolution Clinic during my 2L provided me with real world experience. I was able to learn new problem-solving skills, learn how to better handle conflict, and how to reach creative solutions. Additionally, I was able to see first-hand the impact legal professionals have in impacting the lives of people throughout our community. This experience and the lessons taken from it are something I will forever be grateful for. "

*Libby Gear  
Advanced ADR Clinic*

"The experience that the Advanced ADR Clinic has provided me has been incredible! Before law school I didn't even know that mediation was an available alternative and now in just a semester I have mediated disputes involving divorce, child custody arrangements, debt collection, and diversion cases. Additionally, most of the matters are local, allowing me to solve problems that directly impact the Lubbock community."

*Jacob Bitter  
Advanced  
ADR Clinic*



Pictured L to R:

Left to Right Noah Stewart, Jacob Bitter, M.C. House, Ben Wulfe, Kristin Meurer, Professor Larry Spain, Hannah Napier, Autumn Watterson, Libby Gear, Adjunct Professor Gene Valentini, Gunner Purcell, Hannah Peters (not pictured Mercedes Reed and Henry Teccsi).



## FROM THE DESK OF TERRI MORGESON

### DIRECTOR, FAMILY LAW CLINIC

This year marks the third year I have served as the Director of the Family Law Clinic. My students this year are: Mya Garcia, Palak Dave, Jordyn DeAnda, Christopher Kerr, Allison Monacelli, Emily Walden, and Madison Wright.

We continue to work with Legal Aid of Northwest Texas to receive referrals for family law cases and to participate in the twice-a-month intake clinics. One case in particular makes me proud of the pro bono work we do. We successfully filed for the emancipation of a young mother who had been living on her own since she was 16. By obtaining her emancipation, she was able to secure stable housing for herself and her two

children. We continued to represent couples needing simple divorces. But another case that makes me proud is when a maternal aunt had custody of her niece for several years. The aunt had tried to draft her own pleadings to terminate the parent's rights, but she could not get the language right, so the court rejected her pleadings. In this case, we were able to correct the paperwork, successfully terminating the parent's rights and allowing the aunt to adopt the child she had raised for four years. We have several cases still pending with the Courts and look forward to reporting all the things the students accomplish next semester.

"I have had a very experiential experience with clinic. I have learned many skills that I can take with me in practice. All my clients have been helpful and understanding of me being a student, but most importantly they have been grateful for all I have done to help them."

*Madison Wright  
Family Law Clinic*



Terri Morgeson began her work with the Clinical Programs in the fall of 2007 as a full-time Clinical Fellow for the Civil Clinic, Family Law Clinic and Criminal Defense Clinics. She continued in this position while occasionally teaching a couple of upper level skills classes, negotiations and interviewing and counseling courses.

Terri graduated from Lubbock Christian University in 1994 and received her J.D. from Texas Tech in 2003. Before becoming an instructor at Texas Tech, Terri had a private practice here in Lubbock. She is currently a committee member for State Bar of Texas, Legal Services to the Poor in Civil Matters.

Additionally, Terri was a founding member of the Lubbock Private Defender's Office.

Terri Morgeson served as Director of the Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic in addition to continuing as Clinical Fellow for the Civil Practice Clinic from May 2014 until July 2023. Although the learning curve had been steep, she enjoyed the challenge and continued the tireless work of her predecessors. However, when Professor Wendy Ross departed TTU School of Law, Terri Morgeson assumed the role of Director of Family Law Clinic. Family law has always been her passion!



#### Pictured L to R:

Madison Wright, Jordyn DeAnda, Chris Kerr, Director Terri Morgeson, Mya Garcia, Allison Monacelli, Emily Walden, and Palak Dave.

## FROM THE DESK OF DWIGHT MCDONALD

### DIRECTOR, CRIMINAL DEFENSE CLINIC

During the fall semester, eight students were enrolled in the Criminal Defense Clinic:

Rodger Advincula, Callighan Ard, Ellie Fisher, Diana Garcia, Kashmala Khan, Bridget Pembroke, Tristan Perez and Ashanty Wilson Bishop.

Over the course of the semester, the students have handled or are handling 38 clients with 63 cases between them. Students handle all phases of representation from the initial interview through the client's final appearance in Court. Students started the semester with clients that were in the Lubbock County Detention Center, which allowed them to work on their interviewing skills, as well as using the facts and the law to have their clients released on bond (primarily a personal recognizance bond). We then moved on to represent clients who were out on bond. This gives the students a completely different perspective when they have to locate our indigent clients who are struggling with everyday

survival issues as well as dealing with their criminal case.

The Criminal Defense Clinic (CDC) continues to make meaningful impact in Lubbock by providing pro bono representation to indigent individuals charged with both misdemeanor and low-level felony offenses. Students in CDC have also collaborated with other student attorneys in the Immigration Clinic to provide representation on criminal matters to individuals who also had immigration issues that could be negatively impacted by their criminal case.

All eight students are members of Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association (TCDLA) as well as Lubbock Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. Students traveled to Austin October 16-18 to attend a seminar put on by TCDLA. The students were able to hear from the leading attorneys and scientists in several areas of forensics as well as meet attorneys from throughout the state of Texas who practice criminal defense.

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Following graduation from the Texas Tech University School of Law in 1993, McDonald spent the next 22 years in private practice. His private practice experience included representing clients in criminal and family matters, with an emphasis on representing citizens accused of committing criminal offenses.

McDonald transitioned to teaching in the Criminal Defense Clinic at Texas Tech in January 2015. He also teaches Law Office Management, Introduction to the Study of Law, and the Regional Externship class. Based on student evaluations and his innovative teaching methods, McDonald received the Texas Tech Alumni Association New Faculty Award in 2023.

In addition to his teaching duties, Professor McDonald has been active in bar activities on the local and state levels. He currently serves on the Board of Directors for the State Bar of Texas and was on the Board of Directors for the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association from 2018-2023. He served as the Chair of the Criminal Justice Section of the State Bar of Texas in 2021 and was the President of the Lubbock County Bar Association from 2022-2023.



#### Pictured L to R:

**Back Row** Director Dwight McDonald, Callighan Ard, Rodger Advincula, Tristan Perez, and Ellen Fisher.

**Front Row:** Diana Garcia, Bridget Pembroke, Ashanty Wilson, and Kashmala Khan.

## FROM THE DESK OF JOE STEPHENS

### CAPROCK REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDERS OFFICE

Marley Gamble, Mary Ricker, Holland Pombrio, Caleb Barkman, Jakob Gomez, and Anthony Bomar—the student attorneys in this semester’s Caprock Regional Public Defender Clinic—have closed out the fall with the kind of work that reminds me why I do this. Across our sprawling region of rural West Texas courthouses, they’ve resolved more than 50 cases and secured the release of more than 20 people from jail through bond advocacy, charge reductions, rejections, and dismissals. The numbers matter, but what I’m most proud of is harder to quantify: the way each of them has grown into the unglamorous, essential work of showing up for people who have no one else.

Rural indigent defense asks a lot. The drives are long—we’re talking hundreds of miles in a week, sometimes in a single day. The dockets are unpredictable. The courthouses are small, and the stakes are high. You show up, you advocate, and you learn that the practice of law is as much about patience, presence, and persistence as it is about legal argument. You learn that a five-minute conversation with a prosecutor in a hallway can matter more than a twenty-page motion. You learn that your client’s mother, sitting in the gallery, is watching everything you do. You learn that the clerk’s office closes at noon on Fridays in some counties, and that the judge in another county likes to start at 8:30 sharp. You learn the texture of the work, and it changes you.

This semester’s class has embodied all of that. They’ve logged the miles. They’ve sat in jail visitation rooms and courthouse hallways. They’ve made the calls, sent the letters, gathered

the mitigation, and filed the motions. They’ve learned that criminal defense isn’t about dramatic courtroom moments—though those happen—but about the accumulation of small, deliberate acts of advocacy that, over time, move cases and change outcomes. And they’ve done it with a level of professionalism, compassion, and grit that has made this one of the most rewarding semesters I’ve had the privilege to lead.

#### Our Advocates

**Anthony** comes from rural East Texas, and from the first week of the semester, I could see how naturally he fit into the rhythms of the smaller counties we practice in. He knows how to talk to people—clients, prosecutors, court staff, families—in a way that builds trust without pretense. There’s no performance to it; it’s just who he is. He listens. He follows up. He remembers names and details. In the small-town courthouses where we do this work, that kind of relational skill matters enormously. Prosecutors and judges see dozens of attorneys cycle through, but they remember the ones who show up prepared, who treat everyone with respect, and who do what they say they’re going to do. Anthony is that attorney.

This week alone, that steady, patient work paid off: he secured two dismissals on cases he’s been working since August. These weren’t cases that fell apart on their own. They required preparation, investigation, follow-up, and advocacy. Anthony built the relationships, gathered the evidence,

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After working in public defender offices in rural South Texas and the Hill Country, Joe was hired as Chief Public Defender to create the Concho Valley Public Defender Office. By the time he left, it was the largest rural office in Texas.

Joe has also served on the Board of Directors of the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers’ Association. He was also appointed to serve as a Member of the State Bar of Texas Legal Services to the Poor in Criminal Matters Committee, is a mentor in the Future Indigent Defense Leaders of Texas program, and sits on the Oversight Board of two different regional public defender offices across Texas. He is a frequent speaker around Texas on an array of criminal defense matters.



**Pictured Top: Jacob Gomez,**  
**Left to Right: Anthony Bomar, Caleb Barkman, Marley Gamble, Professor Joe Stephens, Mary Ricker, and Holland Pombrio.**

Joe was born in Australia and grew up in the Washington, D.C. area. He was an Ingram Scholar at Vanderbilt University where he was President of the Vanderbilt Prison Project. In 2010, he graduated from the University of Texas School of Law with honors. Joe has also worked for two chairmen across three legislative sessions in Austin, and spent time in private practice in Baltimore, where he worked on appellate and post-conviction matters.



## FROM THE DESK OF ALLISON CLAYTON

### DIRECTOR, INNOCENCE CLINIC

Dear Friends,

Fall 2025 didn't ease in quietly; it showed up kicking down the door. On day one, we got to work on an appeal of a state writ denial in the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals. I know it sounds super boring and your eyes glazed over just reading that, but most attorneys go their entire careers without ever touching something like that. Our students did it before the end of August. That set the tone for the fall semester: bold and relentless.

After the briefing, we settled into our familiar grind. The kind that looks mundane on the outside but rewrites futures on the inside. We dug into thousands more pages of records, mapped out timelines stretching back decades, untangled witness statements, and turned courthouse clutter into coherent legal theory. The students kept their highlighters in hand and our brand-new coffee machine in distress.

We also pushed forward collaborations with several District Attorneys' Offices (or fought them tooth and nail, depending on the day; we have no problem with either approach). On the litigation front, our momentum kept building. We continued to develop our long-running forensic cases, including one involving an expert on false accusations and another involving a biomechanical engineer whose analysis may

fundamentally reshape the narrative that landed our innocent client in prison for life.

And yes, DNA testing is always alive and well in this Clinic. We have multiple cases in progress, some following years of exhausting litigation just to get to the starting line. One case brought back results that moved the needle in a big way (that may actually implicate a well-known serial killer as the real perpetrator); another is still pending, with the team hovering over their inboxes like it's a George Strait ticket drop. The patience game in post-conviction work is brutal, but the breakthroughs are worth every delay.

Outside the courtroom, our work kept echoing in the broader world. *Night in West Texas*, the documentary featuring our Clinic and one of our recent exonerations, continued its festival run, shining a spotlight on our Innocence Clinic students and the incredible clients who allow us to walk beside them. Be sure to stay tuned as the movie begins its Tour of Texas at the beginning of next year!

This semester moved quietly but with purpose. We showed up, did the hard work, and let persistence carry us exactly where it needed to.

With appreciation and pride,

Allison



Allison Clayton is the adjunct professor of the Innocence Clinic and also runs a local law practice. She is Deputy Director of the Innocence Project of Texas, Director of the Lubbock Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, and an active member of the Amicus Committee of the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association. Allison graduated from TTU magna cum laude with honors in 2004 and TTU School of Law summa cum laude in 2007. Upon graduation from law school, she served as a clerk on the Second Court of Appeals for one year before becoming a staff attorney for the Federal District Court for the Northern District of Texas. Allison left the federal court in 2013 and started her own law practice focusing on appellate and post-conviction criminal defense litigation, which is ironic considering the fact she started law school fully intending to never practice a day of criminal defense in her life.

Dealing primarily with felony convictions, Allison has represented clients in appellate and post-conviction matters around the state and nation. She currently has cases pending in the United States Supreme Court, Fifth Circuit, Federal District Court for the Northern District of Texas, Texas Court of Criminal Appeals, and multiple Texas courts of appeals.



### Pictured L to R:

Kaitlyn Mires, Grace Slauterbeck, Professor Allison Clayton, Marcus Braymer, and Eden Babovec.

## FROM THE DESK OF MIRANDA M. RHYNE

DIRECTOR, LOW-INCOME TAXPAYER CLINIC

### Tax Clinic Delivers Major Financial Relief and Resilience in Fall 2025

The Tax Clinic is proud to report a semester defined by significant financial victories for our clients and professional growth for our students. This term, six student attorneys were qualified to practice before the Internal Revenue Service: Ehsan Ali, Jasper Breitenbach, Grace Lee, Shereen Mathews, Rollins Mayfield, and Luke Ursone. In a nutshell, we help resolve tax disputes by reducing or eliminating debt and/or securing refunds for our clients, in both administrative and judicial forums. The results this semester speak for themselves: ***we secured over \$42,000 in refunds for our clients and eliminated over \$292,000 in tax debt!!***

The Clinic's work bridges a vital gap, providing legal representation to individuals and families who cannot otherwise afford an attorney while allowing students to hone essential lawyering skills transferrable to any practice area. Students successfully navigated the complex and often unpredictable nature of tax practice. They managed demanding caseloads—often juggling over 10 active files simultaneously—

and tackled complex legal issues ranging from innocent spouse relief and identity theft to self-employment and dependent-related audits. These cases were rarely straightforward. In their due diligence, students approached each case as if it were a puzzle, requiring creativity in piecing together evidentiary records for clients who lacked adequate documentation.

Further, this semester offered a lesson in adaptability: the federal government shutdown. Students learned to navigate the slow responses and unique hurdles of working with a stalled agency. Despite these obstacles, they developed resilience and learned that effective advocacy requires flexibility and a holistic approach by tailoring solutions to each client's unique needs. Throughout the semester, students gained practical experience in legal research and writing, along with client interviewing, counseling, and communication, honing their problem-solving and negotiation skills.

The Tax Clinic looks forward to continuing this momentum in Spring 2026, remaining committed to providing high-quality representation for our community and a rigorous educational experience for our students.



Miranda M. Rhyme is a Clinical Instructor and the Director of the Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic. She is a member of the State Bar of Texas and is also admitted to practice in United States Tax Court. Miranda graduated from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. After earning her J.D. from the University of Miami School of Law, she made her way to Texas and obtained an L.L.M. in Taxation from SMU Dedman School of Law.

As a law student, Miranda served on the International and Comparative Law Review as both an Articles and Comments Editor and Executive Editor. Prior to entering legal education, she worked as a tax attorney for a non-profit organization representing taxpayers before the IRS in controversy resolution. In doing so, she saved clients hundreds of thousands of dollars through debt reduction or elimination and assisted in securing delayed or denied refunds. During her time in the public sector, Miranda discovered her passion for advocacy and has dedicated her career to helping others. She has found community engagement and education to be one of the most rewarding aspects of her practice. Miranda has presented on various tax topics to a wide variety of audiences and has a knack for engaging non-tax legal professionals and the lay person alike.



Tax Clinic student attorneys (from left) Shereen Mathews, Ehsan Ali, Grace Lee, Professor Miranda Rhyme, Rollins Mayfield, Luke Ursone, and Jasper Breitenbach navigated complex audits and a government shutdown to secure over \$330,000 in financial relief for their clients this fall.



## FROM THE DESK OF DANIEL CAUDILLO

### DIRECTOR, JIM & LEAH FINLEY IMMIGRATION CLINIC

The Immigration Law Clinic at Texas Tech University School of Law proudly concluded its inaugural semester in Fall 2025. Under the leadership of **Professor Daniel Caudillo**, the clinic launched with four dedicated and talented student attorneys: **Juan Daniel Torres-Monroy**, **Angel Salcido-Padilla**, **Amabilia “Machi” Rivera**, and **Tiffany Hinojosa**. Together, this inaugural cohort set a strong foundation for a clinic committed to service, advocacy, and hands-on legal training.

#### Building the Clinic’s Presence

A major focus of the semester was introducing the new clinic to the law school, campus community, and broader Lubbock area. Through extensive outreach, the clinic ensured that students, faculty, and local organizations became aware of the services offered and the clinic’s goals for community engagement.

Professor Caudillo also contributed to this outreach through professional leadership and public service. This fall, he was appointed **Pro Bono Liaison Committee Chair** for the Texas, New Mexico, and Oklahoma Chapter of the **American Immigration Lawyers Association (AILA)**. He presented on a regional AILA panel and delivered multiple presentations

to **community organizations** on a range of immigration topics, reinforcing Texas Tech’s commitment to serving the public.

#### Gratitude to Our Donors

The clinic also extends its heartfelt gratitude to **Jim and Leah Finley**, whose generous support launched and sustains the Immigration Law Clinic. This fall, clinic students had the opportunity to meet with the Finley’s and share their experiences, discuss the meaningful work they are undertaking, and express how the clinic has shaped their legal education. Their support has directly contributed to the clinic’s ability to serve the community and provide students with transformative, hands-on training.

#### Providing Essential Legal Services

Throughout the semester, clinic students provided **legal consultations to more than 60 individuals**. These consultations involved complex and sensitive matters. Their guidance helped clients navigate important decisions and move forward with greater clarity and confidence.

Beyond consultations, students directly represented clients in diverse matters and submitted applications for immigration benefits before **U.S. Citizenship and Immigration**.

(Continued on Page 11)



Professor Caudillo served as a United States Immigration Judge for the Laredo Immigration Court, where he presided over a broad range of complex immigration matters. In this role, he also mentored and trained new judges, underscoring his dedication to legal education and professional development.

Board Certified in Immigration and Nationality Law by the Texas Board of Legal Specialization, Professor Caudillo has represented individuals, families, and communities across all areas of immigration law. Licensed to practice in Texas, he has appeared before the Executive Office for Immigration Review, the Board of Immigration Appeals, the U.S. Federal District Court for the Western District of Texas, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit. He is also a member of the Texas Bar College and has held leadership roles in various professional organizations, including the American Immigration Lawyers Association.

In addition, Professor Caudillo has extensive teaching credentials. He has presented continuing legal education programs nationwide and served as an adjunct professor at the University of New Mexico School of Law. He continues to mentor students and volunteers as a mock trial judge, helping them develop the skills, judgment, and empathy essential for effective client representation.



#### Pictured L to R:

**Tiffany Hinojosa, Angel Salcido-Padilla, Professor Daniel Caudillo, Juan Daniel Torres-Monroy, and Amabilia (Machi) Rivera.**

## FROM THE DESK OF MAX MAXWELL

### DIRECTOR, VETERANS LAW CLINIC

The Veterans Law Clinic opened on August 15, 2025, and it has been a sprint for the seven law students who are members of the inaugural class. The clinic already has over 30 clients. Clients are veterans from all the military services. The cases the students are working on range from championing disability benefits for the veteran to pursuing discharge upgrades for those veterans that did not receive an honorable discharge. The complexity of the cases varies but each case requires the students to interview the veteran, determine the legal theory that would most benefit the veteran, and then write a brief to Federal government that advocates for the veteran. Some of the students have already argued in front of the U.S. Veterans Board of Appeals. This clinic is helping these students hone their advocacy and writing skills.

There is also an aspect of this clinic that is critical to the student's development as an attorney and that is giving back to the community. The students do outreach projects like presenting at the various veteran support organizations in the Lubbock area and conducting interviews

with members of the media. This outreach not only showcases the clinic, but it helps members of the community who are veterans understand what services are available to them.

In less than four short months, Faith Collins, Bailey Dietzmann, Franklyn Jones, Lettie Morris, Sally Nasrawi, Destiny Pemberton, and Aaron Sharpe, have been fully engaged in helping our veterans in Lubbock and the surrounding community. The clinic also helps veterans find the services they need in the community. The clinic, for example, does not handle family or civil law matters, but the students help guide the veteran to the correct office, so they receive the services they need. And many times, even if we cannot help the veteran, we are willing to listen and make sure they understand that someone cares.

Members of the clinic are finding the joy of giving back to the community and it inspires them to want to pursue a career in public service. Regardless of their legal path, their public service in the clinic has been nothing short of extraordinary.

"I've grown both personally and professionally through the challenges, the meaningful responsibilities, and the constant learning that come with being a member of this amazing clinic. I've had the privilege of working directly with veterans and helping them navigate the often-confusing world of VA benefits and services—from disability claims to discharge upgrades. Every case has pushed me to learn more, do better, and stay committed to the work. "

*-Sally Nasrawi*

*Veterans Law Clinic*



Professor Maxwell has served in the Department of Defense—as both a uniformed officer and a civil servant—for more than 35 years. Most recently, he was the Deputy Legal Counsel for U.S. Africa Command. While on active duty, his tours included service as the first Strategic Initiatives Officer for the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's (JAG) Corps; the Staff Judge Advocate for V Corps; the Legal Advisor to NATO's International Security Assistance Force Joint Command in Afghanistan; and the first Chief of the JAG Corps' Defense Counsel Assistance Program.

Professor Maxwell earned a Master of Science in National Security Studies from the National War College, graduating with distinction. He holds an LL.M. in Military Law, with honors, from The Judge Advocate General's Legal Center and School. He received his J.D. from the University of North Carolina School of Law, where he served on the Board of Editors for the *North Carolina Journal of International Law and Commercial Regulation*. He earned his B.A. in History and Economics from Duke University.

He is accredited by the Department of Veterans Affairs to prepare, present, and prosecute veterans' benefits claims and is a Fellow of the Inter-University Seminar on the Armed Forces and Society.



#### Pictured L to R:

Aaron Sharpe, Bailey Dietzmann, Destiny Pemberton, Faith Collins, Professor Max Maxwell, Sally Nasrawi, Lettie Morris, and Franklyn Jones.

## FROM THE DESK OF LARRY SPAIN AND GENE VALENTINI

### ADVANCED ADR CLINIC

(Continued from page 3)

Non-Family Court-Ordered	11
Debt Cases	5
Personal Injury	1
Payment Dispute	1

Of the disputes mediated, 64% resulted in an agreement; 23% in an impasse; 9% in a

continuation; and 4% in an agreed judgment.

We enjoyed working with this group of enthusiastic students in developing their mediation skills which will prepare them well for their future professional role either serving as mediator or as an attorney representing clients in mediation.

## FROM THE DESK DWIGHT MCDONALD

### DIRECTOR, CRIMINAL DEFENSE CLINIC

(Continued from page 5)

The Criminal Defense Clinic only represents indigent citizens charged with criminal offenses in Lubbock. Our clients are assigned through the Lubbock Private Defenders Office. We are proud to

provide quality representation for the poor while educating each student on the importance of such work and continuing the Texas Tech University School of Law's commitment to pro bono work.

## FROM THE DESK OF DANIEL CAUDILLO

### DIRECTOR, JIM AND LEAH FINLEY IMMIGRATION CLINIC

(Continued from page 9)

**Services (USCIS).** Many of these cases will continue into the spring semester, allowing students to follow their work through the full lifecycle of representation.

A highlight of the semester was **Angel Salcido-Padilla's successful representation of a client before the Immigration Court in Dallas**, marking a major accomplishment for the clinic's first year. The students also accepted an additional Immigration Court case at the end of the term, which will continue into the spring.

#### Collaborating Across Clinics

The Immigration Law Clinic also partnered with other TTU Law clinics to expand the scope of services available to clients. Students collaborated with the **Veterans Law Clinic** to assist veterans navigating immigration-related concerns. Additionally, clinic members consulted with the **Criminal Defense Clinic and the Caprock Regional Public Defenders Clinic** to advise their clients on the immigration consequences of criminal cases—an area where interdisciplinary cooperation is vital. The students also provided this service to local criminal defense attorneys.

#### Experiential Learning in El Paso

In November, the clinic cohort traveled to **El Paso, Texas** for an immersive educational experience. Students observed a range of federal and immigration court proceedings, including:

- A full trial in a detained Immigration Court
- Pre-trial hearings in both detained and non-detained settings
- Proceedings in U.S. Federal Court

The students also had the privilege of meeting with **The Honorable Judge Kathleen Cardone**, as well as her law clerks, gaining invaluable insight into federal judicial practice. Students also met with several of the El Paso Immigration Judge's to discuss the practice of law before those courts. The trip also included meetings with local immigration attorneys who shared their experiences and expertise, as well as a breakfast with students of the pre-law society at The University of Texas at El Paso, to answer their questions about law school.

#### Looking Ahead

As the semester drew to a close, students undertook several new cases, ensuring a busy and productive start to the spring.

The clinic community celebrated a highly successful inaugural semester with a year-end dinner—a moment to reflect on accomplishments and look forward to what lies ahead.

**With momentum and purpose, the clinic enters the next semester ready to deepen its impact and expand its service.**

## WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

**Izzy Mendoza** (May '25 – Family Law Clinic) - is an Associate with The Gibbons Law Firm in Austin, Texas, where she was just awarded "The Zen Lawyer Award."

**Cassidy Terrazas** (May '25 – ADR Clinic) is a family law attorney at Varghese Summersett in Ft. Worth, where she represents clients in divorce and custody matters. She credits ADR Clinic with strengthening her mediation abilities, which is a skill she now uses regularly in navigating high conflict custody and divorce cases.

**Ryleigh Waldo** (May '25 – Tax Clinic) - currently working as Associate Attorney at Field Manning Stone Aycock P.C., here in Lubbock.

**Sydney Allison** (May '25 – CDC Clinic) - is working as an Assistant Public Defender at the Concho Valley Public Defender's Office in San Angelo, TX. Currently, she primarily works Misdemeanor cases for indigent defendants, and she assists with juvenile cases. She says her passion for rural public defense began as a student in the Criminal Defense Clinic and continues to blossom in San Angelo.

**Victoria Gallegos** (May '24 – Criminal Defense Clinic) - is working as a Defense Attorney in the Lubbock Federal Public Defender's Office.

**Kalee Sue Gore** (May '25 – CDC Clinic) - is an attorney with Crossroads Public Defender's Office in Victoria, TX. Crossroads Defenders covers Victoria, Jackson, Lavaca, and Refugio Counties.



## FROM THE DESK OF JOE STEPHENS DIRECTOR, CAPROCK REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDERS OFFICE

(Continued from page 6)

made the arguments, and the cases went away. That's not luck. That's the long game, played well, and it's a skill that will serve him for the rest of his career.

**Marley** delivered one of the finest closing arguments I've witnessed from a student attorney—or, frankly, from any attorney—during a contested revocation hearing in Plainview that stretched nearly three hours. She had already conducted a sharp, compelling direct examination of our client, drawing out the details of his life, his struggles, and his efforts to comply with the terms of his probation under difficult circumstances. When she stood to close, she commanded the room. She wove together the evidence, the law, and the human story in a way that was organized, persuasive, and genuinely moving. The judge listened. The result was a significantly reduced sentence from what the State had originally offered—a sentence that gave our client a real chance at rebuilding her life rather than simply warehousing her. It was the kind of advocacy that changes outcomes, and Marley delivered it under pressure, in a packed courtroom, with everything on the line.

But Marley's impact this semester extends well beyond that single hearing. She has thrown herself into bond advocacy with real conviction, understanding that for many of our clients, the most urgent issue isn't the ultimate disposition of their case—it's whether they'll be sitting in a jail cell for months waiting for that disposition. Pretrial detention destroys lives. People lose jobs, apartments, custody of their children. They plead guilty to things they didn't do just to get out. Marley has personally secured the release of a number of clients who were being held pretrial for no reason other than poverty—people who couldn't afford a bond that a wealthier defendant would have posted without a second thought. She understands that freedom shouldn't have a price tag, and she's fought for her clients accordingly.

**Holland** is a master of persistence and tactics. Her work is meticulous, prepared, and thorough—the kind of behind-the-scenes excellence that doesn't always generate dramatic courtroom stories but that leads to people's names simply not appearing on dockets. Cases get dismissed. Charges get rejected. Problems get solved before they become crises. That's Holland's work, and it's invaluable. She has also handled several juvenile matters this semester, which come with an entirely different set of rules, procedures, and pressures. Juvenile cases move faster. The deadlines are tighter. The stakes—a young person's future, their relationship

with the justice system, their sense of themselves—are profound. Holland has navigated these cases with skill and care, learning the specialized rules while never losing sight of the young people at the center of them.

But what sets Holland apart is harder to teach, and maybe impossible to teach: she cares in a way that's instinctive. Her empathy isn't performed or strategic; it's genuine, and her clients feel it. They trust her. They open up to her. They believe—correctly—that she's in their corner. In a system that so often treats indigent defendants as case numbers to be processed, that kind of authentic human connection is rare and powerful. It makes her a better advocate, and it makes her clients' experiences of the system a little less dehumanizing.

**Jakob** has quietly secured the release of nearly ten people from jail this semester—a staggering number for a student attorney in such a short period of time, and one that reflects both his skill and his determination. Most impressively, he did so for a client in a county where we don't normally practice. Our client was a young man struggling with significant mental health challenges, and his case had fallen through the cracks in a system not well-equipped to handle the intersection of mental illness and criminal justice. Jakob stepped in, learned the local procedures, built the necessary relationships with the court and the prosecutor's office, and advocated relentlessly for a resolution that prioritized treatment over punishment.

Cases like that one require more than legal skill; they require an attorney willing to learn about systems beyond the courtroom—mental health resources, treatment options, the realities of what incarceration does to someone already struggling. Jakob put in that work, and his client is better for it. He got the case dismissed. It was careful, patient, unglamorous work—the kind that doesn't make headlines but that changes someone's life. Jakob did it without fanfare, without complaint, and with a quiet competence that belies his status as a student. He's going to be an exceptional attorney.

**Caleb** has three felony cases of varying degrees set for trial next semester, and he has done a masterful job of preparing the ground. Trial work is the most demanding thing a criminal defense attorney does. It requires thorough investigation, careful legal research, strategic thinking, and—

(continued on page 13)

## WORDS FROM OUR STUDENTS

"It has been my pleasure to work with the Office of Dispute Resolution, members of the community, and the local bar. I have learned so much about interpersonal relationships and professionalism. Additionally, I have been able to experience multiple practice areas because mediation is utilized in so many different ways."

*-Hannah Peters  
ADR Clinic*

"Clinic has given me countless opportunities to do the work of a lawyer and see what it really consists of. I expected that the majority of my time would be spent researching, but I spend more time interacting with the outside world. Criminal defense requires conducting interviews to build a trusting relationship with clients, working with investigators and mitigation specialists, and negotiating with prosecutors."

*-Rodger Advincula  
CDC Clinic*

"The Tax Clinic has given me the opportunity to work directly with clients facing real tax controversies, helping them navigate issues with the IRS that have a real impact on their lives. Through hands-on advocacy, research, and negotiations, I have developed practical skills that will be beneficial in everyday practice. Most importantly, the clinic has shown me the profound difference accessible legal representation can make for taxpayers who need it the most."

*-Rollins Mayfield  
Tax Clinic*

## FROM THE DESK OF JOE STEPHENS DIRECTOR, CAPROCK REGIONAL PUBLIC DEFENDERS OFFICE

(Continued from page 12)

perhaps most importantly—a relationship with your client built on trust and communication. Caleb has done all of that. He's visited his clients, explained the process, listened to their concerns, and earned their confidence. He's investigated the facts, identified the weaknesses in the State's cases, and developed theories of defense. He has prepared, and in some cases filed, the necessary motions and laid the procedural groundwork. He is setting the table for what will be Caprock's first trial in several years, and he's doing it the right way—methodically, thoughtfully, and with his clients' interests at the center of every decision. It's easy to forget how rare trials have become—the vast majority of criminal cases end in pleas, and many attorneys go years without ever picking a jury. Caleb isn't shying away from that moment. He's walking toward it, clear-eyed about the stakes and committed to giving his clients their day in court. And for a clinic like ours, that matters. Taking a case to trial is a statement—it tells prosecutors that we're not just here to process pleas and move cases along, but to fight when fighting is what our clients need. Caleb is carrying that standard into the spring, and I have no doubt he'll carry it well. That's what this work is about.

**Mary** is the fixer. Every clinic needs one—someone who takes cases of all kinds, in all counties, with very specific and often unglamorous tasks, and gets them solved. Mary is that person. She doesn't wait to be told what to do; she identifies what needs to happen and makes it happen, without delay, always thinking three steps ahead. She's the one who notices that a deadline is approaching, that a form needs to be filed, that a client hasn't been contacted in a while. She's the one who picks up the cases that don't fit neatly into anyone else's caseload and figures out how to move them forward. That kind of reliability and initiative is invaluable in a

practice like ours, where the volume is high and the margin for error is small.

This semester, Mary also handled one of our clinic's more difficult moments: a case involving a young man, out of custody, who ultimately accepted a prison sentence. Not every case ends the way we hope. Sometimes the evidence is overwhelming. Sometimes the client's history limits the options. Sometimes a prison sentence, as devastating as it is, is the best outcome available under the circumstances. When that happens, the attorney's job is to prepare the client, to support them through the process, and to ensure that the court sees them as a human being, not just a case number. It was an emotional morning in court—the kind that stays with you, that you carry home. Mary navigated it with grace, professionalism, and genuine compassion. She was present for her client in a moment that mattered, and she conducted herself in a way that honored both the difficulty of the situation and the dignity of the person at its center. That's not easy. Mary made it look like it was.

These six have spent the semester driving thousands of miles across the South Plains, learning the personalities of a dozen different counties, and discovering that advocacy isn't a single skill—it's a practice, built case by case, courthouse by courthouse, client by client. They've learned that the work is hard and the victories are often small and uncelebrated. They've learned that showing up matters, that preparation matters, that relationships matter. They've learned that their clients are people—complicated, struggling, hopeful, scared people—who deserve someone in their corner. Watching them work has been one of the great privileges of my teaching career. I am proud of every one of them, and I cannot wait to see the attorneys they become.

## WORDS FROM OUR STUDENTS

"The Immigration Clinic this past semester offered an exceptional practical learning experience that challenged me in the best ways. I gained hands-on experience representing clients in Master Calendar Hearings, conducting interviews, and drafting motions, affidavits, and other filings for USCIS and EOIR matters. The clinic especially pushed me to strengthen my client-consultation skills—learning how to ask the right questions, build trust, and navigate complex conversations with clarity and compassion. Managing real cases with meaningful feedback helped me grow significantly as an advocate and build confidence in my legal abilities. The clinic was rigorous but incredibly rewarding, and I would highly recommend it to any student looking to develop practical skills and real courtroom experience."

**-Angel Padilla**  
*Immigration Clinic*

"I've really enjoyed my time in the ADR clinic. Mediation has taught me how to listen better and help people find their own solutions. It's rewarding to see how even small conversations can make a big difference for someone."

**-Noah Stewart**  
*ADR Clinic*

"Participating in the immigration law clinic was one of the most rewarding experiences of my legal education. I enjoyed being able to help individuals facing difficult circumstances and provide guidance during moments of uncertainty. Working on these matters has strengthened and affirmed my commitment to serving this vulnerable community."

**-J. Daniel Torres Monroy**  
*Immigration Clinic*

Working in the immigration clinic allowed me to serve some of the most vulnerable individuals in our legal system—people whose futures hinge on whether they can access competent and compassionate representation. Through this experience, I learned how deeply immigration issues affect every part of a person's life, from family stability to personal safety. I had the privilege of helping clients navigate complex procedures, prepare evidence, and tell their stories with dignity. These interactions not only strengthened my legal skills but also reinforced my commitment to advocacy, reminding me why protecting the rights of those at the margins is essential to a just system.

**-Amabilia Rivera**  
*Immigration Law Clinic*

## CCAV SEEKS VOLUNTEERS FOR UPCOMING TAX SEASON

The *Coalition of Community Assistance Volunteers* continues to seek volunteers to assist with the tax season around the corner. An information session was held on November 3rd and Elma Moreno supplied us with information on the how to become a volunteer for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program. This year we even had a training session to help us get started on the training to become a VITA volunteer.

### It's not too late to sign up to volunteer!

The *Coalition of Community Assistance Volunteers* asks that you consider volunteering your time and talents to prepare and e-file income tax returns FREE for low income taxpayers in our community. Tech Law students have played an important role in the community by serving as volunteers for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program for over 30 years. During the 2024 filing season, volunteers prepared a total of 2100 tax returns. The average gross income of the taxpayers was \$1911/month or \$22,934.17 annually. It is estimated that CCAV saved



income-eligible taxpayers from paying \$150/each in unnecessary tax preparation and e-filing fees. This resulted in refunds totaling more than \$3.5 million in refunds into the local economy.

Volunteers prepare basic individual income tax returns on an easy-to-use computer software program and enjoy protections under state and federal Volunteer Protection Acts. Hours also qualify for law-related pro bono hours to meet the graduation public service requirement.

CCAV asks that law students **train and test at the Advanced Level**. Training and testing must be done on-line.

We hope you'll choose to participate with us during the upcoming tax season which runs from January 29th thru April 15th by volunteering 2-4 hours of your time per week. It is not too late to volunteer. If you are interested, please feel free to contact me at [melissa.vasquez@ttu.edu](mailto:melissa.vasquez@ttu.edu) if you have any questions or if you would like to pick up a packet. You can find more information at <https://freetaxlubbock.org>

## THANKS TO CLINICAL PROGRAM FACULTY AND STUDENTS FOR 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 September: **Daniel Caudillo, Dwight McDonald, Terri Morgeson, Miranda Rhyne, and Larry Spain.**

"I've truly loved my clinic experience; it has made everything I've learned in law school come to life. Working with real clients and prosecutors—not just reading about it in class—has been so rewarding and has given me confidence for my future career. It is giving me real experience that's going to put me a step ahead once I graduate. Professor McDonald has pushed me to grow, think deeper, and be the best advocate I can be. It has been one of the most meaningful parts of my time in law school, making me a stronger and more confident student attorney."

*-Ashanty Wilson Bishop  
Criminal Defense Clinic*



## CLINICAL PROGRAMS MANDATORY INFORMATION SESSION FOR 2026-2027 STUDENT SELECTION PROCESS SCHEDULED

*More information will be provided during the information session by all clinic directors.*

*Current clinic students will also be present to answer questions.*

*If you are currently a 2L student you will be able to apply to participate to any of the clinics. If you are currently a 1L student, you will only be able to apply to the Advanced ADR Clinic or the Veterans Law Clinic*

FOR MORE INFORMATION

### CLINICAL PROGRAMS INFORMATION SESSION & STUDENT SELECTION FOR 2026-2027

- Civil Law
- Criminal Defense
- Caprock Regional Defense
- Family Law
- Tax Law
- Immigration Law
- Veterans Law
- Innocence Clinic

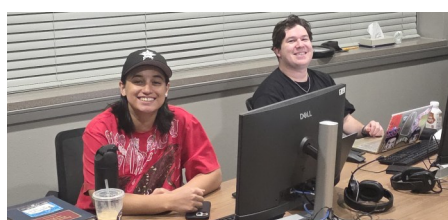
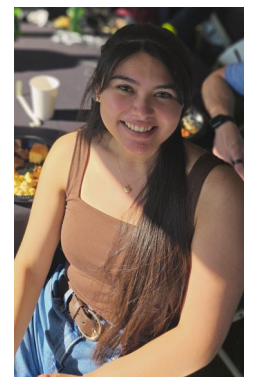
**1LS & 2LS**

**CLINICAL PROGRAMS**  
TEXAS TECH  
School of Law

**MONDAY, JANUARY 26TH @NOON  
LANIER AUDITORIUM**

*Selection process for Students Interested in Participating in the Clinical Programs during the 2026-2027 academic year will begin in January! Mandatory Information Session is scheduled for January 26th, 2026 in the Lanier Auditorium. Watch for announcements coming in January and visit the clinic website at <http://www.law.ttu.edu/acp/programs/clinical/> for more information!*

# SNAPSHOT CORNER





## SNAPSHOT CORNER





**CLINIC DIRECTORS:**

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

**Dwight McDonald**  
Criminal Defense Clinic

**Terri Morgeson**  
Family Law Clinic

**Miranda Rhyne**  
Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic

**Daniel Caudillo**  
Immigration Law Clinic

**Max Maxwell**  
Veterans Law Clinic

**INSTRUCTORS:**

**Allison Clayton**  
Innocence Clinic

**Gene Valentini**  
Adjunct Professor  
Advanced ADR Clinic

**Joe Stephens**  
Chief Public Defender  
Caprock Regional Public  
Defender Office

**ADMINISTRATIVE  
STAFF:**

**Melissa Vasquez**  
Unit Manager for Clinical  
Programs

**Nancy Mojica**  
Senior Business Assistant

**Sally Moreno**  
Senior Business Assistant for  
CRPDO

**Ana Rivera**  
Outreach Coordinator for Low  
Income Tax Clinic



**FROM THE**  
*CLINICAL PROGRAMS*  
*FACULTY AND STAFF*



**CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL WHO PASSED THE BAR EXAM!**  
**WE ARE TECHLAW PROUD!**  
**CONGRATULATIONS DECEMBER GRADUATES!!**



**SEARCH TTU SCHOOL OF  
LAW CLINICAL PROGRAMS**

**CLINIC NEWS**

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