2013

A Social Justice Lens Turned on Legal Education: Next Steps in Representing the Vulnerable and Inspiring Law Students

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Recommended Citation
37 J. Legal Prof. 179 (2013)
A SOCIAL JUSTICE LENS TURNED ON LEGAL EDUCATION:
NEXT STEPS IN REPRESENTING THE VULNERABLE AND
INSPIRING LAW STUDENTS

by

Deborah Moss-West* and Stephanie M. Wildman**

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Critics of legal education abound. Students, journalists, and law professors themselves have issued multiple charges, including calls to reduce the educational program to two years,¹ accusations that law schools gouge students on tuition and hide relevant employment statistics,² and protestations that scholarship is irrelevant and education should concentrate

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The authors thank Ellen Platt, research librarian extraordinaire, and Elizabeth Hollis, graduate fellow at the Center for Social Justice, for excellent research assistance. The authors also thank Mark Aronson and Hastings College of Law for organizing the conference Representing the Vulnerable and Remembering Ralph Abascal: Lessons from the 1970s, where we first began thinking and talking about these ideas. Thanks as well to the organizing committee for the 2012 SALT Teaching Conference at the University of Maryland, Teaching Social Justice, Expanding Access to Justice: The Role of Legal Education and the Legal Profession, especially Sara Rankin, Margaret Kwoka, and Barbara Bezdek, for the opportunity to present the thoughts that have become this paper. Finally, and most especially, the authors thank Richard Delgado and Beverly Moran for insightful comments and support.


on skills. In this time of self-examination for legal educators, a key component of discourse about reform should include how to better infuse legal education with social justice ideals.

This paper serves as a tribute to some of the trailblazing social justice advocates and legal educators we have lost: Ralph Abascal, Keith Aoki, Derrick Bell, Haywood Burns, John Calmore, Luke Cole, Jerome Culp, Chris Ijima, Shanara Gilbert, Trina Grillo, and sadly many others. These change agents fought all their lives on the cutting edge of issues related to representing the most vulnerable, while they also turned a social justice lens on legal education. As part of their commitment, each of these advocates understood the importance of teaching the next generation of lawyers and community workers to carry on this project of representing marginalized, subordinated, and underrepresented clients and causes. And so this paper celebrates the teacher in each of these heroes and also the teacher in each of us. The task, connecting students to the knowledge and skills needed for this representation, is crucial, but it cannot happen without passing on the knowledge held by these justice warriors of the past or without their inspiration to continue the fight.

Challenges to those in power are not necessarily motivated by belligerence or hostility . . . . Nor are retaliation or revenge the major impulses that lead an individual to challenge an injustice . . . . Often, the desire to change the offending situation . . . may be an incidental benefit and not the real motivation. Rather, those of us who speak out are moved by a deep sense of the fragility of our self-worth. It is the determination to protect our sense of who we are.


4. See Martha R. Mahoney, John O. Calmore, & Stephanie M. Wildman, Social Justice: Professionals, Communities, and Law 2D 1 (2013) (identifying the goal of social justice practice as serving "marginalized, subordinated, and underrepresented clients and causes").

5. The reader will find italicized quotes from these warriors for justice throughout the paper.
are that leads us to risk criticism, alienation, and serious loss while most others, similarly harmed, remain silent.\textsuperscript{6} – Derrick Bell

According to a 2012 American Bar Association study, at least 40% of low and moderate-income households experience a legal problem each year. Yet studies show that the collective legal aid effort is meeting only about 20% of the legal needs of low-income people.\textsuperscript{7} Unlike defendants in criminal cases, low-income parties in most civil proceedings have no right to appointed counsel.\textsuperscript{8} Low-income parties’ legal needs often go unmet when potential litigants are without resources to hire an attorney. In 2006, the ABA House of Delegates adopted Resolution 112A:

RESOLVED, That the American Bar Association urges federal, state, and territorial governments to provide legal counsel as a matter of right at public expense to low income persons in those categories of adversarial proceedings where basic human needs are at stake, such as those involving shelter, sustenance, safety, health or child custody.\textsuperscript{9}

The ABA encouraged jurisdictions to develop strategies for meeting the legal needs of their community.\textsuperscript{10} Law schools can play a significant role in closing this “justice gap” for civil legal services when basic human needs of low-income people are at issue by training law students who are committed to serving others.\textsuperscript{11}

\textsuperscript{6} Derrick Bell, Confronting Authority: Reflections of an Ardent Protester ix-x (1994).
\textsuperscript{7} South Carolina Lawyers Serving the Public Good, The Need for Pro Bono (2012), http://www.probono.net/sc/.
\textsuperscript{10} Rulli, supra note 8, at 698.
Gerald López reflects on the role of legal education in failing to address these unmet needs for legal services. López considers the daily life struggles of Maria Elena, a housekeeper, mother, tutor, seamstress, and cook. María Elena seeks to make ends meet, to care for her family, and to survive. López connects María Elena’s goals with the issue of social justice for all members of society. He underlines the gap between such clients and legal education, which does so little to help students learn about the María Elena of our community, what they would seek in a lawyer, or even how they might find a lawyer. Lawyers and law seem irrelevant when viewed from María Elena’s perspective. Low-income women of color have developed their own survival mechanisms without much support from law or the legal system. While some lawyers and vulnerable clients do connect, López observes that this contact occurs in spite of, not because of, legal education.

López says the miracle is that attorney-client relationships happen at all and are less than dysfunctional. These attorney client relations across race, socio-economic class, and other multiple-identity categories which radiate forms of privilege represent a “magnificent mutual adaptation” according to López. López believes that “fighting political and social subordination” is the work we know so little about.

The amazing degree of residential racial segregation prevailing in the United States today, which Douglas Massey and Nancy Denton have called ‘American Apartheid,’ cannot be explained away by resorting to formalist ‘colorblind’ rules or analyses. . . The solution to racism may involve some serious redistribution of power—political, economic and otherwise. – Keith Aoki

This essay acknowledges that many legal educators have consistently urged the importance of public interest and social justice in law schools before now. This essay also reflects on the role that law schools and legal education have failed to play, but yet can play, in preparing the next generation of lawyers to represent the vulnerable. Law schools have not, after all, been the most welcoming settings to many students who come to

14. Id. at 9.
15. Id.
law school because they care about justice. Often, these students remark after their first year, where was the class about justice?

I also have some good news and I have some bad news. The good news is that there is much positive going on in legal education. Because there is so much good news we must resist the easy temptation to engage in law school bashing. Some great changes are being made in our law schools’ fine contributions to legal learning. The bad news, however, is that in the main, these changes are not representative of legal education. Most of legal education has been and remains focused on producing lawyers to serve private, commercial and corporate interests that perpetuate the status quo. — Haywood Burns

I [Stephanie] attended law school in 1970 because I wanted to do social justice work. The closest class I could find listed in the curriculum was called Creditor’s Rights - Debtor’s Remedies. It was a course mostly about creditors rights with not much attention paid to debtors. I was lucky enough to participate in the first ever clinical course offered at my law school - an experimental criminal defense seminar. So it is not so long ago that one could only find “stand up” courses with difficulty and clinical legal education was in its infancy.

[I]t is important for students to challenge the ways of their (mis)education and to examine their entry into the systems of law, lawyers, and politics—reinforcing systems that will constrain their identity and efforts to give material meaning to the high ideals of this nation’s vision of democracy where “[l]ife, [l]iberty, and the [p]ursuit of [h]appiness” really are inalienable rights, where the “consent of the governed” really is the source of legitimated governmental power, and where all of us are not just “created equal” but are enabled to demonstrate it. — John O. Calmore

I [Deborah ] recall, When I attended law school in the early 1990s the dialogue had already begun about the importance of social justice education, and my law school had rich, diverse course offerings. One of my most memorable and action-oriented courses was entitled Seminar on the Regulation of Motherhood; it was refreshing to learn that laws enabled my family to parent in the way we desired. I was hopeful that I could use

this information to help others. Little did I know that, although the laws were favorable, accessibility to legal services remained an issue for many. Now, twenty years later, many of the same public interest and social justice issues connected with legal education, access to justice and adequate provision of legal services for low-income people, continue.

Whether the environmental danger is pesticide poisoning, air pollution, contaminated drinking water, lead poisoning, or proximity to toxic waste sites, in almost every study the conclusion has been the same: poor people and people of color bear the brunt of environmental hazards. 19 – Ralph Santiago Abascal and Luke W. Cole

Clinical education has been the cutting edge of work for teaching students about representing vulnerable client populations. 20 Clinical educators have fought and continue to fight hard for recognition in the academy, even though a 1930 article by Jerome Frank asked, “Why not a clinical lawyer-school?” 21 Frank criticized the Langdellian model that now dominates legal education, noting that casebooks do not really teach cases. Frank praised the medical education model that offers “hands on” practice to aspiring doctors. He challenged legal educators to imagine clinics that would dispense legal advice in every law school. Legal education has still not taken up Frank’s call for a clinical lawyer school with the seriousness that Frank’s idea deserves.

Yet from its first tentative foothold, clinical legal education has grown and spawned a new generation of teachers, who used their own materials and whatever else they could find, including poverty law casebooks, to teach representation skills in a clinical setting. This work has been essential and significant, but it is not the focus of this essay because clinical education should not shoulder the entire task of teaching the importance of social justice to the legal profession. That core value, emphasizing the importance of social justice commitment to professional responsibility,

20. See Margaret Martin Barry, A. Rachel Camp, Margaret E. Johnson, Catherine F. Klein, & Lisa V. Martin, Teaching Social Justice Lawyering: Systematically Including Community Legal Education in Law School Clinics, 18 CLINICAL L. REV. 401 (Spring 2012) (advocating the relevance of social justice lawyering to clinical legal education and reviewing the literature).
needs to be available to every law student, enabling each one to find a sense of her or his purpose in the legal profession.22

[I]f I work in legal education, . . . I can spend some of my time working in academic support programs, making it possible for students who otherwise would not be in law school to attend school, graduate, and get into positions in which their voices can be more easily heard. If I work in legal education, my scholarship . . . can be a political act, bringing the lives of poor women, minority women, and other underrepresented women to the fore. I can focus on how the law and the dominant culture structurally produce subordination. I know that laws and rules ignore the real lives of these women; I can do what I can to make ignoring them more difficult to do.23 — Trina Grillo

Centers for Social Justice in law schools can play the role of providing an institutional context and support for this undertaking that brings students, faculty, staff, alumni, and members of the community together while increasing the teaching, learning, and service opportunities that can provide more legal assistance to underrepresented communities. A center cannot do this work without a strong clinical program, and a center can help bring the clinical work more into the mainstream of legal education, where it belongs. Students need to develop their own theory of justice to prepare them for a life of practice seeking social change. Systemic obstacles will be easier to face for students armed with a sense of purpose and perseverance.24

This essay explains how Centers for Social Justice in law schools can accomplish these goals, using as an example the Center for Social Justice and Public Service at Santa Clara Law. Part I will address the law school curriculum as an essential component to providing knowledge about and access to this social justice work. Course offerings, including certificates in public interest and social justice law, help students develop the vocabulary and theoretical background that will infuse their practical work. A


certificate program along with a Center’s extracurricular activities and *pro bono* emphasis creates an institutional context in which students who want to pursue social justice work, either as a career, or as a lifelong commitment in any law practice, can find support, friendship, and thrive. Part II considers how Centers for Social Justice can help to fill the service gap in the legal profession for marginalized, subordinated, or underrepresented clients and causes through programming that enables law students to serve community legal needs while they study law. Equally vital is the resulting increase in legal resources for diverse, low-income clients and communities.

*By my very deliberate choice of profession as a criminal defense lawyer, I have chosen my stance beside this man, charged with this crime [of rape]. It matters not whether I “like” him, whether I am repulsed by the facts of the case, or whether I believe he is guilty or innocent. There is no qualification, no compromise to my loyalty to my client.*

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I. SOCIAL JUSTICE LAW CURRICULUM AS A FOUNDATION FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Santa Clara Law offers a certificate program in Public Interest and Social Justice Law. In addition to this “general” certificate, the school also offers the certificate with special emphasis in consumer law, criminal justice, critical race jurisprudence, environmental law, health law, or immigration and refugee law. Each of these certificates have different specific requirements, but they share a similar pattern in that each has an academic component, a practicum, and a public service requirement.

The certificate academic component includes both a curricular piece and a supervised writing requirement that a faculty member signs off on upon completion. The curricular requirements include core courses, like clinics, law and social justice, public interest and social justice practice. Another core course, a social justice workshop, changes topic each

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semester, depending on the scholarly interest of the faculty member who teaches it. This course includes funding to bring speakers to campus to talk about the field, and those discussions are open, beyond the enrolled students, to the campus community. Additionally, the certificate requires selection of one course from a list of classes that specifically address legal issues of marginalized groups, like race and the law or sexual orientation and the law. Students may select additional units from a list of more generally applicable public interest courses, like administrative law or family law. About 25-30 Santa Clara Law students graduate each year with one of the certificates. Many more students take these public interest and social justice courses, even if they don’t ultimately seek the certificate. The certificate practicum requirement consists of a 150 hour commitment that can be completed for unit credit or pay, as well as for free. Both the public service and practicum hours must be verified by the supervising attorneys. The public service requirement asks the student to perform 50 hours of pro bono work during their law school career. Those 50 hours must not be for credit or pay.

So the certificate program, along with the Centers’ extra-curricular activities and pro bono emphasis, create an institutional context in which students who want to pursue social justice work, either as a career, or as a lifelong commitment as part of their law practice in any field, can find support and friendship and thrive. Course offerings through the core courses aim to help students develop the vocabulary and theoretical background that will infuse their practical work.

What elements might be missing from this picture? Scholars like Gerald Lopez have characterized education for social justice as “the work we know so little about.” When I teach this article, I ask my students two questions: “If Lopez is right, and fighting subordination is the work we know so little about, does that work against subordination require knowledge that can be taught and learned?” and “Why might it be difficult for lawyers or law students to connect with the Maria Elenas in our communities?”

27. Law students choose from over 35 qualifying public interest and social justice law certificate courses each year, filling 2400 student seats in 2011. E-mail from Michael Flynn, Santa Clara University School of Law, Student Services to Deborah Moss-West, Assistant Director at the Center for Social Justice and Public Service at Santa Clara University School of Law (November 5, 2012, 11:12 PST) (on file with authors).
Of course the answers implicate education, particularly legal education and its role in keeping systems of privilege unspoken, unidentified, and unexamined.29 And the answers underline the need for each of us to pursue that education ourselves as well as in classrooms. Work against subordination does require knowledge—in fact many kinds of knowledge. Jane Aiken uses the term "provocateurs for justice" in describing her own educational goals for making her students "justice ready."30 Provocateurs for social justice must learn self-awareness of one's own privileges and limitations as well as a sense of the role that systems of privilege play in the social order. Professor Aiken pursues these goals in her clinical courses.

"Why is the personal not also legal?" . . . When we leave out the personal in the realm of the law, what is left out is the truth of the experiences of black people in American society. Indeed, to the extent that we permit the personal to be included, we often leave out the reality of being black.31—Jerome M. Culp

I [Stephanie] pursue these goals in my law and social justice and gender and the law classes (and in a large section course, such as torts, when I teach it as well). In addition to assigning readings about privilege, the law and social justice class underlines three aspects of lawyering for social justice. The course begins with the organization of the legal profession: aspirations, why come to study law, the nature of legal education, access to justice, kinds of social justice practice, and an overview of working with communities. It then shifts gears to address the development of social justice law, including the nature of rights-based claims and a history of struggles for social justice in areas like work, welfare, and livelihood, essential to basic human needs. The class also looks at social justice issues key to the practice of democracy: education, voting, protection against harm, and the judiciary and role of judges. The materials ask whether one can be a judge for social justice, just as the course considers lawyering for social justice. It next turns to a case study in the struggle for social change, examining the search for equality and liberation based on sexual orientation. The term concludes with reading on "becoming a lawyer, staying yourself."32

32. The text for the course is MAHONEY ET AL., supra note 4.
We should try to give students a better understanding of what law is, and whose interests and what values it may serve. If we would put what we teach in a better context, we would teach better. If we could teach better, we could ultimately train more competent and compassionate lawyers.\(^\text{33}\) – Chris K. Ijima

It is a full semester, and to complement this theoretical reading the students do original case study research, finding a social justice case and interviewing the parties, the lawyers, community groups, and if possible the judge. Student evaluations support the value of the course:

One of the most important classes that I’ve taken in law school because it really taught me what it means to be a lawyer and the responsibilities that the profession carries with it.

This course is key to our professional training as it provides viewpoints that some may not be aware of; it helped me see the different types of lawyering roles.

The most valuable part of the course (and to my legal education and learning in general) was the case study. Being able to look at a legal case or issue and interview the “players” and analyze the challenges presented was a really valuable experience.

The case study enabled us to speak with attorneys who have incorporated social justice work into their every day practice.

As these descriptions suggest, social justice education reaches students, contributing to their lifelong learning and commitment. Social justice education confirms the possibility to each person that she or he can make a difference in the world.

In an exciting pilot program Deborah and Stephanie are team teaching this course material to undergraduate students who complement the reading and class discussion with a two hour per week community service placement. As one student explained:

Our assignment: Put a face to the legal theory we were studying in the class “Law and Social Justice.” The place: a local community center—perhaps a soup kitchen or a legal clinic. I found myself drawn to Casa de Clara in San Jose. The description for it read:

“Interact and have dinner with homeless women (and young children) in an intimate home-like shelter.”

It’s one thing to read about complexities . . . but that learning really hits home when you’re helping a homeless woman navigate the complex process of filing a request for food stamps.34

It is exciting to see how far social justice education has advanced at both the law school and university level since those days of creditors’ rights and regulation of motherhood. As The Honorable Cruz Reynoso has said about making changes in the legal system, “Si, se puede!”35

Commitment to social justice requires dedication in a way that is challenging both technically and emotionally. The academy and profession often marginalize social justice, so building a network of support and nurture is another key to success. Sylvia Law advises:

[N]urtur[e] a group of friends who share your values. Friendship requires time and effort; lawyers and law students are crippled when the organization of their lives leads them to believe that they do not have time for friendship. We need our friends to help us figure out who we are, what we think, and what sort of world we want to help to create. None of us can do it alone.36

Law students interested in social justice must understand the legal work they want to do and acquire the needed skills. A strong social justice curriculum can help students on that path. But students must also create a mutual basis of support – a social justice community – to sustain that work. Classrooms and coursework provide one avenue for building that friendship network; public service opportunities provide another.

II. THE ROLE OF A CENTER FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE IN PROVIDING SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES

35. Hon. Cruz Reynoso, in CRUZ REYNOSO: SOWING THE SEEDS OF JUSTICE (Abby Ginzberg Films 2010) (discussing the potential appointment of an Asian American or Native American to the U.S. Supreme Court - “Yes, we can.”).
Deborah L. Rhode opines that "Law schools have a unique opportunity and corresponding obligation to insure that issues concerning access to legal services occupy a central place in their curricula and that pro bono activity plays a central in their students' educational experience."37 The Santa Clara Law Center for Social Justice and Public Service agrees and in recent years has expanded available pro bono opportunities for law students. The Center helps to fill the legal service gap38 by providing opportunities that enables law students to serve community legal needs while they study law. The programming is open to all students, not just those who aspire to a full-time public service career. The Center strives to infuse a sense of social justice throughout the law school experience and challenges students to approach their work through a social justice lens, regardless of practice area.

The American Bar Association (ABA) supports this social justice emphasis as part of professional responsibility. ABA Model Rule 6.1 states in pertinent part "Every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay. A lawyer should aspire to render at least (50) hours of pro bono public legal services per year."39 The New York State bar recently amended its rules, requiring 50 hours of law-related pro bono service for new applicants.40 During law school students should begin the practice of being the lifelong volunteers that the ABA and other bars encourage.

38. See supra text accompanying notes 4-8 (discussing the underrepresentation of vulnerable populations).
39. MODEL CODE OF PROF'L CONDUCT R. 6.1 (2002) (Every lawyer has a professional responsibility to provide legal services to those unable to pay. A lawyer should aspire to render at least (50) hours of pro bono public legal services per year. In fulfilling this responsibility, the lawyer should: (a) provide a substantial majority of the (50) hours of legal services without fee or expectation of fee to: (1) persons of limited means or (2) charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means; and (b) provide any additional services through: (1) delivery of legal services at no fee or substantially reduced fee to individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights, or charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters in furtherance of their organizational purposes, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization's economic resources or would be otherwise inappropriate; (2) delivery of legal services at a substantially reduced fee to persons of limited means; or (3) participation in activities for improving the law, the legal system or the legal profession. In addition, a lawyer should voluntarily contribute financial support to organizations that provide legal services to persons of limited means.)
Three primary vehicles in the Center’s programming support this aspiration for pro bono service and skill building outside of the classroom and clinical setting. These areas are: (1) The Pro Bono Recognition Program; (2) The Pro Bono Placement Project; and (3) Law student Summer Grants for public service work.

The Center partners with other parts of the law school to provide these public service opportunities. Collaboration is critical to reaching as many students as possible. The Center teams with Public Interest Law Career Services (PILCS), a student-run program within the law career services office, to provide SCU Law students and graduates with information and opportunities for employment in the public interest and the public sector as well as possible pro bono placements. The Center works with the Public Interest and Social Justice Law Board to fund opportunities, particularly for the summer.

In 1990, the Pro Bono Recognition Program began rewarding law students for volunteer efforts. Program goals include improving access to and understanding of the legal system among members of underrepresented groups; helping law students develop competence, conscience and compassion; and encouraging students to become life-long volunteers who recognize pro bono work as an integral part of a balanced lifestyle. The Pro Bono Recognition Program directs interested students towards general pro bono opportunities, facilitates a student-attorney network to provide students with individual pro bono projects, and recognizes students for their contributions to the community through pro bono work.41

The Recognition Program encourages community involvement in all areas. The students’ tasks need not be legal in nature nor affiliated with a legal organization; the range of volunteer work that qualifies is broad. To receive recognition a student must contribute a minimum of 50 hours each academic year and represent or assist person(s) of limited financial means or person(s) with limited access to legal representation, supervised by an attorney, political leader, community member, or faculty advisor. Awards recognize students at the Bronze, Silver, and Gold level for three cumulative years. Examples of qualifying activities include, but are not limited to: work with nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies, judicial internship (if not for credit), political or election-based organizing, community education and mentorship programs and activities, legal advice and referral clinics or hotlines, translation services, churches and other

community organizations. Law students seek their own volunteer opportunities and obtain verification of hours directly from the organization or community member who supervises their work. An outline of the program, list of past volunteer programs, and verification forms are online.\textsuperscript{42}

Additionally, Center staff and PILCS assist with locating volunteer opportunities when needed. Each semester begins with an information session that details the program and encourages students to volunteer. For the 2011-2012 academic year, seventy-nine law students participated in the Recognition Program, representing more than 11,000 hours of service. Many more students volunteer at levels lower than the 50 hour requirement of the program.

Created in 2010, the \textit{Pro Bono} Placement Project is another joint initiative sponsored by Public Interest Law Career Services (PILCS) and the Center for Social Justice and Public Service (CSJ). The Placement Project identifies and secures legally related \textit{pro bono} volunteer positions at non-profit or public service/government organizations \textit{during} the academic year. The project then "places" students into positions in those organizations. The program is unique in that student gain access to a position without the necessity of a competitive selection or interview process. Volunteer hours through the Placement Project count towards the \textit{Pro Bono} Recognition Program.

Students volunteer with organizations such as Bay Area Legal Aid, Law Foundation of Silicon Valley, Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto, Catholic Charities, and local government offices including the district attorney, public defender and city attorney offices. The volunteer placements typically last for one semester; however, organizations and students may agree to extend the placement for a longer period. The project requires a minimum commitment of one semester for three to ten hours per week as determined by the student and the organization. Some placements are only available for second year students and above to ensure adequate skill level and time commitment. For fall 2012, 44 students volunteered at ten different non-profit or government organizations. The Project has a two-fold mission, both expanding available legal resources for underserved communities and creating vital networking opportunities and on-the-job training for law students.

\textsuperscript{42. Id.}
Katrina Logan, an attorney at the Community Legal Services in East Palo Alto (CLSEPA), received four volunteers during the first semester of the project (and has participated ever since). The students assembled and drafted documents for immigration petitions. One of these students assembled a Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Self-Petition that was over 100 pages long. Another student read through and organized over 200 pages of court records that had to be submitted for a case. Ms. Logan commented:

A couple of hours a week goes a long way when it means that a client now knows where to apply for paratransit services in their county, or when our immigration attorneys can spend 20 minutes reviewing an immigration petition instead of two hours assembling and organizing over 200 pages of documents. Our Pro Bono Placement Project students have been a great asset to our agency and we look forward to receiving more student volunteers through this great program.  

Law student Jessica Chan ‘13 found her experience at CLSEPA equally rewarding:

Volunteering as an immigration intern during my second semester of law school allowed me to use my legal education to help real clients. It was the perfect start to my career in immigration and refugee law, and I am so grateful to Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto and the Pro Bono Placement Project at Santa Clara Law for providing me with the opportunity.

The Placement Project is mutually beneficial; organizations receive much needed assistance, enhancing the quality and quantity of client services; and law students deepen their understanding of the law by putting into practice what they learn in the classroom.

Santa Clara Law created the Public Interest and Social Justice Endowment in 1989 in response to a growing need to support alumni and students committed to the practice of public interest and social justice law. In 2009, the fundraising efforts of the Center for Social Justice and


Public Service and the Endowment Board merged to create the Public Interest and Social Justice Law Board (Law Board).

Since its inception, the Law Board has funded 14 to 30 students per summer at the rate of $3,000 to $5,000, depending on available endowment income and annual fundraising success. The Law Board aspires to maintain the student stipend at $5,000 per summer and to support all students who seek nonprofit or government summer placements. Typically, the Law Board has been able to fund those in non-profit agencies. However, funding has been harder to accomplish for those seeking government placements. For summer 2012, the Law Board provided over $100,000 to more than 26 students, representing over 10,000 hours of free legal services in the community. The grants offer naming opportunities, which can be a fundraising incentive.

Current grants include the Public Interest and Social Justice Law Board, Father Goda and Dean Mary Emery Summer Grants, as well as the LGBT Legal Issues Grant and the Justice John Paul Stevens and Harry and Jean Gluck Fellowships. Many law students report that their ability to volunteer in public interest and social justice organizations during the summer is only made possible because of their grant. Additionally, this experience solidifies their commitment to this field of work. Carolyn Kim ‘12, who served as an Educational Policy Intern at Public Advocates said:

Being able to devote an entire summer to working on behalf of underrepresented communities of color, ensuring that their interests and voices were heard in Sacramento in fundamental issues, such as public education, only deepened my belief in an individual’s ability to create tangible positive change and reaffirmed my passion and commitment to working for social justice and equality. 45

Mengfei He ‘14, a Summer Intern at the Oakland City Attorney’s Office commented:

Interning at the City Attorney’s Office gave me the amazing opportunity to work on key issues that truly impact the lives of Oakland residents. From legal research to legislative drafting and advisory team meetings, I engaged in the City Attorney’s robust practice. The internship strengthened my understanding of how

45. Email from Carolyn Kim, Santa Clara University School of Law Student, Class of 2012 to Deborah Moss-West, Assistant Director, Center for Social Justice and Public Service at Santa Clara University School of Law (Aug. 23, 2012, 2:53 PST) (on file with authors).
government attorneys work to improve the quality of life for the people they serve and affirmed my desire to dedicate my career to working in the public sector.\textsuperscript{46}

Many law students are dedicated to using their legal skills to serve others. Their experience at Santa Clara Law reaffirms this commitment to public interest and social justice law.

Through the \textit{Pro Bono} Recognition and \textit{Pro Bono} Placement Programs and the summer grants, Santa Clara Law supports public interest and social justice \textit{pro bono} service.\textsuperscript{47} But more work remains to be done. Some key learning and future opportunity areas include ensuring adequate staffing support for these programs, the challenges of introducing professionalism to student volunteers, and continued fundraising. A student-led Public Interest Law Career Services (PILCS) connects the faculty and staff to student needs in a way that happens only when law schools regularly hear the student voice. Program staff and faculty must repeatedly ask, "What are student wants and needs?" Staff working closely with the PILCS student coordinators ensure that vital voice and engagement from law students who see the big picture can be present in program planning. Yet the presence of student coordinators presents challenges, too. Students are present in the institution for a relatively short time; once they are well-versed in the field and gain a reputation with other students, they graduate. Perhaps a full-time staff person teamed with a part-time law student would provide the optimal balance for program success.

The \textit{Pro Bono} Placement Project, as the newest offering, presented process issues at the outset. Students read the volunteer opportunity descriptions and center staff assigned placements on a first-come-first-served basis. The assignments have been done manually, with email contact to students. Of course, the strong student response meant the program was oversubscribed, and students sometimes were disappointed. While the center was unable to grow the program with current staffing, an alumni volunteer has made a huge difference in picking up the workload and creating placement opportunities for students. The Project is successful in part due to the Silicon Valley location as one of the southern most law

\textsuperscript{46} Email from Menghei He, Santa Clara University School of Law Student, Class of 2014 to Deborah Moss-West, Assistant Director, Center for Social Justice and Public Service at Santa Clara University School of Law (Nov. 8, 2012, 12:11 PST) (on file with authors).

\textsuperscript{47} In addition to these important service opportunities, students can also support social justice goals during law school by non-practice oriented work. By writing for law reviews, op-eds, and blogs, students contribute to knowledge about how law can and should address social justice issues. See text, \textit{supra} at notes 26-27, detailing aspects of a social justice curriculum that offers such opportunities.
schools in the region. The legal service providers seeking help and student demand for placements are greater than current resources. Strategic growth will further strengthen the program.

Perhaps the biggest hurdle in providing legal services to underrepresented groups through the use of student volunteers has been "professionalizing" the placement project. The first semester several students who signed up did not recognize the value of their role. Even though they had not entered a competitive or rigorous placement process, the expectation from the organization of the student volunteers had been the same as for any paid employee, in terms of commitment, promptness, and dedication. The Center has addressed this issue by having information sessions before sign-up that teach about professionalism and the students' role as a representative of Santa Clara Law. The information sessions also discuss how a student can make the most of a pro bono placement experience, including a detailed checklist.48 The Center and PILCS are developing a memorandum of understanding in which students acknowledge the project guidelines to reinforce the requirements.

For over twenty years, Santa Clara Law has provided some financial support for law students seeking pro bono summer placements. The Law Board reorganized in 2009. Before that time, most of the grants were funded through the yearly endowment payout. Now the Board more actively fundraises for a significant portion of the summer grant funds. The Law Board has transformed from one of mostly university community members to a Board that also includes practicing attorneys who care about public interest and social justice. This model has generated modest success as the Center and the Board continue this building process.

The Center also offers extracurricular programming, including visiting practitioners, diversity lectures, film series, judicial roundtables, and together with the student arm of the Center, the Public Interest and Social Justice Coalition, generates a culture of interest for the issues that support the provision of legal services.49

Pro bono service, supplemented by a curricular background in social justice, is central to the Center’s mission. Many students come to law


49. See Wildman, Democracy and Social Justice: Founding Centers for Social Justice in Law Schools, supra note 22, for a fuller discussion of the extracurricular aspect of the Center’s work.
school unfamiliar with the legal needs of diverse client populations. The academic course work and opportunity to volunteer provide an introduction. Volunteering also reinforces the classroom learning and builds skills. Laurie Laird, Associate Director of the Ignatian Center, explained:

Community-based learning is a mutually beneficial experience in which the students are not only serving those in the community but also learning from community partners. The community experience brings to life the theories students learn in class. We liken it to a textbook that can’t be read; it is a textbook that you live. Through this engagement students are better able to reflect on their own lives, interests, backgrounds, and how they’re connected to the world at large. 50

Volunteering with underserved populations helps law students understand that public interest work is not just a “fall back” while waiting for other opportunities, but rather a practice area that takes skill and commitment. Many law students report benefits and rewards from their volunteer experiences. Siena Kautz ‘14, a Summer Law Clerk at DNA-Peoples Legal Services, commented:

Spending the summer providing legal services to low-income individuals on the Navajo Nation Reservation opened my eyes to vast opportunities and experiences. I gained infinitely more than I gave. 51

Through the Center’s curriculum, extracurricular programming, and volunteer programs, Santa Clara Law hopes that serving others becomes a way of life for students as they become lawyers. The Centers for Social Justice model can help any law school toward this goal.