



New York University School of Law

Student Bar Association

SBA DEANS MEETING AGENDA

DATE: 10/16/12

TIME: 11:00AM

ROOM: VH 202

- ✚ ***New Pro Bono Requirement for the Bar.*** How can the SBA student group work apply towards the requirement? What will they need in terms of supervision? Who will keep track of their hours? Can the answers to these questions help to address how we should appropriately fund student groups who pay staff members instead of using money towards students?

Last meeting we tabled the discussion as to how we would meet the pro bono requirement that was announced a little while ago. Upfront, Dean Revesz (“DR,” hereinafter) assured us that he did not think that it would impose a significant burden on JD students because work done in clinics, summer internships (public interest jobs and pro bono work at firms), work done in conjunction with the New York Bar Association, and certain “supervised” student group activities will count. He thinks that JD students can easily fulfill 50 hours of pro bono service within their three years. He did acknowledge that LLM students may have a harder time meeting the requirement because they only have one year to meet the requirement. Note, that this requirement does not kick in until next year so current LLM students and current 3Ls do not have to worry about it.

The SBA questioned whether students who don’t do public interest their first summer, or clinics will be able to get their hours in through student groups. The administration gave us some statistics on this point. In general, between 40 and 60% of students do public interest work their first summer. Last year, 56% of the students did public interest work during their first summer.

The SBA was worried about the 44% of students who didn’t go to public interest organizations their first year. It’s our perception that students who do work in clinics tend to overlap with the students that do public interest. There seems to be a gap. We think that student groups will help to fill this gap for students who don’t do clinics and students who don’t do public interest work during the first summer. However, we will need a lot of administrative support, because only “supervised” student advocacy will count towards the pro bono requirement.

The administration wants to figure out which groups to supervise in order to make their public service count towards the requirement. The rules are not clear on what “supervision” entails for purposes of meeting the requirement. The school knows that simply having student faculty advisors for the groups will not be sufficient. The administration will need to talk to the groups to determine who will want supervision and

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whether that supervision will be appropriate. The SBA Board has already spoken to many student groups and all of them have said that they would be open to supervision so that their work can count towards the pro bono requirement. We pointed out that there are already groups with built-in supervision, such as IRAP and Alternative Spring Breaks. The administration wants to get some clear-cut numbers on how many student groups would need supervision.

The next steps for the administration will be in gathering the data. They want to know just how significant the “overlap” is. That is, they want to know just how many students that do clinics did public interest firms their first summers, etc. They suggested several strategies for gathering that information, ranging from scanning people’s resumes on CSM to sending out a survey to the student body. They are also open to having meetings with certain student groups.

Last point: It will be the responsibility of each student to keep track of their own hours. The administration will probably allow students to track and record their hours through the Simplicity system.

✚ ***Public Interest Questions.*** Will the pro bono requirement create a need for additional staff? Without the pro bono requirement, PILC still needs additional counselors to meet the capacity of peer schools (Columbia has 7 full-time counselors, Harvard has 13). Can we offer term-time internship credit like so many of our peer schools for public interest internships?

The administration has chosen not to do “externships,” or internships for credit because they consider it to be “clinical work done badly.” Other schools, according to the administration, have admitted that these programs are not beneficial and that the only reason they do them is because they are cheap. The administration feels that hands-on, supervised apprenticeships should be backed by significant resources. This is why they have the clinical program, and why they are so open to student-initiated clinics. The ABA rules also prevent them from allowing certain externships.

✚ ***Improving communication avenues between the students and the administration.*** Assistant Dean Fama has been working on solutions through student focus groups to identify the best ways to grab student attention through email communication. While we have 20+ student leaders and all of the key administrators in the room, can we come closer to consensus on an appropriate solution?

Students are inundated with emails. As a result, they don’t read any of the emails and miss a lot of important information. Dean Fama has been hosting focus groups on the subject. The students in those groups want a single communication that would come from the administration, say on Monday morning, that would incorporate all the important information from the different branches of the administration. There would also be a

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stationary email where people could look information up. The administration, for the most part is behind this plan. There are more difficult questions to answer with regards to offices that have to send students reminders about important, inflexible deadlines (bar registration, e.g.). Students would have to expect that this would be the only email and that there would not be other reminders. We are looking at other schools and what they have done. They want to come up with a prototype that they will circulate.

The SBA made three suggestions: (1) It could be good idea to let students choose whether to receive administrative emails once a week or once a day; (2) Maybe we should consider consolidating emails from student groups as well; (3) Emails from the administration should come with links that students click to “accept” or “reject” certain meetings and events. The date could then be added automatically to the student’s calendar.

The administration seemed receptive to these ideas. They want to tackle emails coming from the administration before they try to tackle those coming from students. They also told us that they already have a system in place to make certain mandatory events appear automatically on students’ calendars.

 ***Space for Phone Calls.*** Students are having a very difficult time finding quiet spaces for personal phone calls. The phone booths are antiquated, but what’s the right modern solution for giving students privacy to talk to doctors, family, potential employers, etc.?

The administration pointed out that space is limited on our campus. We have three phone booths and a glassed-in space in Furman Hall. The administration will look around for extra spaces and will also consider putting signs on the already identified spaces, letting students know that those spaces are for students who need to make phone calls.

The SBA also pointed out that the Furman space is a fish bowl: you can see, and to a certain extent, hear what is going on in there. The administration is considering tinting the glass and possibly putting a door there to make that space more private.

 ***Last quick decisions.***

- The Administration promised to make sure that classes on Nov. 5 and Nov. 6 would be recorded and that there will be no mandatory lawyering assignments or meetings that day so that students can VOTE and engage in meaningful voter protection work in swing states.
- Faculty members will be given more money so that they can take LLM students out in addition to JD students. Previously, the faculty budget for lunches did not include lunches with LLM students.
- The Public Interest Law Center is working on increasing the number of counselors and improving the quality of counseling. They also want to increase the substantive areas they have available for counseling.