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Clinical Program News

Welcome to Our Fall Newsletter!



Suffolk Law's Clinical Program has launched several new initiatives that strengthen our community impact through expanded direct legal services while advancing innovative legal education.

Just this year, we've established two new Centers that build on previous Clinical Program initiatives. Our new Center for Housing Justice and Policy extends the impact of our nationally recognized Housing Discrimination Testing Program, and our Legal Innovation & Technology (LIT) Center grows out of our LIT Lab's tech-enabled efforts to enhance court efficiency and access to justice.

In addition, we are launching two new clinical offerings. The first is a collaboration with the American Arbitration Association, which will create an Online Dispute Resolution Innovation Clinic that serves unrepresented family law litigants. The second is a Veterans Legal Advocacy Project that will address critical housing needs in the veteran community.

These initiatives join our existing foundation of 13 full-year, in-house clinics, where our students contributed over 45,000 hours of legal services last year. Together, they represent Suffolk Law's vision for clinical education: preparing practice-ready lawyers while advancing access to justice through innovative solutions. We welcome hearing about your projects and innovations and send wishes for a peaceful holiday season.

Sincerely,

[Sarah Boonin](#)

Associate Dean for Experiential Learning

Clinic Updates



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE
FOR DISPUTE RESOLUTION®

Suffolk Law and American Arbitration Association Launch Pioneering Online Dispute Resolution Clinic to Enhance Family Law Access

In response to the groundswell of self-represented litigants and backlog of cases in our family courts, and the lack of meaningful alternatives to litigation for low-income clients, Suffolk Law has partnered with the American Arbitration Association (AAA) to launch a new [Online Dispute Resolution \(ODR\) Innovation Clinic](#).

The Clinic will provide free alternate dispute resolution services to self-represented litigants seeking low-contest divorces in Massachusetts. Clinical faculty and students, in collaboration with AAA experts, court administrators, court users, and the Legal Innovation and Technology (LIT) Lab, will customize an online dispute resolution platform provided by ODR.com and develop a suite of interactive guided interviews, online “smart” court forms, and AI-powered assistance to help litigants navigate the family courts and resolve their disputes more collaboratively. Students will ensure that the tools are tailored to community needs and integrate with existing court processes, and also assist clients through the custom-tailored ODR process.

[Learn more about the AAA-Suffolk ODR Innovation Clinic](#)



Suffolk Law Launches Center for Housing Justice and Policy to Address Multidimensional Housing Crisis

This summer, Suffolk Law launched the [Center for Housing Justice and Policy](#) (CHJP), building on the solid foundation of its nationally leading Housing Discrimination Testing Program.

CHJP will bring together faculty, staff, and students across Suffolk University to tackle a wide range of housing issues, from affordability, supply, and accessibility, to environmental sustainability, and housing discrimination.

Students will dive into practical experiences by analyzing new housing laws, advocating for tenant rights, combating evictions, and pushing for practical zoning reforms, says CHJP Director [Jamie Langowski](#).

“Zoning and affordable housing are inextricably bound,” adds Professor Emeritus [Bill Berman](#), the CHJP’s faculty director. “We’ll bring policymakers, fair housing attorneys, community members, developers, and other stakeholders together, and we will drive change.”

[Learn more about the Center for Housing Justice and Policy](#)



Ragini Shah’s New Book Highlights Struggle and Resilience in Mexican Migrant Communities

In her new book, “[Constructed Movements: Extraction and Resistance in Mexican Migrant Communities](#),” (University of California Press) Clinical Professor [Ragini Shah](#), director of Suffolk Law’s Immigrant Justice Clinic, focuses on stories from Mexican communities that have been profoundly affected by emigration to the United States. She chronicles how the exploitation of labor, maldistribution of public resources, and the U.S. immigration system itself have made migration necessary for survival, leading people to leave their homes and families and to generations caught in a cycle of migration.

Shah calls for the governments of the U.S. and Mexico to act to counteract the impacts of migration through social investment and reparative compensation. "The communities," she says, "want a right not to migrate, in other words, to make it a true choice, rather than an exploitative employment relationship."

[Learn more about the book](#)



Suffolk Law's New Legal Innovation and Technology (LIT) Center will Drive Innovation and Train Students in Next Generation Lawyering

The [LIT Center](#) will bring together Suffolk Law's LIT programs, including the award-winning LIT Clinic and curricular programs such as the LIT Concentration, which have collectively earned Suffolk a reputation as a leading law school in legal tech. Clinical students working with the Center are learning to combine design thinking, process improvement, legal technology, and coding skills, creating tools and designing solutions that are helpful for users and courts and can propel legal practice to new levels of efficiency.

This academic year students are developing a guided interview app for individuals requesting the sealing of past eviction records, a simple way for self-represented litigants (SRLs) to complete and electronically file such petitions. The LIT Lab's [Document Assembly Line](#) project, which creates online "smartforms" that guide SRLs through complex court documents, is expanding from Massachusetts to nine other states.

[Learn more about the Document Assembly Line](#)



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Suffolk Law Launches Veterans Legal Advocacy Project to Support Low-Income Veterans

In January, Suffolk Law will launch the Veterans Legal Advocacy Project (VLAP), in partnership with Suffolk Construction. This initiative connects Suffolk Law's clinical programs with low-income veterans, providing direct representation and training in housing discrimination, vouchers and accommodations, evictions, and other related matters.

The project will be embedded within Suffolk Law's Accelerator to Practice Program, in which student lawyers prepare to launch solo practices or join small firms and already focus on fee-shifting matters, including housing discrimination cases.

The project will also collaborate with Suffolk Law's Center for Housing Justice & Policy and the Housing Discrimination Testing Program, targeting rental housing discrimination against veterans using housing vouchers. HDTP's 2020 empirical study found that voucher holders experienced discrimination 86% of the time when they sought to rent a property.



Suffolk Law Clinic Partners with Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe to Revise Tribal Ordinance, Empowering Accessible and Inclusive Justice

Students in Suffolk Law’s Human Rights and Indigenous People’s Clinic (HRIP) are providing vital legal support to the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe located in Massachusetts. Under the guidance of visiting fellow Victoria Miranda (in photo), a citizen of the Tribe herself, and HRIP Director Nicole Friederichs, clinic students are working to transform the Tribe’s law-and-order statute into a more inclusive, accessible, and restorative framework.

“The existing ordinance is unnecessarily complicated and inaccessible,” Miranda says. “My people often feel lost in the court system and are frequently disenfranchised when facing state courts,” Miranda says. “Our own system shouldn’t make them feel the same way.” Students are researching other tribal laws, along with state and federal systems, to help advise the Tribe by drafting amendments to existing law.

Suffolk Law's Experiential Programs At a Glance



- 13 full-year, faculty-led, in-house clinics – our clinic model immerses students in the practice of law for a full year under close faculty supervision
- Last year, nearly 130 students performed more than 45,000 hours of legal representation, counseling, training, investigation and advocacy to individual and community clients
- 4 criminal law clinics with huge impact on Massachusetts criminal practice – Adult Defenders, Juvenile Defenders, Innocence Clinic, Prosecutors Clinic
- Nearly 150 students per year enrolled in domestic and international externships
- Multi-year Accelerator to Practice Program trains students to launch solo or join small firms and use legal technology to meet the justice gap
- Galway, Ireland - 2-week program of study with the University of Galway, including experiential placements
- 13 Trial and Appellate Advocacy Competition Teams, plus *Journal of Trial and Appellate Advocacy*
- Nationally recognized ADR Program, including newly launched AAA ODR-Innovation Clinic
- Top 3 Legal Practice Skills Program

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