

Notice about the JFP Field Placement Clinic for the Summer 2020 Term

April 10, 2020

Dear Students,

The recent worldwide events precipitated by the Covid-19 virus has required all of us to make significant professional and personal changes to ensure our continued health and that of our family and colleagues. Earlier this month, Florida's Governor, Ron DeSantis, issued a state-wide executive order directing everyone to limit interactions outside of their homes to only those necessary to obtain essential services or conduct essential activities. Further, many courts, including Broward's Seventeenth Judicial Circuit, have issued Emergency Administrative Orders ceasing operations. (For example, see <http://www.17th.flcourts.org/2020/03/27/order-court-operations-through-april-17-2020/>, which suspends operations in the 17th Circuit until at least May 29, 2020). These orders, and the rapidly evolving measures being taken in response to the global pandemic by courthouses throughout the state, means that the continued offering of the Judicial Field Placement Clinic for Summer 2020 is not certain. **Accordingly, we are notifying students registering for the Summer 2020 Judicial Field Placement Clinic that their participation in the class is conditional.** Because we cannot guarantee that the courts will be open in time for students to have a meaningful experience, we are suggesting that students have a back-up plan or class for the summer. If you are committed to earning academic credits in Summer 2020, we strongly recommend you review the open offerings immediately and register for any additional courses now. Drop/Add for Summer 2020 will run through May 10, 2020, so you will best be able to manage your final course enrollment that week.

Further, even if the class does go forward this summer, we will be making some changes in an effort to help students complete all the of the experiential hours required for the class. The changes to the Judicial Field Placement Clinic for the summer 2020 term are as follows:

1. The ABA requires that students participating in field placements complete a minimum number of hours in order to receive academic credit for their externship work. Students participating in the JFP Clinic must complete a total of 110 hours in chambers to receive academic credit. Originally, the JFP Clinic was offered in the Summer I semester, meaning that all the experiential hours needed to be complete by June 21. **We are now converting the JFP Clinic to a "Full Summer" course, so the hours do not need to be completed until August 9.** We are making this change to give you the best opportunity to complete the required hours in the summer.
2. Additionally, students are able to complete their hours through Zoom or whatever virtual methods Courts will be implementing for hearings and trials.
3. Both changes mentioned above are, of course, contingent on the **judge's approval** of allowing the student to intern for the remaining summer and allowing remote attendance. If you are participating in the 17th Judicial Circuit Internship program through the Career Services office, Michelle Denis has already contacted those judges, but you should verify with her that your judge is amenable to the change. **If you have obtained your placement outside of that program, however, you MUST reach**

out to your judge and seek approval for participating later in the summer and through virtual methods. Please send an email to Professor Baxter at hbaxter@nova.edu with confirmation of the approval once received.

4. Students that are unable to complete the ABA required minimum hours at their judicial placement due to illness, quarantine, government action, or other issues related to the current Covid-19 pandemic, will receive an “Incomplete” for the course. These students MAY be able to complete any remaining hours needed to fulfill this requirement during the Fall 2020 term, if their judge so allows, but we cannot guarantee that all judges will make this accommodation.
5. As before, all classes for the JFP Clinic will be conducted online. We will meet using Canvas and its online meeting platform Zoom from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on six (6) Wednesday evenings in the summer. Most of the classes will be frontloaded at the beginning of the summer, and attendance is mandatory. There may be weeks where an asynchronous Module will be assigned for each student to work on independently rather than a live web class via Zoom. Please refer to your detailed Course & Topic Outline for specific week-by-week information on classes and assignments once you are registered.
6. **Please understand that despite these changes, the operation of the class remains conditional.** We will make final decisions on whether to operate the class by the beginning of May. As such, we highly encourage you to make alternate plans in case it becomes impossible to hold the JFP Clinic. One such option is to continue your internship with your judge for pro bono hours, instead of credit through the JFP Clinic. For more information on that option, please contact Michelle Denis at mr1895@nova.edu.

We are grateful to you, our students, for understanding and remaining flexible during these challenging times. We are also appreciative of the judges who continue to mentor our students and help deepen their understanding of the workings of the judicial system and of the professional expectations and responsibilities of lawyers practicing within that system. As soon as we know more about the possibility of the courts reopening, we will let you know. In the meantime, if you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to Professor Heather Baxter at hbaxter@nova.edu.