

Changes to the Civil Field Placement Clinic for the Summer 2020 Term

April 3, 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 week 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. This executive order and the rapidly evolving measures being taken in response to the global pandemic by law firms and other businesses, have required that we change how the Civil Field Placement Clinic will be offered for the summer 2020 term.

These changes will enable the Civil Field Placement Program to remain flexible so that we can promptly address any issues that may arise with or during a student's field placement. These changes will also help to ensure that students participating in the Clinic this summer derive the benefits of their clinical placement, given these unique circumstances, and that they are in the best possible position to successfully complete their clinical requirements.

The changes to the Civil Field Placement Clinic for the summer 2020 term are as follows:

1. Consistent with University President George L. Hanbury's announcement on April 1, 2020, all classes for the 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 Wednesday evenings. 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.
2. We will be limiting the number of participants in the clinic this summer to fifteen (15) students. Students not needing to participate in a field placement in order to graduate in December 2020 are strongly discouraged from registering for the clinic for this term. We strongly encourage students for whom these experiential credits are not necessary for graduation in December to enroll in the Civil Field Placement Clinic for the upcoming fall or winter term instead.

For the summer 2020 term, the Civil Field Placement Clinic will be offered for six (6) credits only and will run the full summer term. 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 Civil Field Placement Clinic for six (6) credits must complete a total of 255 hours to receive academic credit. Offering the clinic on this part-time basis will facilitate matching each student with the proper site office and will make it more likely that the student will be able to complete these minimum hours required by the American Bar Association (ABA) to receive academic

credit for the student’s participation in the Clinic. Students that are unable to complete the ABA required minimum hours at their externship 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 will be able to complete any remaining hours needed to fulfill this requirement during the Fall 2020 term.

3. The Civil Field Placement Program will require every site office hosting a student extern for the summer 2020 term, to devise and commit to a contingency plan that will allow the student to work remotely if a student’s ability to work at the site office becomes disrupted due to illness, quarantine, government action, the physical closure of the site office facilities, or other issues related to the current Covid-19 pandemic. Site offices that cannot affirmatively commit to this accommodation will not serve as host offices for our externs this summer even if the office has been previously approved by our program.
4. All participation in the Civil Field Placement Clinic, summer 2020, is conditional. The Civil Field Placement office will work diligently to help match the student with a placement that is able to accommodate the student extern in the manner outlined above. If an adequate placement cannot be secured for a student prior to the start of the summer 2020 term under these necessary stricter requirements, the student cannot participate in the clinic.

Similarly, it is plausible that, due to changed circumstances, an office agreeing to host a student extern for the summer may become unable to continue in that role at some point during the term. Students in these circumstances that have not completed the ABA minimum hour requirement will receive a grade of “I” for the course. The student will be able to complete any additional hours needed to fulfill this requirement during the Fall 2020 term.

We are grateful to you, our students, for understanding and remaining flexible during these challenging times. We are also appreciative of the law firms and other offices that continue to mentor and commit to helping our students obtain the legal practical experience that is needed to become outstanding lawyers. If you have questions about these temporary changes to the Civil Field Placement Program or would like to discuss your participation in the clinic further, please contact the Director of the Civil Field Placement Program, Professor Roma Perez, or Nancy Kelly Sanguigni, Assistant Dean of Clinical Programs.

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