



THE WORLD NEEDS MORE ADVOCATES

Greetings from the University of Wyoming College of Law!

Since 1971, our Experiential Learning program at UW Law has provided its students with the tools necessary to practice law successfully upon graduation. Their work begins the lifelong process of becoming thoughtful, responsible, and reflective lawyers. The program has grown significantly over the decades and in 2022 we were happy to add to that legacy by welcoming our newest addition, the Local Government Assistance Practicum – more details on their work below! Combined, our eight clinic and practicum programs saw 132 students put in over 22,000 hours of work this year, serving clients in 19 of Wyoming's 23 counties. Not to be outdone, our externship program had 76 students work over 11,000 hours in placements in Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nebraska, California, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

All this hard work resulted in the College of Law once again being recognized as a Best School for Practical Training by preLaw Magazine in 2022! The year also saw the law school recognized again as a top school for Family Law by



preLaw Magazine due largely to the efforts of everyone in the Family and Child Legal Advocacy clinic.



We are continuously amazed by our students' enthusiasm, dedication, and commitment as they sharpen their skills and prepare for life after law school. Check out their incredible work in our year in review for each experiential learning opportunity UW Law offers.



*Clinical Students at their Rule 9-student practice, swearing-in ceremony.
Left to Right -- Back Row: Morgan Nance, Brinae Sanders, Madison Barber, Kate Dow, Caleb Dahill,
Clayton Culbreath
Front row: Steven Millward, Kenna Blaney, Miles Guzman, Remi Bullock, Jordan Haack, Paige Realing,
Alex Taylor*

[Civil Legal Services](#)

The Civil Legal Services Clinic represented clients in a wide variety of civil matters this year, including: adverse possession, custody modification, breach of contract, unjust enrichment, grandparent guardianship, name change, record expungement, contempt of court, adjudication of paternity, divorce, termination of parental rights, partition, ouster, and conservatorship.

Under the direction of [Faculty Director Danielle Cover](#), fifteen students worked on thirty-three cases during the year. Samantha Tenner aided a client in reaching an amicable resolution to a child custody case. Cody Townsend conducted extensive fact-investigation for an adverse possession case that has become one of the Clinic's most challenging cases. Christina Porath authored an Answer and Counterclaim to protect her client's interests in a contentious divorce. Brianna Duvall prepared for a trial just three weeks after taking on a client, and she successfully plead for an extension that was essential to her client's case.

Tom Bleicher resolved a contentious property case with various legal issues in spring of 2022. River Heide helped her client settle a divorce case and avoid trial. Alexa Rolin represented her client in a successful mediation that helped the parties reach resolution of their legal issue.

[Student Director Kenna Blaney](#) was able to obtain a judgment in favor of her client on a contract breach/unjust enrichment claim at trial. Brinae Sanders obtained an Entry of Default against an opposing party that put her client in a positive position for the course of the litigation. Ms. Sanders also conducted a full-day trial with Ms. Blaney to defend a client in an intense civil matter involving parental rights.

Speaking about her experience in the Clinic, Brinae said: "My three semesters at the Civil Legal Services Clinic have undoubtedly been the best part of my legal education! It is rewarding working with clients who lack access to the legal system and being by their side through the most challenging times of their lives. In my second semester, I was co-counsel on a full-day trial, where I learned how to produce evidence, open and close a trial, and direct and cross-examine witnesses. Gaining such valuable, hands-on experience early in my legal career has given me confidence in my knowledge and capabilities for post-grad employment."

The Clinic found further success with the work of Jenna VonHofe and Matt Misslin in conducting extensive discovery and filing various motions with the court, and defending a deposition of their client. Additionally, Michie Johnson wrote several successful petitions for Name Changes in accordance with the Clinic's partnership with the Associated Students of the University of Wyoming's scholarship program.

Ben Wall conducted thorough research and drafted several successful motions for his clients throughout the semester. Most recently, Morgan Nance took on the Clinic's most complicated trial case, and has been preparing through a Motion for Summary Judgment and other motions to advocate for her client.

It is impossible to reduce the intensive experience of a clinic to writing. The CLSC looks forward to continued success with each new class of driven student attorneys that joins the bullpen to carry these cases forward and take on whatever new challenges arise.

[Family & Child Legal Advocacy](#)

With the support and direction of [Faculty Director Dona Playton](#) and [Student Director Kate Dow](#), students in the Family and Child Legal Advocacy Clinic have been busy providing direct legal representation, assistance, and information to people throughout the state. As legal services providers, we understand that without legal help, too many people cannot secure the means to meet basic needs, leading to poor health, lost potential earnings, and an increased reliance on governmental programs and community interventions.

Over twenty second and third-year law students enroll in the Family and Child Legal Advocacy Clinic each year to provide holistic legal services around issues crucial to families, including economic self-sufficiency, safety, and child well-being. Students learn and practice how to interview clients, draft pleadings, advocate in court, and assist families in reaching negotiated resolutions after separation or divorce. Students have also appeared with clients across the State in legal proceedings ranging from status and compliance conferences, protection order hearings, emergency custody hearings, trials, and mediation. So far this year, student attorneys in the Clinic have also been challenged to research specialized areas of the law, including the Indian Child Welfare Act and International Child Abduction.

While most students enroll for experiential credit, several students have elected to volunteer beyond their required hours to provide consistent legal representation for their clients. Other students have volunteered to translate for people whose first language is not English. Though students in the Clinic screened and interviewed nearly 250 applicants in 2022, the requests for legal assistance outnumber the

available resources. Nevertheless, students in the Clinic work hundreds of hours each semester to bridge the justice gap in Wyoming.

Student attorney, Jordan Haack, remarked, "The family clinic is the greatest experience I have had in law school. It is a valuable experience that prepares students for the real world. We have real cases, real clients, and the results are rewarding. I have enjoyed the rapport we build with our clients and how much I have learned about practicing. I would recommend that every student get involved in the clinics while they are in law school".



Prosecution Assistance Clinic

Students in the Prosecution Assistance Program have experienced a busy and successful year. Throughout 2022, students worked alongside attorneys and our [Faculty Director Darrell D. Jackson](#) and [Student Director Maridi Choma](#), to complete appellate briefs, research memorandums, motion responses, and a variety of other projects. Regarding her time in the clinic, student Jen Pavlikowski stated that "PAP provides real-world experiences that are not usually available to students...the program came highly recommended by past students as a way not only to learn but also to grow professionally."

In the past year, the Wyoming Supreme Court has issued two favorable opinions on cases argued by students from the Prosecution Assistance Program. Students Maridi Choma and Morgan Cloud were able to collaborate with the Wyoming Attorney General's Office Criminal Division to draft an appellate brief and conduct oral arguments on behalf of the State of Wyoming. Courtroom experience has continued to be a focal point of the prosecution assistance program as multiple students have participated in motion hearings, jury trials, and other appellate arguments.

After expanding the team to include a 2L legal assistant, the Prosecution Assistance Program was able to organize and preserve its historical records. Regarding her entrance to the clinic, student Kaylee Sims stated "I was inspired to become involved with the clinic within the first two months of my first year in law school. Amongst the other clinics, the Prosecution Assistance Program stood out to me because I saw students who were encouraged to proactively and successfully complete tasks." Clinic communication with our community partners has continued to improve as new attorneys hear good news about the work our program has completed. For 2023, the clinic hopes to keep diligently serving the Wyoming prosecution community.

Defender Aid Clinic

Under the direction of [Faculty Director Lauren McLane](#), and [Student Director Luke Dainty](#), students in the clinic represented clients at all stages of the criminal process. After winning a felony jury trial in December of 2021, the Defender Aid Clinic reevaluated how to properly fill the gaps left by both private and public defenders within the state of Wyoming. As a result of this evaluation, the DAC shifted its focus to high-impact, strategic litigation. Much of this focus has been centered on providing relief for those who have been convicted within the state.

In the Spring of 2022, the DAC represented a client at a sentencing in Campbell County. The prosecution asked for eight to ten years of prison time, and we asked for probation. After preparing an expansive sentencing memo that articulated the disparate racial and class impacts of both the War on Drugs and the COVID-19 response, the Clinic argued in Campbell County District Court. At the sentencing hearing, the judge went with the DAC's recommendation and gave our client a probationary sentence. After an emotional presentence period in the Campbell County Jail, our client returned to California and is thriving after being deemed a low-risk offender.

In the Summer and Fall of 2022, an abundance of investigation and research for large post-conviction cases occurred. This work culminated in the filing of two Supreme Court briefs and a 120-page post-conviction petition. The first of those briefs was recently argued in front of the Wyoming Supreme Court. The central issue in that case invoked the Fourth Amendment, making the upcoming opinion one that will impact criminal procedure across Wyoming. Additionally, the Clinic also worked relentlessly to file Motions for Sentence Reduction for five clients throughout 2022. These motions focus on humanizing the client and providing a reevaluation of the

sentence levied upon them. In the Fall of 2022, one of those motions was successful in obtaining an early release for a youthful offender.

While focusing on impactful post-conviction litigation, the Clinic also represented a number of clients throughout the earlier stages of the trial process. This trial experience occurred in Albany County District Court, Cheyenne Municipal Court, and Laramie Municipal Court. Further, a number of DAC students were able to take trips to the Southeastern United States in both the Spring and Fall. These trips focused on learning more about racial justice and visiting both the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace and Justice. During the Fall trip, Professor McLane and two students presented at the Black Doctoral Network Conference on how the all-white jury has effectively become the modern-day lynching mob.

Throughout 2022, 24 law students held official positions with the DAC, with numerous undergraduate students providing assistance in different capacities. Those students worked over 3,600 hours collectively to service 10 counties throughout the state.



The International Human Rights Clinic, led by [Faculty Director Jerry Fowler](#), had five participating students in the Spring and seven in the Fall. Golten Human Rights Fellow Martha Jenkins assisted in leading the Clinic in the Spring, before leaving to work with the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Tanzania.

Over the course of the year, students worked with a French-American legal team preparing litigation against a major corporation under France's *Droit de Vigilance*, which requires companies to ensure that their supply chains are free of human rights and environmental abuses; worked with a South African NGO to prepare for seminars to train African judges on key human rights issues; drafted a legal memo on human rights protections for defenders of the environment for an NGO working with an

indigenous tribe in Colombia; and began a long-term study of the ways in which governments use technology to violate human rights.

In May, Golten Fellow Martha Jenkins traveled (along with Professor Noah Novogrodsky) to Thailand and Cambodia to advance the idea of a compensation fund for exploited fisherman, paid for by large seafood sellers, in connection with a project that Clinic students have worked on for a number of years, including in 2022.



Estate Planning

Under the leadership of Faculty Director Mario Rampulla and Student Director Chandler Pauling, the Estate Planning Practicum provides an excellent opportunity for law students interested in Trust and Estate legal work. The practicum does estate planning work, focusing on wills, advanced health care directives, and durable powers of attorney and using substitute estate planning techniques such as transfer on death deeds. In addition, the practicum also handles estate administrative work for example, affidavits of survivorship and summary probate cases.

Carson Tanner, a recent student intern said of his experience in the practicum, "I know that when I reflect on my time in law school, enrolling in the Estate Planning Practicum will always be one of my favorite experiences. I think that Professor Rampulla's willingness to allow me to handle a variety of important client matters went a long way toward developing my confidence as a soon-to-be attorney. Perhaps most importantly, the opportunity to serve clients who might not have the means to otherwise obtain legal services showed me just how meaningful and fulfilling a career as an attorney can be."

The practicum's first full probate, an exciting opportunity for students, was concluded in 2022. This new work has served as a building block for students to do more complex estate administration work in the future. The practicum has continued its

work on a Guardianship-Conservatorship Research Project in conjunction with the Wyoming Governor's Office. The project is focused on collecting data regarding guardianship and conservatorship actions throughout the State of Wyoming. Students have collected files, reviewed the documents, and collected information from these files. This information will be used to review the system of guardianship/conservatorship conducted in State of Wyoming to assist in determining methods of improving the system.

In addition to our ongoing projects, the Estate Planning Practicum has expanded by adding a 2L Legal Assistant to the staff. The 2L Legal Assistant's primary focus is updating our forms and templates and improving organization processes. The practicum's long-term goal is to focus on forms that may potentially be used to create a statewide forms-based probate practice.



Estate Planning Practicum

*Left to Right -- Back Row: Micah Kellogg, Nicholas McDaniel, Christopher Boynton, Tiffany Killpack
Front row: Chandler Harr, Chandler Pauling, Darby Clark, Heather Bradford*

Entrepreneurship & Business Law

The Entrepreneurship and Business Law Practicum had an eventful fall semester both assisting clients and learning about cutting edge technologies that directly impact Wyoming. At the direction of [Faculty Director George Mocsary](#), and [Student Director Kyra Lukens](#), the practicum has allowed students to gain valuable experiences that will help them become better attorneys both in the present and in the future.

The first half of the semester focused on blockchain technology and cryptocurrency. Professor Del Wright was the visiting lecturer for this section of the course, and he is the author of *A Short & Happy Guide to Bitcoin, Blockchain, and Crypto*. Professor Wright provided students with a thorough breakdown of blockchain technologies, cryptocurrencies, and how newly passed Wyoming laws affect both. Given that Wyoming is at the forefront of blockchain and cryptocurrency law, the practicum's students gained an edge on these exciting developments.

The second half of the semester focused on forming a wide range of businesses and advising clients on best practices. These business formations included profit corporations, nonprofit corporations, and LLCs. Students assisted clients by forming these entities through the Wyoming Secretary of State's website, acquiring EIN numbers from the IRS, and drafting the necessary documentation for each entity. Students also conducted research to provide additional aid with setting up their client's businesses.

Caren Speckner participated in the practicum this fall and had many positive things to say about her experience. "The best part of the UW Legal Clinics is the ability to connect everything we learn in the classroom to the purpose of our education—to help others in our community. I am so thankful to have this opportunity as a student!" Krya Lukens noted, "Being the student director of a practicum that helps create opportunities of passion and excitement through building businesses, is the best part of my law school career!"

[Local Government Assistance](#)

How can a city limit short-term rentals without violating constitutional provisions? Can a Wyoming city legalize marijuana without running into preemption problems with state and federal law? Is a city's rental housing ordinance within the lawful scope of its police power to protect health, safety and welfare?

These are some of the questions students in our brand new Local Government Assistance practicum analyzed for city and county attorneys in Wyoming, Colorado and New Mexico. Led by [Faculty Director Sharon Buccino](#) and through a combination of work with practicing attorney mentors and classroom instruction, students explored how local governments – cities and counties – operate within a state and federal framework. The students addressed issues related to the scope of local authority, regulation of conduct, provision of services and generation of revenue.

To help kick off the semester, three Wyoming city attorneys joined Professor Buccino for an afternoon roundtable discussion of what it is like to practice local government law. Laramie's City Attorney Robert Southard discussed challenges involved in determining exactly who his client is – the mayor? the council? the city as a whole? Stephanie Boster, City Attorney for Cheyenne, shared how she ended up in the job. Sean Brown generously drove from Gillette where he is the current city attorney to share some of the joys and challenges he faces in his work.

Together, Professor Buccino and her students examined various constitutional, statutory and regulatory language affecting the operation of local governments and cases interpreting these provisions. They learned a lot and had fun doing it!

Student, Shelby Nivitanont, reflected on her time in the practicum, "In the Local Government Practicum, I worked directly with Laramie's City Attorney throughout the semester. Topics taught by in the classroom setting related directly to the hands-on assignments I got from the City. And Professor Buccino guided me through each topic in a very knowledgeable but hands off manner. I was lucky to have the opportunity to assist with the various legal issues that local governments deal with: legislation drafting, zoning issues, public meetings, constitutional appeals at the WY Supreme Court level, and more. My attorney mentor brought me into the legal team, allowing me to take on as much responsibility as I could handle. In fact, the City's new rental housing ordinance contains sections that Clay Simpson and I helped work on! I learned so much while gaining a lot of real world experience – couldn't recommend this practicum enough!"



The Externship Program is a great way to gain practical legal experience while in law school and earn course credit at the same time. The University of Wyoming College of Law has an expansive and established externship program with many opportunities available with [Faculty Director, Ashli Tomisich](#) always exploring new and innovative placements and partnerships.

Currently the program boasts [over 100 external field placements](#), both regionally and nationally. Through the dedicated support and mentorship of our field placement supervisors, students learn in dynamic and varied legal positions. Ranging from criminal and civil litigation, judge's chambers, patent, employment, health law, and much more.

Past students note, "Practical supplementation to what we have been learning in our classes is a vital part of a law student's education. I have learned many things from my externship and would recommend other students participate." Another student said, "It was a great experience. My legal research and writing skills improved, I learned a lot about an area of law that was interesting to me, and I have a topic for a law review comment. You will learn a lot from the externship supervisors and make great connections. I would recommend it to anyone, it is a great way to learn."

UW Law has a demonstrated history of prioritizing and advancing the arena of experiential learning. The externship program is a pragmatic and engaging way to explore practice areas, advance substantive legal skills and expand a legal network. The program's flexibility is convenient to students and employers while still providing a robust learning opportunity.



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