

SUMMER LAW INSTITUTE

Newsletter

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Creating a supportive community dedicated to developing and working towards our academic and career goals.

For the summer of 2024, 26 bright students made their way to CUNY Law School every day to study the criminal justice system. With a passion for learning threaded into the classroom, these young students built a community where they grew as scholars daily. Through this intensive five-week program, students were challenged as they studied complex material about the criminal justice system and understood the ins and outs of criminal trial procedures. These students were challenged every day to rise beyond their capabilities. They grew their skills through comprehensive lessons, thought-provoking essay writing, weekly exams, and high expectations that transcended their limits.

Legal Outreach also exposed these students to professionalism through daily guest speakers and interactive field trips. Finally, our dazzling students took to the courtroom and participated in a mock trial where they put their newly-found skills to the test.

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Meet the Staff



Caleb Rocha
Legal Teaching Fellow

Mr. Caleb Rocha is a rising 2L at the Fordham University School of Law. He graduated from Fordham College at Rose Hill in 2023 with degrees in Political Science and Philosophy with a minor in Mandarin. During his time at Fordham University Caleb was highly involved on campus in a variety of clubs and activities. At law school, he is a staff member for the Urban Law Journal, and a competitor for the Vis East/West Arbitration team. He was so excited to share his love of public speaking and passion for NYC law with his students.



Varun Yelamanchi
Legal Teaching Fellow

Mr. Varun Yelamanchi is a rising 2L student at Rutgers Law School. He completed his undergraduate at Colorado State University. During his time there Varun was a part of the Pre-Law Club and other clubs such as snowriders. At law school he is a part of the entertainment art and sports law society. He was so excited to teach his students about criminal law in a creative way while also teaching them their rights. He was excited to share his passion for writing and help students sharpen their writing and academic skills.



Zac Chavez
Coordinating Intern

Mr. Zac Chavez is a rising college junior at Syracuse studying Film and Political Science. He is an alumnus of Legal Outreach Class of 2022 and participated in the NYU Summer Law Institute. In the future, he wants to attend law school to become a lawyer to advocate for renter's rights in NYC. At Syracuse University, he is a member of the Men of Color Initiative and is a Kessler Presidential Scholar Recipient.

Field Trips



Pictured: Students at Proskauer Rose LLP

Our students started to build their sense of professionalism through weekly field trips to prestigious law firms and legal institutions. These institutions provided mock legal activities that pushed students to utilize their knowledge of the law in unique new ways.

Guest Speakers



Pictured: Students with an LO Alumna from Proskauer Rose LLP

Every Monday through Thursday over the summer our classroom was graced with visits from attorney guest speakers. Thank you for helping expand our students' visions for their futures!

Field Trips

Eastern District of New York Courthouse

During this field trip, students had the opportunity to visit and explore the Eastern District of New York Courthouse. The courthouse is home to historic criminal cases. They learned what differentiates a federal crime and state crimes. The students toured the courthouse, observing and reading the exhibitions. They were also able to sit in on the Naturalization Ceremony taking place in the courthouse that day.



Bloomberg LP

Our field trip to Bloomberg LP exposed the students to corporate law and moot court. The students were warmly welcomed by the Global Lead of Bloomberg's pro bono program who told a motivating story about her journey to law today. For the activity, they were presented a difficult case that allowed them to build and present firm arguments through a debate.

Proskauer Rose LLP

During our trip to Proskauer Rose LLP, our students litigated a mock negotiation and practiced their public speaking. Students first learned about public speaking practices and the practices of Proskauer Rose. Next, students learned about sports law, then prepared their own presentations in a faux NBA expansion activity. Finally, they presented their cases for expansion and took questions from Proskauer Rose attorneys. Our students brought their passion and creativity to the activities and learned a lot.



Mock Trial: Prosecution v. Defense

Students engaged with the knowledge they've learned over the summer through the Mock Trial competition. Inspired by "the slap heard around the world," our case this year was *State v. Smythe*. In this case Mr. Bill Smythe has been charged with Assault in the Third Degree and Disorderly Conduct after Bill Smythe slapped Rick Stone on live television for cracking disrespectful jokes of his wife, Jamie Blue Smythe. The case expanded on the source material in order to be trickier for both sides to argue, including adding elements where the Rick Stone character was acting in an intimidating manner towards Ms. Blue Smythe and adding in that the Bill Smythe character continued aggressively disrupting the night's activities after the slap.



Prosecution

Melany Cajamarca
Monica Trejo
Dayanna Loja
Kelden Kek
Merlin Perez
Ethan Gabel
Derek Hurtado

Defense

Semele Wong
Katie Schermerhorn
Theodosia Kalliontzis
Markus Choy
Ruixin Hannah Wang
Noah Lomas Romero

The prosecution presented their case, arguing that Mr. Stone was brutally assaulted by Mr. Smythe for no reason and attempted to reject Smythe's self-defense claim by arguing that there was no immediate threat. Defense countered this argument by claiming that as Rick Stone was walking towards the two to apologize, the Smythe's saw it as a threat to physically hurt Jamie, and that Mr. Stone had menacingly stalked over to them with a trophy in hand. The defense's argument hinged on the idea Bill Smythe saw this as a threat and thought that Mr. Stone would try to hurt his wife. During the Finals of the competition, Prosecution and Defense passionately presented their arguments in front of the honorable Judge James Cho of the Queens County Civil Court who gave a verdict of not guilty.

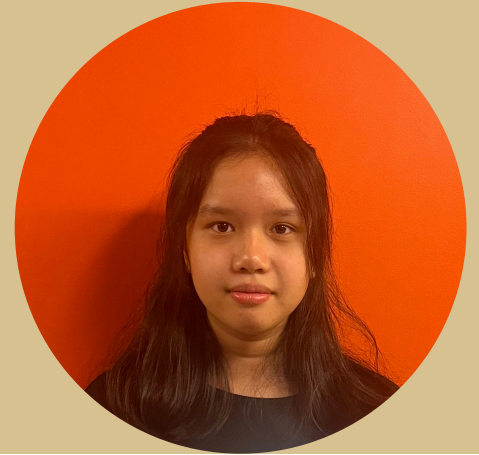
The Verdict:

NOT Guilty

Our Students

Over the past five weeks I have made a variety of new friends whose company I genuinely enjoy. These friends may share the same humor, music, and food tastes, but even though we don't all share the same hopes and dreams they still encourage me to be the best version of myself. Through friendly competition of test or essay scores, they make me strive to earn better scores.

- *Lena Pattanakul*



“I absolutely loved the harsh grading. Mr. Rocha set out to find every small detail and mistake and give us low grades. That’s why it felt so good to start getting grades higher than I would in school, even with a harsh grading. Everyone tells me I am capable, but I just need a push and this program has been that push.”

- *Raul A. Perez*

Anastasios Terpsopoulos
Ms 204

Antonella Saavedra
IS126Q

Ayla Alexander
IS126Q

Dayanna Loja
IS126Q

Derek Hurtado
Forte Prep

Edwin Huang
JHS 185Q

Ethan Gabel
JHS 157 Halsey

Gabriella Hartman
JHS 157 - Halsey

Jada Morris
IS 141 - The Steinway

Jennifer Soria
TYWLS - Astoria

Katie Schermerhorn
TYWLS - Astoria

Kelden Kek
Baccalaureate School for
Global Education

Lena pattanakul
PS 119

Markus Choy
JHS 157 Halsey

Melany Cajamarca
TWYLS Astoria

Merlin Perez
TWYLS Astoria

Mohammad Asif
IS 204

Monica Trejo
JHS 157 Halsey

Noah Lomas Romero
JHS 157 Halsey

Olivia Lin-Zheng
JHS 157 Halsey

Raul Perez
IS 204 Oliver

Ruixin Hanna Wang
JHS 157 - Halsey

Safina Murodkulova
JHS 157 - Halsey

Semele Wong
PS 119

Theodosia Kalliontzis
IS 126Q

Varenne Salazar
Ella Baker School

Final Thoughts & Thank You!

Thanks to all the supporters and sponsors that helped make Legal Outreach's Summer Law Institute possible! Over the past five weeks, our students have truly grown into young professionals who are ready for high school and beyond. Your support allowed these young men and women to learn not just about criminal justice, but about the importance of teamwork, confidence, and advocacy. We cannot thank you enough!

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New York Bar Foundation
New York County District Attorney's Office
New York Life Insurance Company
New York University School of Law
St. John's School of Law

Guest Speakers

Dean Sudha Setty, CUNY School of Law
Brandon Kronstat, Legal Outreach
Marla Trinidad, Oregon's Department of Transportation
Savvy Darragh, Darragh & Bocker, LLC
Dominic Conoshenti, Harris Beach PLLC
Amy Justiniano, Bloomberg LP
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