

SUMMER LAW INSTITUTE

Newsletter

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Creating a Space Where We Can Shape Our Futures Together at Fordham SLI

For the summer of 2024, 27 bright students made their way to Fordham Law School's vibrant campus every day to study the criminal justice system. With a passion to learn threaded into the classroom, these young students built a community where they grew as scholars every day. 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 procedure. These young students were challenged everyday to rise up 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



Samuel Hernandez
Legal Teaching Fellow

Mr. Sam Hernandez is a rising 2L at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law. He was born and raised in California and studied English Literature at the University of California Santa Barbara and International Christian University in Tokyo, Japan.



Kaitlynn Olivas
Legal Teaching Fellow

Ms. Kaitlynn Olivas is a rising 3L at CUNY Law School and is from Las Vegas, Nevada. Ms. Kaitlynn graduated from BYU in 2020 where she majored in Public Health with an emphasis in International Development. When she is not in school, Ms. Kaitlynn loves to dog sit, read, hang out with friends and her boyfriend, and watch movies.



Monisha Gunasekera
Coordinating Intern

Ms. Monisha Gunasekera is a rising junior at Columbia University. She is majoring in Human Rights and Public Health. She plans to attend law school after receiving her bachelor's. She is originally from San Diego, California and loves visiting museums, trying out new cafés, going to the beach, baking, and spending time with friends!

Field Trips



Pictured: Students at Morgan Lewis & Bockius 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 Terry Johnson from Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP

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

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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. They watched a naturalization ceremony and learned about the naturalization process and what it takes to become a U.S. citizen. The students also had a Q&A session with a federal prosecutor and judge. They ended their field trip watching a real-life trial.



Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP

Our field trip to Morgan Lewis exposed the students to labor and employment law. The students were warmly welcomed by several attorneys who shared their journey to law school and what working at Morgan Lewis is like. At the end of the field trip, students were given an activity. They were asked to draft a contract involving a dog walking company and Beyoncé.

Colgate-Palmolive

During our trip to Colgate-Palmolive, our students learned about copyright and Intellectual Property. They also heard from a panel of attorneys working at Colgate-Palmolive about their journey to where they are now. Students were very interested in learning about Colgate's many products and the differences between working at a law firm and a company.



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 was charged with Assault in the Third Degree and Disorderly Conduct after slapping Rick Stone on live television for cracking disrespectful jokes about his wife, Jamie Blue Smythe. The case expanded on the source material in order to be balanced for both sides to argue, including adding the element that the Rick Stone character was acting in an intimidating manner towards Ms. Smythe and the Bill Smythe character continued aggressively disrupting the night's activities after the slap.



Prosecution

Scarlett Santiago
Whin Eimicke
Raisha Tayba
Emely Solis
Paula Perez
Katherina Velasco

Defense

Mariana Torres
Hilary Mendez
Nabila Akter
Sarah Khan
Dean Marines
Mahfuza Ahmed
Kimberly Beltran

The prosecution presented their case, arguing that Mr. Stone was brutally assaulted by Mr. Smythe for no reason and rejected Smythe's self-defense claim by arguing that there was no immediate threat and Smythe had every opportunity to retreat. Defense countered this argument by claiming that as Rick Stone was walking towards the two to apologize, the Smythes 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 Jenny Rivera of the New York State Court of Appeals, who gave a verdict of not guilty.

The Verdict: Guilty

Our Students

This summer, I got out of my bubble. I changed these past 5 weeks because of the people I was with, the curriculum, and the high expectations. The guest speakers inspired me because they were people like me from a similar background coming to talk to me about my dream job. They were the reason I realized I can do anything I want to do for my future if I put in the effort. I can be a prosecutor or a judge if I want to. Thank you, SLI, for giving me a meaningful summer I will not forget.

- Karen Betances



Before SLI, I knew little about the law and how the legal system operated. This program opened my eyes to the realities of the law, and I feel privileged that I had the chance to meet people who specialized in this area. I was inspired by my environment and the people I was surrounded by. I was surprised by how much I could achieve with the right amount of pressure and mindset. I took away many things from this program, but the main takeaway was positivity. Without that, it would have been difficult for me to thrive.

- Emely Solis

Andrew An
IS 230

Areeb Islam
IS 230

Aylin Guerra
IS 230

Dean Marines
Tompkins Square

Elizabeth Estesén
IS 230

Emely Solis
IS 230

Heidy Garfias
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Hilary Mendez
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Karen Betances
Mott Hall III

Katherina Velasco
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Kimberly Beltran
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Luis Uyaguari
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Mahfuza Ahmed
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Mariana Torres
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Micherlin Montano
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Nabila Akter
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Paula Perez
Mott Hall III

Rachel Perez
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Scarlett Santiago
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Sol Gortner
West End Secondary

Whin Eimicke
Mott Hall II

Xavier Nieves
IS 230

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 women to learn not just about criminal justice, but also about the importance of teamwork, confidence, and advocacy. We cannot thank you enough!

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Guest Speakers

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Cliff Wilkins, Colgate-Palmolive
Jared Lerner, Colgate-Palmolive
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