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Brooklyn Law Incubator and Policy [BLIP] Clinic Outreach and Expansion

Through a € 500,000 grant from the European Commission, BLIP is working with a consortium of four core law schools, and a growing number of active European law school satellite partners, to build [iLINC](#), a network of BLIP-like clinics and tech law programs working with the burgeoning startup and entrepreneur communities throughout Europe. BLIP serves as the model, the advisor, and the U.S. “landing strip” for the European law schools and the startups with whom they work. The core European partners are Queen Mary University of London Centre for Commercial Law Studies, the KU Leuven Interdisciplinary Centre for Law and ICT in Belgium, the University of Hamburg Hans Bredow Institute for Media Research in Germany, and the University of Amsterdam, Institute for Information Law, in the Netherlands.

BLIP students are collaborating with several of the European law school partners on both transactional and policy work. In particular, they work with Internet-oriented clients whose ventures and ambitions extend beyond national boundaries and are, therefore, beset with multi-jurisdictional legal regimes and policies. For example, BLIP is working with the program at the University of Amsterdam and with a joint client to establish a global code of conduct for good actors in the emerging 3D printing community. In fact, 3DHubs (which describes itself as the “AirBNB of 3D printing”) is/was an Amsterdam-based client, but has recently received some funding and has moved its headquarters into the Brooklyn Navy Yard in its effort to live among the world’s greatest community of makers and creative entrepreneurs.

BLIP is also working with faculty and students within the legal sciences group at MIT’s Media Lab. To date, we have run several joint “legal hackathons” (a concept pioneered at Brooklyn Law School. Since establishing our relationship, we have begun collaborating on several tech policy projects designed to use technology and innovative tools to improve the law and legal process and to use the law to improve the experience and viability of new ventures. Among the projects are the following: a platform to combat “Revenge Porn” through a site that harness the provisions of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act to create a user-friendly, streamlined process to remove offensive photos and videos without running afoul of the First Amendment; a mobile app to help felons return to society, abide by their parole obligations, while preserving their privacy and autonomy; a nationwide (soon to be global) effort to turn “law into code” – to make laws more open, annotatable, and process-able, so that citizens have a better handle on the state of law within and across jurisdictions.

The goal of the relationship with MIT is to imbue in Brooklyn Law students the spirit and ethos of the MIT technologist. Jonathan Askin has been teaching at both institutions, often linking the two populations via remote hookups, with an eye towards building these links between Brooklyn Law School and the world’s preeminent technology school.

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AIDD Clinic Students Petition for Civil Liberties

Two AAIDD Clinic students, Ora Lupear and Aisling Galvin, broke the ice in our newest clinic. The AAIDD Clinic was appointed as Guardian ad Litem in a 17-A Guardianship case. The parents petitioned for guardianship over their 24-year-old son who is diagnosed with a rare developmental disability called Soto Syndrome. If guardianship is granted, this young man will lose any decisionmaking rights ranging from where to live, who to marry and the right to vote and make any health care, personal or financial decisions. The Court appointed the Clinic to investigate and make a recommendation as to whether guardianship is appropriate.



After a weeks-long investigation, the students submitted their report to the parents and the Court. The following day, the young man's mother informed the Court that she was withdrawing the 17-A petition because she did not want to take away her son's "civil liberties." She wrote the following email to the students:

"This is a masterfully written report. Working with you all has been the only part in this whole process where we felt like we were still human beings, and you helped restore our faith in the court system."

The judge praised the report and, despite the petition being withdrawn, requested to meet with the students to discuss the case.

Public Interest/Public Service (PipS) Fellowship: The Pioneer Year

This year saw the launch of the PipS Fellowship Program, a two-year (3L and post-grad) Fellowship that is essentially a full time externship during the 3L year, followed by a paid (by the host office) post-grad year. BLS students worked at the NY Legal Assistance Group (in the matrimonial, immigration and special litigation units), the Legal Aid Society (in the immigration unit), Youth Represent (offender reentry), Brooklyn Defender Services (in immigration), the NY Transit Authority and the NYC Law Department (in the Torts Division). Attending classes in the evening for the most part, the Fellows soon were immersed in the work of their offices. In the Law Department, the Fellows are conducting depositions regularly. Two of the Fellows have conducted hearings in Immigration Court, while others have handled cases in other courts including Rabbinical courts, and have worked on class action litigation.



These "pioneers" have weathered a difficult schedule with grace and fortitude. Neither intern nor entry-level hire, they had to find their level of work load and responsibility. All have flourished admirably as their first year is winding down. The trust of their host organizations is evident in the amount of work they have all assumed. Two of the Fellows were so successful and made such a great impression that they received offers of permanent employment, bypassing the postgraduate fellowship year entirely.

The selection process for next year's Fellows is underway with students placed already at the LAS, NYLAG, Brooklyn Family Defenders, and the Law Department.

CUBE Consultation Clinic Partners with NYC Business Solutions to Serve Low-Income Entrepreneurs

In downtown Brooklyn on March 25, 2015, 11 BLS students partnered with three alums and CUBE faculty to give brief legal advice to 10 small business entrepreneurs. Participants were able to ask questions in advance and be paired with a lawyer and team of law students for 30 minute consultations. Questions ranged from business entity selection, to contract issues, to leases. One business owner who sells online wanted to amend an LLC operating agreement to transfer ownership to another person. Law students prepared a sample resignation letter at the table, and reviewed it with the business owner and the lawyer-alum. The business owner had trouble opening a bank account in the new owner's name and needed the additional letter and an amended operating agreement to do so.



Another entrepreneur asked about trademark protection for her consulting business. One student, who had experience in intellectual property, explained that the name the client wanted to use hadn't yet entered the "stream of commerce" and had not established any trademark protection. The alum and students discussed the pros and cons of trademark protection and suggested that the client contact the BLIP clinic for possible representation.

Last, a music entertainment company owner asked about LLC publication requirements and cost. Students were able to discuss the importance of limited liability and the alum advised on the byzantine requirement that limited liability companies in New York have to publish in order to claim limited liability.

The participants were alumni Roger Griesmeyer, Brad Clair, and Jason Labate, and current students Jamie Kurtz, Brian Gilbert, Viola Lee, Ian Schwartz, Ben Chananie, Anna Tsiarpinskaya, Bill Meehan, Kristen Lin, and Daniel Chertok for assisting with consultations. Ayshe Mazinova & Michael Seiden were the student leaders for the event.

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