

~ Minutes ~  
Public Service and Trust Commission  
Pro Bono Committee  
Law School Workgroup  
April 14, 2016  
9:00 a.m.  
Teleconference

Co-Chair Professor Timothy Everett called the meeting to order at 9:01a.m. with the following Workgroup members participating in the call: Hon. William H. Bright, Jr., Attorney Karen DeMeola, Co-Chair, Attorney Susan Nofi and Attorney Charles Ray.

1. The draft minutes from the January 7, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved.
2. Attorney DeMeola reported to the Workgroup on the varying definitions of what types of work constituted pro bono service for the four area (4) law schools. For example, UCONN does not include clinic work or participation in other activities for which students earn law school credit, in its definition of pro bono service. Neither Quinnipiac nor Yale responded with specific numbers of pro bono hours performed by their respective students, however, both law schools said that they strongly encourage their students to perform pro bono service. Western New England provided the most detailed information about pro bono, and directed Attorney DeMeola to the law school's website which provided the following criteria for pro bono service which is mandatory for all Western New England law students:

**Proposed Pro Bono service must fall within the following definition:**

"Pro bono service is uncompensated. Pro bono service is defined as the provision of law-related services to:

- (1) persons of limited means.
- (2) charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters which are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means.
- (3) individuals, groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights.
- (4) charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental or educational organizations in matters in furtherance of their organizational purposes, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization's economic resources.

Pro bono service also includes:

- (5) activities for improving access to the law, improving the legal system or improving the legal profession.
- (6) educational activities for improving the public's understanding of the law, the legal system or the legal profession."

3. Additionally, Attorney DeMeola contacted each of the law school deans of students and heard back from three out of the four who all responded favorably to the idea of hosting an organized pro bono presentation to first year law students featuring some combination of judges, private attorneys and legal aid. The Workgroup agreed that the pro bono event would initially be limited to 1L students at UCONN, Quinnipiac and WNEC.

Judge Bright suggested that given the apparent variation in the definitions of what constitutes pro bono service among the law schools and in order to make these events as meaningful as possible, the three pro bono presentations should be customized to each school's definition and philosophy on pro bono service. Additionally, Judge Bright suggested that three separate sub-groups be formed each charged with working with and organizing an event at one of the law schools. The remaining members of the workgroup were amenable to the idea

and discussed the most efficient ways to pair up members of the private bar, legal aid and judges with each of the three law schools to tailor the different programs.

The workgroup agreed that, to the extent possible, the law firms and legal aid representatives should be somewhat local to the law school location, so students felt more connected to and invested in the event. The workgroup agreed to form the smaller sub-groups and reach out to the law schools to develop a program that works for each law school. Attorney DeMeola will reach out to Quinnipiac and WNEC to identify the appropriate point person to help organize the events. Professor Everett will be the point person for UCONN.

The workgroup also agreed that it would be beneficial to conclude each law school event with a sign-up sheet for “shovel-ready” pro bono projects that the students could sign up for. Part of the success of each event is not only conveying the philosophical importance of pro bono service to the law students, but capitalizing on the enthusiasm of the moment and providing the students with immediate pro bono and networking opportunities. A suggestion was made to also include the CBA and possibly Attorneys Lou Pepe and Fred Ury in the events so each program could also focus on the importance and availability of mentoring.

The workgroup agreed to reconvene in two months to assess progress and determine next steps.

4. The workgroup meeting was adjourned at 9:27a.m.