

# **PUBLIC DEFENDER EXTERNSHIP**

## **OBJECTIVES & METHODS**

(Five Credit Hour Course)

**Prerequisites:** Applicants must have (1) completed four semesters and forty-eight credit hours; (2) have a cumulative grade point average of 2.4 or greater; and (3) have successfully completed (a) Professional Responsibility; (b) Evidence; (c) Criminal Law; and (d) Criminal Procedure. Applicants who do not meet the grade requirement may petition to be accepted, but such admission will be granted only in extraordinary circumstances. NOTE: A placement for each applicant is not guaranteed.

**Externship Description:** The student will be placed in a Public Defender office. Placement opportunities are available in the Ninth Judicial Circuit covering Orange and Osceola Counties and by agreement with various other counties. The student will work at the field placement a minimum of twenty-five hours each week and must be available every business day throughout the semester. In addition, the student will attend a one hour class each week at the Law School. This is a pass/fail course. Students will be evaluated by their field placement supervisors in consultation with Professor Young. To obtain a passing grade, students must satisfactorily complete both the field placement and classroom component of the externship.

Objective I: Students will learn some criminal law and criminal procedure.

Method: Students will represent clients charged with criminal offenses or delinquent acts and assist attorneys in these offices in their representation of clients. The students will research and prepare cases for clients of these offices. Students may be assigned to the juvenile, misdemeanor, felony, traffic or magistrate divisions of these offices. They may also have the opportunity to work in more than one division. Students will be given feedback on their performance and guidance for improvement by the legal service lawyers with whom they work.

Objective II: Students will learn attorney-client relations skills.

Method: Students will observe experienced lawyers interview and counsel their clients. Students will also interview, counsel and prepare clients for court or other important stages of the clients' cases. Students' performance in these areas will be reviewed and critiqued by the lawyers with whom they work.

Objective III: Students will learn negotiation and mediation skills.

Method: Students will observe and participate in negotiations with assistant state attorneys or assistant United States attorney.

Objective IV: Students will improve their legal drafting skills.

Method: Students will be given research or drafting assignments related to the cases in their office. The students' work-product will be reviewed and critiqued by the lawyers with whom they work.

Objective V: Students will learn fact gathering skills.

Method: Students will observe and participate in formal discovery or informal investigation of the cases in their offices. This may include the drafting of discovery request, responding to discovery requests, participating in witness interviews, collecting of records or viewing physical objects. The students' performance in these areas will be reviewed and critiqued by the lawyers with whom they work.

Objective VI: Students will increase their awareness of the importance of the Rules of Professional Conduct.

Method: Students will discuss ethical issues with the lawyers with whom they work. These issues will also be discussed in the classroom component of the externship.

Objective VII: Students will learn some of the difficulties faced by the poor in our society and the problems these raise for our judicial system and the lawyers who work with the poor.

Method: Students will observe the realities faced by the clients. Discuss the client and public defender difficulties with the lawyers with whom they work. These issues will also be explored in the classroom component of the externship.

(Approved by the Faculty October 2003.)