

Student Legal Services 2022-2023 Annual Summary Report

The program retains four full time attorneys to provide legal education, representation, and preventive legal education. One full-time Office Administrator is also on staff together with 3 to 5 part-time student office assistants. July 16, 2022, staff attorney, Susan Y. Hessee, was honored with the Streeter-Wilson Community Service Award given by the National Legal Aid and Defender's Association, Student Legal Services Section.

One of the key learning outcomes of the program is to empower student-clients to take appropriate action in order to resolve personal legal matters. Each of the three purposes of the program have demonstrable impact on student success and persistence consistent with the Goals of the Student Affairs Strategic Plan and the Student Legal Services Strategic Plan which can be accessed at [https://www.odos.illinois.edu/about/purpose/docs/strategicPlan 2020-2025.pdf](https://www.odos.illinois.edu/about/purpose/docs/strategicPlan%2020-2025.pdf).

CONSULTATION AND CONTACTS SLS Strategic Plan, Section 1, Goal 1. "Provide quality legal advice and counseling to students regarding their rights and responsibilities." This branch of services is intended to guide students toward the life skill of becoming their own advocate in a world where free or inexpensive legal assistance is scarce.

- 2,207 intake forms were submitted to Student Legal Services requesting assistance. 1,433 students received services in person or through remote access.
- Of the 1,433, 634, or 43.75% were international students, which includes non-resident alien for IRS Purposes, non-resident alien, U.S Visa, Asylee, and 791, or 55.20% were classified as domestic students, which includes citizens and permanent residents. The remaining 7 did not fit into either classification.
- Of the 774 who did not have formal appointments but received other services from the office, 302, or 39.02%, were classified as international, and 467, or 60.33% were classified as domestic. The remaining 5 did not fit into either classification.
- 2,860 contacts with students were reported. This metric reflects follow up emails, clarifications, hearing preparation with clients, review of student drafted letters etc. where students are being guided to develop their advocacy skills with landlords and various agencies such as TSA, Driver's Services, Illinois Department of Revenue etc.
- Assessment results indicate that 55.56% of respondents believed that consultation enhanced their ability to focus on studies.
- 11.10% indicated that without legal help they would have considered leaving school.
- 64.08% indicated that as a result of services they had a better understanding of legal process

PREVENTIVE LEGAL EDUCATION AND ACCESS TO LEGAL INFORMATION SLS Strategic Plan, Section 3.

"Provide students with quality preventive legal education and programming that educates students about their rights and responsibilities." <https://www.odos.illinois.edu/sls> has been the major portal for students to access office services and basic as well as some in depth preventive educational materials, which, in many cases, solves the student's legal issue without a formal appointment.

- 122,590 total hits on the website

- The top three areas of student access are:
 - 1. Student Legal Services homepage 13,699
 - 2. Intake Portal page 12,815
 - 3. “For International Students” page 9,292
- 17 tabling events including large turnouts for Paraprofessional Resource Fair (75), Alternative Quad Day (250), Illini Union Showcase (280), Daily Illini Housing Fair (300), McKinley Health Center Special Populations Alcohol Awareness Program (50).
- Panelist at McKinley Health Center Special Populations Alcohol Awareness Program (50), which included tabling prior to and after the panel, noted above.

REPRESENTATION SLS Strategic Plan, Section 2. This concerns more formalized provision of legal service beyond counseling and direction such as in court representation, non-court representation, settlement negotiation and other alternative dispute formats. The bandwidth for consultative services is properly much higher and broader than for traditional representation services. This has been a long-term trend in the office before the pandemic and anecdotally it appears to be the case at other University Student Legal Services programs. Our student tenants are part of the nationwide trend that treats most housing issues as collection matters and credit reporting matters where representational litigation is increasingly rare. Nonetheless we act as legal representatives in dealing with the agencies and reporting services and direct court representation and negotiation in Eviction, Habitability and deposit disputes.

- 340 students had cases that were formally opened in 7 overall categories.
- 103 cases were opened in the previous reporting period.
- 134 Traffic, 70 Housing, 70 Consumer, 32 Misdemeanor/Criminal, 14 Name Change, with a significant proportion being transgender name changes.
- 54.41% (185) were domestic and 45.59% (155) were classified as international students.

ASSESSMENT Student Legal Service Strategic Plan Sections 1-7 contain various assessment approaches and metrics for success for each section.

- Fall 2022 International LL.M intern from Nigeria and Spring 2023 International LL.M. intern from Afghanistan pursuant to Section 7 were evaluated by the director using the *International Student Learning Outcomes* office guide which posits nine areas of potential learning and skills. Each intern achieved success and sufficient hours to be commended to the New York Bar if requested.
- Section 6 One attorney successfully reported achievement of continuing legal education credits to the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission on June 30, 2023, with credits in all specialties required by the Illinois Supreme Court. Director reviewed the accomplishment with the staff attorney.
- Section 1 Consultation was the primary focus of our student surveys using Campus Labs/Anthology this reporting period. The response rate for Representation services Section 2 was insufficient for purposes of meaningful analysis and use. On the other hand, there was a fairly robust response that was generally positive regarding consultation services.
 - 85.19% “...better equipped to handle similar situations in the future.”
 - 70.37% “...restored and or enhanced my sense of well-being.”
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- Level of knowledge about legal issue prior to meeting with SLS: none-minimal 43.63%.
Level of knowledge after meeting SLS attorney: moderate-significant-expert 70.91%.
- 65% support continuing to have the option of remote access via zoom or other technology.

EQUITY, INCLUSION, JUSTICE The assurance of student access to justice, protection of the rights of students and encouraging respect for law are at the heart of our Student Legal Services program. The program is the only unit in Student Affairs that is licensed to access the civil and criminal justice system on behalf of students. There is not a constitutional guarantee of a *Right to Legal Counsel* in the civil context as there is in much of criminal law as enunciated in Gideon vs. Wainwright in 1963. The program is the lifeline in civil matters such as eviction, landlord discrimination, consumer fraud, abuse of privacy, city offenses, and low-level traffic and criminal matters. There is little equity in the playing field in court for an unrepresented student or in dealing with the power imbalance between landlords and student tenants. Legal counsel often makes all the difference in whether each party is heard. Our international students often find the legal system a morass of confusion, which likely accounts for disproportionate use by this cohort. The system is far from user friendly for domestic students who have rarely dealt with the justice system. Student Legal Services works to remove the unknowns of legal issues, so students do not have to make the choice of hiring an attorney or leaving school.

Hiring did not take place in the office during this reporting period. The staff continued to strongly adhere to Illinois Supreme Court Rule 794(d)(i) requiring legal education in diversity and inclusion which complements Student Affairs Strategic Plan, Goal 2 ci & iv, to increase the reach of social justice training. Among accredited courses taken: Diversity, Inclusion and Elimination of Bias in the Legal Profession, Tackling Deep-Level Diversity in the Law, Eliminating Bias and Discrimination in the Legal Profession, The Legal Ethics of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion.

GOAL UPDATE

1. The contract between CLIO/Themis and the University of Illinois was fully negotiated and signed as a final document March 2, 2023. Training and implementation are tentatively scheduled for late June or early July 2023 with service Fall 2023 rather than Fall 2022 which was original goal timeline.
2. January 2023, Director Betz delivered an accredited presentation on Student Housing Issues at the U.S. Student Legal Service Association-Western Region in Los Angeles.
3. In-person Continuing Legal Education Credits were earned in Consumer Law by staff attorney Emily Vock. In-person Continuing Legal Education Credits were earned in Evidence by Director Thomas Betz, and staff attorney Anthony Allegretti earned live credits at the American Immigration Lawyers Association national conference. The achievement of this goal, which will be an ongoing goal, enables office to enhance expertise and cross-train in substantive areas of the law. This goal was achieved within the contours of the budget. Credits for Vock will be submitted to the Attorney Registration and Disciplinary Commission June 30, 2023, and those for Betz and Allegretti, June 30, 2024.