

**Welcome to the Villanova Law School Interpreter Program!**  
**Following is an introduction to help you get started.**

**Who We Are**

The VLS Clinics Interpreter Program is interdisciplinary. You will be working with two departments this semester: Modern Languages and the Law School (VLS). Those of you who are receiving internship credit for your work will also be working with the Internship Office, 415 St. Augustine Center, directed by Dr. John O'Leary.

The people you will get to know include:

**Modern Languages:**

Dra. Mercedes Juliá

Modern Languages Department Administrative Assistant

*Dra. Juliá is your Supervisor*

**VLS Clinical Program, Room 7, Garey Hall:**

Professor Beth Lyon, Director of the **Farmworker Legal Aid Clinic**

610-519-7126

lyon@law.villanova.edu

JoAnn Viviani, Clinic Paralegal

610-519-6417

moyer@law.villanova.edu

*Professor Lyon and JoAnn Viviani administer the interpreter program for the Law School*

Professor Michele Pistone, Director of the VLS Clinical Programs and the **Clinic for Asylum, Refugee and Emigrant Services (CARES)**

Professor Marisa Cianciarulo, Clinical Teaching Fellow in the CARES Clinic

Professor Les Book, Director of the **Federal Tax Clinic**

Professor Linda Love Vines, Clinical Teaching Fellow in the Tax Clinic

Professor Dveera Segal, Director of the **Civil Justice Clinic**

Professor Beth Lyon, Director of the **Farmworker Legal Aid Clinic**

Pat Brown, Administrative Assistant to the Clinical Program and CARES

Ann McGarrigle, Administrative Assistant to the Tax Clinic

**What the VLS Clinical Programs Do**

The Clinical Program is a Law Office within the law school, where law students, supervised and taught by law school faculty, provide free legal services to poor Pennsylvania residents free of charge.

### **What You Will Be Doing**

You will be receiving course credit to provide interpretation and translation to the law students, faculty and clients of the VLS Clinical Program. All of our clinics serve some Spanish-speaking clients, and as a not-for-profit law office we cannot afford to pay professional interpreters for the many hours we spend interviewing and counseling our clients. We do use professional interpreters to make court appearances with our clients.

### **Your Responsibilities to the Clinical Program**

In the clinics, we are handling real legal matters for real people. Many of our clients' lives literally depend on the outcome of their cases. Therefore, it is important that you provide the best services that you can. To do this, we ask that you observe the following:

- Confidentiality

As lawyers and student attorneys, we have a legal obligation to keep everything a client or potential client says to us completely confidential. As a part of our legal team, that obligation extends to you. At the beginning of the semester, you will be asked to sign a confidentiality agreement. What this means is that you should never talk with someone outside our law firm about a client or about the fact that a particular person is or may become a clinic client. The law firm consists of any law student who is currently enrolled in or working within the clinical program, the clinical program staff and faculty, and the other interpreters currently working in the clinic. It also includes the Modern Language faculty, graduate students and staff who are responsible for reviewing your written case-related translations. Even if you are speaking with one of these people, if you are outside the clinic, you must be sure that you are speaking privately with that person.

It is permissible to discuss the issues in cases or speak generally about a case you are working on with non-law firm members if the information is vague enough to keep that person from identifying your client. We understand that many of our cases are very compelling and that you may want to talk with your friends and other professors about them, but use great caution and common sense regarding the amount of detail you disclose, and never disclose a name.

Try not to take papers relating to specific client matters out of the clinical office. If you must do so, make sure they are with you at all times and do not leave them where they can be seen by non-law firm members.

- Preparation and Notification

Quality interpretation is the lifeblood of our work serving immigrants. Therefore, it is very important that you be prepared to give the best interpretations you can. To do this, anytime you accept an assignment from a law student or faculty member, be sure to inquire what the case is about, and to schedule time to go to the Interpreter Resource Binder and read the materials about the type of case you will be dealing with. Test yourself on the vocabulary and take a copy with you so that you will be able to provide the best interpretation possible.

When providing written translation, do not delay turning around the request so that you have the time to get someone in the Modern Languages Department to review your translation.

Interpreting involves many more skills than just language ability and vocabulary. For example, you must be able to provide literal translations that do not summarize. You must be able to stop speakers before they have said more than you can translate literally. You must be able to inform all parties when you are having trouble with a word or phrase and correct the problem quickly. You will be instructed in these skills, and you are expected to perform the interpretation skills readings and attend trainings and rounds to continuously improve your interpretation abilities.

- Library Resources

We have the Oxford Spanish Dictionary and the Diccionario De Uso Del Espanol dictionary in our clinic library located in the clinic conference room. These books are for your use while in the clinic. We asked that the books not be removed from the clinic without prior approval.

- Rounds Attendance

Every two weeks the interpreters will meet for skills training and discussions with clinical faculty and one another about the program. Attendance is mandatory and you should notify Dra. Juliá if you cannot attend a session.

- Communications

Working in a law office requires a high level of connectedness. Issues and new developments can arise in our cases with lightening speed, and it is important that we be able to reach you easily. You should plan to call in or stop by for phone messages and check your email each weekday morning and each weekday afternoon. If you see a general request from someone for help with a particular client session, *please respond immediately with your availability or non-availability.*

- Time Sheets

You should submit a time sheet each Friday to JoAnn Viviani.

As you know, you receive three credit hours for each eight average weekly working hours you perform between August 27 and December 10. You should expect to perform 8 hours over fall break or to arrange with us to make up the hours in the other weeks of the semester. You are not expected to work over break, but if you happen to be available during that period it would be greatly appreciated if you could use some of your hours during that time as needed.

- Office Hours

We will be asking you to sign up for particular office hours in the clinic so that you can be available to students who need your help to make telephone calls. The students rely heavily on these office hours and we ask that you not fail to attend them unless you have an emergency. Notify JoAnn Viviani as soon as possible if you will not be able to attend, and help her identify someone to take your place.

If no one has any work for you during a particular office hour, please check with JoAnn to see whether she has a project for you. We are developing our interpreter materials and most likely we will ask you to help with vocabulary lists or preparing materials for the bi-weekly classes.

- Weekly Journals

Each Friday, you should submit a 2-page, double-spaced journal to Dra. Julia and Professor Lyon, in Spanish. The journal should discuss your experiences in the clinic, both positive and negative, and should reflect on the work you are doing or the work of the clinic generally, including any reflections about the people the clinics serve.

- Student Learning Goals and Formulation Report

If you are enrolled in the internship program, by September 13 you should submit two copies of your Student Learning Goals and Formulation Report to the Internship Office (SA 451).

- Log, Intern Description, and Term Report

On December 15, each intern must submit a copy of their log and Intern Description/Exit Report, and two copies of the Term Report to the Internship Office at SA 451.

In addition, on December 15 each student, whether or not s/he is an intern, must submit the Term Report to Dra. Juliá and Professor Lyon. This should be a double spaced, typed 10-page essay, written in Spanish. The Term Report should consolidate your weekly journals into a general reflection on your experiences in the clinic. Speak with Dra. Juliá and Professor Lyon about the topic you want to address before writing the paper.

### **Offsite Travel**

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Much of our legal work is done offsite. You are expected to be available for offsite travel and work. Travel time does count toward your average weekly hours worked. If you drive, your travel expenses will be reimbursed by submitting a form to Judy.

### **Your Feedback is Important!**

Your feedback and input about all aspects of the program is highly valued and we ask you to take the time to let us know if there are improvements you think could be made to the materials, scheduling and training. You are welcome to give us feedback in your journals and Term Report as well.

### **Thank You!**

The University thanks you for your willingness to help poor people overcome language barriers to protect their legal rights. We hope the experience will be meaningful and useful for each of you.