

**AALS INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS SECTION  
SURVEY OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVITIES IN U.S. LAW SCHOOLS**

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**Human Rights Center  
University of Minnesota Law School**  
<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/hrcenter.htm>

Contact Person for Further Information (name, phone and email):

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**Questions about your Human Rights Centers, Institutions or Programs (CIP):**

1. How many Human Rights Centers, Institutions or Programs do you have and what are they called?

**The Human Rights Center is home to the Human Rights Library and the Human Rights Resource Center.**

**There is also at the University of Minnesota a Human Rights Program, which is in the Institute for Global Studies and works closely with the Human Rights Center.**

For each separate one, please answer the following questions:

2. What is the makeup of the Center/Institute/Program staff? (full-time staff, part-time staff, law professors, law students, other professors or students, and advisory board)

**The staff varies by the time of year. At this time during the summer, we have 23 total staff**

- **7 full-time (including 1 Co-director)**
- **16 part-time (1 law professor, 2 lawyers, 6 law students, 3 other students, and 4 others)**

**13 advisory board members**

3. How are law students involved with the CIP? (i.e. are there journals, newsletters, briefs, or other publications, human rights programs abroad, other international human rights campaigns, etc.)

**Students work in building the University of Minnesota Human Rights Library – gathering material and posting them on the Web.**

**Students do applied research and projects useful to human rights organizations.**

**Students do research**

4. If it's not obvious from the name of the program, does the CIP focus on any specific international human rights law issues (i.e. refugees, women's rights, etc.)?

**The Center fosters study, applied research, curriculum development, practical training, documentation, dissemination, and outreach on many aspects of international human rights. We are focusing presently on the rights of non-citizens, the human rights responsibilities of transnational corporations and other business enterprises, the right to health, and indigenous rights. You might want to consult our web page for greater detail: <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/hrcenter.htm>**

5. What classes, seminars, symposiums, or other presentations have been offered in conjunction with the CIP?

**Training of Trainers for Human Rights Education Workshop held annually.**

- **To enhance understanding about methodologies used in human rights education;**
- **To expose the diverse ways human rights education is occurring in the United States;**
- **To explore the connection between human rights education and social movement theory and practices;**
- **To recognize the impact of institutionalized forms of discrimination (i.e. race, class, gender, sexual orientation, age, etc.)**
- **To expand knowledge of human rights concepts, theory, and practice;**
- **To share human rights education materials and strategies for training and advocacy;**
- **To explore effective practices for facilitating conflicts and difficult situations; and**
- **To increase the network of qualified human rights trainers in the United States**

**At the University of Minnesota Law School, we offer classes in introduction to international human rights law, women's human rights law, European human rights institutions, Inter-American human rights law, International Criminal Courts, and a course reflecting on the experience of human rights interns.**

**For a full list of the many other courses related to human rights offered at the University of Minnesota, please consult <http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/Humanrightscourses.html>**

6. Does the CIP assist students in acquiring internship/externship opportunities with human rights organizations (NGOs, IGOs, etc.)? Which organizations?

### **Upper Midwest International Human Rights Fellowship**

**The Fellowship Program is designed to promote human rights by providing practical training, on the one hand, and assistance to host organizations, on the other. Fellowships will also foster links between communities in the Upper Midwest and human rights concerns and activities throughout the world. Participants are expected to return with a deeper commitment to a lifetime of work in human rights as professionals, community leaders and activists, teachers, and volunteers. Between 20 and 25 fellowships are awarded each year.**

7. In general, how is the CIP funded?

### **Foundation grants**

8. Does the CIP have any affiliations with Human Rights groups outside the law school or university? Which ones? What is the nature of the affiliation?

**We have a close association with many human rights organizations – particularly those in Minnesota: Center for Victims of Torture, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, Resource Center for the Americas, Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, International Women’s Rights Action Watch, Project Tandem, American Refugee Committee, International Health Volunteers, etc. We also work with Amnesty International and there are two student Amnesty International groups at the University (one in the Law School).**

9. Does the CIP allow student involvement in actual International Human Rights cases? What is the degree of that involvement?

**Students do political asylum cases through the clinic and through Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights. Students also work on cases and projects through the Human Rights Center for the United Nations, other international organizations, and NGOs.**

10. What, in your opinion, attracts students to participate in the CIP?

### **Interest in human rights and desire to help people.**

11. What are some specific projects or cases that the CIP has undertaken in recent years?

**Drafting human rights standards for transnational corporations to be adopted by the United Nations.**

**Drafting a report for the U.N. on the rights of non-citizens.**

**Preparing a study of the procedures of world conferences and how they can be improved.**

**Developing human rights web sites in Arabic, Russian, Farsi, Spanish, French, Japanese, etc.**

**Preparation of memorandum in support of motion in Alien Torts Claims Act case.**

**Preparing a memorandum for Amnesty International on Hate Speech cases.**

**Many asylum cases.**

12. Are there cultural and language barriers that impede your work? If so, how have you overcome these barriers?

**Obviously, it is better for students and other participants in the Center to be able to communicate in English and at least some other language.**

13. Are there any other suggestions you may have concerning the organization of a CIP?

**Again, I suggest that you review our web site:**

**<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/>**

**<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/hrcenter.htm>**

**Questions about your human rights clinical work:**

14. How many clinics do you have that are handling international human rights litigation or projects (by using international law in domestic fora and/or by taking matters to IGOs)?

**Our principal clinic deals with political asylum cases, but we also do clinical work directly through the Human Rights Center.**

For each such clinic, please answer the following questions:

15. In what fora do you practice?

**Immigration Court, Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, United Nations**

16. Who are your case referral agencies?

**Direct receipt of cases, Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights, Center for Victims of Torture, Amnesty International**

17. Please list any partner NGOs that assist you in casework or in teaching the clinic.

**Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights**

18. If you were planning to start up a human rights clinic, what are the most important substantive books to have on your shelf, the top websites you would bookmark and the most important listservs to join (you do not have to catalogue your library for us, we would just like to let our colleagues know your “top ten list” of items you most strongly recommend for people who are starting out)?

**University of Minnesota Human Rights Library,  
<http://www1.umn.edu/humanrts/>  
David Weissbrodt, Joan Fitzpatrick, and Frank Newman, *International Human Rights Law, Policy, and Process* (2001).**

19. Do you have syllabi, simulations or any other material that you are able to make available to others, either upon request or by putting it up for colleagues on a shared link between the AALS human rights section website and your clinic’s website (the AALS link could be password protected if this would be helpful)?

**We have considerable educational materials already in the University of Minnesota Human Rights Library. I would be pleased to send you my syllabus, which follows the chapters in David Weissbrodt, Joan Fitzpatrick, and Frank Newman, *International Human Rights Law, Policy, and Process* (2001).**

20. What percentages of the students in this clinic typically travel abroad for their clinic work?

**10%**

21. Do students have the opportunity to meet their clients in person?

**Ordinarily.**

22. What mix of domestic work (if any) and international cases does this clinic handle?

**At the University of Minnesota, there are 19 clinics. Only one does internationally oriented and immigration work.**

**Individual Faculty Efforts:**

23. Do you have any faculty that are performing or supervising significant international human rights litigation or projects outside the formal structure of centers and clinics? If so, what type of project and how many students are involved?

**Professor David Weissbrodt supervises clinical work and works with students in applied human rights projects outside the context of a clinic.**

**Externships :**

24. Do you have students receiving credit for human rights service performed outside your law school? Roughly how many students are doing this each year? What percentage of externships involve placement outside the U.S.?

**There are about 4 or 5 such projects each year. Most students prefer to be supported by grants from the Fellowship program and thus do not get credit for that work. But some prefer to receive credit for applied research or externship work outside the law school, including abroad.**