

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

Last Updated: August 19, 2002

**Immigration and Human Rights Clinic
St. Mary's University, School of Law**

[http://www.stmarytx.edu/law/index.php?group=program&page=immigrationRights
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Questions about your Human Rights Centers, Institutions or Programs:

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

The Immigration and Human Rights Clinic

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

The immigration and human rights concentration requires a two-semester (fall/spring) commitment for which eight credits are awarded. Additionally, a separate three-credit program is offered during a 10-week period in the summer.

3. Does the CIP allow student involvement in actual Int'l HR cases? What is the degree of that involvement?

Students advocate on behalf of clients before immigration and federal courts, representing refugees applying for asylum, defending claims to U.S. citizenship, seeking permanent resident status for undocumented individuals with strong ties to the U.S., and applying for waivers of removal for immigrants with lengthy U.S. residence.

Students are assigned several deportation cases and appear on a regular basis on the detained calendar of the immigration court to counsel detained immigrants and to argue for undocumented women and children seeking legal residence pursuant to the Violence Against Women Act. Each semester

clinical students travel to the border to provide immigration and naturalization services to residents of impoverished *colonias*. Students work individually and in teams in all aspects of their clients' cases.

In addition, they conduct interviews and other on-site fieldwork to document violations of international and domestic human rights law, prepare reports which include factual and legal analysis to demonstrate why the law requires particular actions, create strategies to ameliorate abuses, advocate with government officials, and develop cases for litigation in domestic and international fora.

Examples of recent work include: litigation against agencies of the U.S. government on behalf of the widow of a U.S. citizen summarily executed by the Guatemalan Army with the complicity of paid CIA assets; drafting legislation for the City of Laredo to control health and environmental risks from hazardous materials; documenting environmental abuses at the Texas-Mexico border; making recommendations for changes in the enforcement of laws designed to prevent contamination; and assisting a deaf inmate who was badly beaten and denied appropriate interpreter services by San Antonio prison authorities.