

# THE CARIBBEAN INITIATIVE VIRTUAL INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

SPRING 2014  
Program Description

*Welcome to the Suffolk University Law School Caribbean Initiative Virtual Internship Program. Please read this information carefully and then meet with me if you have any questions.*

*Mary E. Sawicki, Esq.*

Practitioner in Residence  
Caribbean Initiative  
Virtual Internship Program

The **Caribbean Initiative Virtual Internship Program** will provide opportunities for students to apply newly acquired legal knowledge to real world problems.

For spring semester 2014 – students participating in the Caribbean Initiative Virtual Internship Program will be working on projects with the Office of Child Advocate in Jamaica. The Jamaican Office of the Child Advocate is an organization that was established under the Child Care and Protection Act in 2006. The OCA is a Commission of Parliament mandated to enforce and protect the rights and best interest of the children of Jamaica. Students enrolled in this program will work on a variety of child welfare based projects based on the needs of the Jamaican OCA with the goal of enhancing the quality of life for abused and neglected children of Jamaica.

Enrollment in this Program will afford the student a unique opportunity to work on child welfare projects that will have international significance. For some students, the primary motivation in applying to the Caribbean Initiative Virtual Internship Program may be to provide legal services to children in need or to promote social justice; for others, the goal may be to test career interests. In any event, the classroom component, individual supervision of child welfare projects assigned, and journal and reflective exercises that make up this Virtual Internship Program described below are designed to enhance students' ability to reflect on their experience and on their learning styles and lawyering skills in the realm of an international cross-cultural legal experience.

### ***Formal Requirements***

The requirements for the Caribbean Initiative Internship Program are:

#### **1. Nature of work**

The functions of the Office of Child Advocate in Jamaica are numerous and varied. They are tasked with the responsibility of receiving and conducting investigations of allegations of abuse of a child by a government entity. The OCA reviews regulations and statutes pertaining to the abuse and neglect of the children and gives advice and makes recommendations to Parliament and other authorities on matters that effect the rights and best interests of the children of Jamaica.

The assigned projects in the program for spring 2014 will be based on the needs of the OCA. Potential projects for the spring 2014 semester may include:

- a) Preparation of a Best Practices Manual for the investigation of child abuse matters.
- b) Review of child abuse and neglect statutes and recommendations for changes.
- c) Development of a training program for OCA staff and child abuse prevention professionals in Jamaica.

## 2. Faculty supervision

Attorney Mary Sawicki, Practitioner in Residence, will oversee the field work and serve as a professional guide for the student. In addition – lawyers and staff of the OCA also will have input on the projects development.

Lawyers for the OCA will also participate in the supervision of the projects assigned to the students. These OCA lawyers will engage with the students participating in this program through email, SKYPE and other virtual means.

## 3. Journals and Time Logs

The student will submit time logs and journals throughout the semester to document hours worked on child welfare projects and to reflect on the internship experience. Journals and time logs will be regularly reviewed by Attorney Sawicki.

## 4. Credits

A student may earn 2 credits during the semester for work done on assigned child welfare projects in the Caribbean Initiative Virtual Internship Program. One credit is earned for each forty-five (45) hours of legal work on a project. Students may distribute the hours to be worked during the semester as they choose, with the approval of Attorney Sawicki. Students will receive a credit/no credit grade for their work on the child welfare projects.

Students should be realistic about their academic course load and their extra-curricular commitments when deciding whether to participate in this program. Commitments to the Jamaican OCA lawyers who have pledged to working with Suffolk Law students in this endeavor must be honored to maintain the quality of the Virtual Internship Program.

## 5. Class Component

Child Welfare Seminar Internship Seminar (Spring Semester 2014)

## **(Attorney Sawicki) 2 credits**

This course is required for all students registered for the Caribbean Initiative Virtual Internship Program for the spring 2014 semester. The two credits granted for this course are in addition to and independent of any credits awarded for the child welfare project assignments experience.

This classroom component will cover child welfare and juvenile justice laws and policies in the United States as well as including Jamaican culture and cross-cultural competence, the laws and regulations in regard to child abuse and neglect in Jamaica, the legal child welfare and juvenile justice system of Jamaica in contrast to that of the American system, ethical issues relating to child protection legal practice, legal topics relating to the issues of child abuse and neglect and child welfare. Readings and class participation are essential components of the course. A short paper will be required. This paper will not satisfy the writing requirement. Student work is graded on the letter grade system.

In this seminar – students will be co-instructed by Attorney Sawicki and by lawyers of the OCA and Jamaican child welfare professionals as well. The class component will meet on Tuesdays from 4-5:50.

Class will at times be held utilizing SKYPE and other virtual meeting techniques to involve child welfare professionals from the OCA in Jamaica. Due to the virtual nature of some of the instruction in this seminar – some classes may be held at different times/dates but will accommodate all students' schedules.

### **6. Potential Site Visit to Jamaica**

There is a **possibility** that students participating in this internship program will travel to Jamaica for several days for a site visit to the OCA.

During that time, students will have an opportunity for face-to-face meetings with their virtual seminar instructors. In addition, students will have an opportunity to present their work to Jamaican authorities. Students will have an opportunity to engage in discussion with Jamaican OCA staff concerning their projects. In addition, students will have a tour of the OCA and the local Jamaican legal system

This POSSIBLE site visit is still tentative and funding for this travel may not be available. It is just a possibility that is being discussed at this time. Please see Attorney Sawicki for the status of this possible site visit.

### **7. Grades**

Placement credits are graded pass/fail. The classroom component is graded separately (see course descriptions).

## 8. Evaluations

Field supervisors are required to evaluate student work. This evaluation becomes part of the students Caribbean Initiative Virtual Internship Program file.

## 9. Eligibility

Generally, any day student who fails to achieve a GPA of 2.67 after his or her first year is barred from enrolling in this program for one year/two semesters. Generally, any evening student who fails to achieve a GPA of 2.67 after his or her third semester is barred from enrolling in this program for one year/two semesters. Thereafter, the student may enroll in this program but the students' participation is limited to 3 placement credits during his or her law school career.

## 10. Contact Attorney Sawicki

Students interested in participating in the Caribbean Initiative Virtual Internship Program for Spring 2014 should contact Attorney Sawicki at 617-305-3080 or at [msawicki@suffolk.edu](mailto:msawicki@suffolk.edu) with any questions.

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