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Newsroom

RWU Law Launches Immigration Clinic

BRISTOL, R.I., April 23, 2009 Responding to a huge array of unmet legal needs within Rhode Island's immigrant communities, Roger Williams University School of Law has announced the launch of a new Immigration Law Clinic in Providence.

"I couldn't be more excited about adding the Immigration Clinic to our clinical offerings," said Professor Andrew Horwitz, RWU Law's director of clinical programs. "The field of immigration law is dynamic and ever-changing and the legal needs of the immigrant community are vast and largely unmet. We will be providing a sorely needed service to Rhode Island's low income immigrant population while at the same time providing our students with a top-notch educational experience in a burgeoning field of law."

Heading up the new clinic is Professor Mary Holper, an experienced clinical director from Boston College Law School, with nearly a decade of immigration-intensive experience. In addition to her clinical skills, Professor Holper has served as a human rights fellow and supervising attorney at the Boston College Center for Human Rights and International Justice, as well as holding intensive fellowships at the Catholic Legal Immigration Network in Boston and the Capital Area Human Rights Coalition in Washington, D.C. She has also worked with the American Civil Liberties Union's Immigrants' Rights Project.

Law student participation in the Immigration Clinic will consist of several components, including:

- Direct Client Representation. Students will represent non-citizens (detained and otherwise) in their applications for relief from removal before the Immigration Court in Boston. They will argue bond motions for detained clients, conduct direct examination of witnesses, raise evidentiary objections and argue points of law.

- Case Preparation. Students will research and write motions and memoranda of law, gather documents in support of applications for relief from removal, interview witnesses, draft affidavits and research human rights issues in the countries of removal. Students will also prepare applications for benefits and represent non-citizens in their interviews for such benefits before the local U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (CIS) office.

- Community Outreach. Students will conduct "Know Your Rights" presentations for immigrant communities in Rhode Island and for non-citizens who are detained by the Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) in the Bristol County House of Corrections in North Dartmouth, Mass.

- Classroom Instruction. Each week, students will participate in exercises designed to develop their lawyering and trial skills while enhancing their understanding of the lawyer's role in the process handling substantive, ethical and policy issues.

Roger Williams University School of Law is the only law school in Rhode Island, offering future attorneys a rigorous, world-class legal education in a supportive, personalized environment. A world-class faculty and strong student culture, as well as a deep commitment to public service, drive the school's rapidly growing reputation for preparing graduates for successful practice in the 21st century.