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Newsroom

Krishna: ABA Leader in CED Law

Professor Gowri Krishna, as chair of ABA's Community Economic Development Committee, will work 'to create stronger, healthier communities.'



PROVIDENCE, R.I., September 18, 2014 – A Roger Williams

University School of Law professor has been appointed to head the American Bar Association committee tasked with improving the practice of community economic development law across the United States.

Associate Clinical Professor of Law Gowri Krishna, who also directs RWU Law's Community Economic Development Clinic, was formally named as chair of the Community Economic Development (CED) Committee of the ABA's Business Law Section during its annual meeting this month.

The CED committee focuses on lawyers who serve low- to moderate-income entrepreneurs and community-based organizations working to revitalize economically distressed communities. It also provides a national voice in the area of affordable housing and community development law.

With the ABA appointment, "Professor Krishna has been named by her peers as a national leader among lawyers working to revitalize economically distressed communities," said RWU Law Dean Michael Yelnosky.

Krishna added that the appointment provides an important opportunity to expand and improve legal practice in the field. “The ABA committee provides a wonderful platform for sharing, creating and building CED knowledge and practice on the national level,” she said. “With economic concerns at the forefront of issues that many communities currently face, I hope to focus on how CED lawyers can and do work, in various ways, to create stronger, healthier communities.”

Krishna joined RWU Law’s faculty last fall, tasked with establishing the school’s CED Clinic. She brought deep experience in creating community-based institutions, including worker cooperatives made up of low-wage, immigrant workers. Having taught in CED clinics at the University of Michigan Law School and at Fordham University School of Law, she was ready to hit the ground running at Roger Williams.

“Professor Krishna and the CED Clinic have had a remarkable inaugural year at the law school,” Yelnosky said. “The clinic served the needs of many clients, while students learned the skills necessary to be effective lawyers after they graduate.”

In her new ABA role, Krishna said she hoped to “promote leadership roles within the committee for CED lawyers and students, and provide them with space to generate and carry out initiatives to help further the field.” She has already had considerable success in that regard, and her RWU Law CED clinic was “recently chosen to join a select group of clinics in which supervised law students can practice before the United States Patent and Trademark Office,” Yelnosky added.

Krishna was awarded an Equal Justice Works Fellowship from 2006-2008 to work in the Community Development Project at the Urban Justice Center in New York City, where she remained a staff attorney prior to joining the faculty at Fordham in 2010. At the Urban Justice Center, she provided transactional legal support (e.g., contract drafting and negotiating, corporate, tax, real estate, and regulatory compliance matters) to numerous community-based organizations. She earned her AB, magna cum laude, in social thought and analysis and political science, from Washington University in St. Louis, and her J.D. from Fordham University School of Law.