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Recommended Citation

Mulholland, Brittani, "Trending @ RWU Law: Brittani Mulholland's Post: Alternative Spring Break's Biggest Year Yet!: 03/04/2016" (2016). *Law School Blogs*. 437.

https://docs.rwu.edu/law_pubs_blogs/437

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Brittani Mulholland's Post

Alternative Spring Break's Biggest Year Yet!

Posted by Brittani Mulholland on 03/04/2016 at 11:22 AM



[This blog was cowritten with ASB coordinator, 2L Trevor Bernard.]

The **Alternative Spring Break Program (ASB)** all started back in 2006, when RWU Law students traveled to New Orleans to offer assistance to those affected by the catastrophic Hurricane Katrina. The Program was initially started by the School's **Association for Public Interest Lawyering (APIL)** and focused on providing general community service. It has developed into an elaborate, year-long process that focuses on placing students in pro bono organizations aimed at helping those who have traditionally not been able to afford legal representation or have access to legal services.

ASB has consistently grown with each successive year and in 2016 has reached a record high with almost 70 applicants. For the first time in ASB history our applicants were so high in number that we were not able to place all our applicants. We fully plan on accounting for such an amazing and exciting growing popularity in the future, ensuring that future ASB committees will be able sustain the program in both an efficient and economic manner.

This year's logistics were highly impressive: we accepted six 3L applicants, 19 2L applicants, and 43 1L applicants, constituting 30 percent of the 1L class. The Program features a total of 16 different placement locations, including 14 returning placements from last year's program. Additionally, 11 of our placement

locations are home to RWU alumni who will work closely with our students, fostering an even closer connection and forging new relationships in the community.

Speaking as past participants, we can attest to the successfulness of the program. Both of us had great experiences last year: **Trevor** placed at the **Women in Prison** project, where he worked with inmates and researched their legal concerns; and **Brittani** at **CPCS New Bedford**, where she did legal research, shadowed attorneys in court, and was lucky enough to catch a glimpse of a high profile trial going on at that time (may or may not have involved a former Patriot – it was intense!!). Both of us felt rewarded by the end of it; we truly believe in this program and all the good it is doing – both at the law school, but also in the community.

Lastly, we'd like to highlight how impressed we are with the number of students that applied this year. Spring Break is a time where many students take the time to sleep, relax, socialize and overall re-charge. However, almost 70 students were willing to give up that relaxing week; almost 70 students were willing to wake up (early) and suit up, to benefit others while fulfilling their pro bono graduation requirement. This just goes to show how selfless and dedicated our RWU Law students are. You all make the Roger Williams Law community proud!

Both of us have had the privilege to be involved in the shaping of the 2016 program, but we couldn't have done it alone. To RWU Law Students, thank you. To the ASB committee and Feinstein center, thank you. And thank you to all of the placements that open their doors, giving our students the opportunity to give back and gain real world experience:

- **The Bronx Defenders**, The Bronx, N.Y.
- **Brooklyn Defender Services**, Brooklyn, N.Y.
- **City of Central Falls, Solicitor's Office**, Central Falls, R.I.
- **Conservation Law Foundation**, Providence
- **Connecticut Veterans Center**, New Haven, Conn.
- **Immigration Law Education and Advocacy Project**, Fall River, Mass.
- **The Island Institute**, Rockland, Maine
- **Juvenile Rights Practice**, Brooklyn and Manhattan, N.Y.

- **Pittsburgh Public Defenders**, Pittsburgh
- **SOROS Project**, Providence
- **Rhode Island Center for Justice**, Providence
- **Pennsylvania AIDS Law Foundation**, Philadelphia
- **Chesapeake Legal Alliance**, Annapolis, Md.
- **Women in Prison Project**, Providence



This blog was cowritten with Trevor Bernard 2L, who is a staff member of Roger Williams University Law Review, treasurer of Phi Alpha Delta and Alternative Spring Break Coordinator.