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Newsroom: National Law Journal on RWU Law

Roger Williams University School of Law

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Newsroom

January 27, 2016

National Law Journal on RWU Law

RWU Law is one of only seven law schools outside NY participating in Pro Bono Scholars, a unique program that gives law students a fast track into the profession.

From The National Law Journal: "[Bellying Up To The Bar Exam Early: New York's novel pro bono program opens to out-of-state third-year law students,](#)" by Karen Sloan, NLJ



Jan. 25, 2016: Laura Rodriguez won't graduate from **Roger Williams University School of Law** until May, but she's spending her days studying for the bar exam instead of sitting in class.

Rodriguez is one of 11 third-year law students from seven schools outside New York who will take the February bar then spend three months working full time on public interest projects — all before collecting their diplomas.

They are the first out-of-state participants in New York's fledgling **Pro Bono Scholars**, a unique program launched last year that gives law students a fast track into the profession provided they spend their final semester at public interest organizations or in law school clinics.

"I just felt like this was a quick way to get things going," **said Rodriguez**, a native New Yorker and aspiring public defender who will handle criminal cases at Brooklyn Defender Services after she takes the bar. She hopes 12 weeks of full-time legal experience in her chosen field will help her land a job. [...]

Administrators at Roger Williams, in Bristol, Rhode Island, quickly developed an academic program that would enable students to participate, **said Andrew Horwitz, assistant dean for experiential education**.

"It was a natural fit for Roger Williams," **said Horwitz**, citing the school's focus on real-world learning and community service as well as its existing semester-in-practice program that allows third-year students to work off campus for academic credit. Two other Roger Williams students are joining Rodriguez in the program