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Law School News

National Criminal Defense College to hold Trial Practice Institute at RWU School of Law

Some of nation's top criminal defense lawyers will come to Bristol campus this summer to teach two-week sessions



November 15, 2018 Edward Fitzpatrick

BRISTOL, R.I., Nov. 15, 2018 – The National Criminal Defense College will hold its Trial Practice Institute at the Roger Williams University School of Law for the first time this summer.

A pair of two-week sessions will take place from June 16-29 and July 21-Aug. 3, bringing more than 100 defense attorneys from across the country to the Bristol campus.

“We are thrilled to partner with Roger Williams University School of Law to host our Trial Practice Institute,” National Criminal Defense College Co-Deans Natasha Silas and Karen Perdeu Smolar said. “We were drawn to RWU Law because of its outstanding commitment to public service and its reputation for excellence. We also share RWU’s belief in the power of experiential learning. As we prepare for the 34th year of the NCDC Trial Practice Institute, we are looking forward to a magical time in Bristol, Rhode Island, at RWU Law.”

“Hosting the NCDC Trial Practice Institute is a perfect fit for RWU Law,” RWU Law Dean Michael J. Yelnosky said. “We have great depth in and a commitment to criminal law and procedure, public interest law and experiential education. Many of our alumni are public defenders or criminal defense lawyers in private practice, and many are prosecutors. We believe, as does NCDC, that effective representation is essential to equal justice under law, and I am proud that we are in a position to welcome them to Bristol and to Rhode Island in summer 2019.”

The Trial Practice Institute is a two-week-long transformative experience for public, private, military and federal defense attorneys from all over the United States and beyond. Participants are challenged to master courtroom skills by attending lectures, performing case exercises with live professional actors, and by watching demonstrations by NCDC’s nationally renowned faculty.

“Our goal is to empower passionate and committed defense lawyers to become the most formidable client-centered courtroom advocates they can be,” Silas and Smolar said.

Last year, about 80 faculty members taught in the two institutes, which were attended by 208 participants. The faculty come from coast to coast and from the judiciary, law schools, private practice, and state and federal public defender offices. Associate Professor Tara Allen, who recently joined the RWU Law faculty and is an alumna of NCDC, will join the institute’s visiting faculty for summer 2019.

“Having NCDC’s Trial Practice Institute at RWU Law will bring some of the best criminal defense lawyers from across the country to Bristol and Rhode Island to serve as Institute faculty,” Yelnosky said.

The institute will also provide tremendous summer experiences for four RWU Law students who will work with the deans of NCDC, as well as the institute faculty and staff.