Newsroom: National Law Journal on RWU Law

Roger Williams University School of Law

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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.


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