



HEALTH LAW SEMESTER IN D.C.

Since health care law is a legal subspecialty, recent law school graduates must have the right combination of education and experience to secure employment in the field. As the premier health law program in the country, the Center for Health Law Studies at Saint Louis University School of Law recognizes that educational experiences in health law must exist both in and out of the classroom. Building on our successful health law externship program in St. Louis, in 2011 the Center established its *Health Law Semester in Washington D.C.*

The practice of health care law is complex and fast paced. The health care industry is highly regulated, with substantial regulation occurring at the federal level. In Washington D.C. law students will clerk in a health-related federal agency on a nearly full time basis for an entire semester. Students will gain significant practical experience working with complex health care regulations. Additionally, they will begin building a network of contacts within the federal government and in Washington D.C. in particular.

Students participating in the Program are eligible to earn 12 to 14 credits through a combination of experiential and course work. They will work 32, 35, or 38.5 hours per week during a full spring semester at an assigned externship placement to earn 10, 11 or 12 credits, respectively. Additionally, each student will enroll in a 2-credit course on federal agency law practice, addressing both professional responsibility issues that arise in agency practice and advanced topics in administrative law.

Offered annually during spring semester, this Program is available to students enrolled in the health law concentration program, health law dual degree program, or in the health law LL.M. program. Students are required to successfully completed Administrative Law, Health Care Law, and Professional Responsibility prior to their semester in D.C.

The *Health Law Semester in D.C.* Program relies on licensed practitioners employed at the federal agencies where students are placed to act as the supervising attorneys (the field placement supervisor). The field placement supervisor will oversee the student's work, assuring that it serves both the educational purpose of the placement and the agency's needs. The field placement supervisors will also train the student as needed, address issues of professional responsibility that might arise during the student's work, and communicate with the faculty coordinator about the student's performance. In addition to the field placement supervisor, the Program relies on an adjunct professor based in Washington D.C. to lead the weekly two-credit companion course.

Finally, the *Health Law Semester in D.C.* Program provides an additional layer of professional and career support by matching each student in the Program with a D.C.-based mentor. Mentors are selected from SLU Law alumni working in Washington D.C. Attorney-mentors are expected to meet with their assigned student several times throughout the semester, to communicate regularly with the student, and to provide a means by which the student can contact the mentor directly and easily. The mentor provides an invaluable service to the Program by ensuring students are having a positive experience; by alerting the faculty coordinator to challenges a student may be having; and, by providing career and professional guidance to students as they work in a professional environment and near the completion of their formal legal training.

Questions? Contact the Health Law Semester in D.C. Program Director Amy Sanders at amy.sanders@slu.edu or (314) 977-8176.