**THE OFFICE OF STUDENT AFFAIRS
AND PRO BONO PROGRAMS**

**What is the Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs?**

The Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs provide support for students and student organizations to maximize the quality of their experience at the Law School. Our office is committed to empowering students to develop leadership, organizational, academic, and professional skills that will enhance their transition from the academic arena to the professional world. In keeping that pledge, we provide counseling to help students reach their academic, personal, and professional goals. Additionally, our office addresses student concerns and suggestions for improvements.

The Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs is staffed by the Associate Dean of Students and the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs. The Associate Dean also oversees all student groups, provides advisement to students and student organizations, develops and implements programs to enrich the learning experience, mediates disputes among and within student groups, and represents the students’ perspective to the faculty and administration.

**What is the Pro Bono Program?**

The Pro Bono Program provides students with opportunities to deliver law-related services to community members of limited financial means. The goals of the Pro Bono Program are to provide needed services to the community, instill in students a sense of professional responsibility, help students learn about representing the underrepresented, provide students with practical experiences and interaction with community attorneys and organizations, and build a positive identity that strengthens the Law School’s community ties.

**Is it mandatory to participate in the Pro Bono Program?**

No; however, first-year students are required to complete at least four hours of community service during their first year in order to participate in the Pro Bono Program. Beyond the first year, pro bono service is encouraged, but not mandatory.

**What is the difference between pro bono, public interest and community service?**

All volunteer work that is not law-related qualifies as community service (e.g. Building a Habitat House or working at a food bank). Public interest work is work that provides services to groups or organizations seeking to secure or protect civil rights, civil liberties or public rights (e.g. District Attorney’s Office, Government Agencies, Administrative Advocacy). Pro bono service is work that provides meaningful, legal work that helps a person of limited means, or helps an organization that serves people of limited means (e.g. Legal Aid Society, homeless shelter, Public Defender’s Office, student org/events with a legal component).

**Where do I find pro bono opportunities?**

While students are welcome to independently find appropriate pro bono placements, the Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs assists students with finding qualifying pro bono placements in private and nonprofit law firms, legal aid groups, and other organizations.

**Can I volunteer at an organization that is not listed as an approved placement?**

Yes. The placements secured by the Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs are not exclusive and students are encouraged to find volunteer opportunities that match their interests. The Dean of Students makes the final determination as to what qualifies for pro bono credit.

**What qualifies for Pro Bono Credit?**

To receive pro bono credit for service performed, the service must meet the following requirements:

1. It must be law-related. The service must be law-related.
2. It must be uncompensated. The service must be performed in a volunteer capacity and the student may not receive any compensation for providing the service. Compensation is broadly defined and includes stipends, academic credit, or fulfillment of academic or clinical requirements.
3. It must serve eligible clients. The service must be provided to people of limited financial means or charitable or not-for-profit organizations in matters that are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited financial means.
4. There must be oversight. The services must be supervised by an attorney, law school faculty or staff member, or other licensed professional, and the student must receive training from one of these respective parties.

**How do I turn in my pro bono hours?**

Log into Symplicity and navigate to your “My Account” page. Then select the “Pro Bono” tab. In the lower-left corner of the “Pro Bono” window is a button labeled “Add New”. Click on that button to bring up the form for creating a new record. You should create one record for each organization with which you’re involved each semester. Use the same record to record all hours over the course of that semester. Select “Pro Bono,” “Community Service,” or “Public Interest”. The specific fields related to that type of volunteer work will appear.

Once you have created a record of the organization, you can later add additional hours to the existing record. Log into Symplicity and navigate to your “My Account” page. Then select the “Pro Bono” tab. Open an existing record by clicking the “Edit” button to the left of its name. Click the “Add Hours” button (near the middle of the form). A new table will appear, with a line for the current day. Ideally, students would enter their hours regularly over the course of the semester, and there would be a separate record for each day of work with the organization. If you find yourself reporting all your hours at the end of the semester, then you may enter them as a lump sum under a single date. Be sure to click “Submit” after creating a new record or adding hours to an existing record. Once you hit submit, the screen will stay the same and you will not receive a confirmation page; however, your submission has been received by the Assistant Dean of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs. If you are unsure, please email studentservices@johnmarshall.edu.

All submissions must be submitted by the conclusion of the semester in which the pro bono hours occurred. You are encouraged to submit hours as you complete them. When submitting hours, be sure to fill out the form in its entirety or the system will not allow the submission to be approved. This will include, but is not limited to, the date the hours were performed, where they were performed, the number of hours performed, a brief description of the work, a brief statement describing the impact of the work, and the name and phone number of someone we may call to verify the hours.

**Can I get pro bono credit for work done at an externship?**

You may get credit for work at a pro bono or public interest externship AFTER you have completed the number of work hours needed to fulfill your externship. Note that only one half of your public interest work will be counted as pro bono credit.

**How many hours are required for pro bono recognition?**

Students who complete a minimum of 50 hours of pro bono service will be inducted into the Pro Bono Honor Society. Students who complete at least seventy-five pro bono service will graduate with pro bono distinction.

**Does the Law School issue awards for pro bono service?**

Graduating students will receive the **“Excellence in Pro Bono Service”** award if they are in the top 10% of the class for total pro bono hours accumulated during their law school career. The student whose pro bono service has the greatest impact on the community will be awarded the “**Chief Justice Leah Ward Sears Pro Bono Award**”.

**Does non-legal volunteer work count?**

No. Only pro bono work will be recognized for these awards.

**Why should I perform pro bono work?**

Through providing pro bono services students develop legal and professional skills, gain practical, hands on experience in real work environments and explore their ethical responsibility to provide pro bono service.

**What if I have more questions?**

Please contact the Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs at (678) 916 – 2680 or by email at studentservices@johnmarshall.edu.

**What is the Peer Mentor Program?**

The Peer Mentoring Program was created specifically for incoming students to help them navigate the first-year experience and engage with the AJMLS community by providing social and personal support.  The goal of the program is to increase student retention, improve overall academic performance, provide an on-going orientation to all aspects of law school, and foster academic and social integration. Each first-year student is assigned a mentor. Mentors undergo extensive training, and are responsible for helping their mentees navigate through the everyday challenges of school, society, and the community by drawing upon their personal knowledge and experiences.

**What kind of assistance and support does a peer mentor provide?**

Peer Mentors provide academic and social support. Since they are upper-class students, they have already gone through the first-year experience. They are very resourceful and can answer new students’ questions about wide-ranging issues, from housing and the challenges of law school, to extracurricular activities and preparing for classes.
**If I am having concerns about my peer mentor, what should I do?**

If you encounter a problem, please address this concern to the Associate Dean of Students or to the Student Director of the Peer Mentoring Program.

**If I need help choosing my courses, who should I contact?**

The Associate Dean of Academics and the Associate Dean of Students are available to offer you academic counseling and to assist you with mapping your course selections during your law school career. You can view a sample course load for full-time and part-time students on the AJMLS website. To access this information, go to the “Future Students” tab and click on “J.D. Program” on the dropdown menu. Then, click on “Sample Schedule” in the right column on the J.D. Program page.

**What is the Professionalism Series?**

The purpose of this Series is to help students establish good practices and high ethical standards early in their training. It is also an opportunity for students to meet practitioners and members of the judiciary who exude the highest standards of professionalism and ethics. Participation in the programs that make up the Series is mandatory for all first-year law students; however, we welcome participation by all students. The Series has featured prominent members of the legal community, including Justice Nahmias of the Georgia Supreme Court, Judge John Ellington, Chief Judge of the Georgia Court of Appeals, and Attorney Paula Frederick, General Counsel for the State Bar of Georgia.

**What are the consequences of missing a program in the Professionalism Series?**

Failure to attend mandatory programs will result in a letter being placed in your academic file.  When students petition the Dean or one of the Associate Deans for variances, reinstatement, or other matters, their academic records will be reviewed in full before such decisions are made.  Your academic record will also be reviewed by the Associate Deans when you apply for the Bar Exam.  To be eligible to sit for the exam, you must be certified as fit to practice law.  That determination hinges in large part on the information that the school provides to the Board of Bar Examiners based on the information in your academic record.  If you have an emergency that requires you to miss one of the professionalism programs, please contact the Associate Dean of Students.

**What is OrgSync?**

OrgSync is an online student organization management system that allows students to create personal profiles and get involved in the AJMLS student community. On OrgSync, students are able to become members of student organizations, keep up with organization events, news, and other important information and keep in contact with other organization members. All students are automatically registered on OrgSync.

**How do I activate my OrgSync account?**

To activate your OrgSync account, go to [www.orgsync.com](http://www.orgsync.com), and click “Sign Up” on top of the page. Once you are on the registration page, create a new account using your AJMLS email address, and create a password. Click “Create New Account”. After you have done that you can join a student organization.

**If I need to access services and resources that are available locally, what do I do?**

AJMLS has a resource list on OrgSync that provides information on local healthcare clinics, counseling services, eldercare services, and disability services. The list also provides students with local services for food, clothing, housing and legal aid.

**What is the SBA and what do they do?**

SBA is the acronym for Student Bar Association. The SBA is the student government organization for the school. Each year, an executive board is elected by the student body. The purpose of the SBA is to bring the student perspective to AJMLS. This includes representing the student body and its diverse issues and concerns in three categories – academics, service, and social development. The SBA sponsors speakers and forums to provide educational and networking opportunities to students, and coordinates community service and social events for the student body.

**How do I become a member of the SBA?**

All enrolled students at AJMLS are automatically members of the SBA. Please contact your SBA representatives to find out how you can get more involved.

**How do I get involved in other student organizations?**

The name and mission of each student organization can be found on the AJMLS website. To access this information, once on the AJMLS website, go to the “**AJMLS Students”** tab and then click “**Student Organizations”** on the dropdown menu. Information on student organizations and student organization events can be accessed on OrgSync.

**How many student organizations are on campus?**

There are currently fifteen student organizations on campus. These organizations represent various professional, academic, cultural, and recreational interests of the student body. The number of student organizations can fluctuate each year based on student interest.

**How do I start a student organization?**

New student groups may apply to the SBA and the Associate Dean of Students for recognition by AJMLS. Student organizations that are officially recognized by the law school are given access to an array of campus services, facilities, and systems. There is a process to seek initial recognition. To apply for recognition, your group or organization must complete a “Student Group/Organization Initial Recognition Request Form.” This form is available on OrgSync on the Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs page under “Forms”. For a request for recognition to be approved, membership must be open to all AJMLS students. More information on this process can be found in the Student Organizations Manual. The Manual can be accessed on the Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs and SBA OrgSync pages.

**How do I join a student organization?**You can join an organization through OrgSync. Click on “Organizations” on the community page, and select the organizations you are interested in becoming a member of; then, click on “Join Now”.

**How do I find out more information about each student organization?**

At the beginning of each academic year, the Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs coordinates a Student Organization Expo during New Student Orientation. The purpose of the Expo is to provide students with an opportunity to learn more about the school’s student organizations. For more information, you can contact the Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs. Each student organization also has a webpage on OrgSync that you can visit for additional information.

**How do I reserve a room for my organization?**

Log into your OrgSync account and click on “My Memberships”. Once you click on this button, a drop down menu of the all the organizations you belong to will drop down. Click on the organization that you wish to reserve a room for and it will take you to the main page of that organization. Once there, click on “Forms” and it will bring up a list of forms. Select “Organization Meeting Room Request.” Once the form loads on the screen, fill it out in its entirety and click submit. Your submission will be received by the Assistant Dean of Students for review. You will be notified upon approval/denial with additional details concerning the room assignment.

**What is the process for becoming a member of the JMLS Law Journal?**

Full-time and part-time students must complete Torts, Contracts, Property, Civil Procedure, and Legal Writing, and have a minimum GPA of 2.5 to apply to the Journal. Once a member of the John Marshall Law Journal, a student must maintain a minimum GPA of 2.5. Prospective members are invited to join the Journal through a semi-annual write-on competition. Students will be asked to submit a memorandum based upon a topic of the Editorial Board's choosing. Students will also be asked to complete Bluebook Citation and cite-checking exercises. Each submission is graded anonymously by members of the Journal. Those submissions that meet the criteria previously established by the Editorial Board will be invited to join the Journal.

**What is the process for becoming a member of a moot court or mock trial competition team?**

First-year students are not eligible to compete on moot court or mock trial competition teams; however, students who are interested in learning more about try-outs and the eligibility requirements should contact Professor Malempati at smalempati@johnmarshall.edu, the advisor to all JMLS competition teams.

**Where do I go to obtain information about scholarship opportunities?**The Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs has compiled a list of external scholarship opportunities. The list is available on the school’s website, on the “Students” tab. Once on the “Students” page, click on the “Scholarship” link. You must be enrolled at the school to access the scholarship list.

**How do I access the AJMLS Classified Ads?**

The Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs maintains the School’s Classified Ads page. Students use this page to post ads about rooms for rent, books for sale, joining carpools and many other things. To access it, you must first log into your AJMLS email account. Then, proceed to the AJMLS homepage. Go to the “AJMLS Students” tab, and click on “Student Services” on the dropdown menu. Once you are in the Student Services page, click on “Classified Ads” on the left column to create or read an ad.

**Does AJMLS provide health insurance to students?**

No. As of July 31, 2016, AJMLS does not offer health insurance plans to students. Although the Law School will not require students to have insurance, we strongly encourage all students to purchase insurance coverage.  An unexpected injury or sickness can result in heavy financial burdens.  Given the high cost of education, these burdens sometimes force students to withdraw from law school. There are several ways to secure individual and family insurance plans. You could potentially find a plan that meets your individual needs by visiting the following websites: <https://www.healthcare.gov> or <https://www.jamesgroupllc.com/index.php/request-a-quote>.

**If I have witnessed or have knowledge of a violation of the Code of Student Responsibility, do I have to report it?**

The Code of Student Responsibility states that any student who has knowledge of a code violation should report it to the Associate Dean of Students or the Associate Dean of Academic Affairs.

**If I have a personal or professional problem and need advice or a referral, who should I speak to?**

Please contact the Associate Dean of Students at sharrison@johnmarshall.edu, or the campus counselor, Ms. Sunamita Tuple, at stuple00@gmail.com.

**If I have complaints or suggestions about how to improve the school who should I bring them to?**

The Office of Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs’ staff is available for students to communicate their concerns and/or suggestions. Our staff has an open-door policy, but you may also call to schedule an appointment to speak with the Associate Dean of Students. Students may also anonymously submit concerns and/or recommendations through the online Suggestion Box. The Suggestion Box can be found on the **“Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs”** page of the JMLS website. Go on the **“AJMLS Students”** tab and click on **“Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs”** on the dropdown menu. Once on the **“Student Affairs and Pro Bono Programs”** page, click on the link titled, “Suggestion Box”. Complete the required sections of the form and click “submit.” Although the form asks for your email address, you have the option of leaving that box blank and submitting your request anonymously. All requests are received and reviewed by the Associate Dean of Students.

**If I have other complaints, suggestions, or concerns that I would like to discuss, who should I speak to about it?**

The Associate Dean of Students has an open door policy and welcomes your feedback on any aspect of your experience at the law school.

**If I am having a conflict with another student what should I do?**

The Associate Dean of Students mediates disputes between students, and should be contacted if you have a conflict with a student that you do not feel capable of handling on your own, especially if the conflict is interfering with your studies.

**If I perceive a student to be a threat what should I do?**

To address incidences involving potential threats to student safety, AJMLS has created a Threat Assessment Team (TAT). The TAT is a multi-disciplinary team that responds to reports from faculty, staff, and students about behavior exhibited by a student that is disruptive and/or threatens, or that is perceived to threaten, the safety of the student or others on the AJMLS campus. The TAT also identifies and connects a student of concern with the appropriate interventions and provides periodic, post-incident follow-up with the student, as needed.

Any student whose apparent physical and/or mental state or related conduct is such that the student may be, or has become, a threat to himself or herself, others, the educational process, or the AJMLS community in general should immediately be reported to 911 and the Threat Assessment Team.

The following members of the AJMLS community sit on the Threat Assessment Team, and their contact information can be found in the Threat Assessment brochure:

* Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Scott Boone
* Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, Browning Jeffries
* Associate Dean of Students, Sheryl Harrison
* Director, HR & Office Manager, Cynthia Davenporte
* Professor Helen de Haven (one of our tenured professors who has written extensively in the area of campus violence)
* Dr. Nancy Wesselink, Phd/LMSW/CEAP, therapist and President/CEO of One Source Counseling
* Jimmie Brown, Head Security Officer

**What is Title IX?**

Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School is committed to providing a successful learning and working environment for all members of its community, free from any sexual misconduct or harassment. The law school regards such behavior as a violation of the standard of conduct required of all students. In addition to facing sanctions from the law school for violation of its policy on sexual misconduct, a person who engages in sexual misconduct may be held personally liable to the victim and subject to sanctions independent of those imposed by the Law School. The Dean of Students shall serve as the contact person for all complaints made against John Marshall students.

**Where do I report acts of Sexual Misconduct?**

The law school provides several options for students who believe they have been subjected to sexual misconduct. Any law school student who has a concern, inquiry, or complaint regarding prohibited misconduct should feel free to seek information and advice concerning the law school’s policies and guidelines, its formal and informal grievance procedures, and the counseling and other services the law school makes available to people who believe they have been subjected to prohibited misconduct or violence. If you have questions, please contact the Title IX Coordinator, Dean Sheryl Harrison-Mercer, at 678-916-2682 or at 404-808-7887. She can also be reached by email at sharrison-mercer@johnmarshall.edu.

The Title IX Coordinator is responsible for overseeing the law school’s response to allegations of sexual misconduct by students and identifying and addressing any patterns of systemic problems reveled by such allegations. This would include ensuring that immediate and appropriate steps are taken to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred. When investigations reveal that reported sexual misconduct creates a hostile environment, the Title IX Coordinator is responsible for taking prompt and effective steps that are reasonably calculated to end the sexual misconduct, eliminate the hostile environment, prevent its recurrence and, as appropriate, remedy its effects.

**Who do I call if I do not want to make a formal complaint?**

The Law School encourages victims of sexual violence to talk to somebody about what happened so victims can get the support they need and so the Law School can respond appropriately. Different employees on campus have different abilities to maintain a complainant’s confidentiality. A complainant has various reporting and confidential disclosure options available to them.

Professional, licensed counselors who provide mental-health counseling to members of the Law School community are not required to report any information about an incident to the Title IX Coordinator without a complainant’s permission. The Law School offers professional counselors on and off campus, free of charge. The contact information for those counselors is listed below.

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| **Counseling Services on Campus** | **Counseling Services off Campus** |
| **Sunamita Tuple, LPC****(404) 872 – 3593 ext 3041****(404) 610 – 2007 (cell)** | **Joel Baker, LMFT****(678) 948 – 8057****Joel@joelBakerCounseling.com** |

A complainant who speaks to a professional counselor must understand that, if the complainant wants to maintain confidentiality, the Law School will be unable to conduct an investigation into the particular incident or pursue disciplinary action against the respondent. Even so, the counselor will still assist the complainant in receiving other necessary protection and support, such as victim advocacy, academic support or accommodations, disability, health or mental health services, and changes to living, working or course schedules. A complainant who at first requests confidentiality may later decide to file a complaint with the school or report the incident to local law enforcement and have the incident fully investigated. The counselor will provide the complainant with assistance if the complainant wants it.

**What do I do if I witness to acts of sexual misconduct?**

Atlanta’s John Marshall Law School strives to create a safe environment for students, faculty, and staff. If you have concerns about your experience or another student’s experience with sexual misconduct, you can speak confidentially to a counselor or the Title IX Coordinator. Even if you have not been the victim of sexual misconduct, it is your responsibility as a student, a bystander and a member of the community to report and discourage this behavior.

Students who have experienced an act of sexual misconduct will often disclose their experience to a friend or loved one first. This can be overwhelming for the person in the supportive role who may not know what to do or say to be helpful. It is important for victims to have people in their lives who will be empathetic, supportive and knowledgeable about available resources. If you have questions about the resources that are available, please contact the Title IX Coordinator at sharrison-mercer@johnmarshall.edu.