



Susan Hazeldean Wins Prestigious Award



Professor Susan Hazeldean

Susan Hazeldean, the Director of the LGBT Advocacy Clinic, was awarded the inaugural LGBTQ+ Inclusive Excellence Award by the AALS Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Issues Section. The award will be presented at the AALS Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. in January.

After only three years at BLS, the LGBT Advocacy Clinic has given students an opportunity to participate directly in the struggle for equal rights for some of the most marginalized people in our city. Not only have she and her students advanced the legal rights of LGBTQ+ people in our community, Susan's work has made it clear to our students, faculty and staff that inclusion of LGBTQ+ people is a vital part of our mission at Brooklyn Law School. This is a well-deserved honor for one of our newest clinical faculty members who has made such a big impact both within and outside of the law school in such a short time.

Safe Harbor Successes After Long Backlogs and Delays

Last year, several cases finally were adjudicated in both the Asylum Office and Immigration Court. One matter was a joint enterprise between the [Disability Rights Clinic](#) and the [Safe Harbor Project](#). The client, a young man from a Central American country, is so severely cognitively disabled that he cannot testify or articulate the facts of what happened to him. Despite this impediment, students in the Disability Rights Clinic under the supervision of former clinical faculty members, Amy Mulzer and Dan Smulian, established his credible fear of return. The Disability Clinic students over two semesters helped at this stage of the case were Rebecca Szczupakiewicz '20, Cory Bernstein '20, Katherine Schloemer '20, Mario Fitzgerald '19, David Kass '19, and Simone Lamont '18. In fall '18, they were supervised by Deborah Berkman, a visiting professor on leave from NYLAG. A host of student interpreters also worked hard with the client and his family to understand his story and to substantiate the claim: Diego Gomez, '20, Pavel Williams '20 and Will Granados '20. They were assisted by the Clinic's Administrative Assistant, Ana Puello.

Continued on next page

In this Issue

- Susan Hazeldean
- Safe Harbor
- Corporate and Real Estate
- BLIP
- New Faculty
- Criminal Defense & Advocacy

Clinical Education Program
 111 Livingston Street
 Brooklyn, NY 11021
 T: 718-780-7994
 E: clinics@brooklaw.edu



L—R: Deborah Berkman, Vilma Ilic, Mary Gergis, Alex Hull, and Professor Rey outside Immigration Court.

Corporate and Real Estate Clinic Students Close on Real Estate Tax Exemption and Refund for Williamsburg Building

Corporate and Real Estate clinic students are representing a forty-one unit building in Williamsburg whose residents suffered without heat for two weeks last winter. To address the financial difficulties faced by the not-for-profit tenant-controlled owner corporation, students are pursuing various strategies, including: 1) finalizing a real estate tax exemption and refund, 2) obtaining a rehabilitation loan through New York City's Green Housing Preservation Program which is scheduled to close around March of 2020, and 3) converting the building to a low-income cooperative so that residents who are willing to pay slightly higher monthly charges can own shares for their units. Fall semester students Nicole Ventura '20 and Yu Xie '20, negotiated a regulatory agreement required for the real estate tax exemption and gathered supporting resolutions and certifications in order to close on the real estate tax exemption on October 16, 2019. The refund, which should be available within a month, will be used for pre-development costs for the loan and boiler repairs.



L—R: Yu Xie, Esterlina Alvarez, the President of the client corporation, and Nicole Ventura

Safe Harbor *continued*

Next, the [Safe Harbor Project](#), under the supervision of [Carmen Maria Rey](#), prepared the case for the Immigration Court hearing. The new team of students working on the case were Alex Hull '20, Vilma Illic '20 and Mary Gergis, LL.M. The first court hearing was adjourned at the last minute but, after weeks of discussion with the government lawyers, by the time the hearing took place, both the judge and the government lawyers understood that this client needed the protection that asylum secures. The case was concluded in under thirty minutes proving that thorough preparation and advocacy makes all the difference. This busy team also successfully secured asylum for a gay man from Jamaica who has been studying in the US for several years.

Several other cases also were concluded happily with a grant of asylum in the Asylum Office after a lot of hard work by fall 2018 students. In another case supervised by Carmen Maria Rey, a scholar whose name appeared on an infamous government list of banned intellectuals also was granted asylum after his case was thoroughly prepped by Robin Michaelson, '20, Alec Nelson '19 and Hannah Sarokin '20. Two cases supervised by Stacy Caplow also had happy endings. A mother and daughter from Egypt, whose claim involved religious persecution as well as FGM, were both granted asylum. This case involved two independent but linked claims, doubling the work for Carrie Sandstrom '20, Kenneth Law '20 and Travis Elliot '20, who worked through some complicated potential conflict issues. Finally, Will Granados '20, Lauren Blake '19 and Emilia Foto '20, helped their client, a Tibetan monk, jailed for educating his community about Buddhism, to gain asylum.



JFK at 9 a.m.

In early June, the husband and son of a clinic client who had been granted a T (trafficking) visa arrived at JFK after a 10-year separation. Our client was represented by former clinic students, Sarah Burpee, '18, Gilbert Zelaya, '18 and Adrienne Couraud, '18, who were supervised by Dan Smulian. This fall, with the generous assistance of IOM, the family were able to get passports, visas and plane tickets. Their early morning arrival at JFK was a joyous reunion.

Although the Clinic cannot claim credit for this outcome, congratulations are owed to one of its asylee clients who

succeeded in his claim against the Russian government in the [European Court of Human Rights](#). As part of his asylum case, he demonstrated that he had been arbitrarily arrested and convicted of “hooliganism” as a tactic to silence his anti-Putin dissidence. Before fleeing to the US, he had filed a case with the ECHR. Three years later, his allegations of a denial of due process were admitted and he was awarded 2,000 Euros in damages. Will the Russians pay up???

The Busyness of BLIP

Legal Hackers International Summit

BLIP students helped to host and volunteered at the 5th Annual Legal Hackers International Summit. The Summit brought together chapter leaders from more than 70 Legal Hackers chapters around the world, to focus on issues at the intersection of law and innovation. Among the sessions at the Summit were the following:

- Open Legal Education Forum in which the participants discussed how we might develop and maintain open educational resources for law.
- Open Legal Data Forum in which participants discussed how we might foster a culture of open legal data in our local legal ecosystems.
- Free and Open Source Legal Technology Forum in which participants discussed how we might create a thriving community of free and open source legal technology developers and users in our local communities.

- Global Tech Policy Forum in which participants discussed how we might engage local stakeholders in our communities to collaboratively develop solutions to the most pressing technology policy issues that we face.



Legal Hackers Community Discussion in which participants discussed what's next for the Legal Hacker community and how might we continue to advance our mission of building an open culture for law.

Justice Lab

BLIP students have been building a “Justice Lab” at BLS in the basement of the BLS Law Library. Over this past summer and into this semester, BLIP students have hosted and participated in a series of legal tech workshops, both on and off campus, to train students in computational law and legal automation, with an eye towards building A2J apps. Our goal is to leverage the skills and passions of students and professionals worldwide to create and sustain solutions that serve millions of people in need – and prepare students to excel in the modern, digitally-enabled, workplace. The Justice Lab primarily uses “no-code” programming, machine learning, and other automation software development platforms to be used by people without programming skills to create apps that replicate the thinking and actions of lawyers. The harder,

legal work relies on law school-oriented skills and objectives to train law students to parse through statutes, regulations, standards, and other legal documents and then use the tech tools to automate applications around these statutes, regulations, standards, and other legal documents.



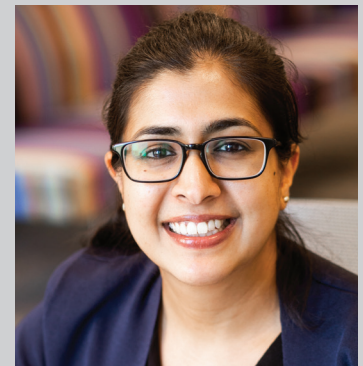
L-R: Diego Gomez, Aya Itani, Husai Buzzi

Welcome to our Newest Clinical Faculty Members

This fall, two new clinical faculty members launched the Disability and Civil Rights Clinic 2.0. [Sarah Lorr](#) (left) and [Prianka Nair](#) come to the clinic with years of experience in direct services in disability law and family law, as well as litigation backgrounds in a range of courts and tribunals.



Sarah Lorr



Prianka Nair

Criminal Defense & Advocacy Clinic in Court, At Rikers Island, in the Community

In the Fall 2019 semester, the Criminal Defense & Advocacy Clinic (CDAC), led by Professor [Kate Mogulescu](#), continues its representation of individuals arrested for sex work across New York City. Policing trends and patterns dictate the clinic's case work. [As first documented by Professor Mogulescu in 2017](#), NYPD continues to target foreign nationals working in massage parlors for arrest. Accordingly, all of the clinic's misdemeanor clients this semester are Chinese immigrant women who have been arrested for prostitution or for offering massage without a license.

In October, CDAC resumed its workshops at Rose M. Singer Center, the women's jail at Rikers Island. Each semester, the students create presentations designed to share information with detained women about New York Criminal Procedure law, criminal records, sealing convictions, correcting criminal history errors, and certificates of relief/good conduct. Clinic teams go to Rikers Island four times per semester to lead group workshops. Students also meet workshop participants individually to review their records and to identify and correct any errors they uncover.

Finally, on October 24th, CDAC partnered with The Legal Aid Society, Trinity Baptist Church, and the Department of Homeless Services to participate in a warrant amnesty program. Clinic students worked with residents of New York City shelters to search for any pending warrants on outstanding summonses. Summonses are tickets given for low-level offenses but a failure to appear in court on a summons results in a warrant that can cause individuals to be detained and incarcerated. The CDAC team met with individuals who live in shelters to help them ascertain the status of old summonses and clear any existing warrants.



L—R: CDAC students Mike Vilensky '21, Paula Gonzalez '20, Carrie Sandstrom '20, and Zoe Bernstein '21 in Queens County Criminal Court after representing clients in appearances in diversion court.



Mike Vilensky '21



Zoe Bernstein '21



L—R: CDAC students Paula Gonzalez '20, Jane Brennan '20, Carrie Sandstrom '20, and Christina Yellamaty '21 at Rikers Island.