



Disability and Civil Rights Clinic

This fall was a busy one for the Disability and Civil Rights Clinic as Prianka Nair and Sarah Lorr took the helm.

- We filed an amicus brief on behalf of several disability services experts in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit. Our brief urges reversal of a district court decision to dismiss a complaint challenging the indefinite detention of Markelle Seth, a young man with intellectual disabilities, who is suffering in prison despite not having been convicted of any crime.
- We also filed three different reports in our capacity as guardian ad litem for adults with intellectual disability. We conducted extensive investigations in each of these cases, including a trip to Ohio to visit an adult at her residential school there; each of these cases is now pending decision.
- We assisted Brooklyn Defender Services in the representation of a young mother in a permanency hearing, arguing that she be provided services that are tailored to her needs and her intellectual disability. Two clinic students conducted the entire hearing, including conducting cross examination.
- At the same time, we worked to obtain appropriate services for another young mother in similar circumstances.
- This semester, we will continue our work representing two adults seeking to terminate inappropriate guardianships over their personhood and will begin a new project initialing Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) requests with NYCLU, among other cases.



Back row, L—R: Prof. Sarah Lorr, Emma Charap (2L), Prof. Prianka Nair, Julia Sculley (2L), Joseph Nasca (2L), Daphne Spector, Elizabeth Berkowitz (2L), Fiona McFarland (2L)

Front row, L—R: Rakeem Johnson (3P), Melody Knight-Brown (2L), Dohnehy Schlau (3L), Lauren Saleh (2L), Sarah Francois (3P)

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BLIP Faculty and Student Co-Author Article

Adjunct Professor Lynda Braun worked with BLIP student, Arielle McTootle '19, to write a [comment](#) about the recent Supreme Court decision in a trademark case, *lanca v. Brunetti*, for the Winter 2020 Issue of *Bright Ideas*, the IP Journal of the New York State Bar Association.

Sports Law Externship Course Launches in Spring 2020

Professor Jodi Balsam, Director of Externships and a recognized authority on sports law, created an exciting new externship for the many students eager to work in sports law. The inaugural roster of Sports Law Externship students are working in placements such as Major League Baseball, New York City Football Club, premier sports law firm Proskauer Rose, NFL player-agents SportStars, and BSE Global, owner of the Brooklyn Nets and Barclay's Center. The nature of the legal work differs from site to site, with students this semester working on litigation, transactional, compliance, advisory, and policy matters involving the sports industry.

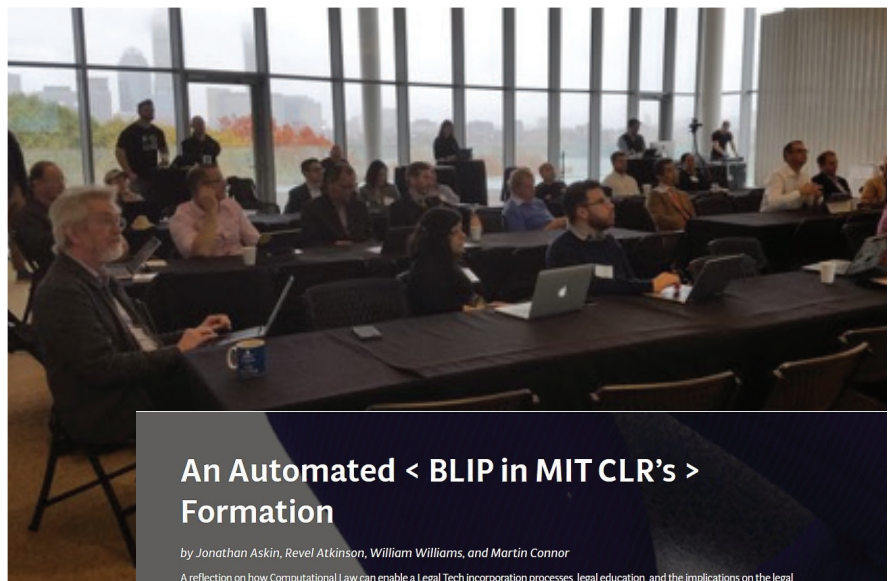
The on-campus academic component for the Sports Law Externship is a one-credit seminar that supports the students in understanding the practical, strategic, and ethical roles and responsibilities of lawyers working in the sports industry. Students develop communication and lawyering skills necessary to manage and execute projects common to sports industry legal work and to collaborate with the sports industry's non-legal professionals. Seminar assignments include presentations on "hot topics" in sports law, a sports industry networking project, and a final paper that analyzes a sports industry dispute. Seminar field trips will include a visit to ESPN's NYC studio to observe the taping of a sports roundtable show that debates current industry issues.

Melissa Felcher, a 2L who is working on collective bargaining negotiations and antitrust litigation at Proskauer Rose, observed that the new course "directly addresses common themes and issues that I have witnessed during my internship and has helped me to better understand this unique and exciting area of law."

BLIP Branches Out

Among the dozens of clients and projects handled by the BLIP Clinic this Fall included several projects focused on exploring emerging concepts in legal tech automation, algorithmic and computational law. In particular, BLIP has also been serving as counsel to the MIT Computational Law Report, an agile, new media online publication about the way that law and legal processes function as computational systems. The Computational Law Report features traditional written content (such as peer-reviewed articles, essays, and posts); rich media content (such as videos, podcasts, visualizations, etc); and reproducible software and data projects (such as computational law apps, automated processes, data science projects, games).

The Report is published and edited by law.mit.edu-affiliated academics, researchers, and practitioners. The Report fills a critical need for reputable, responsive, and neutral analysis of emerging computational law applications and thought leadership. The Computational Law Report's goals are to reimagine law as something dynamic, interoperable, and adaptive; to cultivate discussion at the intersection of law and computation; to create space for experimenting with new legal technologies. To kick off the first volume and issue of the Computational Law Report, Professor Askin and three BLIP students Revel Atkinson, William Williams, and Martin Connor wrote *An Automated < BLIP in MIT CLR's > Formation*. For more information about the *Computational Law Journal* see law.MIT.edu.



An Automated < BLIP in MIT CLR's > Formation

by Jonathan Askin, Revel Atkinson, William Williams, and Martin Connor

A reflection on how Computational Law can enable a Legal Tech incorporation processes, legal education, and the implications on the legal profession.

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Contributors (4)

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A Reflection on Legal Tech Incorporation Processes, Legal Education, and the Implications on the Legal Profession

INTRO// ORIGIN STORY//

The MIT Computational Law Report (the "MIT CLR") is a legal entity that was created more by metaphorical Iron Man than by C-3PO. [1] It was created by a machine but also by a human, by computer-driven legal automation tools in the hands of law students. [1] Indeed, the best elements of both human and machine united to deliver a potent legal product. The process epitomized the

LGBT Advocacy Clinic Students Present Training on Tenant's Rights and Fight for Transgender Parents' Rights

LGBT Advocacy Clinic Students Lance Bond '21 and Jennifer Liles '21 gave a know your rights presentation on tenants' rights for LGBTQ+ mental health consumers at the Rainbow Heights Club on Flatbush Ave on January 30, 2020. Bond and Liles discussed legal protection from housing discrimination under New York City law, explaining that landlords cannot turn prospective renters away because they will use public assistance to pay rent, for example, or discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity, or disability. They also discussed what to do if you are illegally locked out of your home, how to access city rental assistance programs, eviction proceedings in housing court, and the right to counsel under New York City law. Rainbow Heights Club members shared the challenges they have faced finding and keeping safe housing, and strategies for dealing with poor conditions, discrimination, and other legal violations. Brooklyn Legal Services attorney Josh Elmore also attended to offer information about legal services for low-income LGBTQ and HIV+ New Yorkers.

Clinic students Elliot Tanha '21 and Sean Collins '21 served as briefing counsel for two LGBTQ families seeking second parent adoption in Brooklyn Family Court. The Judicial Hearing Officer (JHO) adjudicating the cases questioned whether transgender men whose wives give birth to a baby during their marriage qualify for a second parent adoption to confirm their parental rights or must instead bring a paternity action instead of adoption. The attorneys for the two families



seeking adoption asked the LGBT Advocacy Clinic to write a brief in support of their adoption petitions. Tanha and Collins prepared a brief arguing that transgender parents should not be excluded from second parent adoption on account of their gender identity. Rather, any parent who wants to secure their legal relationship with their child should be able to adopt whether or not they may have existing parental rights based on their marriage. Transgender people face rampant discrimination and violence in the U.S. and abroad, and cannot be sure that their parental rights will be respected if they do not have a biological relationship to the child and do not adopt. After the clinic filed the brief on behalf of the parents, JHO Ross granted the adoption. The case was covered in the [New York Law Journal](#).

Corporate and Real Estate Clinic Closes Another Big Deal



Standing, L—R: Mallika Bolla '20, Celeste Russell '21, Jared Antico '20, Nicole Ventura '20, and Gil Igin '20. Seated, L—R: Yu Xie '20, Dylan Ilario '20, and Chris Nixon '20.

Fall semester Corporate and Real Estate Clinic students, under the supervision of clinic director Professor Debbie Bechtel, closed \$1,600,000 in loans for two Manhattan low-income co-ops, obtained a real estate tax exemption for a Williamsburg building and forestalled two bank foreclosures for Brooklyn buildings. \$700,000 of the loan funds will be used for crucial rehabilitation work while much of the rest was used to pay off real estate taxes, water charges and liens plaguing the co-ops and hampering their ability to maintain affordable units.

BLS Joins with Local Law Schools to Host CLE Program for NYC-Area Supervising Attorneys

On January 7, 2020, BLS, along with eleven NYC-area law schools, co-hosted the Fifth Annual Training and Reception for Supervising Attorneys of Legal Externs. Through this annual event, BLS Externship Director Jodi Balsam and other members of NY-ACE, the New York-Area Consortium of law school Externship programs, fulfill the ABA requirement that law schools provide training to the attorneys who supervise student practitioners in the field.

This year's event took place at Columbia Law School and addressed "Strategies for Reducing Bias and Leveraging Diversity," earning participants two CLE

credits toward the New York State requirement of training in Diversity, Inclusion, & Elimination of Bias. Leading the session were Susan Sturm and Richard Guy, Columbia faculty experts in training justice system participants in building "the architecture of full participation." They guided the lawyers in the room through an interactive workshop that offered concrete strategies for building classrooms, courtrooms, and lawyer-client relationships that enable full and fair participation of people with different identities, backgrounds, and roles.

The presentation offered methods for advancing identity literacy and safety, and reducing the impact of implicit bias on decision making. Professor Balsam and other local externship faculty served as facilitators to engage the

field supervisors in exercises that simulated interactions with student externs and sought to build trust and connection across differences. The session concluded with brainstorming about how field supervisors might use these

strategies in their workplaces. Judith Kaufman, a New York State Assistant Attorney General who supervises BLS students in the Real Estate Finance Bureau, praised the speakers as "dynamic, inclusive, and engaging"... "I learned so much from them, but also from the other attendees."

Over 100 supervising attorneys from the metropolitan area who work in government agencies, courts, non-profit advocacy and pro bono service

organizations, law firms, and in-house legal departments attended the workshop. They supervise our students in field placements as diverse as the Brooklyn Defenders, the EDNY federal district court, Advocates for Children, Kings County District Attorney's Office, Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, New York Legal Assistance Group, Comcast, and Donaldson Legal Counseling.

The program concluded with a networking reception at which the supervising attorneys, including many BLS alumni, expressed gratitude for the practical advice and tools that helped raise consciousness of these important issues and empowered field supervisors to provide inclusive learning environments for our students.

The flyer is for a CLE program at Columbia Law School. It features a blue background with white and yellow text. The top section includes the Columbia Law School logo and the event details: Tuesday, January 7, 2020, 4:30-7:00 p.m. at Columbia Law School, Case Lounge (Room 701), 435 West 116th St., New York, NY 10027. Below this, it states 'Co-hosted by members of the New York-Area Consortium of Externship Programs (NY-ACE)'. The bottom section displays logos for several participating law schools: Brooklyn Law School, Fordham University, Pace University, Elisabeth Haub School of Law, Cardozo School of Law, Hofstra University, St. John's University, New York Law School, and the City University of New York CUNY School of Law.