Entrepreneurship and Innovation Law Clinic

Semi-Annual Report 2017-18

From the Director

The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Law Clinic (EILC) is dedicated to supporting West Virginia's economic development. The EILC provides essential, pro-bono, corporate legal services to small businesses, social enterprises, nonprofits and individual entrepreneurs. All of our work is for West Virginia clients.

Echoing WVU President E. Gordon Gee, the EILC strives to be "the foundation that supports economic growth, including our infrastructure, talent base and business climate."

At the EILC, we know our clients represent the best of West Virginia. They embody the true Mountaineer spirit of resilience and innovation in the face of adversity. The EILC is proud to support the social enterprises, small businesses and individual change makers that play a central role in our state's economy during these challenging times.

In this semi-annual report, I've selected two projects to highlight the EILC's work. The first illustrates our statewide impact and ability to collaborate with an outside agency. The second is an example of working with a tech start-up and supporting the growing knowledge-based economy in the state.

Some of the other highlights of last semester include:

- Providing legal assistance for community groups interested in forming broadband cooperatives to improve rural internet access;
- Providing advice on corporate structuring and IRS compliance to a nonprofit dedicated to promoting access to healthy and sustainable food;
- Providing intellectual property protection assistance and general contract drafting assistance for a woman-owned fitness business in the Northern Panhandle;
- Providing intellectual property advice for a social enterprise dedicated to fair trade and promoting sustainable agriculture; and
- Providing corporate structuring advice for an organization dedicated to making the state's recreation economy accessible for disabled individuals.

If you have any questions about the EILC, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Priya Baskaran
Director, Entrepreneurship and Innovation Law Clinic
Associate Professor of Law

WestVirginiaUniversity.
COLLEGE OF LAW

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: A PARTNERSHIP WITH LEGAL AID OF WEST VIRGINIA

The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Law Clinic (EILC) is collaborating with Legal Aid of West Virginia on its statewide Community Economic Development Law (CEDLaw) Project.

The Project hired three EILC Fellows to provide legal services to new entrepreneurs and community organizations throughout the Mountain State. They will work for Legal Aid of West Virginia for two years to offer foundational training and ongoing technical assistance on business-related topics.

Communities throughout West Virginia are faced with the economic impact of job losses in the extractive industry and the June 2016 floods that destroyed or damaged more than 7,000 homes and businesses. The legal support and training the EILC Fellows provide to nonprofit organizations and budding small businesses in these economically distressed and flood-impacted counties is expected to support community development and benefit low-income individuals and non-profit groups that work to address poverty.

Paul Sheridan

Paul Sheridan works in the Logan County office of Legal Aid and serves the southwestern counties of West Virginia. Prior to joining the CEDLaw Project, he spent 24 years in civil rights enforcement for the State. During that time, Sheridan led the Civil Rights Division of the West Virginia Attorney General's Office and was the organizer and leader of the West Virginia Hate Crime Task Force.

Sheridan served as counsel to the West Virginia Senate Select Committee on Children and Poverty and as interim director for the ACLU of West Virginia. He has also provided pro bono legal work to Advocates for a Safe Water System, a citizens group formed after the Charleston water crisis. Sheridan earned his JD from WVU Law.

"The CEDLaw Project is an important tool for addressing poverty and building community in West Virginia. I believe that many of the challenges faced by Legal Aid clients stem from a lack of economic opportunity and resources, such that an effective effort to promote community economic development could have a major impact on their lives," he said.

Philip Pham

Philip Pham works in the Bridgeport office of Legal Aid and serves north central West Virginia. His family immigrated to the United States from Vietnam and opened up their own small business, so he is familiar with the challenges new entrepreneurs face while going through that process. Pham studied business at WVU and earned his JD in 2017 from WVU Law.

"I hope my family's experience, combined with my business background and legal training, will help me understand my clients' perspective and vision of their business while providing them with transactional work and guidance," he said. "I look forward to providing resources and legal services to people who are eager to get to work but need help with the initial stages of opening a business. With West Virginia's economy in its current condition, I think the CEDLaw Project can be a part of a bigger movement in revitalizing the economy and improving lives across the state."

Samuel "Raymie" White

Samuel "Raymie" White works in the Beckley office of Legal Aid and serves the southeastern counties of West Virginia. He came to the CEDLaw Project after nine years of criminal law work as a public defender and prosecutor. White earned his JD in 2008 from WVU Law and is admitted to the bar in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. He earned his MA in 2002 and BA in 2000 from Marshall University.

BUILDING A KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMY: UMUSEUS.COM

Justin Whitman wants West Virginia to be a hub for the technology industry, beginning with his own high-tech startup, UMuseUs.

"When I moved to Berkeley County from northern Virginia in 2008, there weren't many tech or business ventures in West Virginia, so I had to create my own opportunities," Whitman said. "So I did corporate consulting for Fortune 100 and 500 companies. Then I decided that putting my best foot forward in West Virginia would be to start a tech venture here."

UMuseUs is a multifaceted, interactive social platform that is centered around music of all genres. The website, UMuseUs.com, uses proprietary software to "provide platforms, venues and resources that empower musicians and music lovers to share, discover, interact, create and more."

"This relationship with WVU has been amazing because I know that the University, the College of Law and the EILC care about the state as much as I do." — Justin Whitman

"UMuseUs allows you to say, 'I'm a guitar player. This is what I look like. Here's an audio or video clip of what I sound like, or here is some of my original work'. Bands are able to find someone to play with them who is qualified, just like a recruiter does when they're trying to fill a job," Whitman explained.

"It also allows music lovers to discover new artists and become a musician's first fan. And it allows musicians of all ages to showcase their skillset from home and have an avenue for others to hear their music and give them feedback," he said.

UMuseUs.com will also house educational videos uploaded by music teachers or experienced artists for those interested in learning a new instrument. Through this component, Whitman hopes to create partnerships with public schools in the Mountain State to increase exposure to a variety of instruments and supplement music education.

UMuseUs.com will also have a competition component that allows members to create a virtual "fantasy band" by compiling their favorite musicians on the site. They can then share their creation on UMuseUs.com and other social sites, prompting their friends to vote for their band or make their own match-ups.

Whitman's partnership with WVU began with the Entrepreneurship and Innovation Law Clinic (EILC) in 2016.

"The EILC worked with UMuseUs to draft nondisclosure agreements, privacy agreements and terms of service," said EILC director Priya Baskaran. "We help with the initial stages in a startup process so that a company has a firm foundation set to grow from."

The Clinic also made sure Whitman complied with certain guidelines that come with running an interactive website involving minors.

"This relationship with WVU has been amazing because I know that the University, the College of Law and the EILC care about the state as much as I do. Their passion and their success means it will be easier for me to succeed," said Whitman. "Having the ability to work with the EILC gives me peace of mind financially because their help is pro bono, and ultimately the Clinic allowed me to feel confident that I'm protected legally and that we are launching our site properly. They really tailored their recommendations to our needs."

Whitman's work won't stop at UMuseUs. He plans to develop a tech business incubator for new startups, providing an umbrella of support for entrepreneurs wanting to grow roots in West Virginia.

"I want to show West Virginia residents that, when we unite behind an idea, amazing things can happen. We can produce opportunities for the state to realize its potential and expand its internet and technical capabilities," he said. "I hope UMuseUs becomes our stepping stone for creating more long-term tech projects that will benefit the community and the state."

▲ Professor Baskaran and students discuss branding strategies with start-up founder Justin Whitman

EILC FALL 2017 | BY THE NUMBERS

The Entrepreneurship and Innovation Law Clinic helps community organizations, social enterprises and early-stage entrepreneurs build **West Virginia's** economy.

2,500+
BILLABLE HOURS

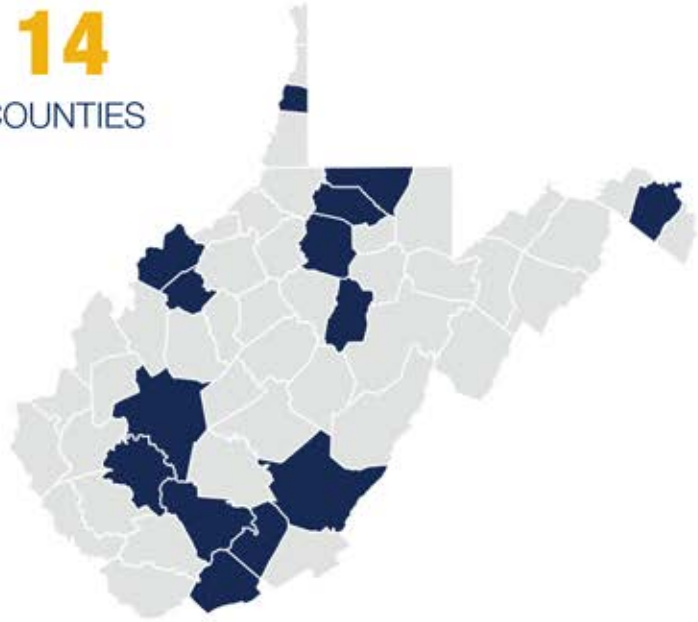
$268,000
VALUE

25
CLIENTS

100%
WEST VIRGINIA-BASED CLIENTS

(Data since June 2017)

14
COUNTIES



TYPES OF CLIENTS

- **Social Enterprises**
- **Start-ups**
- **Nonprofit Organizations**
- **Individual Entrepreneurs**

TYPES OF CASES

- **Business Formation and Structuring**
- **Compliance with Securities Regulations, IRS Regulations, Employment Laws**
- **General Intellectual Property Protection: Trade Secret, Trademark and Copyright**
- **Contract Drafting and Review**
- **Patent Work Limited to Assisting Student**

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