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Cardozo Hosts Annual Immersion Courses in Courtroom Litigation, Mediation and Transactional Skills as Part of Suite of January Intensive Offerings



Experiential learning is a cornerstone of the Cardozo legal education, and a major portion of the program includes opportunities for practical experience. This month, the Law School hosted several simulation courses as part of the practical experience curriculum, including the Intensive Trial Advocacy Program (ITAP), the Intensive Mediation Advocacy Program (IMAP) and the Intensive Transactional Lawyering Program (ITRANS). These rigorous, pioneering simulation courses allow students to gain real casework and courtroom experience under the supervision of top practitioners. Seventy students participated in the three intensive offerings this year.

ITRANS is a two-week immersion course in which students gain essential transactional skills needed for effective client representation. The course's structure sets up a mock deal where students, divided into teams, work on executing the deal using skills such as contract drafting, transactional issue analysis, negotiations, client communication, matter management, due diligence,

preparation of closing documents and client service. The entire interactive workshop process is guided and critiqued by experienced attorneys.

“We are so lucky to have such experienced attorneys, who practice at top law firms and in-house, participating in the course as coaches and guest speakers so that students benefit from receiving their feedback and hearing about a wide range of career experiences,” said ITRANS instructor and Cardozo Adjunct Professor Sophie Gandler. “ITRANS students leave the course better prepared to solve real-world problems and act as strategic partners and valued advisors to their future clients.”

“The simulated deal was masterfully crafted and executed, providing us with substantive insights into the practical nuances of transactional law,” said 2L Leor Hofman. “I have no doubt that we are walking away from this course more prepared to tackle transactional work that awaits us after Law School. If I could take this course again, I would do so in a heartbeat.”

Students who participated in ITAP gained hands-on experience and learned cutting-edge strategies for courtroom litigation under the instruction of leading jurists and lawyers from across the country. In structured days of trial lawyering, leaders in the legal field shared their expertise over the course of the two-week immersion. Students practice direct and cross-examinations, interviewing and preparing witnesses, selecting juries, dealing with evidentiary issues and preparing for and presenting bench and jury trials. The course ends with students conducting a full jury trial. At every step, students are critiqued by judges and lawyers, including individual reviews of student performances on video. ITAP is one of the only programs of its kind in the country.

Jane-Roberte Sampeur, Coordinator and Staff Attorney of the Women's Pretrial Release Initiative at the Legal Aid Society, was recently named as ITAP's new director. “I have heard so many wonderful things about this program,” said Sampeur. “For many students ITAP is one of the most memorable experiences of their legal education.”

IMAP, the Kukin Program for Conflict Resolution's long-running intensive, introduces students to the essential skills needed for effective client representation in mediation. Throughout this five-day interactive course, participants hone a skills inventory of active listening, interest discernment, client counseling, option generation and principled negotiation. Under the guidance of professional neutrals, students adopt the complementary roles of attorney and client to acquire more robust appreciation for nuanced advocacy.

This year's distinguished guest instructors included David L. Reinman '12, Supervisory ADR Coordinator at the United States Equal Employment

Opportunity Commission, Maurice Q. Robinson '09, EEO & Fair Housing Officer, Assistant Director, Department of Equal Opportunity at the New York City Housing Authority and Alan Serrins, Of Counsel at Beranbaum Menken LLP and former General Counsel, New York City Commission on Human Rights. David M. White, Adjunct Professor at Cardozo and Director of the Conflict Management Program at Seton Hall University School of Law, has been teaching the course for the last seven years.

“IMAP is emblematic of the sea change in law school pedagogy,” he said. “Legal employers demand practice-based readiness from newly minted attorneys.”

There are a number of winter break course offerings available to students during the January break at Cardozo. In addition to ITAP, IMAP and ITRANS, this year's offerings include Advanced Legal Research, Collaborative Family Law and Introduction to Financial Statements (IFinS).