

## A Message from UCI Law's Co-Associate Deans for Experiential Education

Friends,

It is our pleasure to share some of the work of our colleagues and students in the experiential education program at UCI Law over the past year. Like so many of you, we returned to classrooms, courtrooms, legislatures, and community spaces last year with a renewed commitment to serving clients and the communities they are a part of. And like you, we have sought to consolidate important lessons from the pandemic, find new ways to advocate, and embrace opportunities to reduce harm, increase justice, and in some cases, re-imagine the systems we are working in. We know that there is much work to be done.

Earlier in the fall, we had a gathering with community partners at [El Centro Cultural de México](#) in downtown Santa Ana, California, where our law clinics have a satellite space. It provided a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the work that has been done and to brainstorm possibilities for future collaboration.

Below please find some highlights of the work being done by our clinics, in our Pro Bono Program, and in our Externships Program. Through these programs, we continue to live out our commitment to service learning at UCI Law.

All the best,

**Annie Lai**, Co-Associate Dean from Experiential Education and Clinical Professor of Law

**Michael Robinson-Dorn**, Co-Associate Dean for Experiential Education and Clinical Professor of Law



**PICTURED** (right to left): Community and Economic Development (CED) Clinic Directors Bob Solomon and Carrie Hempel with El Centro co-founder Socorro Sarmiento, her husband Hon. Salvador Sarmiento, and UCI Law Dean Austen Parrish

## Civil Rights Litigation Clinic

**Clinic Director:** [Paul Hoffman](#)  
**Adjunct Clinical Professor:** [Melanie Partow](#)

The [Civil Rights Litigation Clinic](#) (CRLC) has worked on a range of civil and human rights issues over the past year. For example, CRLC students assisted with briefing and preparation for oral argument for *Vega v. Tekoh*, a Supreme Court case addressing the enforceability of *Miranda* violations under 42 U.S.C. §1983. Students also helped to prepare counsel for a complex Eleventh Circuit argument in a major case against Chiquita brought on behalf of thousands of victims of right-wing militia violence in Colombia. Chiquita is sued for its alleged complicity in that violence. In September 2022, the Eleventh Circuit delivered a sweeping victory opening the door to trials on the merits of the plaintiffs' claims.

CRLC continues to represent Kenji Howard, who served 26 years for a crime he did not

commit, in his efforts to obtain compensation for his wrongful imprisonment. CRLC students have also continued to be involved in lawsuits challenging police brutality that occurred during demonstrations in Los Angeles after the death of George Floyd in 2020. Students have reviewed video and documentary evidence and helped prepare for depositions and motions practice.

Along with our Criminal Justice Clinic, CRLC students are working on a taxpayer action against the Orange County District Attorney challenging its unconstitutional collection of DNA from individuals in misdemeanor cases. The case is currently pending in the Court of Appeal.

## Community and Economic Development Clinic

**Clinic Directors:** [Carrie Hempel](#) and [Bob Solomon](#)

**Adjunct Clinical Professors:** [Anna Marie del Rio](#) and [Linda Schilling](#)

The [Community and Economic Development Clinic](#) (CED) represents clients in a wide-range of matters in low- and moderate-income communities, with priorities in creating and maintaining affordable housing and economic development. Many of our clients live in mobile home parks, and much of our work revolves around the myriad problems faced by park residents. We have been successful in helping our clients purchase their mobile home parks in two instances. Both of these projects took years to accomplish. In both cases, the purchase has resulted in no rent increases for the past ten years.

Currently, we are representing residents in a third mobile home park in Fresno seeking to purchase their park. We are also representing residents in a different park who are fighting an onerous rent increase and in another who are pursuing a local ordinance to restrict future rent increases. Although the clinic emphasizes non-adversarial, transactional approaches to advocacy, we have brought litigation on behalf of our clients, and this semester we were successful in resolving a case for damages on behalf of one mobile home park client.

We also continue to represent a non-profit community land trust in Santa Ana as it moves toward establishing a community garden, as well as a group of small business owners seeking to preserve the identity of Santa Ana's downtown business district, three entrepreneurial cooperatives establishing agricultural and food businesses, and an organization bringing solar energy to low-income communities.

## Criminal Justice Clinic

**Clinic Director:** [Katharine Tinto](#)

**Adjunct Clinical Professor:** [Janet Hong](#)

This past year, the [Criminal Justice Clinic](#) (CJC) continued its work of advocating for those caught in the criminal justice system. CJC students represent low-income individuals who are charged with misdemeanor offenses in state court, often working in collaboration with local non-profits and advocates for the houseless. In addition, CJC has continued its long-standing legal work on behalf of noncitizens who seek to vacate state criminal convictions that are causing adverse immigration consequences. To date, CJC has successfully helped over 60 individuals vacate prior criminal convictions that—in many cases—were the grounds for their deportation or inability to live lawfully here in the U.S. After CJC vacated their criminal conviction, these CJC clients were able to remain in the U.S. with their family and loved ones.

CJC has also continued its work fighting for the compassionate release of federal prisoners who are serving lengthy prison offenses, often due to outdated and unjust sentencing laws. Since beginning this project in 2019, CJC has successfully won the release of 14 individuals, five of whom

were over the age of 65, six of whom were serving life sentences, and six of whom had each served more than 30 years in prison. CJC files these motions on behalf of clients throughout the south, including in federal courts in Alabama, Louisiana, Georgia, Texas, and Florida.



**Pictured:** CJC compassionate release client Derrell Gauden with his wife, Audrey.

## Domestic Violence Clinic

**Clinic Director:** [Jane Stoever](#)  
**Adjunct Clinical Professor:** [Patricia Cyr](#)

Students in the [Domestic Violence Clinic](#) (DVC) provide transformative representation to abuse survivors in domestic violence, child custody, and immigration cases. Students also carry out community education and legislative advocacy to more broadly address access to safety, justice, and healing.

For example, this past year, after DVC students learned that California law only allowed for a single renewal of a domestic violence restraining order, they proposed legislation ([SB 935](#)) on behalf of clients to allow for subsequent renewals of restraining orders. The bill, which was signed into law in July 2022, was inspired in particular by a DVC client who sought a second renewal of a domestic violence restraining order against her abusive father, who had repeatedly threatened her life with gun violence. In addition to addressing statewide or nationwide issues through legislative change, DVC students frequently appear in court to obtain protection for abuse survivors and their families through evidentiary hearings and negotiated settlements.



**Pictured:** DVC students Alexandra Super '24 and Alex Mayeda '24 at their first court appearance

Professor Stoever also continues to direct the [UCI Initiative to End Family Violence](#) and co-chair the Orange County's Domestic Violence Death Review Team. DVC students have been involved in the interagency team's review of cases, publication of a 60-page [report](#) analyzing a decade of domestic violence fatalities, and proposing [SB 863](#), which will allow California Domestic Violence Death Review Teams to learn from survivors of near-fatal abuse (in addition to analyzing fatalities) when formulating their recommendations for their communities.

## Environmental Law Clinic

**Clinic Director:** [Michael Robinson-Dorn](#)  
**CLEANR Attorney and**



**Lecturer:** [Melissa Kelly](#)

Over the past year, the [Environmental Law Clinic](#) (ELC) has worked on a broad range of matters and continued to deepen its commitment to centering environmental justice. Our 2021-22 Mysun Clinical Fellows, [Jabari Brown](#) and [Scott Badenoch](#), worked alongside clients and allies to achieve significant victories for EJ communities in both [Santa Ana](#) and [Orange County](#). The year also saw the ELC's students helping [clients to prevail](#) in defense of California's first-of-their-kind connectivity and wildlife corridor ordinances in Ventura County, and the protection of sacred sites and national park resources in the [Mojave Desert](#). Similar work continues on behalf of clients fighting to protect their interests in places ranging from [Oceano Dunes](#) on California's central coast to the Apalachicola River and Bay ecosystem in Florida.



In 2021, the ELC saw the departure of staff attorney and fellow [Brett Korte](#), who joined Clean Wisconsin, followed in early 2022 by the addition of [Daniel Jacobs](#) as staff Senior Counsel. The ELC continues to have a close collaborative relationship with UCI's Center for Land, Environment, and Natural Resources (CLEANR), including with its staff directors [Melissa Kelly](#) '14 and [Gregg Macey](#).

## Immigrant Rights Clinic

**Clinic Director:** [Annie Lai](#)

**Adjunct Clinical Professors:** [Sabrina Rivera](#) and [Theresa Nguyen](#)

The [Immigrant Rights Clinic](#) (IRC) provides holistic representation to immigrants facing detention and deportation and partners with immigrant advocacy groups on critical issues affecting low-income immigrants in California and beyond. Over the past year, IRC advocated for a number of clients who had won post-conviction relief to have their deportation cases closed, thus paving the way for clients to renew their green cards or apply for citizenship. IRC students also collaborated with a social work team (including a social work student at California State University-Fullerton) to assist clients with immediate non-legal needs, such as getting access to housing, identity documents, and mental health care.

IRC students also continue to assist with discovery in a [putative class action case](#) challenging Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) practices when conducting warrantless arrests at community members' homes. Plaintiffs in the case hope to stop ICE officers' tactic of posing as police or probation to trick community members into complying with their demands. In addition, IRC students are continuing to work closely with the Orange County Rapid Response Network (OCRNR) to conduct trainings on various topics to empower local organizers and immigrant families. This past fall, a student team gave a training on the interaction between the criminal and immigration systems.



**Pictured:** IRC client, U.S. Army veteran Victor Partida, at his naturalization ceremony

Finally, students are partnering with groups in other parts of the country, helping to review records obtained via the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) on ICE surveillance technology and conducting research on potential legal challenges to Texas's Operation Lone Star.

## Intellectual Property, Arts, and Technology Clinic

**Clinic Director:** [Jack Lerner](#)

**Adjunct Clinical Professors:** [Susan Seager](#) and [Christina Gagnier](#)

Since the [Intellectual Property, Arts, and Technology Clinic](#) (IPAT) released [Rap on Trial: A Legal Guide for Attorneys](#) last year, IPAT students and faculty have been busy working with attorneys, artists, and policymakers to help ensure that creative expression cannot be used in court to circumvent a defendant's right to a fair trial. In September 2022, students Jillian Lynk and Justin Stalberg, together with Professor Jack Lerner, [met with lawmakers in Washington, D.C.](#) to help them understand the issue; and back in California, Governor Gavin Newsom signed The Decriminalizing Creative Expression Act, the nation's first legislation to address this problem. Lerner and his students worked with members of the California Legislature and their staff to help them understand this issue and craft sound legislation.



**Pictured:** IPAT students Justin Stalberg '24 and Jillian Lynk '24 with Professor Jack Lerner and Congressional Representatives Jamaal Bowman and Hank Johnson. Photo courtesy of the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA).

The IPAT Clinic's [Press Freedom Project](#) also racked up an impressive string of victories fighting for journalists and media organizations. [Students settled a civil rights lawsuit](#) in federal court on behalf of Long Beach student photojournalist Pablo Unzueta for \$90,000 after Los Angeles County Sheriff deputies illegally arrested him after a protest; IPAT student Zöe Vikstrom recently spoke about this work at the Access and Accountability Conference at Yale Law School.

California Public Records Act (CPRA) lawsuit students filed on behalf of Los Angeles freelance reporter Ben Camacho prompted the City of Santa Ana to quickly release police body camera footage of incidents involving sexual harassment of a teenaged girl and the fatal shooting of a young man. And the Press Freedom Project created new law when students won a published decision in the California Court of Appeal ordering a Madera County juvenile court to unseal the juvenile case file of a 14-year-old girl who was killed after social workers ignored repeated reports of abuse. In June 2022, Professor Susan Seager was awarded the Los Angeles Press Club's [Guardian Award](#) for her work directing the Press Freedom Project.



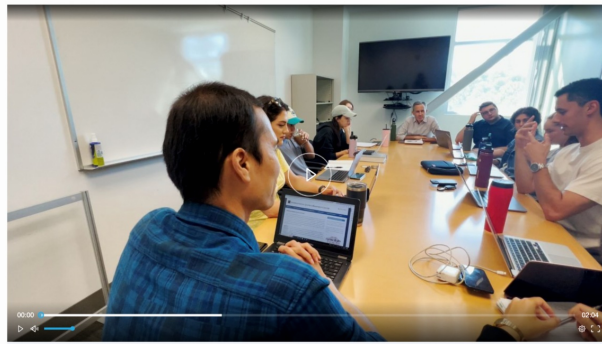
**Pictured** (left to right): IPAT student Leon He '24, client Ben Camacho and Wesley Juels.



# International Justice Clinic

**Clinic Director:** [David Kaye](#)  
**Clinical Fellows:** [Hinako Sugiyama](#)  
and [Hashmat Nadirpor](#)

The core agenda of the [International Justice Clinic](#) (IJC) is to develop, extend and consolidate international human rights law in particular areas of need. Several projects focus on human rights in the digital age. With the support of the Ford Foundation and in collaboration with the International Center for Non-Profit Law, IJC launched its Treaty Body Litigation Initiative in 2021. The initiative is identifying digital rights cases for litigation before the United Nations treaty bodies that are monitoring human rights compliance around the world. Students and faculty, including our new Digital Rights Fellow, Hinako Sugiyama, are partnering with lawyers and human rights defenders worldwide to research and prepare cases for submission to treaty bodies, focusing on digital surveillance and censorship. IJC is also leading projects to promote the use of human rights law and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights in social media content moderation and the development of constraints on the global private spyware industry.



UCI Law students, Afghan legal expert push for human rights

In addition, IJC is active in non-digital rights spaces. With the support of the Scholars at Risk program and our new fellow, Hashmat Nadirpor, IJC has launched an [Afghanistan Human Rights Project](#) to monitor and report on violations since the Taliban took over the country in August 2021. IJC is also leading a national effort to urge the establishment – or at least consideration – of a national human rights institution (NHRI) in the United States, working with activists and academics across the United States and NHRIs worldwide to develop the models possible for a U.S. effort.

## Ninth Circuit Appellate Litigation Clinic

**Clinic Directors:** [Peter Afrasiabi](#) and [Kathryn Davis](#)  
**Adjunct Clinical Professors:** [Kathryn Eidmann](#) and [Michael Seplow](#)

The [Ninth Circuit Appellate Litigation Clinic](#) (ALC) litigated several immigration and prisoner 1983 appeals over the past year. It currently has an en banc request pending in a case where a client was shot by prison guards. The ALC has also filed an opening brief in an immigration appeal raising question about continued *Chevron* deference to the agency's interpretations of immigration law.

Last year, students argued appeals in several Ninth Circuit cases, ranging from an immigration appeal on behalf of a sex trafficking survivor seeking to avoid removal back to Thailand under the Convention Against Torture (CAT) to cases raising Fourth Amendment issues related to the scope of search authority that police possess when reviewing modern cell phones and digital device data. The ALC had a particularly notable win in an appeal on behalf of Cuban national who was beaten and detained by Cuban police on account of his political opinion. The ALC obtained reversal of the agency's adverse credibility findings and denial of a continuance allowing petitioner to obtain additional supporting evidence. The Ninth Circuit remanded the case for a new hearing on petitioner's asylum, withholding of removal and CAT claims.

## Workers, Law, and Organizing Clinic

**Clinic Director:** [Sameer Ashar](#)  
**Adjunct Clinical Professor:** [Amelia Alvarez](#) and [Jennifer Reisch](#)

Amongst other projects, [Workers, Law, and Organizing Clinic](#) (WLO) students, in conjunction with the [United Farm Workers](#) and [Martinez Aguila-socho Law, Inc.](#) in Bakersfield, have investigated the termination of workers at a food processing plant in the Central Valley this past year. Students drafted a state court complaint alleging retaliation against the workers in violation of public policy for two walkouts in protest of unsafe conditions in the plant during the pandemic. In fall 2022, clinic students are working with [National Day Laborer Organizing Network](#) on deferred action requests for immigrant workers in labor disputes, [Rideshare Drivers United](#) on behalf of drivers deactivated by platform companies, [Unemployed Workers United](#) on local temporary agency regulation, [UNITE HERE Local 11](#) on behalf of hospitality workers, and [Warehouse Workers Resource Center](#) on organizing in logistics operations in the Inland Empire.

Finally, with support from the [American Association of University Women](#) and led by experienced litigator and policy advocate Jennifer Reisch, a student team is focused on the representation of women, Trans, and femme workers in the low-wage sector. The team is initially focused on collaborations with domestic worker leaders in [Nuestras Manos](#) and restaurant workers in Tenayuca Labor Project, both worker organizations in Orange County, California. The clinic continues to deploy racial capitalism as a frame in which to analyze conditions of exploitation and expropriation in the low-wage sector and to co-generate strategies to counter those conditions with organizing partners.

## UCI Law Elective Clinics

In addition to UCI Law's 10 core clinics, the Law School also offers several elective clinics for second- and third-year students:

- [International Human Rights Clinic](#)
- [Reproductive Justice Clinic](#)
- [Startup and Small Business Clinic](#)

## UCI Law Externships

**Director of Externships:** [Anna Davis](#)

Students interested in expanding on the many experiential opportunities available at UCI Law can often be found earning academic credit while working with one or more of the 300 judges, nonprofits and government agencies around the world that host our students through the Externship Program. As most organizations have moved to in-person or hybrid work, our students have done the same. In fall 2022, students are engaged in legal work in Geneva, Switzerland; Washington D.C.; New York City; and government and legal services offices covering the West Coast. Plus, students are completing part-time externships providing legal services focused on environmental justice, housing rights, indigent criminal defense, education access, federal criminal prosecution, worker's rights, and more.

Whether students are looking for part-time externship opportunities to supplement their studies, or are looking to be immersed in a full-time externship for the semester, UCI Law provides opportunities for every situation. Additionally, students working at a qualifying organization during the summer may complete field placement hours that count for externship credit during the academic year.



**Pictured:** Jason Grimm (right) with Attorney General of the United States, Merrick Garland



**Pictured:** Dana Matsunami '23 (left) and Anna Wood '23 (right) participating in a full-time externship through the Center for Public Resource and Leadership at Columbia University in New York City. Both students are getting hands-on experience working to revitalize public school systems across the nation.

## UCI Law Pro Bono Program

**Director of Pro Bono Programs:** [Anna Davis](#)

UCI Law offers one of the most robust pro bono programs in the nation with students engaging in pro bono legal work within a few weeks of starting law school. This past year was no exception. In fall 2022, 88 percent of the 1L class signed up for pro bono projects. Overall, more than 90 percent of UCI Law students engage in pro bono at some point during their law school career.

As organizations return to in person work, UCI Law students are engaging with the community. For example, students have been busy launching a new project serving survivors of human trafficking in collaboration with Rutan & Tucker LLP. Students have also moved back to in-person work for survivors of crime with the annual Permanency Project; for domestic violence survivors preparing declarations for Temporary Restraining Orders; and for disabled or elderly clients apply for SSI; and working with deportees in Tijuana, Mexico. This is just a sampling of the 100+ projects available to students, and the many ways they volunteer every day to serve the most vulnerable in our communities.





**Pictured:** Luke Boughen '12 supervising UCI Law students doing pro bono work for Surfrider Foundation. The project is focused on research and advocacy for a stretch of coast in Capistrano Beach. From left to right: Jason Grimm '23, Luke Boughen, Amber Norrori Nieto '22 and Michael Vine '24 on the stretch of coast that they have been working to save.

**Pictured:** UCI Law alum Mariam Bicknell '17 of Orrick, Herrington & Sutcliffe LLP serving as a pro bono supervisor to Esteban Nam '25 and other UCI Law 1L's during the fall Permanency Project. This is the 11<sup>th</sup> year of collaboration between Orrick, Legal Aid Foundation of Los Angeles and UCI Law.

## Graduate Tax Program Experiential Learning

**Executive Director:** [Natascha Fastabend](#)

Our [California State Tax Clinic](#) offers students hands-on practical tax experience and skill in legal matters, such as client interviewing and counseling, settlement negotiations, and oral legal arguments. They also write to a wide variety of audiences, such as clients, auditors, attorneys and judges.

Students in this clinic represent low-income and under-represented taxpayers involved in disputing tax assessments from the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration (CDTFA). Under the guidance and training of the supervising attorney, students handle all aspects of the appeal, including contact between the client and the tax agency, attendance of hearing appearances and direct negotiations with settlement attorneys from CDTFA. UCI Law Lecturer Michael Larkin, attorney at the California Department of Tax and Fee Administration, supervises clinic students and has taught over 100 semester length courses in tax law at accredited ABA law schools.

[UCI Law's Graduate Tax Program Externships](#) are comprised of partnerships with a wide variety of employers including law firms, industry and government.

During the Spring 2023 semester, our Graduate Tax Program students will be externing with partners including: Bechtel, Edwards Lifesciences, Gilead Sciences, Herbalife, the Office of Tax Appeals, Rutan & Tucker and the United States Tax Court.



**Pictured:** UCI Grad Tax student, Xingshuo Liu, '20 and Michael Sylvester, Senior Tax Director at SpaceX (now retired)



**Pictured:** UCI Grad Tax student, Grace Guan '20 and Doug Schaaf, Partner at Paul Hastings

## UCI Law Experiential Education Administration

**Co-Associate Dean for Experiential Education:** [Annie Lai](#)

**Co-Associate Dean for Experiential Education:** [Michael Robinson-Dorn](#)

Director of Externships and Pro Bono: [Anna Davis](#)  
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