

JOYCE ANN BROWN INNOCENCE CLINIC
UNT DALLAS COLLEGE OF LAW
JUNE 30, 2023 REPORT
For period January 1, 2023- May 31, 2023

Summary

Spring 2023 continued the in-person operations for the Joyce Ann Brown Innocence Clinic. The JABIC offices were open for student work although a limited percentage of office hours worked remotely were allowed.

Our Experience

We continued the team approach to selected cases. Students continued research on legal arguments, gathering factual information and exploration of potential expert witnesses. The team approach concentrates student resources on fewer cases but yields more in-depth analysis and development of legal claims. We find that the team approach encourages collaborative legal work and provides students opportunities to test theories and develop new case strategies.

To address the increasing accumulation of pending requests, beginning with the fall semester¹, we will implement the following steps:

- 1) each enrolled student will be assigned to respond to specific inmate letters, requesting materials and responses to specific follow-up questions;
- 2) for each assigned letter, the students will contact the court of jurisdiction to obtain court records and transcripts, if not available on line;
- 3) for each assigned letter, the students will download all available pleadings and court opinions;

¹ Our summer enrollment was so low, only two students, that we were not able to institute these procedures.

- 4) faculty will review the status of all pending matters and categorize those matters based upon the viability of additional investigation and possible legal theories.
- 5) during the weekly rounds' sessions, there will be presentations on those inquiries for which follow-up materials and correspondence have been received to assess potential further action.

We have hired a legal assistant who will provide needed administrative support. This support person will contribute to management of inquiries and other tasks. With her participation, supervising faculty plan to do an audit of all pending cases, formally closing those cases where no viable additional investigation can be identified.

National Wrongful Conviction Recognition

October 2nd is National Wrongful Conviction Recognition Day. The Joyce Ann Brown Innocence Clinic commemorated the day with a special event at the law school. Dallas County District Attorney John Creuzot, director and attorneys in the Dallas County District Attorneys Integrity Unit, the founders of the Innocence Project of Texas, several exonerees and family members of exonerees attended. The program began with remarks from persons involved in innocence work and representatives of the exonerees. The focus and theme for the event was "why this day should be recognized." At dusk, the program transitioned to the park for a symbolic lighting of candles as we honor men and women of Dallas County who have been wrongfully convicted.

Use of Funds

The provided funding is used in two ways: 1) contribution to salaries and 2) direct client expenses.

Contribution to salaries: supervision and management of the inquiries and investigations is conducted under the direct supervision of the Director and Assistant Director of Experiential Education. Funds are used to contribute ten percent (10%) and twenty percent (20%) respectively of those faculty members' salaries. This percentage contribution is less than the actual time expended by these faculty members on JABIC supervision and operations.

Additionally, \$10,000 of the funds will be contributed to the salary of the legal assistant. This contribution allowed the department to elevate an administrative assistant position to the more specialized and skilled position of legal assistant. Again, it is anticipated that the legal assistant's workload relative to JABIC will exceed the percentage contribution to the overall salary range.

The Director of Experiential Education regularly certifies the percentage allocation of workload for the Assistant Director to the JABIC.

Direct client expenses: during the review and investigation of claims specific expenses are encountered. Most commonly, the costs are associated with the acquisition of court transcripts, police records, and other documents. Expenses have also been incurred relative to experts to assist in assessment of potential claims.

The procedure for such client expenses is: 1) the assigned student discusses the rationale and purpose of the expenditure with either the Director or Assistant Director; 2) the student completes a "Request for Funds" form identifying the inquiry, the requested items, and the purpose of the request; 3) that form is submitted to either the Director or Assistant Director for approval; 4) that approval and information is forwarded to administrative support staff for processing, sometimes as reimbursements for expenses already paid or for issuance

of a requisition. Items to be paid from the TIDC funds are identified for the administrative staff by either the Director or Assistant Director.

WORKLOAD REPORT

Total requests for assistance received	97
Requests for assistance based on claim of actual innocence	83
# of innocence claims screened	43
# of innocence claims closed after screening	7
# of innocence claims closed after investigation	0
# of innocence claims with legal remedy pursued	0
# of innocence claims with relief granted	0
# of innocence claims with relief denied	0
# of innocence claims under active investigation at end of period	75
# of innocence claims awaiting investigation at end of period	221
# of law students participating in the project	14
# of hours worked by law students	1530
# of students from other fields of study participating in project	0
# of hours worked by students from other fields of study	0