POST-GRADUATE FELLOWSHIPS WITH WASHINGTON AND LEE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW - TRANSNATIONAL LAW INSTITUTE

The Washington and Lee University School of Law - Transnational Law Institute is pleased to announce the opportunity to work pro-bono as a law fellow in Liberia for the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Public Works, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Labor, the Supreme Court, the James A. A. Pierre Judicial Institute, or The Carter Center in Liberia. This initiative of the Transnational Law Institute will be implemented with assistance from The Carter Center’s Access to Justice Project in Liberia.

The Washington and Lee University School of Law - Transnational Law Institute was established in 2006, to globalize the study of law at W&L. The International Law Practicums, which operates programs in Cambodia, Liberia, and The Hague, form a key element of the Transnational Law Institute's broad array of international and comparative law programs. The Transnational Law Institute supports and coordinates teaching innovations, global externships and fellowships, a speaker series, and visiting faculty to help prepare students for the increasing globalization of legal practice.

The Transnational Law Institute has functioned in Liberia since the spring of 2008, conducting The Liberia Access to Justice Practicum; a joint program at Washington and Lee School of Law in Lexington, Virginia and the Louis A. Grimes School of Law at the University of Liberia, Monrovia, Liberia and the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime. Its principle goal is to educate and train, every academic semester, a selected number of W&L and Louis A. Grimes’ law students on the human rights of detainees to access to justice and the role of paralegals working with lawyers to ensure those rights are respected and to conduct prison visits to promote access to justice.

The Carter Center, in partnership with Emory University, is committed to advancing human rights and alleviating unnecessary human suffering. Founded in 1982 by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and former First Lady Rosalynn Carter, the Atlanta-based Center has helped to improve the quality of life for people in more than 70 countries.

The Carter Center, with offices based in Liberia, has operated an Access to Justice Project since 2006. Working with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Judiciary, and the James A. A. Pierre Judicial Institute, the Carter Center is working to help build the capacity necessary within the justice system to provide accessible, fair, and consistent justice.

FELLOWSHIP DETAILS

These fellowships are sponsored by the Washington and Lee University School of Law’s Transnational Law Institute which is responsible for promoting and establishing the placements. The Carter Center will
facilitate in-country aspects of the fellowship in Liberia and provide a local point of contact. The Transnational Law Institute and The Carter Center are fellowship facilitators only. There is no academic credit or funding available from either organization for the fellowships.

These fellowships offer current and graduate students a unique opportunity to engage in legal reform and legal development at a critical time in Liberian history, as well as a challenging and interesting personal experience.

Post-graduate fellowships are available starting after the graduate takes a bar examination in the United States. These post-graduate fellowships are flexible can be arranged to fit a law graduate’s schedule but require a minimum commitment of not less than six (6) months. Preference will be given to applicants who can participate for 9 months or longer, and only applicants who can participate 10 months or longer will be considered for placements in the Ministry of Justice.

Applicants can express preferences for their placement, but placements will be determined by the Transnational Law Institute after considering the interests and experience of the applicant, and consultations with The Carter Center on the current needs within the Liberian justice sector. Liberia is a post-conflict country and each of the fellowships below require a person who is willing to pitch in no matter what the task in order to get the job done and assist with the development of the Rule of Law. There is not “lawyer work” and “non-lawyer work” but Rule of Law work that can range from the most basic to the more legally sophisticated.

LAW FELLOW ACTIVITIES: OVERVIEW

Developing and strengthening the rule of law in a post-conflict environment encompasses a wide range of tasks and skills. Specific tasks are determined by the Fellow and placement supervisor upon arrival, but as a general matter, Law Fellows are involved in many aspects of the work of their placements. This includes researching and suggesting reforms for Liberian laws; policy analysis; negotiating, drafting and updating relevant contracts and agreements; legal proceedings for law enforcement; the development of training and educational programs; the development and maintenance of systems to record information and track important trends; planning and implementing reforms in various programs; and providing general legal and administrative support. Each Fellowship position is unique, and is an opportunity for the Fellow to work with their placements on programs based on his/her assessment of the needs and resources available. Through these activities, a Law Fellow’s work targets the following areas of impact:

- Developing & Strengthening the Rule of Law: Developing and strengthening the rule of law in a post-conflict environment encompasses a wide range of tasks and skills, and Law Fellows assist in everything from providing legal research and policy analysis, to providing administrative and coordinative support. Expected activities include legal proceedings for law enforcement, the codification and administration of Liberian law, the development of training and educational programs, and the development and maintenance of systems to record information and track important trends.

- Institution-Building to Uphold the Rule of Law: Law Fellows assist in institutional development by creating a working and learning structure within the institutions themselves. Law Fellows help develop and strengthen institutional practices from within, and help their supervisors understand how to utilize someone of their skill and background. This ensures that as
trained Liberians become available to assume responsibilities in the justice sector, there will be mentors and institutions ready to use and help further develop their skills. This is important because much capacity-building training is lost when there is nowhere for the individual to go and to use their skills. The Law Fellows’ work ensures that young Liberians who value human rights and justice are given a voice and a chance to protect those values.

- **Monitoring and Recording Progress**: Capacity and institution building are crucial to the development of rule of law, and the documenting and measuring of progress is as important as the efforts themselves. An important function of the Law Fellow is to monitor and record the needs of and progress in participating institutions, which will help the government set and meet concrete goals, and will facilitate cooperation and continuity across and among other efforts in Liberia.

**CURRENT OPENINGS**

The Liberia Law Fellowship Program is currently seeking applicants for the following placements. Please note that these are non-exhaustive descriptions of activities and responsibilities of the Law Fellows. Work accomplished during each Fellowship placement will vary based on the analysis and skills of each Fellow and placement supervisor.

*Please check back for updated information as new positions become available.*

**Ministry of Justice – Economic Affairs (requires commitment of 1 year)**
The Fellow assigned to the Ministry of Justice – Economic Affairs works on behalf of the GoL with NGOs and other counsel in negotiations, drafting and reviewing contracts, providing legal opinions, and business acquisitions and other transactions. Recent assignments have included reviewing and revising Liberia’s Public Procurement and Concessions Act, assisting with the creation of a national agency to regulate the import, export, and sale of drugs, and acting as legal advisor to the Government of Liberia on a major purchase of a private power plant.

**Ministry of Justice – Access to Justice (requires commitment of 1 year)**
The Law Fellow in the Ministry of Justice assigned to working on prison reform and refugee issues sits on various committees and task forces, and works with NGOs, government officials, members of the judiciary, and other stakeholders to review and assess current policies. Responsibilities include participation in meetings of the Asylum Committee, and the Appeals Committee of the Liberia Refugee Resettlement and Repatriation Commission, serving as a legal advisor regarding merits of individual claims and subsequent appeals, and assisting in the drafting of opinions for the Appeals Committee. Activities related to correctional policies include participation in the Pre-Trial Detention Task Force, which is comprised of representatives from the Ministry of Justice, the Judiciary, and other NGOs. The Task Force was created to reduce the number of pre-trial detainees in Liberia’s prisons, and the Law Fellow engages with prison officials, magistrates, the Assistant Minister for Corrections and Rehabilitation to collect information and draft proposals to address the issue.

**Ministry of Justice – Sexual and Gender Based Violence Unit (requires commitment of 1 year)**
The Fellow working at the MOJ-SGBV works directly with the SGBV Unit. The Fellow works directly with prosecutors, reviewing files and charge sheets, ensuring that cases that are brought contain enough
evidence to proceed, and prioritizing files that should be prosecuted. The Fellow helps the Unit ensure that the constitutional rights of criminal defendants are protected, while also working to ensure that victims receive the benefit of a legitimate forum to pursue their claims. The Law Fellow also attends trainings given for various government actors, including the Women & Children Protective Unit of the Liberian National Police (LNP), and the county attorneys. Prior experience with criminal prosecutions of sexual violence cases is highly desired.

**Ministry of Justice – Human Rights Unit (requires commitment of 1 year)**

The Law Fellow in the Human Rights Unit of the Ministry of Justice is extensively involved in efforts to support and improve the structure of the Unit, and to build capacity to collect, analyze, and use data which assesses human rights conditions effectively. For example, the current Fellow has assisted with the Unit’s contribution to the development of a household welfare indicator survey by the Liberian Institute of Statistics and Geo-Information Service (LISGIS). The process of formulating these questions involved the review of human rights treaties Liberia has ratified, working with national human rights groups to prepare questions suitable to Liberian households, and participate in workshops with various stakeholders. Additionally, the current Fellow is working on drafting a clearly and updated official mandate for the Unit, which involves comparing the recommendations of the assessment report with the Act which created the Independent National Human Rights Commission. Ongoing tasks of the Fellow include the organization of records for the HR Unit, cooperative efforts with UNMIL and UNDP, and creating internal processes and procedures to improve the efficiency and accountability of the office.

**Ministry of Internal Affairs**

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is the primary ministry responsible for traditional culture and local administration and governance in Liberia, including supervisory authority via County Superintendents and District Commissioners over Liberia’s Chieftancy structure. The MIA, in partnership with the Governance Commission, has undertaken a broad decentralization initiative in 2012, which is just entering a public outreach and implementation phase. The Law Fellow in the Ministry of Internal Affairs will support the MIA in developing an implementation plan for decentralization, including possible work on boundary harmonization issues, preparation for local elections, development of an updated local government law, harmonization of the customary and statutory justice systems (under the primary authority of the Justice Ministry), and other general support to the Minister and his key Deputies.

**Ministry of Commerce**

The Ministry of Commerce & Industry of the Republic of Liberia has a broad scope of responsibilities needs significant technical support. The Ministry is currently seeking a Fellow to focus on evaluating and implementing a draft consumer protection framework, and on developing a competition law framework, in coordination with national and international partners. The Fellow will be expected to engage in both capacity-building and advisory work, and will likely be consulted by officials at all levels within the Ministry. Examples of tasks performed by the previous Fellow (whose focus was IP law) include: producing an initial draft of laws; organizing and conducting workshops for government officials, lawyers, and stakeholders; meeting with stakeholders to ensure participatory policy development; producing a work plan and curriculum outline for relevant legal courses; mending relationships between the literary and artistic unions and the Ministry through personal meetings; providing comments on pending legislation and consultant recommendations; and generally advising the government on matters regarding intellectual property law. The new Fellow will be expected to undertake similar tasks in the areas of consumer protection and competition law.

**Land Commission**
The Law Fellow in the Land Commission serves as the resident land lawyer to the Land Commission, and advises on land policy and law reform. The previous Fellow (who remains at the Land Commission in another capacity): conducts legal research on issues of international and comparative law, legal history, and legal pluralism; participates in strategy planning for various projects; assist consultants retained by the Land Commission; and performs miscellaneous legal tasks (e.g. drafting contracts). In close cooperation with the Policy Program Officer, the Fellow supports policy reform processes through the work of the Land Rights Policy Task Force, the Land Administration Policy Task Force, and the Land Use Policy Task Force. That support consists of drafting key policy documents, comprehensive reviews of international and comparative best practices, ensuring that the meetings are efficiently managed and properly recorded, and collaborating with Liberian and international stakeholders. The Fellow is expected to assist in the drafting of new land laws through Legal Drafting Teams, consisting of relevant members of the Liberian government, civil society, and international partners.

**Judicial Institute**

The James A. A. Pierre Judicial Institute (JI) was established in January 2008 by the Supreme Court of Liberia. Its mandate is to train all judicial officers and court staff in the country. The Law Fellow working at the JI works directly with the Liberian Executive Director, and Liberian magistrates and justices. This position requires a mix of legal and creative skills, and involves both analysis of the Liberian judiciary strengths and weaknesses, as well as development of educational and training programs.

The Fellow performs needs assessment activities, such as the interviewing of judges from various courts, including circuit courts, the gender court, the child court and the tax court. The Fellow’s duties include assessing the strengths and needs of each of the courts, and assisting with preparation and execution of conferences for the Liberian legal community. The Fellow holds an active role in all JI activities, including sitting on subcommittees, assisting with strategic plans, and preparing for and attending retreats and conferences. A previous Fellow worked closely with stakeholders to develop the entrance exam and curriculum for the JI magistrate training program.