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Summer Legal Fellows Reflection
Dr. Leonard Cutler

For the past eight weeks I was given the amazing opportunity to participate in Siena Colleges Summer Legal Fellowship, through the guidance of Todd Ommen and Karl Coplan at Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic. The clinic represents public interest groups predominantly being Riverkeeper. As I began my fellowship I quickly had to become trained with the Clean Water Act and the role Riverkeeper and the clinic plays in protecting the Hudson River and other property's being exposed to environmental abuse.

During the fellowship, I was given the chance to be acquainted with an abundance of cases. However, I was mainly subjected to a well-developed breach of contract case and provided research using Westlaw and Lexis Advance. The research I produced assisted in finding out what are the standards of summary judgment were, CPLR, judge rules, and so on. As the weeks went by I became introduced to new terms and procedures that are entwined with the job of being a lawyer. Through the search engines of Westlaw and Lexis Advance I learned how to navigate the website and prepare key words to find what I was looking for faster. I was given the tasks to write an opposition memorandum of summary judgment, a service affidavit, notice of petition, and an affirmation. By slowly learning the IRAC format and structure of legal writing it became easier to produce these documents.

Despite all the legal writing training I received, I was given a lot of hands on experiences such as, meeting with a client and sitting in on the proof reading of their affirmation. In addition,

I was entrusted to serve legal documents. This was my favorite experience and the most rewarding. It was an awesome opportunity to serve papers down in the city, however, in preparation, to do so I had to organize and gather all the documents necessary for the serve to be correct. This included, binding the documents and discovering the rules that apply to how the documents should be served. In addition, since I was the one serving the papers I had to produce an affidavit of service. Which claims that I am a separate party and that I am over the age of 18, this document then had to be notarized, and filed electronically to the court. With the help from Todd Ommen, I discovered all the ways the legal system can have a series of rules for one procedure. I developed patience and an eye for these different types of scenarios, and found it very humbling to know that the laws are ever changing so you always have to be ahead of the game. I cannot express enough my gratitude to Dr. Cutler and the Pace Environmental Litigation Clinic for their guidance.

In addition, do not be intimidated to step outside of your comfort zone. Before my time as an intern, I was unaware of all the daily tasks of being a lawyer and how I would adjust to the differences. However, it all becomes very familiar as weeks go on you become more comfortable to doing tasks that once were hard. Prior to my fellowship, I was not as aware of the scientific side of law. Originally, I was interested in Entertainment Law however, by exposing myself to a new type of law, I found out a different career path I could take. By allowing myself to experience a different outlook I feel more confident in tackling the unknown that lies ahead.

This past summer allowed me to expand my perspective on what I am preparing for in the future, law school. It is a humbling experience to have a chance to work every day with real cases and clients. As I prepare to apply to law school I feel this fellowship has allowed me to

stand out when it comes to my resume. The experience has also taken my reading analytical skills and writing to the next level. With practice and feedback from Todd Ommen, I became more knowledgeable in recognizing my mistakes and legal writing became second nature to me and I am so ever grateful to have had this experience.