

JOYCE ANN BROWN INNOCENCE CLINIC  
UNT DALLAS COLLEGE OF LAW  
JUNE 30, 2024 REPORT  
For period January 1, 2024- June 1, 2024

Summary

Spring 2024 continued the 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. Spring enrollment saw ten (10) students enrolled and eleven (11) students for the summer semester.

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 semester, 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;
- 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 hired a legal assistant who will provide needed administrative support. The addition to the need provided a much-needed initial intake of the cases. This support person contributes to management of inquiries and other tasks, including mailing correspondence. 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.

#### Writs of Habeas Corpus

Students teams are concentrating efforts on cases that the JABIC has determined may receive a favorable result from filing a habeas motion. The teams work to develop legal strategies and to gather evidence to support the theories. We use the weekly supervisory meeting as a place to brainstorm, research and discuss case strategies. We anticipate as we move further in the process that the teams will present their findings and tactics to the entire class during the weekly case rounds. The teams made positive strides for information and evidence by connecting with district attorney integrity units, district clerk offices and trial counsel.

### 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.