

JOYCE ANN BROWN INNOCENCE CLINIC
UNT DALLAS COLLEGE OF LAW
AMENDED JANUARY 31, 2023 REPORT
For period June 1, 2022 – December 31, 2022

Summary

Summer 2022 saw the full resumption of 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

The return to in-person work allowed us to institute a team approach to selected cases. Those cases were chosen because the work on those files to date had identified potential viable post-conviction claims. This selection was necessary because progress on cases continues to be challenged by difficulties in obtaining transcripts, police reports, and other investigative materials.

The team approach targeted specific theories for relief. Students were assigned to either conduct the research and develop the legal arguments or the compile of facts and evidence to advance the legal arguments. The team approach, along with the case presentations, has allowed JABIC to invest time into claims deserving of concentrated resources. Moreover, we find that team approach fosters collaborative legal work and provides students opportunities to test theories and develop new case strategies. This allocation of students, however, concentrates resources focus on a lower number of cases.

To address the increasing accumulation of pending requests, we will implement a strategy:

- 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.

These efforts will be aided by the hiring of a legal assistant, a process that is currently underway. For much of the program operation, all activities have been managed by faculty, including physical handling of incoming and outgoing correspondence and such other administrative tasks. The legal assistant will assist will provide needed administrative support relieving faculty of those time draining necessities as well as contribute to the monitoring of workflow and inquiry progression.

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. It is anticipated that the legal assistant's workload relative to JABIC will also exceed the percentage contribution to the overall salary range.

The Director of Experiential Education regularly certifies the percentage allocation of workload for the faculty supervising in 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	178
Requests for assistance based on claim of actual innocence	160
# of innocence claims screened	20
# of innocence claims closed after screening	5
# 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	62
# of innocence claims awaiting investigation at end of period	210
# of law students participating in the project	14
# of hours worked by law students	1607
# of students from other fields of study participating in project	0
# of hours worked by students from other fields of study	0