

Pro Bono Requirement

Valparaiso University Law School Pro Bono Service Graduation Requirement

(Adopted by Faculty in 1988 for students graduating in 1991 and thereafter- amended in 2003, 2009)

1. **Rule** – Enrolled students must complete forty (40) hours of pro bono service under the supervision of an attorney. Full-time students must perform the service **after completion** of their first year and part-time students must perform the service after completion of thirty (30) credit hours. In addition, students are required to prepare a short reflection paper on their pro bono experience and to participate in a Plenary during their final year of law school.

DEADLINE: On or before the last day of classes of the student's final semester of law school, the student must complete all pro bono hours logs on-line in **Strategy**, and submit a student evaluation form and reflection paper to Career Planning. Failure to submit reports by the appropriate deadline will result in a delayed graduation date.

2. Purpose

- a. To introduce law students to the professional obligation of attorneys to perform pro bono work, the benefits of public service and the needs of the under-represented in society;
- b. To encourage attorneys in the local area and elsewhere to fulfill their pro bono obligation by partnering with Valparaiso Law students to expand legal services to those with limited access to the system;
- c. To improve relations between the law school, students, attorneys and judges in the local area and elsewhere; and
- d. To introduce attorneys and judges to our law students, thereby expanding employment opportunities.

3. **Acceptable Activities** – In general the intent is to make students available to assist attorneys in the representation contemplated by Rule 6.1 of the Indiana Rules of Professional Conduct, which states: *A lawyer should render public interest legal service. A lawyer may discharge this responsibility by **providing professional services at no fee to persons of limited means or to public service or charitable groups or organizations, by service in activities for improving the law, the legal system or the legal profession...*** This includes assisting a private attorney on matters handled without a fee or a reduced fee (e.g., court-appointed criminal defense work), assisting an attorney who represents government (e.g., city attorney, prosecutor, etc.), assisting a judge, and assisting an attorney employed by a public interest organization. The activity should be of the nature that one would expect an attorney or law clerk to perform, i.e., not clerical. Students may not count hours in court observation as pro bono unless it pertains to the case preparation work and accounts for less than 20% of total hours worked.

4. **Supervision by an Attorney** – All students engaged in pro bono service **must be supervised by an attorney to guard against the unauthorized practice of law.**

5. **Administration** – The program is administered by Career Planning.

6. **Site Selection** – Upon securing a pro bono position, all students must complete the online form, “Report a Pro Bono position” which can be accessed in their Strategy accounts and all pro bono positions are subject to final approval by the Career Planning staff.

7. **Compensation** – Students cannot receive compensation (credit or wages) for the hours of service used to satisfy the Pro Bono graduation requirement.

8. **Fulfillment of Requirement** - Satisfactory completion of the requirement will be demonstrated by:

- a. Completion of the requisite number of service hours;
- b. Completion of hours logs describing work performed in student’s Strategy account;
- c. Completion of student evaluation form;
- d. Completion of supervising attorney’s evaluation form;
- e. Preparation of 2-3 page reflection paper on the student’s pro bono experience;
- f. Submission of all paperwork on or before the last day of classes in the student’s final semester of law school
- g. Attendance at one Plenary session in student’s final year of law school.

The Valparaiso University Law School Honor Code applies to students completing these requirements.