



School launches Atlanta program

“... provides access to an impressive array of civil practice settings and opens up new opportunities for professional networking.”

—Atlanta Director Hillel Levin

Georgia Law has expanded its footprint to include the state’s capital with its Atlanta Semester in Practice. The new program offers students full-time, practical lawyering experience through externship placements in the judicial, governmental, corporate and nonprofit arenas. As part of the externship course, students take a clinical seminar and also take upper-level courses at the school’s facility in Atlanta, allowing them to earn a total of up to 16 credits for a semester.

Georgia Law in Atlanta Director and Associate Professor Hillel Y. Levin said this program is a terrific opportunity for students to spend a semester working and learning practical lawyering skills in Atlanta-area legal settings. “The program provides access to an impressive array of civil practice settings and opens up new opportunities for professional networking,” he said.

Placements from the spring semester included the U.S. District Court judicial chambers of Judges Richard W. “Rick” Story (J.D.’78) and Leigh Martin May (J.D.’98), the Georgia Attorney General’s Office and the Access to Law Foundation, in addition to other governmental and nonprofit placements.

Participating students and employers have embraced and praised the program. According to Georgia Law Associate Dean for Clinical Programs and Experiential Learning Alexander W. “Alex” Scherr, who teaches the externship course, students report getting more complex, difficult and meaningful work as a result of working full time, which develops their abilities as lawyers in ways that exceed their expectations.

“Having students full time [gives employers] the opportunity to learn the student’s abilities

earlier, to rely on them more heavily, and to get to know them more thoroughly,” Scherr said. “The supervising attorneys routinely compliment the quality of our students’ work. In turn, our students praise the depth and focus of the supervision and feedback that they receive. Most students formed strong mentoring relationships with supervisors, and all appreciated the chance to participate in the Atlanta legal community.”

Over the next year, even more placements will be available to students, including some in the corporate counsel area, through the school’s Corporate Counsel Externship. Additionally, the program will offer expanded opportunities for students to meet with Georgia Law graduates and other practitioners in targeted networking events.

Levin said the feedback from the inaugural semester was unanimously positive and that students are starting to organize their law school careers around the program.

Working at the Access to Law Foundation, under the leadership of Georgia Law alumna Rebeca E. Salmon (J.D.’07), third-year student J. Michelle Hamill said working full time at a busy, efficient law practice gave her the chance to test her abilities in a way she had never before experienced in previous internships or in any traditional law school course.

During its first semester, students were offered Education Law and Constitutional Law II courses in Atlanta. The courses on tap for the fall of 2016 include Remedies as well as Political Leadership and the Law, which will be co-taught by former U.S. Sen. Saxby Chambliss, who will be continuing his role as the school’s Sanders Political Leadership Scholar.