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NEW BUSINESS LAW CLINIC AIMS TO ASSIST DEPAUL ENTREPRENEURS

By Russell Dorn / February 21, 2019 / Posted in: [CAMPUS AND COMMUNITY](#) / [Twitter](#) / [Facebook](#) /



2018 DePaul alumnus Esteban Perez is working with the College of Law's business law clinic as he gets his business, Opex Esports, started. Some of the ways the business law clinic can assist DePaul entrepreneurs include help with business transactions, corporate governance issues, financing issues or intellectual property issues, such as trademarks, logos and copyrights. (DePaul University/Jeff Carrion)

If you have a business idea, but aren't sure of the steps needed to start a company, DePaul College of Law's newest in-house legal clinic - the business law clinic - is ready to help. Founded in 2018 to provide law students with an opportunity to practice their craft while still in school, the business law clinic offers counsel at an affordable rate to the DePaul community's budding entrepreneurs.

"The benefits of the business law clinic stretch across the DePaul community," says the [clinic's director Julie Lawton](#), an associate dean for experiential learning and clinical professor of law in the college.

"The client gets legal advice and work at a significantly reduced cost, while the students get the experience of being an actual lawyer, practicing real legal issues with real legal clients while they are still in law school. It's exciting to be able to support DePaul students, faculty, staff and alumni as they work to fulfill their dreams of owning their own businesses," Lawton explains.

Focusing on transactional law, the clinic provides law students

the opportunity to offer legal counsel to corporate or organizational entities, including start-ups, existing mid-sized businesses and entrepreneurs with DePaul ties, many coming from the Coleman Entrepreneurship Center in DePaul's Driehaus College of Business.

year law students might have the opportunity to participate in, and lead, contract and corporate documents drafting and negotiating, client memoranda drafting, the counseling of clients on corporate transactional legal issues, or providing primary legal counsel for clients. Depending on the needs of the clients, students also might be able to work on corporate intellectual property issues, such as copyright and trademark.



Julie Lawton, the business law clinic's director, is also an associate dean for experiential learning and clinical

“While students get a different type of experience here at the business law clinic, they could get similar experience as an extern at a law office,” Lawton says. “However, the major difference with the clinic is that students are the primary legal counsel for the client. They do the negotiations and draw up the contracts. They are not our assistants. Steve and I are here mainly to supervise, guide and counsel.”

For the client, the business law clinic might help them work through business transactions, corporate governance issues, financing issues or

professor of intellectual property issues, such as trademarks,
law in the logos and copyrights.
college.

(DePaul

University/Jeff Carrion) “One of the ways that start-ups and emerging
businesses are able to distinguish themselves in a
competitive market place is through their unique
technology and creative endeavors,” Wiser says. “The business
law clinic recognizes this competitive business advantage and
focuses on the importance of providing students the resources
to identify, secure and maximize the value of these intellectual
property assets for their clients.”

Many of the projects that the clinic works on are confidential,
but 2018 alumnus Esteban Perez was happy to share his
experience after he turned to the clinic for help with his idea for
a company that hopes to create after-school centers where
youth can learn computer programs like Adobe Photoshop while
also playing esport video games.

Perez, who was documented in a [2018 DePaul Newsroom
feature](#), started Opex Esports in November 2018 and turned to
the business law clinic last year after shaping his original idea
with the help of the Coleman Entrepreneurship Center and 1871,
Chicago’s tech business incubator.

“The business law clinic helped me feel confident about what I
needed to watch out for while starting my business,” Perez says.

“Being a first-time business owner can be extremely daunting, and I'm very lucky to have the clinic assisting me.”

Two of the eight students who work in the business law clinic are Thibaut Giret and Jason Whitehead, who are each assisting Perez with Opex.

“Getting the experience of practicing with a real client has been incredibly valuable for me as I get closer to graduation,” says Giret, a third-year law student who’s on pace to graduate with a Juris Doctor degree in May. “I learned the importance of client management and other skills that you wouldn’t necessarily learn in the classroom. With Opex Esports, Jason and I helped Esteban create the corporation and addressed legal questions he had.”

For Whitehead, the experience will pay huge dividends as he plans to graduate with a Juris Doctor degree in May.

"Law school teaches us how to think as an attorney, but this clinic has taught us how to actually practice in the real world," he says. "This experience gives us a head start on how to apply the law to real life situations, in real time that has an effect on the client’s life."

With additional funding, plans for the clinic include hiring DePaul graduate students in the Driehaus College of Business

and the College of Computing and Digital Media to assist clients with business services, like financing and marketing, and with technical issues, like app and website development.

Overall, DePaul's College of Law offers eight experiential clinics for its students. In addition to business law, there's civil litigation, asylum and refugee, civil rights, criminal appeals, immigration, misdemeanor, and technology and intellectual property.