

## DePaul University *Asylum & Immigration Clinic*

# Paula Kirlin

*Co-Founder, COO, Chief Legal Officer - Better Coliving, Inc.*

*Paula Kirlin is the Co-Founder, COO, and Chief Legal Officer of Better Coliving, the first platform exclusively for single-family home coliving for the 55+ demographic in the U.S. and a member of the 2021 Techstars Future of Longevity Accelerator in partnership with Pivotal Ventures, an investment and incubation company created by Melinda French Gates. Paula has led legal and policy strategy for two startups, and was previously a partner at Holland & Knight. Paula teaches land use and environmental law at UC Berkeley and serves on the San Jose Policy Board for SPUR, a leading public policy non-profit organization. Throughout her legal career, Paula has dedicated pro bono legal services to immigration and human rights advocacy matters.*



*Clinic Participation:  
2006-2007  
Graduated:  
2007*

### **What do you remember most about your time in the Clinic?**

My best memories from my time in the Clinic are meetings with clients, collaborating with my Clinic partner Kwabena Larbi-Siaw, and working with Professor Albiol.

### **What lessons from the clinic do you still use today or have used in your professional career?**

I learned so many skills that were incredibly valuable in practice, it's hard to write a short answer for this question! The practical skills I developed during my year in the clinic were invaluable - managing matters, client meeting skills (agendas, note-taking, follow-up), client communications, effectively working with a colleague on a matter, and working effectively with a supervising attorney. I also learned that connecting personally with clients and really taking time to get to know a client can help me be a better advocate and more effective attorney.

### **How did your involvement with the clinic help you connect with other professionals in the field?**

While I don't practice immigration law full-time, I have continued to work on immigration and asylum matters pro bono throughout my career. I have reached out for advice, referrals, and support for my pro bono clients and always receive helpful feedback and information from clinic colleagues, whether classmates or Professor Albiol. The network is an invaluable resource.

### **What would you tell current or future DePaul law students about the clinic?**

My year in the clinic was one of the most impactful experiences during my time at DePaul law. I developed practical and applied skills that were incredibly valuable when I started practicing law after graduation. The transition from law school to practice is a big one. Thanks to my clinic experience, I began my career with a level of confidence in my own skills and ability to figure things out, which honestly made me a better lawyer from day 1 as I made the journey from law student to practicing attorney.

### **Is there anything else you would like to share about your clinic experience?**

My experience in the clinic inspired me to keep working on immigration and asylum matters pro bono; immigration, asylum, and human rights matters have been the focus of my pro bono work throughout the 15 years I've been practicing since graduation, both in a firm and now as a General Counsel.