

Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic

The Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic Experience

The Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic (IEC) functions as a pro bono law practice handling environmental and community health cases.

IEC students engage in litigation and advocacy as part of an interdisciplinary team, which includes students from the schools of law, engineering, arts and sciences, public health, medicine, and occasionally business and architecture. Students develop their lawyering skills acting as the student attorneys in their cases and through extensive interaction with experienced IEC faculty.

The IEC's cases tackle some of the most challenging and important water, air, waste, climate change, and environmental justice problems in the region and nation. In addition, students will learn about public interest law, as most of the clients are non-profit organizations and under-represented communities. The IEC works in Missouri and Illinois, and on some cases of national scope.

Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic Aims

As much as possible, students are responsible for making key decisions and performing much of the "heavy lifting" in pursuit of clients' goals. Students experience the challenges and rewards of lawyering by stepping into the role as professionals in a supportive setting, with ongoing faculty feedback and assistance.

Typical Activities

- Court and administrative litigation and advocacy
- Legislation and regulation drafting
- Strategic planning
- Significant contact with clients, government agencies, and opposing attorneys
- Drafting briefs, memoranda, and detailed comment letters
- Participating in hearings, meetings, and site visits
- Requesting and reviewing public records in government offices

Student Perspectives

"Wonderful hands-on experience even if you aren't going into environmental law. It was a truly useful learning opportunity to take with me into my professional career."

"I will always remember the experience I had arguing before the court at the Motion to Dismiss hearing."

"It's a lot of work but it's worth it. I learned a ton!"

"The clinic was a very valuable learning experience for me. The hands-on nature of the clinic and the opportunity the clinic provides for students to take a front-seat role in real cases is invaluable."

"I would not be exaggerating when I say that my clinic experience was one of the best learning experiences of my life."

"The immense amount of knowledge I have gained will be invaluable to me in my career, and more generally, my everyday life."



Interdisciplinary Environmental Clinic students, faculty, and clients following Missouri Supreme Court argument.

Highlights

- After three years of negotiation, the IEC's client and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency reached a settlement agreement with the Metropolitan Sewer District (MSD), St. Louis's sewer authority that requires MSD to spend more than \$4 billion over the next 23 years building infrastructure and upgrading the region's sewer systems to comply with the Clean Water Act. At the client's urging, MSD will also undertake specific green infrastructure projects in North St. Louis. The settlement was the largest ever in Missouri and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch called it "the largest public works project in St. Louis' history."
- Achieved groundbreaking global warming settlement involving the proposed construction of a coal-fired power plant in Kansas City. Challenged the construction of another proposed new coal-fired power plant in central Missouri; company abandoned plans for the plant in favor of renewable energy sources.
- Prompted by our federal court suit, U.S.EPA concluded its four-year review of the outdated National Ambient Air Quality Standard for lead. The review resulted in a 90% reduction in the lead emission standard.
- Negotiated a major settlement agreement involving proposed expansion of a massive steel mill in Granite City, IL. The proposed projects went forward, but subject to significant additional pollution control measures and a \$5 million commitment by the companies to undertake fine particulate and greenhouse gas emissions reduction projects in the vicinity of the facility.

For more information, contact:

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Requirements

Students are required to act professionally and responsibly and devote an average of 21 hours per week to IEC work (if enrolling for six credit hours; 28 hours per week are required if enrolling for eight credit hours), including preparation for and attendance each week in:

- A 2-hour seminar for all students in the course on Friday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
- At least one individual meeting with your supervising professor
- One team meeting with other students and faculty working on your case(s)

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this Clinic. Administrative Law or a course related to environmental law is recommended but not required as a pre- or co-requisite.

The Bottom Line

- Enrollment is limited to 10 students.
- 6-8 credit course.
- Graded on a modified pass/fail basis.
- Substantial reading and writing on client work. Limited additional reading and writing for seminar.
- No exams.
- The professors will set specific requirements for receiving credit.

IEC Faculty

Peter Goode, Environmental Engineer
Liz Hubertz, Clinic Attorney
Maxine Lipeles, Director
Ken Miller, Environmental Scientist