

Legislative Policy & Drafting Clinic

Getting an Insider's Perspective on the Legislative Process

The Legislative Policy & Drafting Clinic gives students an “insider’s perspective” on the legislative process and an opportunity to **develop a variety of legal skills** to legislative work. Students learn how to:

- effectively research public policy and related legal issues;
- draft and revise legislation;
- negotiate and build consensus;
- formulate strategy to guide bills through the legislative process;
- offer effective oral and written advocacy for a bill or issue; and
- testify at legislative hearings.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Legislative Policy & Drafting Clinic is a one-semester, six-credit clinical program, in which students work on a variety of legislative projects. Clinicians work on projects with Massachusetts legislators, typically committee chairs, to generate new ideas for legislation, integrate various bills into a redrafted bill, or helping to move stalled bills forward. Clinicians also write a research report and draft a bill for their client. Students also publish blog posts related to policy law and legislation, which are posted on the Clinic’s blog Dome (sites.bu.edu/dome).

Classes cover the theoretical and practical aspects of law-making bodies, including how statutory law is created, constitutional limits to law-making, ethical responsibilities of those involved in the process, and how lawmakers anticipate and shape the way agencies and courts will interpret the statutes. The class covers legislative practice in many states and Congress, and the information discussed and skills developed can be applied no matter where the student practices law.

We warmly welcome all applicants and remind students that Boston University policy prohibits discrimination against any individual on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, physical or mental disability, sexual orientation, gender identity, genetic information, military service, pregnancy or pregnancy-related condition, or because of marital, parental, or veteran status, and acts in conformity with all applicable state and federal laws. This policy extends to all BU Law academic programs.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Recent projects have included:

- Stopping human trafficking,
- Addressing racism in health care,
- Regulating drones,
- Promoting cyber security,
- Protecting bees and other pollinators,
- Addressing ocean acidification; and
- Providing behavioral health care for children.

Clinicians have also:

- Gathered hundreds of legislative

histories to be posted online to provide judges and legal practitioners with easy access to the primary documents behind Massachusetts statutes;

- Reported on legal codification practices for use by the Ireland Oireachtas (Parliament); and
- Analyzed recently passed African laws for Laws.Africa and AfricaLII for use by parliaments, academics and civil society.

Clinic students have gone on to a range of careers including at private law firms, positions in Congress and state legislatures, as counsel to government agencies, and as lobbyists. Former clinician Nika Elguardo was elected to the Massachusetts Legislature to represent the Roxbury, Jamaica Plain, and Roslindale neighborhoods of Boston.

 bu.edu/law/clinics-apply