

New Arizona State University College of Law and its Clinical Program

New Arizona State U. is located in Frankonia, the capital of New Arizona. Frankonia is a city with approximately one million residents, 18% of whom live at or below the poverty line. The law school was established in 1955, is still housed in the original building, and has historically focused on serving in-state students. The law school has approximately 600 law students, including a small part-time program. There are currently 38 tenure or tenure-track faculty members. Over the last ten years, it has expanded its student base and its faculty, and has simultaneously focused on experiential learning.

Ten years ago, the law school created its first in-house clinic, the Civil Practice Clinic representing low-income clients in a variety of civil litigation cases. The law school used hard money to fund the clinic. Five years ago, the law school added the Legal Defense Clinic when an alumnus provided a donation for that purpose. This clinic represents low-income clients in pre-trial detention hearings and criminal cases. Since then, the clinical program at New Arizona has expanded to include the Domestic Violence Clinic and the Low-Income Taxpayer Clinic. The four clinics are housed in dedicated, shared, and cramped space on the top floor of the law school. The clinics are each staffed by one full-time, tenure or tenure-track faculty member (who also teach outside the clinical program) and by one clinical fellow (on a yearly contract, who is able to stay in the position no more than two years and has a background of at least two years of experience). The Civil Practice Clinic is currently staffed by two faculty members.

Each clinic lasts one semester, and takes up to 16 students per semester, except for the Civil Practice Clinic that takes a maximum of 24 students per semester. Students are required to have taken Evidence and Civil and Criminal Procedure for the Civil Practice, Legal Defense, and Domestic Violence Clinics. Students must also be certifiable under the New Arizona civil and criminal student practice rules. Although formally open to second and third year students, the clinics have for the last three years been oversubscribed and have taken only third year students.

Given the law school's increased focus on experiential learning, the clinical program has been the focus of both pride and dissention among the general faculty. For a number of years, students have asked for additional clinical opportunities. However, the school has been reluctant to create a new clinic given the funding implications.