



Emergency Pro Bono Policies and Procedures for the COVID-19 Pandemic

The Stetson University College of Law recognizes that the COVID-19 Pandemic has uniquely altered the Spring 2020 pro bono and community service work normally performed by its students. May and August 2020 intended graduates found themselves severely impacted in particular, as volunteer and pro bono opportunities disappeared overnight when agencies, organizations, and government offices were ordered to shut down. In light of these unforeseeable changes to the daily life of communities across the world, the faculty has voted to implement the following procedures and policies. These changes to the policies of the College of Law are intended to ameliorate these concerns while continuing to monitor and promote the professional responsibilities students have in the areas of pro bono and community service work. This policy may be extended to subsequent academic semesters by faculty vote if circumstances warrant its continuation or reinstatement beyond the Spring 2020 semester.

- I. May and August 2020 intended graduates who have not fulfilled the graduation requirement (a minimum of sixty hours of pro bono and/or community service hours, at least thirty of which must be pro bono) will be evaluated individually by a faculty-approved committee to examine the following factors:
 - A. The number of hours the student still needs to meet the graduation requirement and the most recent submission of hours towards meeting that requirement;
 - B. Any plan the student may have had to complete the hours prior to the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic;
 - C. Any established relationship the student might have with a community partner, and the student's history of volunteering with that community partner;
 - D. The extent to which the student has been personally impacted by the Pandemic, including but not limited to:
 1. Changes in work, family, and other obligations;
 2. Food and/or housing insecurity caused or exacerbated by the Pandemic;
 3. Physical and/or mental health challenges caused or exacerbated by the Pandemic, whether for the student or for an immediate family member of the student for whom the student has responsibilities of care or support;

4. Other changes in circumstances that are particular to the individual student, in recognition that it is not possible at this date to anticipate every way the Pandemic has impacted, and is continuing to impact, students, particularly the May and August 2020 anticipated graduates.
- II. For May and August 2020 graduates, pro bono and community service hours will be combined and treated the same to determine if the student reached 60 total hours. Thus, the requirement that at least 30 hours must be pro bono hours is eliminated.
- III. May and August 2020 intended graduates who have not yet fulfilled the graduation requirement for pro bono may be designated by the faculty-approved committee to have substantially fulfilled this responsibility if the students are within ten hours of fulfilling their responsibility or if they have demonstrated to the committee, through the factors outlined in Section I.D. 1-4 of this policy, that fulfilling their responsibility was rendered impossible by the COVID-19 Pandemic.
- IV. Students who are not determined to have substantially fulfilled their pro bono responsibilities shall enter into a written plan, as specific as possible given the unknown duration of the Pandemic, as to both time and number of hours, to fulfill their responsibilities. If such a student fails to meet the terms of the plan, the Associate Dean of Academics may report this fact to any State Bar to which the student is applying.
- V. The only circumstance in which a May or August 2020 intended graduate may be barred from graduation for failure to complete the pro bono requirement will arise if such a student fails to communicate or cooperate with the faculty-appointed committee, and is deemed to have neither substantially complied nor to have been impacted by the factors listed herein in Section I.D. 1-4. A student's physical inability to communicate or cooperate with the committee shall not be grounds to withhold graduation.

Effective April 2, 2020; On October 9, 2020, the faculty voted to extend this emergency policy to apply to December 2020, May 2021, and August 2021 intended graduates.