

Application Deadlines and Orientation Schedules

Paralegal, Graduate & Undergraduate Studies

Applications for Spring 2012 must be received by December 31, 2011
Intern Orientation will be held on January 19 and 20, 2012

Law Studies

Applications for Spring 2012 must be received by December 29, 2011
Intern Orientation will be held on January 5, 2012

Placement opportunities, eligibility and application process can be obtained at our new website www.jud.ct.gov/intern

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Volunteer/Intern Program Approaches its 40th Year

JUDICIAL COLUMN

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From Tibetan Refugee To Judicial Intern

By Chime Dolma
Intern

My name is Chime Dolma. I am a rising senior double majoring in political science and Chinese. I was born in Tibet and spent most of my childhood herding yaks and sheep. The people from the particular town where I grew up have a very limited understanding of the concept of “education” and hardly know how to write their own names even in their own language, let alone any other language.

Education is, of course, more than knowing how to write your name, but it begins with something that simple. I was one of the many illiterate until the age of 12. I was an illiterate yak herder until that point in time, but I dreamt of becoming a literate person one day.

That dream came true when I escaped Tibet and took a long journey to India — where I learned to read and write my own language — Tibetan, for the first time. Eventually, I immigrated to New York City in 2003 with high hopes for great success.

However, the drastic change of the language, culture and environment provided for nothing to be easy. I had to overcome many barriers such as language and cultural differences. Despite all difficulties, I was able to meet my own expectations to create an opportunity to study at an American university or college to further my studies and to broaden my mind and perspective. After years of hard work, I got accepted to Middlebury College.

My three years at Middlebury have been unquestionably auspicious. I am surrounded by many intelligent peers,



Chime Dolma pictured with Court Planner Veronica Perez-Davidson at the Court Service Center in Norwich.

“Education is, of course, more than knowing how to write your name, but it begins with something that simple.”

Chime Dolma
Intern

professors and faculty members. I belong to a community that is, to me, a utopian society. The majority of our students live in nice dormitories where everything is provided for. Despite the intensive workload, the life of a Middlebury student is rather privileged. I feel blest to have this opportunity.

For the summer, I truly wanted do an internship in an

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Stepping Out Of The Classroom For Real World Experience

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environment that is different from Middlebury. Due to the recession, internships were fairly competitive all across the nation. Additionally, I was not sure if I could afford to do an unpaid internship given my family's financial circumstances. Despite my financial situation, I wanted to gain real life working experience in a field that interests me.

I looked into several fields, namely teaching and legal work. I ended up having three options, and ultimately chose to intern for the Judicial Branch of Connecticut for a number of reasons. I wanted to see how this area of study played a role in real life. On a micro-level, upon completion of this internship with the Superior Court Operations Divisions, I wanted to be competent in the initiation of civil proceedings, types of diversionary programs and their eligibility, and familiarity with criminal proceedings and the accompanying paperwork. I was able to meet these objectives by performing my daily basic responsibilities.

On a macro-level, I wanted to find out how this system functioned. As an immigrant who escaped an authoritarian country, I am intrigued and fascinated with our American court system. Hence, I wanted to learn how it works and discover if it is as I have read in college text books. Moreover, I personally wanted to see if law school is the right field to pursue post-Middlebury. I wanted to explore this career option and confirm this indeed suits my moral and cultural values. I also hoped to observe the people who are now living the life that I would be living in the future and this internship would open new doors to other opportunities in the future. And indeed, it did.

Thanks to Dr. Micheley Angelina, Juana Brown, Robyn Oliver and my internship sponsor, I found a means to do this wonderful internship. I worked for two different courts; one of them dealt with mainly family cases and the other dealt with criminal cases. I interned five days a week.

In Norwich Superior Court, I assisted clients initiate family cases such as divorce, visitation and custody

actions. I sat with 100 to 300 clients a day to assist them with their paper work. The small service center where I worked is packed with clients from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Needless to mention how people-oriented Norwich Superior Court is. I loved being busy because I would be bored if I didn't have anything to do. I loved working under pressure and there was never a dull moment at the service center. There I learned to complete various types of forms and applications.

In New London, I worked in the Office of the Public Defender, a non-judicial agency. My internship consisted mainly of shadowing attorneys and investigators. I learned about the types of diversionary programs such as Alcohol Education Program, Accelerated Rehabilitation Program and other programs. Most of the public defenders in my division took the time out of their work to explain the proceeding and the accompanying paper work to me. I am more than thankful and grateful for their kindness.

I also sat in judges' chambers to observe how justice is brought to the clients. I sat with the public defenders and the states attorneys when they discussed the matters of many clients. Due to heavy layoffs of many states employees in Connecticut, I had the opportunity to perform more diverse tasks. Towards the end of June, I began to do mostly investigation work in New London, where I interviewed clients. My daily responsibilities consisted of attending the lock up room every morning at 10 a.m. to interview clients there and in the Office of the Public Defender. I completed an application that asks

“As an immigrant who escaped an authoritarian country, I am intrigued and fascinated with our American court system. Hence, I wanted to learn how it works and discover if it is as I have read in college text books.”

Chime Dolma
Intern



Chime Dolma is pictured with Joseph Segal, a public defender in GA 10.

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I completed an application that asks

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Former Undergraduate Intern Returns As Law Intern

By Dominika S. Blok
Intern

I participated in the Judicial Branch Intern Program two times, first as an undergraduate and later as a law student. As an undergraduate, I interned for adult probation in Waterbury. This internship was mainly focused on the job of a probation officer, and I was primarily learning about this specific occupation. Initially, I observed probation officers performing their duties, and when I learned the basics, I was able to meet with clients and conduct interviews. I also accompanied probation officers on home visits, read and summarized police reports and filed documents. The probation officers I worked with were very helpful, and were always willing to answer my questions about probation, as well as the criminal law process in general.

Later, as a law school student, I interned for a judge in Waterbury. During that internship, I learned about many different aspects of the legal profession. The judge I worked for arranged for me to spend time in the prosecutor's office, public defender's office, family services and probation. This allowed me to learn about various legal professions, and to see law from different perspectives. I also conducted some legal research, which allowed me to use skills that I learned in school. The biggest part of this internship, however, was observing trials and other court proceedings, which was very helpful and educational because it allowed me to identify both good and less effective advocacy. The judge I worked for always took time to answer any questions I had about my observations of court proceedings, as well as law in general. All of the knowledge and advice that she shared with me was invaluable, and I greatly benefited from it.

The law school internship differed from the undergraduate one mainly in that it was more of an



Waterbury GA 4 courthouse

“The judge I worked for always took time to answer any questions I had ... All of the knowledge and advice that she shared with me was invaluable, and I greatly benefited from it.”

Dominika S. Blok
Intern

educational than work experience. During the law school internship, I applied material that I already learned in school. This allowed me to review some concepts, and to understand the ones that I did not fully grasp when they were introduced in class. In addition, I acquired a lot of new information that has proven to be very helpful in subsequent classes. The undergraduate experience, on the other hand, focused more on the probation aspect of the criminal law system. While the law school internship was in large part observational in nature, the undergraduate was more of a “hands on” experience, where I actually performed some of the same tasks as actual probation officers. Both of the internships were very rewarding. They were great learning opportunities and exposed me to some aspects of criminal justice system, as well as law in general, that I could never learn in school.

Return Interns Are Assets To The Branch, Reflect Program's Growth

Since the beginning of the Intern Program in 1971, the program has undergone significant improvement, which has resulted in successful experiential placements for students as well as providing the Branch with much needed additional assistance.

One indicator for program success can be seen in the number of interns who have returned for subse-

quent placements when they have entered graduate school, law school or are required by their school to obtain additional internship placements. Eleven percent of all applicants return for a second internship.

The Judicial Branch benefits from the placement of interns by augmenting staffing in offices. However, re-

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A Variety Of Opportunities In New London And Norwich

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very basic information to determine whether these clients are eligible for a public defender or not. Since most of the public defenders are tremendously compassionate, they try to take as many clients as possible unless the clients are not at risk of being incarcerated. Performing that task was relative easy because I felt that Middlebury had prepared me well beyond what was required.

On occasions, I sat in court to observe trials — a murder trial and an assault trial. I found them very engaging and exciting. But, of course, it is very poignant in the end.

In retrospect, I accomplished my basic objectives and met my expectations. As a matter of fact, I learned so many things that I never thought or would have expected to learn. Working for two different court systems gave me a wider range of taste and exposure. I believe I am more than lucky to have had that exposure.

All aspects of my internship were meaningful to me — my days at the family court made me appreciate certain aspects of my life more. It has reminded me of ethics and compassion. When I walked out of the GA 10 in New London, my thoughts lingered on the moments of dealing with my clients and my coworkers. Therefore, I would say the people that I worked with and for are the most noteworthy part of my internship. They gave me a wonderful experience; they created a learning environment that was truly comfortable and accommodating. I truly loved every single one of my coworkers. They were all amazing people. I learned so much from them and I am sincerely thankful for what they have offered me.

At right, Chime is pictured with Sean Kelly, public defender in GA 10 and Jennifer Nowak, also a public defender in New London.



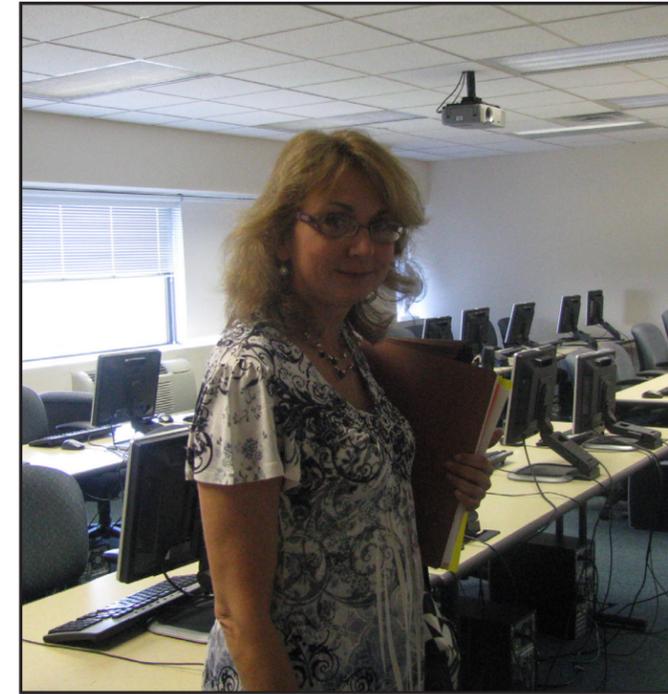
Branch Benefits From Return Interns

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turning interns provide a special benefit to the Branch. These students have honed their professional skills during their initial placement and are now ready to take on more advanced tasks. Additionally, the Judicial

Branch has the ability to observe these students for long periods of time and are able to determine potential candidates to interview when positions become available.

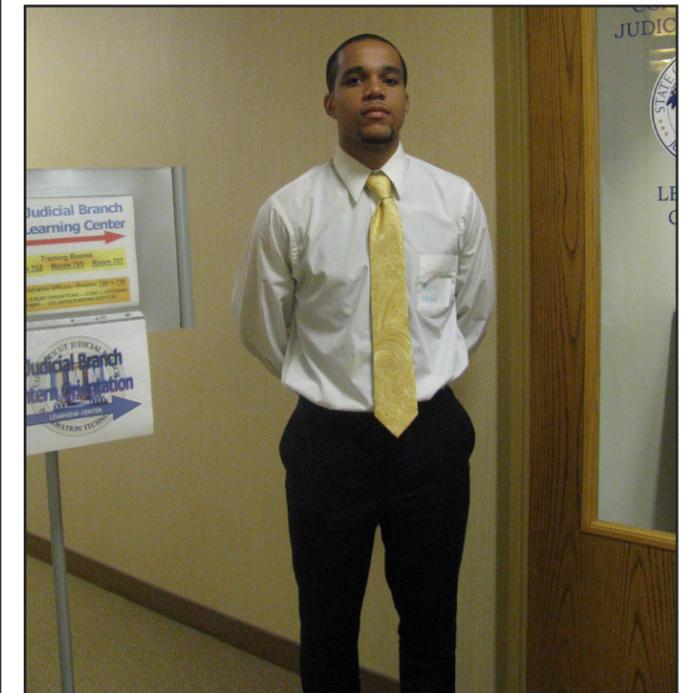
Interns are a valuable resource to the Judicial Branch as they represent future government employees who have a true interest and desire to serve the citizen of Connecticut.



Spotlight On Orientation Trainer

Barbara Kennedy is an Administrative Assistant with the Court Support Services Division's Adult Probation Office in New Haven. She has provided training in Case Management Information System (CMIS) to incoming interns for more than four years. The Intern Program staff is grateful to have Barbara as part of the training team.

From Court Aide To Intern



In 2010, as a senior in Warren Harding High School in Bridgeport, Herbie Meghie participated in the Judicial Branch's Court Aide Program. In the fall of 2011, Herbie returned to the V/I Program as a college intern. "I wanted to further my knowledge and skills toward becoming a lawyer, that is why I am participating in the Intern Program."

The Volunteer/Intern Program wishes you all happy holidays and a happy and healthy New Year!