



# ALBANY LAW SCHOOL

## GOVERNMENT LAW CENTER

### Guide to the Government Law Center Fellowship

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#### INTRODUCTION

The Government Law Center Fellowship program is a unique special curriculum and mentoring program that prepares students for distinguished careers in public service. The program serves three main goals:

- First, it helps students who are interested in public service to develop a foundation of substantive knowledge and practical skills.
- Second, it creates a sense of community for students interested in public service.
- And, third, it builds strong connections to attorneys in public-service practice.

The Fellowship also serves an overall goal of building a professional identity that will help each student thrive in public service.

The Fellowship is different at each stage of law school. First-year Fellows are given extracurricular opportunities to explore whether public service is right for them. Upper-class Fellows take specific courses that will help prepare them for public service, and then undertake an experiential capstone project that helps prepare them directly for practice.

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## I. BECOMING A FELLOW

### *Selection of first-year Fellows*

First-year Government Law Center Fellows are chosen during the first four weeks of the academic year. Applications are due two weeks after classes begin. No more than fifteen first-year Fellows will be chosen from the entering class.

Applications will be assessed by a Fellowship Committee composed of the Center's Director and two other members, one of whom will be an upper-class GLC Fellow. The GLC Fellow is invited to join the Committee by the Director, and plays an advisory role in the selection process. All information about applicants is kept strictly confidential.

### *Selection of upper-class Fellows*

After students have completed the first year of their fellowship, they are invited to reapply. The deadline is the same as the application deadline for first-year Fellows.

Although selection as an upper-class Fellow is not automatic, students who have participated actively in the first-year programs are given strong preference for acceptance as upper-class Fellows. If a first-year Fellow has not participated actively in Fellowship programs, they are still welcome to apply to become upper-class Fellows; whether or not those applicants receive preference will depend on the reasons for the lack of active participation. Upper-class students who have not been first-year Fellows may also apply. The overall size of a Fellows class will be no greater than fifteen students per year.

### *Selection of Fellows in the MSLS, LLM, and accelerated JD programs*

Students pursuing a master's of science in legal studies (MSLS), master of laws (LLM), and accelerated JD programs are eligible for consideration to be Government Law Center Fellows. Because of their relatively short time at the law school, they are not subject to the same second- and third-year requirements as JD Fellows. Any student in these programs who wishes to apply to the Fellowship should contact the Director; if the student becomes a Government Law Center Fellow, their requirements will be determined on a case-by-case basis.

### *How Fellows should describe themselves*

During students' first year, or at any point when they are still in the Fellows program, students may describe themselves as "Government Law Center Fellows."

However, if a student leaves the program after their first year, they may describe their experience only with the phrase "first-year" in the name. In other words, a student who has left the program after the first year can refer to their "Government Law Center First-Year Fellowship," or say they were a "Government Law Center First-Year Fellow," but they may not describe themselves as a "Government Law Center Fellow."

If a Fellow from a graduate program, or the accelerated JD program, leaves the program before completing their degree, they should consult the GLC Director about how to describe their experience.

## II. PROGRAMS FOR FELLOWS

The GLC Fellowship helps students prepare for public service in several ways. First, the Fellowship helps students build knowledge in key areas of the law, and the practical skills required to be a successful practitioner. Second, it helps students build a sense of community on campus, so that they can share their experience with colleagues facing the same challenges. And, third, the Fellowship helps students build connections to the community of practitioners off-campus.

Every program that forms a part of the Fellowship also helps students build their professional identity, that is, the goals, values, and sense of commitment and meaning that will help them succeed and thrive in public-service practice.

The GLC Fellowship includes different programs at each stage of law school. It begins with informal programs, then moves to academic requirements, and finishes with an experiential capstone. Each is described below.

### A. First-Year and Ongoing Informal Programs

The first-year Fellowship is designed as a series of optional activities for first-year students who wish to explore whether public service is right for them. Programs are designed to be both exploratory and preparatory; students who aren't yet sure of their plans can use them to explore the possibility of public service, while students who are firm in their plan to enter public service will benefit from the substantive exposure.

Each of the programs described here is also open to upper-class Fellows unless specifically indicated otherwise.

These extracurricular programs will fall into one of three basic categories, which correspond to the three goals of the Fellowship program: learning about public service; community-building; and making connections to attorneys in public service.

#### *Building knowledge and skills*

Program that build knowledge and skills may include:

- Lectures and other class-like sessions that substantively explain a specific field of practice or legal topic;
- Career mentoring, including participation in the Alumni Initiative in Mentoring program, workshops on career topics, and mentoring by the Center's staff; and
- Field observations, in which groups of Fellows have the opportunity to see government lawyering in practice. Examples could include observing a Court of Appeals argument on government-law-related issues and discussing the argument with the judges; or observing a legislative or administrative hearing.

#### *Building community*

Through social events and other activities, GLC Fellows develop a sense of community. The Fellows also serve as a core group on the Albany Law School campus around which students who are not in the Fellowship program can coalesce to learn more about public service and continue to build their professional identities.

Programs that create a sense of community among students interested in public service may include:

- Social activities, such as receptions at the beginning or end of an academic year organized by members of the GLC Advisory Board's Student Engagement Committee;
- Skill-share sessions, where Fellows exchange ideas about challenges facing them in law school;
- Workshops on law-school skills like note-taking and outlining;
- Community-service projects; and
- Open houses, study breaks at the GLC during exam periods.

Other programs discussed above, like field observations, will also help build community.

### ***Building connections***

Programs in the third category help Fellows (and other students) develop connections to attorneys in public service. Programs of this kind may include:

- Collaborating with the Alumni office to help GLC Fellows and other students participate in the law school's mentoring program, so that mentors can help them build their understanding of public service;
- Sessions in which attorneys in public service meet with the Fellows to describe their practice and career paths;
- A in which each first-year student Fellow is assigned to meet with two of the lawyers who have signed up to

be mentors, to learn about the setting in which those lawyers practice and what it's like to practice there, and to report back to the other Fellows in a roundtable session that the Center will organize; and

- Where appropriate, involving GLC Fellows (and other students) in meetings and events organized or attended by the Center's staff-members.

### **B. Academic Programs**

We recommend that upper-class GLC Fellows declare a concentration in Government Law and Policy, but this is not a requirement. Details about this concentration are listed on the website, [here](#).

What is required for the Fellowship, however, is that Fellows complete two courses: Administrative Law and Law of Government. We recommend, but do not require, that Fellows take these classes in their second year, before they undertake their experiential capstone work (see below).

### **C. The Experiential Capstone**

Upper-class GLC Fellows are required to complete an experiential capstone project, which can take a variety of forms. They can fulfill this requirement either by interning at the Center or with an external placement in government or government-related practice. If the placement is not in government or at the Government Law Center, it must involve policy work (as opposed to direct legal services).

Fellows will then make a presentation about their experiential-capstone work at a

roundtable attended by GLC staff and other Fellows. Details on each of these aspects of the experiential capstone follow.

***Option One: Interning at the Center***

Students can satisfy the experiential requirement by interning at the Government Law Center. Interns work at the Center, helping with our core projects and other research. Typically, our interns are assigned to specific projects, such as our immigration research, our project on aging law, or our project on police oversight.

Internships at the Center can be done as for academic credit (as a [field placement](#), [semester in practice](#), or independent study) or for pay (as a research assistantship). The application schedule and commitment involved in the internship varies depending on whether it is a research assistantship, a field placement, or an independent study. But the GLC is limited in the number of interns it can accept each semester, so students should let us know as early as possible if they are considering applying for an internship.

The appropriate way to apply for an internship will depend on what form the internship takes. Students who wish to do their internship as a field placements, semester in practice, or independent study should apply through those programs, which each have their own application requirements. Students who wish to do their internship as a research assistantship should talk to the GLC Director about how to apply.

***Option Two: An external placement***

Students can also satisfy the experiential-capstone requirement by doing an internship, externship, field placement, or

semester in practice under the supervision of an external attorney. The external placement should be either in government or in a government-related position. If the placement is not in government, it must involve policy work, as opposed to the representation of clients. But policy work needn't be the only thing the Fellow does at the placement; in other words, as long as the placement involves some policy-level work, it satisfies the requirement.

If a student wishes to satisfy this requirement with a government-related position, they should discuss the placement with the Director of the Center before beginning work to make sure it qualifies. Examples of qualifying external placements could include working at a lobbying firm in a role that involves focus on government activities; working for an advocacy organization to affect governmental policies; and related activities.

***Roundtables***

As part of the capstone experiential requirement, Fellows will be required to make a presentation about their work and what they have learned from it at a roundtable organized by the Center and attended by GLC staff and other Fellows. These roundtables will be organized for late in the relevant semester. Details will be announced promptly.

***The Fellowship's experiential capstone is different from the concentration's experiential requirement***

The experiential requirement for the Government Law Center Fellowship is separate from the experiential requirement for the Government Law and Policy concentration. The concentration has its

own experiential requirement, which can be satisfied by participation in a clinic, field placement, or summer/semester in practice related to the concentration—or participation in the GLC Fellowship.

Students can use the same experience to satisfy both the Fellowship’s experiential requirement and the concentration’s experiential requirement. For example, a student who does a field placement at the GLC in their third year would satisfy both the GLC Fellowship’s experiential requirement and the Government Law and Policy concentration’s experiential requirement. However, students should make sure that they satisfy each program’s requirement according to the program’s independent criteria.

#### **D. The Executive Board**

The Fellows are represented by an Executive Board that helps organize events and advises the GLC staff in deciding which events will be most useful to students. Meetings of the Executive Board are convened by the GLC Administrative Director. Members of the GLC Advisory Board’s Student Engagement Committee participate in such meetings as appropriate.

Members of the Executive Board are chosen by election in early October of each year, and serve one-year terms. There are two representatives from each class of Fellows, each of whom has the title “Co-Chair.” Elections are conducted by email, with each candidate providing a brief statement about their interest in serving as a Co-Chair, which is be circulated to all of the Fellows.

Also, the GLC Director chooses one GLC Fellow to be appointed as a member of the Center’s Advisory Board. That student is

expected to attend meetings of the Advisory Board, to serve as a member of the Advisory Board’s Student Engagement Committee, and to participate in other Advisory Board activities as appropriate. The student Advisory Board member is chosen in the late spring to serve a term that begins on the last day of classes and runs until the last day of classes the following year.

#### **E. Alumni of the Fellowship Program**

We keep in touch with our alums, and encourage them to stay in contact with the Center and continue to take advantage of the network after completing the Fellowship and throughout their careers. Within the larger network of Albany Law School alumni, they form a special hub of people who are passionate and knowledgeable about public service. Alums mentor our current Fellows and other students at the law school who wish to know more about public service, participate in Fellowship programs, and play a leading role in our community.