

Legal Research to Support Positive Indian Parenting Program

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Reflection:

My project itself evolved greatly over the last year (2016-2017), largely because I am adjunct faculty so I am never 100% sure if I will be rehired from year-to-year, and largely because of confidentiality.

Katie Goger was kind enough to partner with me for the planning phase of last year's program, where my proposal was basically to have my students assist her Positive Parenting Program through the Lummi Nation by conducting legal research to double-check the acceptance of program-compliance. (Katie had a much longer, detailed, and well-thought out project proposal; mine was simply to offer assistance needed whenever needed.)

I greatly enjoyed being a Fellow. I learned from all of the different Fellows in my program. I knew two people in my cohort before, and it was terrific being able to interact with both of these people in a different way, and at a different level. I had difficulty developing my project (and it is still morphing ongoing due to many considerations related to my profession), but my colleagues in the program only offered me ideas and support, not criticism.

Overall, the best part of the program was that I can see my growth in the classroom. Even though the other disciplines in my cohort were different than mine, I learned from their unique perspectives and techniques, and it actually assisted me in refining my classroom presentation. It also gave me ideas on "different ways" to approach topics in the classroom. While that may not be the intended or primary focus of the activities, that is what happened to me, and I am very grateful, especially as it presented exciting possibilities and perspectives that I had not thought of before.

My time in the program was invaluable, and I highly recommend it. On a personal note, as an attorney and as an adjunct instructor much of what we do is independent simply due to the nature of the positions. As a result, it was especially nice to be able to interact with colleagues in a different setting.

Major obstacles anticipated when project was proposed:

(1) **Confidentiality:** Neither the students nor I could ever know the identity of the individuals in question

(2) **Acceptance:** There are multiple attorneys in multiple jurisdictions that may not appreciate my involvement, or the student involvement.

(3) **Other Legal Concerns:** Katie and I anticipated student involvement (and my involvement) as simply providing information, such as a checklist, or further questions to be asked. For a myriad of reasons, including but not limited to liability, this was in no way to constitute or substitute for legal advice. *However*, it was also difficult to identify the correct “official” person to run it past so this would not be misconstrued.

(4) **Student Skill Level:** I teach introductory courses. For the past two years I had students who could definitely handle the research and work independently. I had had many of them previously, and knew their skill set. With a different cohort of students, however, this may be problematic.

New Obstacles that have been Identified:

(1) Staff turnover: At the Lummi Nation, the entire attorney department that worked for this department has changed since Spring 2017, and the structure of the overall legal department and program has changed.

Implementation: I do not teach until Winter Quarter 2018. However, I have been approached since the last Community Fellows meeting about doing 1 or more advanced special projects in legal research with former students and practicing paralegals for the LLLT certificate program, so there may be ways to refine this idea, or change it slightly.