

COMMENTS FROM STEPPS STUDENTS

"After completing the STEPPS program last spring, I began my summer internship at the Public Defender's office with confidence. The skills I developed through the STEPPS program have served me well throughout the course of my internship. Particularly in the area of client counseling/interviewing. After conducting numerous client interviews, then receiving valuable feedback in the STEPPS program, I now conduct structured, thorough, and effective client interviews on a daily basis.

Additionally, my research and writing in the workplace is top-notch - thanks, in large part, to the challenging and complex hypothetical scenarios that I researched and drafted legal memoranda on in STEPPS. The training and experience I received in STEPPS has allowed me to transition smoothly into the real-world legal community."

-Christopher Light

"I found STEPPS very helpful and practical now that I'm working. I especially think the drafting of the various motions we did, especially the points and authorities was extremely helpful (I have already written one for the office, along with several memos, and I was so relieved to know that I had experience writing one just a few months ago!). I think the more motion work, and memo-drafting practice we get in law school, the easier it is in practice. So even though it was a pain to write these papers in addition to our other class load, it was truly valuable!"

-Farah Khaireddin

"I am really glad I took STEPPS. This class combines two classes into one with some extra units to boot. It is also nice to have one "supervising attorney" all year so you can really work with them. They get to know you and customize your feedback to help you personally improve. I have been involved with role playing exercises before that never really felt useful, but here I can honestly say they really did help. For one assignment, we had to conduct a second interview with our 'client'. I really had to think about what I would be saying to a client on a second interview and what questions I needed to ask so I could draft facts to prove the elements of a cause of action. Fast forward four months later and I am doing *exactly* that in my internship. I have to interview investors about securities they purchased. I have to take my interviews and draft a declaration for the investor to support the motion for summary judgment I am writing. It is exactly what we did in STEPPS applied in the real world. The professors even took our feedback half way through and modified the syllabus. This class really does give you practical real world lawyering skills."

-Michael Manley

“I recommend that you enroll in STEPPS because you will receive the same benefits and experience that previous STEPPS students now have. I am glad I took this course during my second year. I improved my time management skills because I managed cases and clients in addition to my course work. I honed my professional skills in the small class settings between communication with my “Supervising Attorney” and interacting with other students during mock interviews and negotiations. I received in-depth feedback on my writing skills and interviewing skills; I am more self-aware of my strengths and weaknesses which enables me to further improve my abilities. Finally, the best reason you should take STEPPS is because it broadens your networking pool. I met new acquaintances that I otherwise would probably have not met. For me, this led to my job this summer. One of my partners on a past assignment told me about an available clerkship and introduced me to the lawyer he knew. This happened because he knew my professionalism and competency from our interaction in STEPPS and thus, was confident in recommending a fellow law student. In sum, you will be more capable and competent in your internships and future jobs if you take STEPPS. I hope you invest in yourself and gain the practice and self-assessment as a future lawyer that I and other STEPPS students gained from this course.”

-Meredith Callan

“I enrolled in STEPPS because I was intrigued by the structure of the program. It is a hybrid of Professional Responsibility and Advanced Legal Writing with a law firm twist. It was a novel concept at Cal Western and I am always interested in trying something new. Little did I know what was in store. There are a lot of rumors about STEPPS and most of them are accurate reflections of the challenges we all faced in the first semester of the program. Truth be told; if it had not meant changing my entire schedule I would have reconsidered like many other students did early on. Fortunately, sometimes blessings come in disguise. The supervising attorneys, the professors and the administrators of the program really took the feedback from students to heart. As a result, the second semester of STEPPS was a refreshing improvement from the non-stop assignments that we hammered out first semester. The entire program was restructured to create balance and help us optimize the skills we were learning.

Had a judge asked me to review a case and submit a memo when I began STEPPS, I would have broken into a cold sweat without a clue where to begin. After learning key elements of good legal writing, I was able to do exactly that when I attended the ABA’s Judicial Clerkship Program in February. To succeed in this profession it is imperative to be able to research efficiently and write eloquently. Under the tutelage of my supervising attorney, STEPPS helped me foster those skills. At the conclusion of the program, I confidently accepted a summer position as a research and writing assistant.”

-Sarah Garrick