INTRODUCTION

The New York State Court of Appeals launched its Pro Bono Scholars Program (“PBSP”) in spring semester 2015. Instead of following the usual calendar for the last semester of law school and admission to practice law in New York State, students in the PBSP (“Pro Bono Scholars”) will:

- Prepare for the New York bar exam in January and early February 2016
- Take the New York bar exam in February 2016
- Devote 14 weeks of their final spring semester in law school (February 29-June 3) to a law school experiential learning program in which they will provide pro bono legal assistance and participate in closely-related classes at their law schools (for a total of 500 hours)
- Receive expedited review of their applications to the bar, if they pass the bar exam; and
- Be eligible for admission to practice in New York in July 2016, if they pass the bar exam and successfully complete the Program and all other graduation requirements.

All of the law schools in New York State are participating in the PBSP and each is designing its own PBSP course. At Columbia Law School, its Edson Queiroz Foundation Mediation Program will provide the PBSP offering for 2016. (“Columbia PBSP” or “Program”) It is partnering with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) New York District Office to provide direct mediation services to low-income claimants who file claims under Federal EEO statutes. Selected students will complete 4 academic credit hours of academic work and 8 clinical credit hours of direct mediation services. Admission is limited to third-year students and is by application only. Five students will be selected.

Professor Alexandra Carter, Director of Clinical Programs and Director of the Edson Queiroz Foundation Mediation Program, and Ellen Chapnick, Dean for Social Justice Initiatives, will oversee Columbia’s overall participation in the statewide PBSP. Professor Carter and Professor Shawn Watts, Associate Director of the Edson Queiroz Foundation
Mediation Program, will provide academic and practice oversight for the students in Columbia’s PBSP offering. Administrative Judges at the New York District EEOC Office will provide professional supervision for Columbia’s Pro Bono Scholars while students are working on site.

Participation in Columbia’s PBSP will satisfy New York State’s 50 hour pro bono requirement for admission to the bar and Columbia Law School’s 40 hour pro bono graduation requirement. Completion of Columbia’s PBSP can satisfy the law school’s Minor Writing Requirement if certain conditions are met.

The deadline for applications is August 30th at 4 p.m.

This document describes the Columbia PBSP as well as the application and selection process. Please read it carefully.

PREREQUISITES & OTHER PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Successful completion of Columbia’s PBSP will result in the receipt of twelve credits – four graded academic credits and eight C/NC clinical credits.

To participate in the Columbia PBSP in spring 2016, students must:

1. Have sufficient clinical credits remaining (8) to fulfill the ABA and Columbia requirements for graduation. No more than 23 of the 83 law school credits required for graduation may represent either clinical courses or other courses related to legal training; and at least 65 of the required 83 credits must represent regularly scheduled class sessions. The 8 credits for the PBSP pro bono work will count against the 18-credit cap. Students who have taken clinics or other externships or received academic credit for supervised research, law review, moot court or other nonresidential classroom activities should make sure that they will have the necessary credits to graduate if they participate in the PBSP. It is strongly suggested that, before applying, students consult Rule 1.1 of the Columbia Law School Rules for the JD Degree (http://www.law.columbia.edu/academics/rules/jd-rules/course-of-studies) and meet with Joel Kosman, Director of Academic Counseling and Student Organizations.

2. Have registered for (and preferably completed) the Major Writing requirement. All 3Ls must register for the Major Writing by the close of Add/Drop in the penultimate term; and submit a first draft by February 1 and a final draft by April 1 of their last term (slight date adjustments for off-cycle grads). Scholars will not have much time during the PBSP to work on Major Writing.
3. **Have met with someone in the Financial Aid Office if they are receiving financial aid.** It will be necessary to adjust a Scholar’s package so that it is awarded for the period February 29-June 3, rather than for January and February when they will not be enrolled in Law School classes. The Financial Aid Office will not be able to disperse funds to Scholars earlier than 10 days before February 29. They will need to plan for January and February expenses and can apply for a bar loan to do so. Students can apply for a bar loan anytime in the 3L year, and can use these funds to pay for a bar course and for the bar prep period.

4. **Have already completed the required Professional Responsibility credits by the end of the first semester of 3L year.** It is necessary to complete the Professional Responsibility credits by the beginning of the PBSP program because the program requirements prevent students from taking any concurrent courses.

Preference will be given to students who demonstrate an interest in mediation and alternative dispute resolution, or employment discrimination work. In addition, the Columbia PBSP welcomes applications from students whose post-graduation careers may include service in the public interest or government that includes mediation or employment discrimination.

**COMPONENTS OF THE COLUMBIA PBSP**

Students selected for the program will fulfill their service through the completion of the program’s training, placement, and academic components.

Students will complete an intensive 40-hour mediation skills, mediation theory, and employment law training during the first week of the program. During training students can expect to read a thorough selection of scholarly writings related to mediation theory and practice, current mediation model standards, and EEOC statutes and cases. In addition, students will participate in several exercises designed to develop and hone general mediation skills. Students will use those general mediation skills in full role-play mediations centered on common and recurrent EEOC issues.

Once fully trained, students will begin a placement with the EEOC New York District Office. While at the EEOC students will work closely with and under the supervision of Administrative Law Judges to identify appropriate cases for mediation. Students will manage the full life-cycle of those cases including drafting mediation orders, communicating with the parties, scheduling mediations, mediating the cases, drafting agreements, and conducting necessary follow-up.

During placement students will also attend a weekly academic seminar designed to advance their knowledge of mediation practice and theory. In addition to discussion of
curricular readings students will participate in case rounds and debriefing. Students will also meet regularly with the professors to discuss issues related to their placement and cases. Students will be expected to write regular scholarly and reflective journals.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE AND SCHEDULE

Applications must be received no later than 4 p.m. on August 30th, 2015. Applications must be e-mailed as a single PDF file to both Professor Alex Carter (acarte1@law.columbia.edu) and Professor Shawn Watts (swatts1@law.columbia.edu), copying Brenda Eberhart (eberhart@law.columbia.edu). Each application will be acknowledged upon receipt. If your application has not been acknowledged, you may call Brenda Eberhart in the clinic office at 212-854-4291 to verify receipt.

APPLICATIONS

The application consists of one PDF document containing, in this order:

1. A current resume

2. A personal statement (2-3 single spaced pages in 12 pt type with 1” borders maximum) that includes discussion of:
   - The applicant’s reasons for wanting to participate in Columbia’s Pro Bono Scholars Program
   - The applicant’s preparation for the Program, with particular attention to work experience and classes taken; and
   - Interest and future aspirations, if any, with respect to pursuing a public interest or government career that includes mediation or doing substantial pro bono service as a volunteer mediator.

3. A statement that the applicant:
   a. Has sufficient clinical credits remaining (8) to fulfill the ABA and Columbia requirements for graduation
   b. Has registered for (or, preferably, completed) the Major Writing requirement; and
   c. Has met with someone in the Financial Aid Office or is not receiving financial aid.
   d. Understands that an applicant to Columbia’s PBSP is bound to participate in the program in its entirety, for its full semester duration upon acceptance, and that no withdrawal from the program will be permitted.
   e. Has or will have completed the required Professional Responsibility credits by the end of first semester.

4. A copy of the applicant’s Columbia Law School transcript (unofficial transcript from Lawnet is acceptable).
SELECTION

Selection will be based upon the candidate’s:

- Demonstrated interest and future aspirations, if any, with respect to pursuing a public interest or government career that includes mediation or doing substantial pro bono service as a volunteer mediator.
- Preparation through classes, employment or other activities, not restricted to those done while a student at Columbia Law School.
- Skill set and demonstrated professional responsibility.

INTERVIEW

Applicants should not expect an interview.

APPLICATION AND SELECTION SCHEDULE

August 30th at 4 p.m.  Applications Due
August 24th by 8 p.m.  All students informed of their status (accepted, on the wait list, not accepted)

For More Information

For more information, contact:

Professor Alexandra Carter, acarte1@law.columbia.edu
Professor Shawn Watts, swatts1@law.columbia.edu
Dean Ellen Chapnick, chapnick@law.columbia.edu