

Annual Report

2016-17

The Centre for Professional Legal Education and Research



PROFESSIONAL LEGAL
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH
BIRMINGHAM LAW SCHOOL

Introduction from Professor Robert Lee Director of CEPLER, Head of Birmingham Law School



I am delighted to present the CEPLER Annual Report for 2016-17, an exciting year in the life of the Centre.

In the five years since CEPLER was created, we have provided an unparalleled scope of opportunity for our students to expand their knowledge and experience of legal practice through careers events and initiatives; our growing advocacy provision; and our hugely successful Pro Bono Group.

We are proud to have partnered with a number of organisations and institutions that have helped us to maximise the scale and impact of these initiatives.

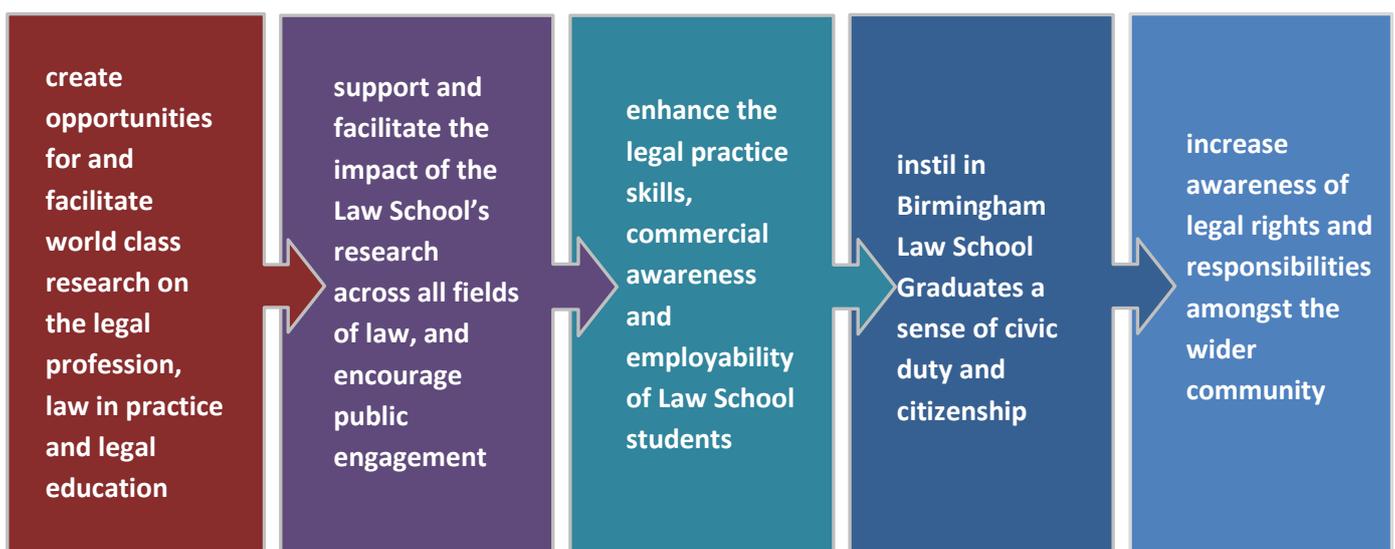
CEPLER's research agenda has continued to explore, challenge and pre-empt the issues affecting legal practice and education. Our team's work has been widely cited and, collectively, we have presented papers at both national and international conferences.

In education, the four CEPLER final year LLB modules are in high demand and we present some of our student feedback on page 14 of this report. Our LLM research assistance scheme, Re-skill, continues to enhance students' analytical skills whilst providing much-needed assistance to Law School colleagues.

We are indebted, as always, to our professional partners for their unstinting support, generosity and encouragement, without which our aspirations could not be realised.

The CEPLER Framework

CEPLER is part of the Law School at the University of Birmingham. It encompasses those Law School activities which are linked to law in practice and to the legal profession. CEPLER's objectives are to:



Each of these objectives is pursued in collaboration with the legal profession, our students, the wider university, other academics, policy makers, regulators and others.

Contents

- 2: Introduction and CEPLER Framework
- 3: Headlines
- 4: Meet the Team
- 5-6: Pro Bono Group
- 7: Careers Calendar
- 8-9: CEPLER Careers
- 10-11: Advocacy
- 12-13: Research
- 14-15: Education
- 16: CEPLER in Numbers

CEPLER Headlines

Birmingham Law School Wins Student Pro Bono Award

In April 2017 Birmingham Law School was awarded 'Best Contribution by a Law School' at the prestigious LawWorks and Attorney General Student Pro Bono Awards. This coveted award was given in recognition of: the range of services and projects; the impact of our work in the local community; and the benefits to student volunteers who participate.

The Pro Bono Group was also shortlisted for 'Best New Pro Bono Activity' for the Birmingham Employment Tribunal Streetlaw programme, alongside a Commendation in the Law School Challenge in fundraising for LawWorks and the Bar Pro Bono Unit.

Chris Walker, Student Chair of the Pro Bono Group said:

"This award is a testament to the hard work that over 200 student volunteers, coordinators and committee, overseen by an incredibly committed staff, have undertaken over the course of this year, but also every year since the Group was founded in 2008."

The Group has also been shortlisted for the Experian Award for Building Stronger Communities, one of Business in the Community's Responsible Business Awards. The Responsible Business Awards ceremony will take place at The Royal Albert Hall in July 2017.



Attorney General Jeremy Wright with Linden Thomas and student committee members Chris Walker, Elliot Mountfield and Sacha Hibbitt



Law Society appointment for Linden Thomas

CEPLER Manager and In-house Solicitor Linden Thomas has been appointed as Deputy Vice President of the Birmingham Law Society, the largest local law society in the country, representing over 4000 legal practitioners in Birmingham and the Greater Midlands. Linden will work alongside the other Officers to promote the work of the Society and its members. This is the start of a three year commitment; a year as Deputy Vice President will be followed by the Vice Presidency and Linden will become President in April 2019.

Earlier this year, Linden was also a finalist of the Birmingham Law Society Awards in the *Pro Bono Lawyer of the Year* category.



Birmingham Law Society Deputy Vice President Linden Thomas with President Andrew Beedham and Vice President James Turner

CEPLER Awards

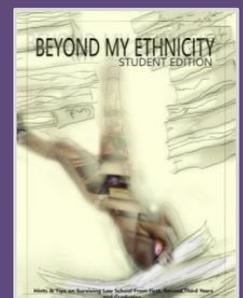
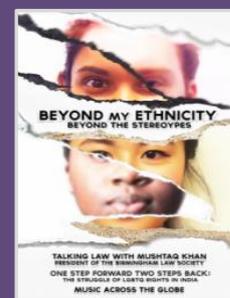
The annual CEPLER Awards recognise our students' outstanding achievement and this year we introduce two new awards:

The CEPLER Award for Research Excellence: celebrates astounding commitment to research and we are proud to honour the huge achievements of the five participants in the UN Women project. Full story on page 13.

The CEPLER Award for Enterprise: this award is given in recognition of ingenuity, creativity and determination. This year's award goes to **Stephanie Stevens**. Stephanie independently applied to the University's Educational Enhancement Fund for backing to produce an online magazine 'Beyond My Ethnicity', profiling different cultures in the student population and representing a forum for cultural diversity. Stephanie was also instrumental in working with law firm, Freeths, to create two work experience placement opportunities as part of a BME Project.



Stephanie Stevens, winner of the CEPLER Award for Enterprise, and two issues of 'Beyond My Ethnicity', her pioneering online magazine.



The CEPLER Team



Professor Robert Lee
Director of CEPLER and Head of Birmingham Law School

A specialist in regulation, particularly health and environmental law, Robert has worked in two of the UK's largest law firms and has held positions on numerous committees and panels.



Linden Thomas
Solicitor and CEPLER Manager

Linden qualified as a solicitor with SGH Martineau, specialising in Employment Law. She oversees many of our pro bono projects and links with the profession and has recently been appointed Deputy Vice President of the Birmingham Law Society.



Dr Steven Vaughan
Director of Research

Steven has been a practising solicitor and held lectureships at Cardiff and Bristol. He is a Future Research Leader for the ESRC and is currently working on a 3-year project on Corporate Lawyer-Client relationships.



Emily Carroll
Director of Careers

Having qualified as a solicitor in 2005, Emily brings a decade of experience and understanding of the legal marketplace from roles with Irwin Mitchell, Walker Morris and Shoosmiths.



Piers Von Berg
CEPLER Bar Liaison

Piers is a Law School Teaching Fellow, specialising in Youth Crime and Justice and Advanced Constitutional Law. He is also a practicing barrister and a member of The 36 Group.



Theresa Lynch
Director of Advocacy

Theresa was called to the Bar at Gray's Inn before joining the Law School from her role with the CPS. Theresa manages all extra-curricular advocacy activity and teaches the CEPLER Advocacy Module. She is also researching BME Students and Mooting.



Dr Julian Lonbay
CEPLER International Development Officer

Julian researches and advises on the law relating to legal education, lawyers and other professionals and he teaches on the Global Legal Services module.



Dr Bharat Malkani
Director of Pro Bono

Bharat specialises in the field of human rights and criminal justice. He joined the Law School from Bristol University in 2008 and established the Pro Bono Group in 2009.



Caroline Bowen
Administrative Assistant

Caroline provides essential support in coordinating the careers events calendar and administering CEPLER's pro bono and advocacy activity.



Lesley Griffiths
Senior Administrator

Lesley supports the extra-curricular and careers-related activities in the Law School, including devising and coordinating the CEPLER Professional Development (CPD) Scheme.

Pro Bono Group

The Pro Bono Group continued to expand during the 2016-17 academic year, with 206 student volunteers, volunteering across fourteen different extra-curricular projects. Whilst each project addressed a different area of legal need, all pursued the Group's twin objectives to:

1. enhance the educational experiences of Birmingham Law School students; and
2. provide free legal services for people in the community, especially vulnerable people who cannot afford the services of a lawyer.

The Pro Bono Group provides services for the benefit of our local, national and international communities.

Local Impact

The Group delivers several projects in and around Birmingham. These include:

- The **Birmingham Free Legal Advice Group** - FLAG is a LawWorks clinic run by the University in collaboration with Mills & Reeve LLP, No5 Chambers and Shakespeare Martineau LLP. This year our students gave written advice to Birmingham residents on a diverse range of matters including, child custody disputes, unfair dismissal, discrimination, wills and probate and landlord and tenant disputes.
- **SIFA Fireside** project – SIFA Fireside is a local charity that supports the homeless and drug and alcohol dependent. During 2016-17 student volunteers designed and delivered interactive workshops and presentations on topics requested by SIFA, including: rights for EU migrants; debt awareness; benefits; and modern slavery.
- Students delivered weekly presentations on Tribunal procedure to litigants in person at the **Midlands (West) Employment Tribunal**.
- Student volunteers provided casework and research assistance for **Birmingham Community Law Centre**, providing invaluable additional capacity for the Law Centre's lawyers. Students worked on a citizenship case which was heard by the Court of Appeal in January 2017. They also helped with the Law Centre's 'Living Rights' project, helping to raise awareness amongst EU migrants living and working in Birmingham of their legal rights.
- Students continue to deliver public legal education through our **StreetLaw** programme, running interactive workshops for schools, community groups and other organisations to help people understand their legal rights and responsibilities. Streetlaw sessions during 2016-17 ranged from a series of workshops on Entrepreneurship and the Law for year 12 pupils at the University of Birmingham School to a session on Crime and Punishment in the UK with 120 year 10 pupils from local secondary schools.

National Assistance

At national level the Group provides assistance through projects such as the:

- **Environmental Law Foundation (ELF) Clinic** – Run in conjunction with No5 Chambers, we take referrals from the charity ELF and provide advice to individuals and community groups on environmental law matters. This year students advised on matters such as protecting a much-loved local green space from development, and dealing with air pollution caused by a neighbouring chimney.
- **Criminal Appeals Assistance Unit** – Our team of students met weekly throughout the year to conduct casework on cases of alleged miscarriage of justice referred by the Centre for Criminal Appeals.

Global Reach

- In 2016-17 the Group took on its first international project in conjunction with **Action4Justice**. Students were briefed on the project by General Counsels for Oxfam and Greenpeace, before researching and writing the content for a website which will be an international resource on how to conduct public interest litigation.



Working with pupils at the University of Birmingham School

Pro Bono Publico: “For the public good”

One of the best things about pro bono work is that, when it is done right, there are benefits for all involved. Here’s what some of our key stakeholders have to say about our pro bono services.

What our clients say:

“Excellent resource/support tool for anyone in fear of legal matters or any legal worries “

“Thank you so much for giving me an action plan to refer to when I need guidance, which is clear, coherent and individually tailored to a rather complex case.”

Clients of Birmingham Free Legal Advice Group

“[S] has come back yesterday declaring she wants to become a lawyer (solicitor or barrister, not sure yet). Just now, she's been asking us: 'Did you know that Nelson Mandela had a law degree?' And, astonishingly, she voluntarily (I repeat: voluntarily) provided detailed information about her day yesterday evening, describing all the different activities in which she got to participate. In other words, the law day yesterday was a wonderful and, I am certain, a formative experience for her!”

Parent of a pupil who attended one of our Streetlaw sessions

What our partners say:

“We are really proud to be a part of such an established project that services Birmingham at a time when pro bono could not be more necessary. It enables our staff to provide legal advice to people who would not otherwise be able to access it, and at the same time to work with the next generation of lawyers and assist them to achieve their potential. FLAG also helps remind students and professionals of the gaping and expanding justice gap.”

Alice O’Donoghue, FLAG Committee, Mills & Reeve LLP

“This partnership has really allowed us to increase our capacity to help vulnerable people with complex needs. It is a great example of collaborative working across a number of different organisations.”

Michael Bates, Manager, Birmingham Community Law Centre

Since the Pro Bono Group was established:

- over 800 student volunteers have engaged in delivering over 4000 hours of pro bono services;
- the Birmingham Free Legal Advice Group has advised over 225 clients;
- we have harnessed in excess of 850 hours of practising solicitors’ and barristers’ time in the supervision of our students delivering free legal advice to members of the local community. This equates to a monetary value of in excess of £173,000; and
- over 1000 people have benefited from our advice and public legal education work across all of our projects.

What our student volunteers say:

“During my time with the Pro Bono Group, I have been a Free Legal Advice Group Coordinator and volunteer, and an Environmental Law Foundation volunteer. The Group provides an extremely valuable service to members of the community.

As a coordinator, I have heard issues that clients have had, some of whom were in very difficult situations and had no other legal service to turn to, so it is fantastic to know that we are there to assist them. It is great to hear the positive impact pro bono has on their lives.

The Group also offers a brilliant opportunity for student volunteers to develop legal and life skills. I have enjoyed putting my theoretical legal skills into action, so that I can help others, and to work with like-minded individuals, who I have become very good friends with. Overall, I have gained skills which will help me to have a successful legal career, an insight of what law is like in practice and an appreciation of the value that free legal advice has for members of my community.”

Elliot Mountfield



FLAG Coordinator, Elliot Mountfield, pictured with Pro Bono Group Committee colleagues Chris Walker and Sacha Hibbitt

CEPLER Calendar of Careers Events

Mon 26 Sept	LLM Careers	Making the most of your LLM Clare Doolan & Emily Carroll
Wed 5 Oct	Careers Lecture	To Be or Not to Be... A Lawyer? Emily Carroll
Thurs 6 Oct	Bar Careers	Introduction to a Career as a Barrister: Is a Career at the Bar for You? Piers Von Berg
Wed 12 Oct	Careers session	Coffee & Careers Gowling WLG
Tues 18 Oct	Bar Careers	Areas of Practice No5 Chambers, Piers von Berg
Wed 19 Oct	Skills Workshop	Commercial Property Case Study: Negotiation Skills Session Shoosmiths
Thurs 20 Oct	Skills Workshop	Contract Negotiation Session Sandeep Kang, Bevan Brittan
Tues 25 Oct	Careers Lecture	What Not to Wear and Making the Most of the Law Fair Emily Carroll
Wed 2 Nov	Leaders in Law	Grace Ononiwu OBE , Chief Crown Prosecutor, West Midlands Region
Tues 8 Nov	Law in Practice	Intellectual Property Law Vinod Bange, Taylor Wessing
Thurs 10 Nov	Careers Lecture	The Business of Being a Lawyer , Cairo Nickolls, Gowling WLG
Wed 16 Nov	Careers Lecture	Commercial Awareness/Personal Brand , Katy Handby, KPMG
Wed 16 Nov	Careers Lecture	I Want to be a Lawyer in Canada Deborah Wolfe, National Committee on Accreditation (by Skype)
Thurs 17 Nov	Skills Workshop	Corporate Case Study: Negotiation Skills Stephanie Stern, Slaughter & May
Fri 18 Nov	Leaders in Law	Geoffrey Ma , Chief Justice of Hong Kong
Wed 23 Nov	Law in Practice	Compliance Law Deutsche Bank
Tues 10 Jan	Skills Session	Negotiation Skills Case Study Browne Jacobson
Wed 11 Jan	Skills Session	Mock Mediation Mishcon de Reya
Thurs 12 Jan	Bar Careers	What Kind of Barrister Would You Like to Be? St Ives Chambers, Piers Von Berg
Tues 17 Jan	Careers Session	Coffee and Careers Gowling WLG
Wed 18 Jan	Skills Session	Mock Assessment Eversheds
Thurs 19 Jan	Careers Lecture	How to Get a Training Contract Higgs & Sons
Thurs 26 Jan	Leaders in Law	Stephen Denyer , Director of Strategic Relationships at the Law Society
Wed 1 Feb	Skills Session	Mock Mediation event Gateley PLC
Thurs 2 Feb	Alternative to Traditional Practice	How to Become a Tax Lawyer Deloitte LLP
Mon 6 Feb - Thurs 9 Feb	International Law Week	Qualify as a US Attorney , Sarah Hutchinson, BARBRI International, US Judge Mirjana Lazarova Trajkovska , Judge for FYR Macedonia at the ECoHR Qualifying in Singapore Michelle Lu (via Skype) Law Career in Canada Barbara O de Dios (via Skype) Opportunities in the Oil and Gas Sector in Nigeria Paul Ugwu Abba
Thurs 16 Feb	Alternative to Traditional Practice	Working in a Professional Services Team Jenna Ostrowski and Irina Evstafieva, KPMG
Tues 28 Feb	Bar Careers	'As I was going to St Ives, I met a man with seven wives': My Career at the Family Bar Mark Cooper, St Ives Chambers
Thurs 16 Mar	Law in Practice	Property Litigation Law Kate Barry, Herbert Smith Freehills
Thurs 16 Mar	Skills Session	Mock Interviews Kate Barry

Careers

CEPLER works tirelessly to ensure that Birmingham Law School's careers provision evolves to reflect the aims and ambitions of our students. This year, we have increased the number of commercially-focused interactive skills-based sessions, partnering with firms including: Macfarlanes, Slaughter & May, Eversheds, Mishcon de Reya, Browne Jacobson, Gateley, Shoosmiths and Bevan Brittan. These sessions covered areas such as: negotiation; commercial awareness; mediation; and interview skills.

We continued to provide a range of Law in Practice talks in specialist areas such as compliance, tax and intellectual property; Alternatives to Traditional Practice talks such as 'Working in a Professional Services Team'; and we gave prominence to a series of talks on legal practice in other jurisdictions during *International Law Week*, which included presentations from lawyers practising in the US, Canada, Singapore, Nigeria and a Leaders in Law lecture from Mirjana Trajkovska, the former judge for FYR Macedonia at the European Court of Human Rights.

At the start of the the year, CEPLER recruited a team of students to facilitate a Peer2Peer employability project, with the aid of Student Experience and Law School funding. The aim of the initiative was to provide more tailored careers advice and information, with bespoke guides designed to assist student in taking positive steps towards their career goals. The student facilitators also hosted informal 'coffee club' drop-in sessions, focusing on common themes such as interview success and dealing with application rejection, through which students were directed to CEPLER and Careers Network resources.

Bar careers

Piers Von Berg, CEPLER's dedicated Bar Liaison, has substantially increased the range of bar careers support.

Piers, who divides his time between teaching, research and his legal practice as a member of 36 Group Chambers, has enhanced the provision of bar careers talks, panel events and networking opportunities with barristers chambers both locally and nationally for those students focused on a career at the bar.

He has also provided advice and support to students undertaking pupillage applications and interviews, and seeking scholarships. One student was successful in winning the Access to the Bar Award from Middle Temple for students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Piers has also helped students contact judges and arrange 'marshalling' where the student sits with the judge in court for work experience. He intends to roll this out to more students next year. This is an unusual offering for a law school as these opportunities are normally only available through the Inns of Court.

CEPLER Congratulates

Laura Kendrick, a final year LLB student, has beaten over 1,000 other applicants to win a coveted prize in the Herbert Smith Freehills 'Too Good to Miss' competition.



Applicants were required to submit a video presentation highlighting what was unique about them. Laura's impressive vlogging skills earned her a trip to Hong Kong and Australia, followed by work experience in their London office.

Birmingham Law in the City

On Wednesday 7th December, CEPLER coordinated Birmingham Law in the City 2016 – our biggest insight day yet.

This full day law careers event, run exclusively for fifty University of Birmingham law students, was hosted by Gowling WLG and designed to give an insight into the Birmingham legal market. Sessions included a corporate case study focusing on the industry sectors in Birmingham, an emphasis on negotiation skills, top tips for applying for vacation schemes, interview advice and a chance to ask questions of current lawyers and trainees from top tier firms based in Birmingham, including: DLA Piper, Eversheds, Pinsent Masons, Shoosmiths and Squire Patton Boggs.

Participating students said:

"The networking opportunities it provided were invaluable and I would definitely recommend that students apply to go to next year's event."

"I was able to talk to trainees and grad recruitment officers who were extremely informative"

"This event has been of the best law events I have attended because I have been able to gain a greater understanding of these firms in terms of applications"



Work Experience and Insight Opportunities

In 2015-16, over 17,000 students were accepted to study law in the UK, but in the same year less than a third of that number graduated with training contracts in place. In such a competitive professional market, work experience plays an essential role in employability and this year CEPLER continued to offer work experience opportunities with long-standing partners. We were also delighted to extend the scope of our placement and insight activity even further by introducing a number of new opportunities

Following the successful Leaders in Law lecture by Grace Ononiwu, Chief Crown Prosecutor for the West Midlands, the CPS generously provided 12 one-week placements, giving our students the opportunity to immerse themselves in the environment of the largest CPS regional office in the country, and shadow a prosecutor in court.

CEPLER also joined forces with Pinsent Masons to offer ten first year students a unique introduction to global corporate law in practice and we partnered with local law firms: Wright Justice Solicitors, Dass Solicitors, George Green LLP and HRS Family Law, each providing excellent grounding in the work of busy solicitor practices.

A Pro Bono Group Project with Action for Justice (A4J), (a group supported by Oxfam to provide help and advice to those seeking access to justice through the strategic use of public interest litigation) has generated an exclusive opportunity to develop content for the A4J website in a four-week summer placement.



Placements: 2-4 weeks

Personal Support Unit, Birmingham
Bailey Wright & Co, Birmingham
Dass Solicitors, Birmingham
Action for Justice, Oxford/London
International Student Advisory Service

"(Bailey Wright & Co) was a wonderful work experience placement and I cannot recommend it highly enough. It definitely helped me to gain a lot of confidence and ultimately to achieve my training contract offer."

Demi Hughes, LLB 2017

Placements: 1 week

Crown Prosecution Service
George Green Solicitors
Wright Justice Solicitors
Pinsent Mason
No5 Chambers
Freeths

"I have a firm belief that my experiences with the PSU will benefit me in the future in regards to both work experience and graduate positions. The PSU is a well-regarded charitable organisation and I hope that its prestige will enable me to look at bigger opportunities within established law firms."

Daisy Walker, LLB 2016

Exclusive Insight Days

- **Slaughter & May, London:** a rare opportunity for students to gain access to a busy city law firm and benefit from valuable applications advice.
"It was particularly useful to have the graduate recruitment team review our CVs and to have partners perform a mock interview... the advice gained during the day will be invaluable for future applications."
- **Resolution Conference:** eight final year students studying family law assisted at this annual national conference, enjoying the opportunity to attend conference sessions and network with delegates.
"[the conference] gave me the opportunity to meet barristers, solicitors and judges; all of whom were very friendly and offered much useful advice in terms of career progression."
- **Employment Tribunal, Birmingham:** this annual event is always a highlight as the Tribunal welcomes two groups of students on successive days, providing a tour of the courts, and an invitation to witness proceedings and meet the Judge.
- **UK Association of Women Judges:** students were thrilled to be welcomed to the Birmingham Civil Justice Centre by some of our most notable female judges.
"It was an outstanding afternoon. I learnt a lot and really think it is going to make a huge impact in my law career as a woman."

Advocacy

2016-17 has been a bumper year for Mooting, Debating and Negotiation, with our regular internal mooting and debating competitions, a new internal negotiation competition and teams of students representing the School in several external competitions.

Internal Mooting

Mooting is the backbone of our extra-curricular advocacy provision and is a hugely valuable skill which will benefit students whatever their chosen career path. Mooting is open to all students through skills training sessions and those students wishing to can register to take part in competitive moots.

The Camm Cup: sponsored by No5 Chambers, this is open to 2nd and 3rd year students and is judged by the serving Holdsworth Club President. This year we were honoured to welcome Lady Justice Gloster as judge, who presented the cup to our winner Isabel Slippe-Quartey:



“Competing in the Camm Cup has been such an enriching experience; the opportunity to be able to moot in front of a Court of Appeal judge does not arise every day! Throughout each stage of the competition, I was challenged to engage with a range of different skills, predominantly understanding the intricacies of judgments and applying them to factual scenarios. During the times when I struggle with reading law and begin to lose faith, I will remember the hope winning has instilled in me. I greatly recommend mooting at the university to everybody.”

The Postgraduate Cup: also sponsored by No5 Chambers, was judged by barrister Mr Timothy Newman and Theresa Lynch. This year’s winner Barbara Gonzalez-Jaspe comments:



“I came to university with a future at the Bar in mind, and mooting is something which is highly regarded during the application process. Taking part, and winning, gave me an enormous confidence boost... there is also no better way to practise for your exams than being able to articulate your arguments and undermine possible counter-arguments in 10/15 minutes in front of someone who currently practises in law. Mooting was the scariest and the best thing I’ve done and I look forward to continuing next year and into practice.”

The Alumni Cup: open to first year students, this cup is judged by our esteemed alumni – this year we were delighted to welcome back Ann Houghton from Anthony Collins Solicitors and Douglas Houghton from Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, along with Circuit Judge, Simon Ward. The winner of this cup was Deborah Bowen:



“Mooting has provided an opportunity to practise and develop skills that are imperative to advocacy. Formulating a legal argument then presenting it before a court to be scrutinised and tested is indeed nerve-racking. However, the adrenaline rush that one experiences is incomparable. The sense of accomplishment at winning is remarkable and has enthused me to continue mooting. It has also reinforced the determination to achieve my aspiration of the Bar.”

Debating

Debating begins with skills training followed by an internal competition. Each year, the winning team from our internal debating competition represents the University in the Birmingham Law Society Debating Competition. A stellar performance by Poppy Watson, Shusmita Deb and Balpreet Singh Khatra, sealed the team's victory and they were presented with the trophy by John Hughes, Birmingham Law Society President.



“Debating forces you to think on your feet, produce creative and convincing arguments. It also develops your team working skills. It has been an honour to represent the University.” Poppy Watson

“The Birmingham Law Society Debating Competition provided me with the opportunity to develop my advocacy skills and meet with other like-minded students to have interesting and thought-provoking debates. I am extremely grateful to my team and, of course, our incredible debating coach, Theresa Lynch.” Balpreet Khatra

Negotiation

Extra-curricular Negotiation began this year with skills training and an internal competition. Congratulations to all involved in the preliminary stages.

The students involved in the competitive stages of the **Birmingham Law School Internal Negotiation Competition** were: Charley-Louise Hope, Nisha Telesford, Umaeno Nkposong., Angela Eggleton and Nivedita Kulkarni. **Winner (joint):** Charley-Louise Hope and Angela Eggleton.

Following on from their success in the internal competition Angela and Charley represented Birmingham Law School in the **CEDR National Negotiation Competition** and Nisha and Charley represented the Law School in the **National Sports Law Negotiation Competition**. They all proved to be shrewd negotiators, congratulations!

“Competing in both the internal and external negotiation competitions has been a fantastic opportunity to develop the necessary skills required by the legal profession. I have thoroughly enjoyed competing.”

Angela Eggleton
2nd Year LLB

External Competitions

This year, as well as hosting the regional round of the Times 2TG Moot, CEPLER has funded the Law School's participation in an unprecedented number of external advocacy competitions, including:

- ESU-ECC National Mooting in Liverpool (**Joanna Orczyk and Nivedita Kulkarni**)
- UKSLA Moot in Aberystwyth (**Angela Eggleton and Rebecca Bate**)
- Inner Temple Varsity Moot in London (**Mima Markicevic and Michael Coumas**)
- Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution (CEDR) Competition in Chester (**Charley-Louise Hope and Angela Eggleton**)
- National Sports Law Negotiation Competition, Wembley (**Charley-Louise Hope and Nisha Telesford**)
- LSE LGBT Moot, London (**Barbara Gonzalez-Jaspe and Zoe Seen Chan**)
- Oxford French Law Moot (**George Rollins and Oogathoo Roubekrishna**)

Representing the Law School in a national competition is an intensive and challenging, but ultimately thoroughly rewarding experience and we congratulate our teams for their extraordinary commitment.

“I was thrilled to be asked to represent the law school in the LSE: LGBT Moot. I enjoyed working as a team and getting the opportunity to work with academics who have advocacy experience as they were able to provide some insight into how we could improve. Working in a new area of law which we hadn't studied was daunting but afterwards left us with a sense of pride that we had managed to really understand the law through our own research. The weekend itself was fantastic, it was fast paced but extremely friendly – speaking with students, practitioners, researchers and judges allowed me to really understand the profession and network. The judges give fantastic feedback and are keen to speak with students after each round to find out more about you.”

Barbara Gonzalez-Jaspe
1st year LLB for Graduates

Research

CEPLER undertakes independent, cutting edge and ground-breaking research on the legal profession and legal education. We provide a critical and reflective forum that engages policy makers, regulators, practitioners and national and international academic communities in rigorous debate.

Projects, papers and publications

This year, the CEPLER team and colleagues have been involved in a broad range of research, for example:

July 16: Steven and Emily presented a paper at the Fordham University International Legal Ethics Conference on *'Transaction Mills? The 'Dirty Work' of Legal Services Onshoring'*;

July 16: Steven spoke at the NYU Stern School of Business event on *'Understanding the Moral Compass of In-house Lawyers'*;

Sept 16: Linden hosted the Inaugural UK and Ireland Streetlaw Conference in Birmingham Law School for 50 delegates (see page 14);

Oct 16: Steven was a speaker at the Norton Rose Fulbrights *'Women in LGBT Networks'* event;

Oct 16: Bob gave evidence to the External Affairs Committee of the National Assembly for Wales;

Nov 16: Emily and Steven presented a paper at York Law School on *'Transaction mills or London lite? The onshoring of legal services in an age of globalisation'*;

Nov 16: Steven and Bob were awarded a Legal Sustainability Alliance Grant for their project on *'Law Firms, Sustainability and Demand-side Drivers'*;

April 17: Bob presented a paper on his *'Study of Litigants in Person in Birmingham Civil Justice Centre'* at the SLSA conference;

May 17: Professor Erika Rackley spoke at a conference at University of Maserata, Italy, on *'Being a Constitutional Justice: A Women's Perspective'*;

June 17: Piers spoke at the Colloquium on the Civic Curriculum, Leeds University on *'Formation of identity and individualization among undergraduate law students'* and his research on *Civic Education at Higher Education: Lessons from Azerbaijan* will be published as a chapter in *Higher Education in Post-Communist States: Sociological Perspectives (2017)*

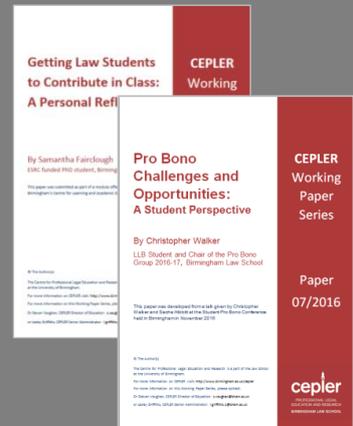
July 17/Sept 17: Theresa spoke at the HEA Annual Conference in Manchester and will present at the SLS Annual Conference in Dublin on the theme of *'Experiential Learning, Reflection and Diversity: A Discussion Inspired by an Advocacy (Mooting) Module'*.

Sustainability and the Commissioning of Legal Services

Bob and Steven are working with the Legal Sustainability Alliance (LSA) on this pioneering research, which explores the extent to which sustainability is a driver in the commissioning of legal services. The project, which is funded by the LSA, consists of three phases: phase one is an online survey to private practice; whilst phases two and three comprise confidential one-to-one interviews with private practice lawyers and those working in-house.

Litigants in Person

CEPLER research on the experience of access to justice and the court process by those representing themselves has been published in a CEPLER Working Paper. This two-stage project was conducted with the support of the Birmingham Civil Justice Centre and the Personal Support Unit. Supervised student researchers assisted in gathering questionnaire data from litigants in person in court about their experience. Stage two involved one-to-one follow-up interviews, examining the challenges they encountered.



CEPLER Working Papers

Launched in 2014, the CEPLER Working Paper Series provides a freely accessible public space for reflection on the legal profession and legal education for authors from the academy, from practice, from our student body and from further afield.

Contributions range from draft articles; to book chapters; conference papers; reviews and opinion pieces, all of which contribute to furthering the scope of research-led thinking and debate.

The growing Working Papers series has had more than 7,000 downloads since the series began in late 2014. You can view the series, download the individual papers, or sign up for updates at:

www.birmingham.ac.uk/cepler-workingpapers

If you would like to write for us, we would love to hear from you:

cepler@contacts.bham.ac.uk

UN Women Project

UN Women, an institution of the United Nations, has designed and launched a *Global Gender Equality Constitutional Database*, partnering with a small number of law schools around the world to highlight student work that uses this database.

This is the second year of the programme, and Birmingham Law School is the first UK law school to have been selected to be part of the initiative. In April, five of our students participated in the UN Women Summit of Student Research at the US Institute of Peace in Washington DC:

- **Colette Power** (LLM) presented her original paper on sex-selective abortion in India;
- **Magda Furgalska** (LLM) presented her work on abortion law in Kenya;
- **Natasha Rushton** (LLB) discussed her research on state responses to domestic violence;
- **Umaeno Nkposong** (LLB) talked about gender and transitional justice in Kenya;
- **Simone Thomas** (LL.B Grads) presented her research on forced and coerced sterilisation of Aboriginal women in Canada.



“To have the opportunity to present my own research at a UN Women Symposium on ‘Equitable Constitutions’ at the United States Institute of Peace in Washington, is something I never imagined when accepting a place to do LLM at Birmingham and is something I will never forget. In the words of UN Women, they had bought us from the classroom to the global policy making table because our ideas and our voices are important in the global development agenda.”

This project was the product of 6 months of hard work, in collaboration with the faculty at BLS, who have given generously of their time to support, encourage and challenge us to produce work which really stood out at this prestigious event. We have become critical legal thinkers, we will finish our courses with work already published by UN Women and we have been encouraged to dream big in terms of how our future work (be that in practice or research) can be used to have a global impact and influence at the very highest levels, on key issues facing our world today, such as the realisation of gender equality.”

Collette Power (LLM)

UK and Ireland Streetlaw Conference

In September 2016, CEPLER was delighted to host this inaugural event: an exploration of best practice in the provision of public legal education to local communities.

Inspired by the first International Street Law Best Practices Conference, held in South Africa earlier in the year, the two-day event was organised by **Linden Thomas**, CEPLER Manager and In-house solicitor. The conference welcomed almost fifty delegates from universities, regional law societies and other organisations from across the UK, Europe and the USA to exchange ideas and implementation strategies for successful Streetlaw.

The highly interactive event was divided into three sections:

- Streetlaw in the Community;
- Skills and Knowledge; and
- Implementation and Development.

Each section featured sample sessions and teaching techniques. The conference also included a fast-paced mock trial delivered by two leading Streetlaw proponents, who graduated from Georgetown University Law Center, Washington DC, where the Streetlaw initiative began over forty years ago.



Conference delegates said:

“...we managed to recognise a number of ways to develop our projects and how to get better student engagement.”

“The event surpassed my expectations.”

“We took away a number of ideas which we could adapt for our projects.”

“Excellent sessions which I would recommend highly! Glad to see such an enthusiastic international community.”

“Very engaging and interactive.”

“I’ve got a lot of inspiration and practical experience and training.”

“We now have a strong platform for progression.”

Education

During a period of substantial change for legal education in England and Wales, CEPLER's four final year LLB modules offer diverse and innovative practice-related approaches which enhance our students' understanding of legal practice and develop their commercial awareness by incorporating practitioner input and engaging with real world legal environments.

Employment Law

Led by Linden Thomas, and with guest speakers including an Employment Judge and both private practice and in-house employment law solicitors and barristers, this module offers an insight into the theory and practice of employment law relating to individual rights, adopting a simulated practice setting to introduce topics such as unfair dismissal and discrimination, as well as professional conduct issues.

"I gained more practical skills such as writing letters to clients and how to interview potential clients. These skills will be beneficial for the future and something I would not have had the chance to gain in the Law School without this module." Hannah Shaw

"... the biggest highlight was having to negotiate and settle discrimination claims with each other..."

I think this will really give me a head start when I begin the LPC."

Oliver Gordon

"Advocacy really helped me to engage with the law in a practical way and inspired me to work hard to improve both my vocational skills and my legal research skills, as well as increasing my self-confidence."

Victoria Stasi

Advocacy

This module was designed to provide students the opportunity to develop their rhetorical skills, legal research and presentation skills. The module introduces students to court room advocacy and alternative dispute resolution. Students focus on mooting and present at the appellate level. Now in its fourth year, this module also features input from the legal profession with practitioners attending regularly to judge practical skills but also to offer insight to life in legal practice.

"I chose advocacy because, in contrast to my other modules, it offered a more interactive and practical based course, with insight into how law operates in the real world. We got to perform our moots and pleas in mitigation in front of the guest judge, and guest barrister, who came in to watch our performances and give us advice for the future." Victoria Stasi

Regulation of the Legal Profession

Introduced four years ago and led by Dr Steven Vaughan, this module provides a wide-reaching examination of lawyers, their ethics, duties, dilemmas and the real world context of how lawyers do their job. The module helps students to hone critical thinking and writing skills and develop tools to evaluate current research on the role of lawyers in the profession, with guest speakers including Julie Brannan, Director of Education at the SRA.

"(Steven) was able to stimulate our critical thinking in a way none of the modules before did. I gained confidence in debating about challenging topics. I learnt how to critically read papers of authors and also how to properly carry out a research project." (Flavia Irta)

"... the highlight was when a representative of the SRA came to speak to us about the incoming SQE. This really illustrated how prevalent the module was to us as budding lawyers"

Nataliya Barmak Manifold

"It was a very contemporary and innovative module, taught in a very creative way, which gave us the opportunity to explore different aspects of the legal profession through a variety of assessments and activities."

Sofia Tsouloukidou

Global Legal Services

Launched this year and led by Dr Julian Lonbay, this module offers an innovative approach, combining research and presentation of the legal profession in the student's chosen jurisdiction with a short exam, independent project and multiple choice questions to examine transnational legal services and the factors affecting lawyers and clients. Practitioner input included a session from Stephen Denyer who spent 36 years in international legal practice with Allen & Overy before joining the Law Society.

"The project also allowed us to be more creative and innovative as it differed from the traditional academic summative assessments. I was also given the opportunity to interview the ex-president of the CCBE when conducting research on my project."

(Zandina Glava)

CEPLER Re-skill

Re-skill is CEPLER's research assistance scheme, which recruits LLM students to support members of Law School academic staff in their individual research projects. The scheme provides a valuable staff resource and enables students to earn money whilst honing their skills. This year has been the most successful yet, providing almost three hundred hours of assistance to fourteen Law School academics. Research themes included: comparative constitutional law; foundations of judicial review; research into mid-tier law firms; the structure of the European Court of Human Rights; and the regulation of energy technologies.



Professor Fiona de Londras, Deputy Head of the Law School, participated in the Re-skill scheme this year:

*“As the academic year was coming to an end, I was finishing a co-authored book called **Great Debates on the European Convention on Human Rights**. The book was designed to go beyond basic knowledge of the Convention and to spur on debates, in the classroom, among students, and in the reader's own mind, about the purpose, effectiveness and legitimacy of the European human rights system. Through my work with Magdalena I gained not only an excellent researcher, who uncovered and organised masses of information for our chapter on the role of the Convention in times of austerity, but also a critically aware reader who could offer comments on the manuscript, challenging us to push some debates further and identify particularly effective (and ineffective) parts.*

The confidence Magdalena showed in bringing her independent, critical faculties to reading the book led me to engage her for another project, on which she is uncovering some little considered materials on EU counter-terrorism especially using her extensive language skills. The opportunity to work with her through Re-skill, thus, not only offered Magdalena the chance to develop and further hone existing skills, but also ‘re-skilled’ me as an author, sharpening my analysis and greatly strengthening the book”

Magdalena Furgalska was Fiona's Re-skill research assistant

“As an aspiring PhD candidate, but having only worked in legal practice since graduating with my LLB, it was wonderful to have an opportunity to ‘retrain’ on the Re-skill Project. I have worked under Professor Fiona de Londras assisting with research (literature review, case law summaries) on one of the chapters of her upcoming book.

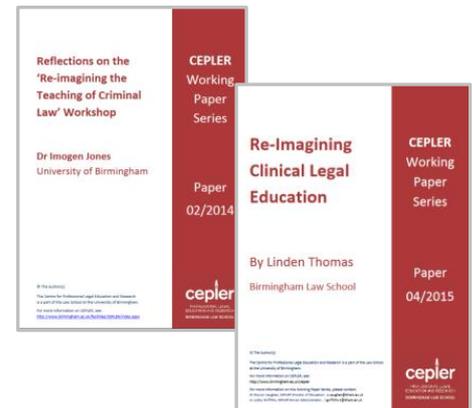
I was also privileged to have had an opportunity to proof-read and comment on finalised chapters. Assisting Professor de Londras allowed me to immerse myself in researching an area of law outside of my comfort zone and gave me more confidence in pursuing my academic career. The Re-skill project gave me hands-on research experience, which has enhanced my overall academic development.”

Re-imagining...

CEPLER's Re-imagining events are one-day workshops that provide a forum for academics, practitioners, policy makers, and regulators to reflect on new and innovative approaches to the teaching and learning of law subjects.

Hosted within the Law School, these workshops bring together like-minded educators to consider the extent to which educational approaches remain fit for purpose and how subjects might be delivered differently.

Previously, CEPLER has hosted workshops that re-imagined the teaching of criminal law and clinical legal education (visit www.birmingham.ac.uk/cepler-workingpapers to download reports on both events).



CEPLER is delighted to announce that, following the Reimagining Clinical Legal Education workshop in March 2015, Hart Publishing has commissioned an edited collection of the same name.

Written by contributors and delegates from the workshop and edited by members of the CEPLER team, the collection ‘reimagines’ various aspects of clinical practice at a time of significant change for legal education and regulation.

This will be CEPLER's second edited collection, following the successful publication, *'The Futures of Legal Education and the Legal Profession'* published by Hart in 2015.

CEPLER Year in Numbers 2016-17

69 the total number of **CEPLER Professional Development** award-winners in 2016-17

The total number of **CEPLER CPD points** amassed by this year's graduates **25,596**

345

The number of days of **work experience and professional insight** CEPLER has provided to students

the number of downloads of **CEPLER Working Papers** in the last year **2,772**

14

The number of **pro bono projects** now running

440

Number of undergraduate and postgraduate students involved in **Advocacy activity** In 2016-17

27

Recipients of CEPLER Awards for **exceptional achievement**

76

The number of external speakers who provided careers talks and **interactive workshops** this year

208

The number of students involved in **pro bono activity** this year

If you have any comments or questions about the contents of this report, or if you or your organisation would be interested in working with CEPLER please contact Linden Thomas, CEPLER Manager, at l.thomas@bham.ac.uk or on 0121 414 5780.