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Winter 2023 Newsletter

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GOLDEN GATE UNIVERSITY

SCHOOL OF LAW

WOMEN'S EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS CLINIC

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Winter 2023 Newsletter



Former Director Hina Shah, New Assistant General Counsel at the California Labor & Workforce Development Agency. WERC Welcomes Professor Ramirez Lee!

After 16 years at the clinic, and seven years as Director, Professor Hina Shah is joining the California Labor Workforce & Development Agency, the highest labor agency in the state, as their assistant general counsel.

Prof. Shah has helped transform the Clinic into a strategic partner with grassroots, community-based worker organizations. As legal counsel to the California Domestic Workers Coalition, Prof. Shah helped expand and protect rights for domestic workers throughout California. While we are extremely sad for her to leave, we are excited to see the impact she will make at the government level.

The Clinic is on solid footing and in good hands. Moving forward, the clinic will be co-led by Professor Kate Raven and Professor Natalia Ramirez Lee. Prof. Raven previously supervised and taught at the clinic with Prof. Shah and brings a wealth of experience as a clinical educator, litigator and trial attorney. Prof. Ramirez Lee recently joined the clinic and has experience counseling and representing workers in complex wage and hour class and representative actions as well as individual retaliation, discrimination and harassment cases. Welcome Prof. Ramirez Lee!

**Above, from left to right: Professors Shah, Ramirez Lee and Raven.*

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Another Successful Semester: WERC Launches New Collaboration with Civil Rights Department

WERC launched a new collaboration with the Civil Rights Department (CRD, formally known as the Department of Fair Employment and Housing, DFEH) to represent low-wage workers at mediation before the agency. The workers filed discrimination claims based on gender and racial discrimination, sexual harassment and/or disability discrimination.

Each WERC student was assigned a case to prepare for mediation: they interviewed and counseled their clients; tracked down and interviewed witnesses; researched legal issues; filed mediation briefs on their client's behalf; and ultimately, represented their clients at all-day mediations in front of CRD mediators. In the end, the students were able to negotiate settlements on behalf of the majority of the clients.

In addition to our partnership with the CRD, WERC conducted two legal intake clinics in partnership with: Mujeres Unidas y Activas, Filipino Advocates for Justice, the Chinese Progressive Association, Trabajadores Unidos/Workers United (TUWU) and the San Francisco Women's Building.

WERC students diligently represented these low-income clients in their wage and hour cases. **Jowita Fratzak** ('24) and **Estefani Munive** ('24) represented clients at two Labor Commissioner Conferences and successfully negotiated settlements on their clients' behalf. **Esra Coskun-Crabtree** ('23), **Emily Padilla** ('23), and **Amanda Dobson** ('24), **Victoria Chan** ('24), **Allie Kozak** ('24) and **Cheri Hines** ('24) all interviewed clients, resulting in the clinic filing a new case at the Labor Commissioner, representing a care attendant whose employer failed to properly pay overtime to its large workforce of personal attendants.

In addition to their casework, students helped prepare several litigation memos on the residential care industry that will be used in statewide trainings. Finally, after noticing several clinic cases that would have benefitted from it, **Natalie Ciapponi** ('24) and **Marvin Macias** ('24) prepared a training on sexual harassment in the workplace targeted to youth workers.

Finally, the Clinic, in our role as part of the Domestic and Residential Care Facility Worker Education and Outreach Program ("DWEOP") of the California Domestic Worker Coalition, conducted several statewide trainings including for residential care providers and legal advocates.

**Above: Students celebrate the end of the semester. Below: Jowita Fratzak ('24) and her client at the Labor Commissioner Conference.*



WERC Developed 360° Caregiving Rights Toolkit

At WERC, we believe that a key missing piece in the ongoing dialogue and advocacy on caregiving is worker's rights. As demonstrated by our 2017 report, *Understaffed and Overworked: Poor Working Conditions and Quality of Care in Residential Care Facilities for the Elderly*, working conditions are an integral and essential component to older adults' wellbeing. With unprecedented growth in America's elder population, the need for long term services and support (LTSS) has increased; unfortunately, the existing long-term care infrastructure is unprepared for this seismic demographic shift.

In response to this need and supported by a generous grant from the Metta Fund, WERC created the **360° Caregiving Rights Toolkit**, a robust set of Know Your Rights materials, designed to educate families and professionals who hire caregivers to work in private homes. The videos and handouts will help them navigate the complex web of state and federal labor laws to set conditions of employment, including hours, pay, and benefits, that are legally compliant. In the coming year, the Clinic will use the materials to conduct trainings for families and professionals that hire caregivers or place elders in facilities, and legal advocates for the workers.

[View the 360 Caregiving Toolkit Here!](#)



Clinical Program Assistant Fe Gonzalez Celebrates 20 years with the Clinic

Fe Gonzalez joined the GGU clinical department in 2002, bringing with her a wealth of experience as a legal secretary and paralegal in the Philippines. Since then, she has grown into an integral part of the clinics: answering students' questions, providing technical and paralegal support and generally, making the clinics run. We thank her for all her hard work over the past 20 years!



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