The SIU School of Law's Health Law & Policy Semester Away Program offers third-year law students a unique, hands-on opportunity to learn about health law and policy, while living and working in the Illinois capital during the fall semester of their final year of law school.

Residence in Springfield, Illinois, allows students to work in externship placements under the supervision of experienced health law and policy lawyers, while still earning up to a full semester (12 - 18 credit hours) of academic credit. Springfield is approximately three (3) hours north of the main law school campus in Carbondale.

The Academic Program

Students will reside in the Springfield, Illinois, area and enroll in three (3) courses:

- A for-credit clinical experience under the supervision of an approved externship supervisor who is an Illinois-licensed attorney at an approved site, as well as oversight by an SIU School of Law faculty member. Between three (3) and nine (9) credits may be awarded for the clinical experience.
- Two (2) or three (3) designated health law policy courses taught during the fall semester, which will leverage the use of technology to allow for simultaneous instruction in multiple locations, including Springfield and Carbondale, conducted in compliance with ABA requirements. These courses may include: Health Policy Law, Public Health and Law, and Bioethics and the Law, among other designated “core” health law and policy courses that are part of the health law program and taught by School of Law faculty. Each of the courses will be three (3)-credit-hour offerings.
- The total credits available through the Health Law & Policy Semester Away Program range from twelve (12) to eighteen (18).

Externship in Health Law & Policy

Students will work under the supervision of a licensed Illinois attorney focused on health law and policy four (4) days per week (Monday through Thursday). Students will be paired with an externship site based on their interest and experience, and on the entity's needs and availability.

Site types include:
- Hospitals & Health Systems
- Health-related Government Agencies
- Health Care Associations
- SIU School of Medicine

Student Requirements:

- Orientation. Students will attend a mandatory two (2)-day orientation at the beginning, or just before the beginning, of the semester.

- Journaling. Students will be required to keep a daily journal of their activities. The journal will be summarized weekly and submitted to Professor Mekel.

- Round-table Discussions. A student round-table discussion will take place regularly during the semester in Springfield with Professor Mekel.

- Final Report. A written student summary of and reflection on the externship will be submitted to Professor Mekel.

Professional & Academic Evaluation

Extern supervisors will submit evaluations of assigned students to the student externs and to Professor Mekel. Professor Mekel will review the supervisor evaluations with students and will assess students' learning and performance during the externship. Grading will be on a pass-fail basis.
Through the SIU Health Law & Policy Semester Away Program, SIU School of Law students have a unique opportunity to experience a real-world capstone to their legal education.

~ Michele Mekel, J.D., M.H.A., M.B.A.
Assistant Professor of Law, Southern Illinois University School of Law, Assistant Professor of Medical Humanities, Director, SIU Center for Health Law and Policy

This program offers a unique opportunity for students to hone the skills they have learned in the classroom while working under the guidance and mentoring of attorneys who are experts in health law and policy.

~ W. Eugene Basanta, Southern Illinois Healthcare Professor of Law, School of Law, Professor, School of Medicine, Department of Medical Humanities, Director, SIU Center for Health Law and Policy

For More Information:
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Application & Enrollment Process

- Memorandum to Professor Mekel outlining interest and qualifications, and preferred externship site type and rationale
- Résumé to Professor Mekel
- Release of transcript from Registrar to Professor Mekel
- Enrollment in designated health law courses
- Approval and placement by Professor Mekel

~ Michele Mekel, J.D., M.H.A., M.B.A.
Assistant Professor of Law, Southern Illinois University School of Law, Assistant Professor of Medical Humanities, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine Department of Medical Humanities