



Getting With the Program

Suffolk Law's new Client Services Innovation Program gives law students real-world work experience.

As the evolution of technology reduces the need for space, and demand increases for areas that facilitate interaction and collaboration, law librarians from all sectors continue to adapt their physical environments. Suffolk Law's John Joseph Moakley Law Library was built in 1999; its most recent incarnation includes an inventive way to turn two unused rooms into real-world experience for students and to serve as a revenue source for both students and the school.

Signs of the Times

Until recently, the evolution of the Moakley Law Library paralleled the changes of many other libraries: the creation of areas for collaboration, the need for fewer computer terminals, and a reduction in the size of the

physical collection. Suffolk had already created non-quiet zones to foster student collaboration. As students use personal laptops, tablets, and smartphones, the number of computer terminals located throughout the library has been reduced from roughly eight computers to two.

Students still come to Suffolk's law library to check out course textbooks, copies of treatises, and other resources; and they still utilize law library staff to find items that they're looking for.

"Beyond offering a place to study, the library staff provides reference and instructional assistance both inside and outside the library in the form of trainings, guest lectures, standalone classes, and one-on-one appointments for research help," says Legal Research Librarian Liza Rosenof. "The library also still staffs a traditional reference desk."

The abundance of space created from replacing much of the physical collection with digital resources was compounded by a reduction in law school enrollment. The law school's current enrollment, based on the class that entered last fall, is 332 first-year students. Five years ago, Suffolk Law School's first-year class totaled 540.

"The library was able to remove a good chunk of the print collection because it now provides access to a lot of the materials online," says Moakley Law Library Interim Director Rick Buckingham. "Also, the law school has intentionally decreased its class size target projection. With a reduced student body, fewer students are using space in the library."

Requiring less space, last summer the law library consolidated its total area from roughly two and a half floors to a floor and a half. Yet, even after

the move, a few underutilized rooms remained. In the past year, the library has implemented inventive alternate uses for some of its extra space.

Room for Opportunity

Since the summer of 2015, legal advocacy organization The New England Innocence Project, an independent 501(c)(3) public charity, has been working out of an unused room in the library. A Suffolk law professor who had worked with the organization helped to create the mutually beneficial arrangement.

In January, Suffolk announced that two adjacent law library rooms, previously used as computer labs, would serve as the home base for its new Client Services Innovation Program—a joint venture with outsourced legal, document, business and research support services provider Integreon. The company employs more than 2,300 associates (assisting clients in more than 50 languages), who are located in 13 delivery centers on four continents. Integreon provides training, supervision, and aid to Suffolk students so they can assist clients with e-discovery, legal research, legal spend analytics, compliance, process engineering, contract management, due diligence, and operations support services.

The new Client Services Innovation Program will provide students with real-world experience, according to Dean and Professor of Law at Suffolk Andrew Perlman. “The current generation of law students needs different training than the prior generation,” Perlman says. “The partnership between Suffolk Law and Integreon will help law students develop skills that they can use throughout their professional career.”

Partnerships in Learning

Integreon’s global head of legal process outsourcing had a long-standing relationship with Perlman prior to approaching him, shortly after Perlman was named Suffolk Law’s

dean in spring 2015, about the possibility of Integreon and Suffolk Law working together.

Perlman, former director of the Institute on Law Practice Technology and Innovation that Suffolk Law launched in 2013, felt the partnership provided an opportunity to help students work with digital legal service methods that they will potentially come into contact with when they graduate.

“I really liked the idea; it fit the school’s focus,” Perlman says. “The program is not designed to train students to go work for legal process outsourcing companies; it offers law students an opportunity to experience how legal services can be delivered in new ways, and how to be competitive in the twenty-first century legal marketplace.”

The library’s available space seemed like an ideal venue to house the venture.

“As is true for many law schools, Suffolk is currently downsizing, in terms of space needs, and the library has been part of that process,” Perlman says. “It had a fairly large space that was

being underutilized, and we saw the legal process outsourcing program as a way to repurpose the space.”

Moakley Law Library staff members agreed.

“Offering access to opportunities like the Client Services Innovation Program and the Innocence Project helps provide students with valuable real-world experience,” Buckingham says. “Students get experience handling different types of work that they may end up doing later in their practice.”

Laying the Groundwork

Renovations to the Moakley Law Library workspace were minimal. Aside from Suffolk’s IT (Information Technology) Department working with Integreon to make sure all required security features were in place on the lab’s 32 computers, —to ensure sensitive information processed during Client Services Innovation Program projects would be protected—the former labs required no major remodeling work.

In total, it took about six months to bring the Client Services Innovation

FAST FACTS

SUFFOLK LAW CLIENT SERVICES INNOVATION PROGRAM



Andrew Perlman

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SERVICES PROVIDED: e-discovery, legal research, legal spend analytics, compliance, process engineering, contract management, due diligence, and operations support.

PROGRAM EMPLOYEES: Law students, particularly ones with experience in the school’s Institute on Law Practice Technology and Innovation coursework, will be given first consideration; however, other students, including undergrads, may be considered for projects as well. Integreon employees will offer supervision and support.

LOCATION: Suffolk Law School’s John Joseph Moakley Law Library, located in Sargent Hall on Suffolk’s Boston campus.

HOURS: Dependent on projects.

Program to fruition—making sure “all the ‘i’s were dotted and the ‘t’s were crossed” before the contract was signed.

Integreon will handle all client relations, and Suffolk’s law school director is responsible for vetting candidates to determine who will participate in Client Services Innovation Program projects.

Priority will be given to law students—they are, Perlman says, “the first order of business when it comes to staffing available work,” particularly if they’re taking courses within the school’s law practice and innovation concentration. However, if a suitable opportunity arises, Suffolk undergrad students may be considered as well.

Students’ pay, which comes directly from Integreon, varies depending on experience level and the matter at hand. According to Perlman, they are paid well, relative to what they’re paid to perform other work within the law school.

Students may sign on for just one project or several. Perlman says the program also provides law students who currently have a part-time job with an opportunity to replace it with work that would allow them to obtain

training and income—potentially without ever having to leave the law school building.

Law students expressed interest in the program shortly after it was announced earlier this year. “Students started asking how they could apply to get involved,” Perlman says. “Their reaction was very positive right away.”

Real-World Experience

Suffolk isn’t the only law school to recently partner with an external legal company.

In May 2015, legal service provider UnitedLex announced four law schools would be participating in its residency program: the Emory University School of Law, University of Miami School of Law, The Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, and Vanderbilt Law School. The University of Southern California Gould School of Law was added in November, and Notre Dame Law School signed on to participate in UnitedLex’s program in January.

Law school graduates in the two-year program obtain classroom instruction, client interaction, and other work experience as they help deliver legal services in practice

areas such as litigation management, e-discovery, cybersecurity, contract management, patent licensing, IP management, and immigration law.

The Client Services Innovation Program may include similar assignments. Perlman expects projects to involve high-volume work from corporate legal departments that may not want to send the assignments to an outside law firm due to the nature of the work or the cost involved.

Integreon and Suffolk Law waited until the Client Services Innovation Program was announced to start approaching potential clients. They recently completed their first project—part of a larger initiative to transform the contracting process for a major biosciences company—which involved a Suffolk student with a biosciences background drafting a sophisticated contract playbook. The student analyzed past biosciences contracts and synthesized the data into negotiating positions to create the playbook, which will let the company accurately assess the current state of negotiations and plans to normalize future negotiations.

Program coordinators expect more projects to begin in the coming months. Suffolk Law will receive a percentage of the revenue from work performed through the program.

Despite the potential to benefit both students and the law school, Suffolk’s program has faced some criticism, according to Perlman—including concern it was created primarily to train law students to work for a legal process outsourcing provider in case they don’t find work as a lawyer. However, Perlman says critics misunderstand what the Client Services Innovation Program is trying to achieve.

“What we’re really doing is ensuring that, no matter what our graduates do—whether they go to the largest law firm in the world, or a corporate legal department, or set up shop as a solo practitioner—they understand how technology and innovative practices are changing the delivery of legal services,” he says. “That experience will make them better lawyers—no matter what career path they choose.” ■



Suffolk’s Moakley Law Library repurposed two available rooms into the home base for its new Client Services Innovation Program—a joint venture with Integreon.