MEMORANDUM

TO: Students (and others) interested in Externship Program
FROM: Roy M. Sobelson, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs; Professors Andi Curcio and Kendall Kerew, Co-Directors, College of Law Externship Program
SUBJECT: Explanation of policies regarding credit for non-Externship work
DATE: June 1, 2014

We often receive inquiries from students interested in receiving academic credit for an internship or other similar work experience with a placement that is not part of the College of Law’s Externship Program. Unfortunately, students cannot receive academic credit for this work experience. The only way students can earn academic credit for work outside of the law school is with an approved externship site through our Externship Program.

To learn more about our Externship Program, visit law.gsu.edu/programs/experiential-learning/externships/. All student questions should be answered there. What follows is an explanation of how externships work and why the answer is as stated above.

An externship is a class for which students earn academic credit. As is true for all classes, students in Externships pay tuition, register in advance in accordance with registration rules and schedules, and agree to meet certain requirements. Like all classes, externships must comply with ABA and other standards by which we are governed. And as is true of several other elective courses (most notably, clinics), the College of Law is charged with verifying that all potential registrants meet certain curricular and other requirements before they register and begin their work.

In some ways, externships are obviously different from other classes. They meet off campus and require that students work a certain number of hours per week. They require students to engage in written self-reflection, report to their faculty and externship supervisors and periodically meet with faculty supervisors.

Since the heart of the externship experience is on-site legal work, the site supervisors serve as the teachers and mentors. Accordingly, site supervisors are carefully screened to ensure they will provide students with meaningful legal work, mentor students, provide extensive feedback on student work, timely submit student evaluations and otherwise comply with program requirements. Site supervisors must also agree to abide by certain externship program policies, one of which is that all students must be given equal
opportunities to apply. Naturally, that means that all interested students must go through the application process in every semester in which they seek to work at an Externship site. Students who are chosen and offered positions must sign contracts covering their on-site work.

Another difference between externships and other classes is how externships gain faculty approval. Before externship placements receive approval, they must first be vetted by the faculty members who run the Externship Program. These faculty members review proposed placements, meet with the applying supervisors, evaluate the nature of the work to be done off-site, and perform a host of other functions. Once they do that, they decide whether there is room for us to take on additional externships, in light of the fact that our faculty supervisors and staff are already handling dozens of placements at a time. If approval of the placement seems appropriate, it is added to the Externship Program as an approved externship site.

After a site is approved, students may apply to extern at the site during the College of Law’s regularly scheduled externship application periods. The site supervisors make the final decisions as to which students are accepted. Once students begin work, students and supervisors alike must meet numerous filing, review and other requirements. As you can see, the Externship Program is an extensive one requiring a huge amount of administrative work from the faculty and staff of both the College of Law and the approved sites.

Finally, the College of Law Externship Program is limited to government agencies and not-for-profit organizations within the metro-Atlanta area. Interested judges and lawyers in such agencies or organizations are encouraged to apply to participate in the program. If our faculty supervisors are in a position to take on new placements, they will consider any such application.

We hope this explanation is adequate. If not, feel free to contact the externship faculty or staff or the associate dean for academic affairs with any questions.