

Institute for Legislative and Governmental Affairs Summary of Programs **Spring 2005**

THE INSTITUTE FOR LEGISLATIVE AND GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS sponsored several important programs during the spring semester. It hosted a seminar on tax reform featuring Congressman Richard E. Neal. Additionally, the State Commission exploring the adequacy of legal services to indigent defendants held its final hearing at the Law School (see article in *Perspectives*, Spring 2005). Further, the Massachusetts Appeals Court conducted its semi-annual sitting. In addition to several well-attended CLE sessions, the Institute hosted two students from Siena College for the seventh annual summer internship program.

Tax Reform Speak Out

Congressman Neal was the keynote speaker at the "Tax Reform Speak Out," urging amendments to the internal revenue code that would make the federal income tax system fairer to the middle class. Among other changes, he would eliminate the alternative minimum tax. Professor Ned Schwartz argued for a "flat tax" on the sale of consumer goods, coupled with repeal of the income tax. Attorney Paul Mancinone '92 and Professor William Baker concluded the program with comments on tax reform in general, including observations that a flat tax would not be viable.

Massachusetts Appeals Court Sitting

At its semi-annual sitting at the Law School, Judges Mel Greenberg, Kent Smith, and Andre Gelinas of the Massachusetts Appeals Court heard six cases. The civil appeals included issues relating to the Uniform Commercial Code and child support in divorce proceedings. The criminal appeals included questions about search and seizure, sufficiency of the evidence, and competence of counsel. ♦

Siena College Summer Interns

The Law School is one of three sites for a special internship program created by Dr. Leonard Cutler of Siena College. Each summer two Siena students reside on campus to participate in a one-of-a-kind program in legislative research and drafting, a collaboration between the office of State Representative Gale Candaras '82 and the Legislative Institute.

The eight-week program has developed into one of the most popular summer internship programs offered at Siena. Dr. Cutler, the Siena pre-law advisor and director of the internship program, has referred to the Western New England College program as "unique." He has reported that competition for the Institute's legislative internship is keen among seniors, who may also chose internships at other law schools in the Northeast. Working under the supervision of Institute Director Arthur Wolf, the Siena interns conduct research on their choice of current legislative problems. This summer's Siena interns, Kelly Pressler and Brian Sterling, chose to work on death penalty and redistricting legislation.

The interns also accompanied Representative Candaras to the State House where they undertook primary research and met with experts on their topics, including legislators, policy analysts, legal staff, and advocates. The interns then prepared a legal and policy memorandum, together with draft legislation.

Candaras said the students are instructed on the technical aspects of legislative research and drafting. "When the summer began, I honestly did not know where they would come out on their topics of redistricting and reinstating the death penalty. We certainly had extensive discussions about these issues. Kelly and Brian are bright, energetic, and hard working. They would make fine attorneys and legislators," Candaras concluded.



Siena College summer interns Brian Sterling and Kelly Pressler discuss their legislative projects with State Representative Gale Candaras '82 (center) at the State House in Boston