

2010-2011 CHICAGO-KENT LAW REVIEW STAFF WRITING PROGRAM

On behalf of the entire Executive Board, congratulations on becoming a new member of the Chicago-Kent Law Review! One of the numerous benefits of being a Law Review member is the opportunity participate in the Staff Writing Program. Through the Program, you will have the opportunity to publish your first scholarly legal work before you finish your time at Chicago-Kent. This handout will describe some of the basics of the Program.

Executive Notes & Comments Editor:

The Executive Notes & Comments Editor (“ENCE”) is in charge of the Staff Writing Program. This year’s ENCE is Andrew Jung. Andrew will hold a weekly office hour (time to be announced) to discuss your notes/comments. He will always be available via e-mail and will also be available to schedule one-on-one meetings. Periodically over the course of the semester, papers will need to be submitted to Andrew for edits and status checks (see the Track One and Track Two schedules for specific deadlines).

Notes & Comments Editors:

Each new member will also be paired with one of our nineteen Notes & Comments Editors (“NCEs”). These editors will be your day-to-day contacts for any questions or comments you might have. In addition, you will need to periodically meet with your NCE to discuss your paper. Once you have selected a topic, we will try to pair you with an NCE who has an expertise or interest in your topic. Furthermore, if you will be seeking publication, you will need to get permission from your NCE before submitting your paper.

Faculty Advisors:

Each new member will be responsible for selecting a faculty advisor for his/her note/comment. Students tend to find faculty members whose specialties fall within the topics about which they are writing. If you will be seeking publication, you will need to get permission from your faculty advisor before submitting your paper.

Research Librarians:

Each new member will be paired with a research librarian. You will be responsible for scheduling a meeting with your research librarian in the near future. In the past, the research librarians have proven to be an invaluable resource in the note/comment writing process.

Online Resources:

As described in the other handouts, you will need to meet various benchmarks throughout the semester. Please refer to the website for examples of what various students’ papers have looked like at various stages of the writing process (e.g., a topic proposal, a research plan, and a preliminary draft).

CHOOSING A TOPIC:

As you begin the writing process, choosing a topic is a daunting but important task. Remember, the topic you select is going to become a big part of your life for the next year. Here are some useful tips:

What are your interests?

When you begin thinking about what you would like to write about, ask yourself what your interests are—not necessarily even your legal interests, but your interests in general. Are you interested in sports? International relations? Music? Politics? The financial markets? Gender issues? There are plenty of legal issues that deal with all of these topics. Or maybe you are interested in a specific area of law that you studied last year or intend to study in the future. The point is that you should put a good deal of thought into your topic. If you have a genuine interest in your topic, you will likely enjoy the Staff Writing Program considerably more, and it will show in your work.

Still stumped?

- Schedule an **appointment with a professor** you had last year or who may share some of your interests. The odds are that the professor will have some good input on hot topics or emerging legal issues.
- **Go online.** Legal blogs discuss controversial or interesting legal issues that make great topics. Here are some examples (with an entertainment/copyright/constitutional law focus – the ENCE’s area of interest):
 - The Split Circuits blog, <http://splitcircuits.blogspot.com/>, is devoted to circuit splits, which are always popular for notes/comments (Circuits splits are also listed in the BNA’s United States Law Week, on reserve in the Chicago-Kent Library). Admittedly, this blog is not very active.
 - The SCOTUS blog, <http://www.scotusblog.com/wp/>.
 - The Wall Street Journal’s law blog, <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/>, a daily source of current legal events
 - The legal blog for the Hollywood Reporter, <http://thresq.hollywoodreporter.com/>, which is great for those with an interest in entertainment and IP law.
 - Blogs by law professors, like:
 - The Chicago-Kent faculty blog, <http://blogs.kentlaw.edu/faculty/>
 - The Volokh Conspiracy, <http://volokh.com/>, run by UCLA’s Eugene Volokh
 - The blog of Jonathan Turley, a professor at George Washington University law school, <http://jonathanturley.org/>
 - You can also often find personal blogs of attorneys, such as:
 - Copyrights and Campaigns, <http://copyrightsandcampaigns.blogspot.com/>, a blog about issues in IP law and the First Amendment by Ben Sheffner, senior counsel at NBC Universal
 - The Digital Media Lawyer Blog, <http://www.digitalmedialawyerblog.com/>, from David Johnson, a litigator focusing on technology and the law
- **Talk to upperclassmen** members of Law Review, or schedule an appointment with your NCE. You have a large support system that is ready to help.

THE PUBLICATION PROCESS:

Chicago-Kent Law Review has no set number of student notes/comments that it will publish. We hope to publish as many student notes/comments as possible. The first step in the publication process is to meet all deadlines. Once your final draft is complete, you must obtain approval from your NCE and faculty advisor before submitting your note/comment. After obtaining approval, the twelve-member Law Review Executive Board will review all papers and will vote on whether or not to publish that paper. The Board will meet at the end of the first semester for notes/comments completed pursuant to Track One. The Board will meet in February and March to consider notes/comments completed pursuant to Track Two, as well as Track One papers that have been revised and resubmitted.

BATTLING WRITER'S BLOCK:

At some point this year, you will want to throw up your arms and give up on your note/comment. Try not to get frustrated. In effect, you are becoming a leading expert on a given area of law, and that takes time, effort, frustration, and devotion. Utilize the support system around you—your fellow new members, NCEs, ENCE, faculty advisors, and research librarians all want to help.