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### **Arthur Liman Public Interest Law Summer 2013 Fellowship Report**

This summer, with the generous support of the Arthur Liman Public Interest Law Fellowship for undergraduates, I was able to intern both at the Georgetown University Law Center O'Neill Institute for National and Global Health Law in Washington, DC and the Natural Resource Defense Council's Chicago Office. In this report, I will reflect on my experiences at both places and share how together they have helped me to determine the next steps of my journey.

#### **Experience at Georgetown O'Neill Institute**

Project: Joint Learning and Action Initiative on National and Global Health Responsibilities

The O'Neill Institute was established in 2007 with a vision that recognizes law as a fundamental tool for solving health issues in our local and global communities. It seeks to fulfill a trifold mission, which includes: 1. Serving as a leader in understanding the many ways in which law can be mobilized to improve health through interdisciplinary research 2. Serving as an advocate and encourage actors in the public, private, and civil society spheres to employ law as a positive tool in addressing critical health issues and bring them together for collaborative problem solving, and 3. Teaching.

I was fortunate to experience all three facets of O'Neill during my time there, working with the team on the Joint Action and Learning Initiative on National and Global Responsibilities for Health (JALI). I was able to explore the intersection between global health, international law, and human rights, a topic in which I have developed a keen interest from the few classroom exposures here and there. Interning with JALI this summer, amidst human rights and health lawyers from all over the world was an eye-opening experience. JALI's right-based interdisciplinary approach to health and the balance between theoretical and practical considerations that underlies its efforts in helping address the global inequities in health converged in a perfect learning opportunity for someone like myself who has just started exploring career paths in this field.

JALI was formed during an international meeting held at the Norwegian Directorate of Health in 2010. It is the response to a collective commitment by the civil society and academia to engage in evidence-based research and launch a right to health based advocacy campaign with the goal of ultimately drafting a Framework Convention on Global Health (FCGH) to frame post-MDG global health commitments. JALI's ambitious mission would not be as

inspiring had I not witnessed first hand the passion that my colleagues have developed and the endless hours that they have put in for turning this idea into a tangible reality. Its innovative concept of creating an international binding-legal instrument bottom- up, through a fully inclusive process that involves civil society actors and those suffering from the health inequities alike from the beginning to the end really captured my attention. As a student of international relations, I have learned about how the international system is no longer as state-centric as it once has been, but little could I even imagine a legal instrument created by the people and for the people. With this big question mark, I embarked on my internship with a curious mind and craving heart.

My main task as a summer research assistant consisted of coordinating JALI's overall research effort and help develop a comprehensive global movement outreach strategy in preparation for the launching of a FCGH network of civil society organizations and advocates in November this year. I really enjoyed the fact that my supervisor gave me a lot of freedom to design how I wanted to tackle these two fairly broad responsibilities. At first, it was a little frustrating not knowing exactly what I had to do, but after orienting myself and having really absorbed the organization's mission and transformed it into something of my own – taking ownership of the experience in a way – I started to actively propose concrete projects of my own, all while guided by the overall directions I received from my supervisor.

Consequently, I created a civil society network database to keep track of all those committed to assist JALI in the effort to developing a FCGH. I also penned a detailed outreach strategy for JALI with a set of relevant documents that future interns or team members can use to continue the work after I leave. To accompany all this, I developed a social media strategy for JALI and worked with JALI's secretariat members at the Center for Health Human Rights & Development in Uganda to fully launch the FCGH global movement's online presence by opening avenues like Twitter, Facebook, JALI blog, and a LinkedIn group to complement other parallel outreach efforts. This was a great learning experience for me, because I identified a need, acted upon it, and saw the impact.

To top all these, my supervisor, Eric Friedman, JALI's project leader and a law fellow at O'Neill, also asked me to co-draft a response paper to address critiques towards the FCGH. It was largely prompted by a scholarly article published in the International Journal of Health and Human Rights, but my task was also to engage with issues and limitations that scholars and other relevant stakeholders have suggested in relation to the development of a binding international law that is as broad in scope as the FCGH. I found myself applying the research skills that I have

accumulated throughout the years at Princeton and introducing international relations frameworks and methodologies into my analysis “in defense of the FCGH”.

In addition to completing these JALI-related projects, this internship experience was also instrumental in my career exploration. In June, I got to sit in on a weeklong summer conference on Non-Communicable Diseases and Law designed for policymakers and civil society advocates that came from organizations like the Department of Health and Human Services, Safe Kids, Norwegian Department of Health, the WHO, the American Heart Association, as well as a few industry representatives from transnational corporations like Merck. The amount of knowledge that I gained in the course of the week aside, this experience convinced me that lawyers do play a crucial role in the future of global health, and that my intention in pursuing a legal education is well justified by the need for those skills in the field, whether I want to engage in policy-work or more advocacy and project based initiatives in the future.

The O’Neill institute also organized weekly lunch discussion sessions with people who worked at the forefront of both domestic and international health domains as well as a few journal clubs where interns joined law fellows to talk about recent developments in health regulation, such as e-cigarettes, food labeling, and big data. My fellow interns were from France, Mexico, China, Argentina, and the US, and all of them were health lawyers in training. So the best part about this exercise had to be seeing how as a result of the differences in their respective legal systems and cultures, often times they framed a given regulatory issue in very different ways. The diversity in perspective further enriched the already-simulating discussion and I was happy to realize that I sometimes was also able to pitch in with my international relations background and topical knowledge accumulated through Princeton’s Global Health Program.

Overall, this summer internship with JALI at O’Neil institute was a truly eye-opening and rewarding experience. Not only was I exposed to many innovative concepts in the field of global health governance, I was also able to make substantial contributions to an important global movement and acquire some vital transferable skills along the way. This no doubt will come in handy in my future endeavors. This experience consolidated my desire to pursue a legal education so that I can one day have the necessary tools to not only advocate for but also actively solve health equity issues globally, from empowering people to make changes at the grass-root level to addressing global governance inadequacies head-on.

*You can find more information about JALI on <http://www.jalhealth.org/>*

## **Experience at the Natural Resource Defense Council**

Project: Marine Emission and Air Pollution in the Pearl River Delta Region (PRD) in China

The second part of the summer, I interned at the NRDC to work on a China marine emissions and air pollution project. Although I was based in the Chicago office, all the other members of the project team were either in China or all over in the U.S.. This was not my first exposure to working in an international team, but it did remind me of how difficult it is to repeatedly schedule conference calls across four different time zones.

Emission from ocean going vehicles (OGVs) have recently become a major contributor to air pollution. This is especially true for the Pearl River Delta Region (PRD) of China, which, with its flourishing shipping industry, has suffered a huge toll in terms of air quality. OGVs use bunker fuels that are extremely high in their sulfur content. The international community has attempted to curb the impact of this pollution source by establishing “Emission Control Areas” (ECAs) under International Maritime Organization’s MARPOL Annex VI. The North American ECA was adopted in 2010 (implementation began in 2012), and the Caribbean ECA was adopted in the following year (implementation to begin in 2014). Both contain specific emission reduction targets for NO<sub>x</sub>, SO<sub>x</sub>, and PM. The European Union currently has two SO<sub>x</sub>-only ECAs, for the Baltic Sea and the North Sea.

The long-term goal for the NRDC team is to identify key local players (scientists and policy makers) in the PRD region and mobilize available resources to build policy momentum towards applying for an ECA for the area. The difficulty of this endeavor is manifold. Not only is it extremely difficult to convince Chinese mainland officials to work with their counterparts from Hong Kong (a PRD ECA would need to include both regions), the scarcity of relevant environmental and health data is also a major obstacle. My task consisted of helping the team navigate both barriers.

Part of my job was to find major local influencers in the hope of getting them on the same page with the NRDC team in terms of realizing the need for an ECA. This consisted of going through publications, NGO reports, conference presentations, and figuring out who would be able to serve as our local advocates. The larger portion of my time, however, was devoted to hunting down evidence of the link between marine emission and air pollution, and the link between air pollution and health. It wasn’t until last year or so that the Chinese government started to increase the transparency surrounding air pollution data. The public availability of daily air quality monitoring is still at its nascent stages. So I spent much of my time looking for what we call an emission inventory (database of emission information) for the PRD region. Maintaining such an inventory is a standard practice in the U.S. and EU, but not in

China. I also worked on compiling evidence from scientific literatures and from talking to relevant scientists to address the various criteria for application for ECA under international law, such as impact of seasonal forcing on local air pollution, percentage contribution of air pollution from marine sources, readiness of alternative technologies to replace existing bunker fuels, potential impact on economy, etc. Since I didn't yet have any legal training, I couldn't work on diverse legal questions that an ECA would engender in the Chinese context. Another intern on the team was charged with that, but I got to read her memo, which was quite fascinating.

Overall, although this internship experience was rather science heavy, it did consolidate my interest in international law. I really got to see how the local implementation of policies is one step removed from the lofty global principles but how the latter is nevertheless crucial. This air pollution project was another powerful example of the potential of international law in creating a framework for global governance and the tremendous contribution of non-state actors (like NRDC) in the governance effort. At NRDC, I also got to talk to a few environmental lawyers who worked on really interesting litigation cases. While I was very intrigued by their work, I was actually steered away from pursuing a purely environmental law track. This experience helped me see more clearly that I'm interested in international law and global governance more broadly, and that includes issues that relate to human rights and public international law.

Thus, it is with this more general direction that I wish to approach my next steps. I want to give myself more time to explore and find more organic ways to bridge my interests in health, environment, human rights, international relations, public interest advocacy and diplomacy through law. My immediate next step is applying to law school and pursuing a legal education. I would not have been so certain about this had it not been the generous support of Yale Law School and Princeton's Law and Public Affairs Program in awarding me the Liman Summer Fellowship and giving me the opportunity to have these two experiences. This summer was instrumental in helping me crystallize my passion and find a direction.