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Liman Fellowship Report, Summer 2018

National Center for Access to Justice, New York City

Compared to other recipients of the Liman Fellowship, my background is a bit unconventional. I'm studying Operations Research and Financial Engineering, and am interested in applying quantitative skills to contemporary social and political challenges. Not having had much experience in the legal world, I feel incredibly grateful that I was given the opportunity to learn about a host of issues that I didn't know existed.

I spent my Liman fellowship as a research fellow at National Center for Access to Justice (NCAJ) in New York City. I met my supervisor, David Udell, at the Liman Colloquium at Yale, Law School where he was a participant. David (the organization's executive director) and Amy Widman (the associate director) were both exceptional supervisors and mentors.

NCAJ researches and reports on the state of civil justice in the United States. Civil court cases do not guarantee legal representation to litigants, and many people find themselves dealing with consumer debt, eviction, family issues, or other legal troubles without much guidance or support. NCAJ conducts research on civil legal aid organizations, policy initiatives, court practices and technological innovations to help make courts fair and accessible.

As a research fellow, I conducted data analyses related to court access and representation. I connected NCAJ's Justice Index to broader social and economic indicators

to help understand the causes and effects of civil justice issues. I also created interactive data visualizations using Tableau software to make my findings easier to access and interpret.

Representing NCAJ, I participated in numerous conferences about the future of law, the administration and preservation of justice, and the role of technology in the court system. I also had the opportunity to volunteer with CLARO, a program that offers legal assistance to unrepresented litigants in consumer debt cases. With CLARO, I went to Bronx Civil Court weekly to provide legal assistance to individuals being sued by debt collectors. The first-hand experience was both sobering and inspiring – I quickly came to understand that the civil justice system needs more attention, scholarship and reform.

I am incredibly thankful to the Liman Fellowship for providing me the opportunity to work at NCAJ this summer. I'm also grateful to David Udell and Amy Widman for being outstanding supervisors. My internship experience re-affirmed my interest in pursuing rigorous, impactful work throughout my career.