From Dean Dan

We're proud to partner with the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada and Nevada Legal Services to provide free community legal education classes throughout the year. These classes have served more than 60,000 people in our community since the program began in 1998. The fall semester classes begin this week and provide opportunities for members of the public to learn about their rights and how to navigate the legal system on issues relating to family law, small claims, bankruptcy and foreclosure, immigration, and criminal records sealing. Many of the classes are taught by Boyd law students under the supervision of Cliff Marcek, the law school's supervisor for its community service programs, and attorneys from the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada and Nevada Legal Services. Classes are offered in both English and Spanish and are held at the law school, the Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada, and the Clark County Law Library. A schedule of classes and more information about them is available [here](#). Help us spread the word about this free community service that builds on our partnerships with Legal Aid Center of Southern Nevada and Nevada Legal Services.

Dan

Dean & Richard J. Morgan Professor of Law
daniel.hamilton@unlv.edu
facebook.com/DeanDanHamilton

Faculty Spotlight: Max Gakhh

*The UNLV Health Law Program is an innovative partnership between the Boyd School of Law and the School of Community Health Sciences. Last week's faculty spotlight was on Stacey Tovino, Lehman Professor of Law and director of the UNLV Health Law Program. This week's spotlight turns to Max Gakhh, the associate director of the Health Law Program, adjunct professor at Boyd, and assistant professor in the School of Community Health Sciences.*

What's the most important thing you are working on right now?

The UNLV Health Law Program is working with many excellent colleagues to help organize
the Nevada Population Health Conference, which will take place this November. The Conference will assemble attorneys; health care providers, facilities, and payors; public health practitioners; and other partners from across the state to consider how we can improve health in Nevada by thinking not only at the individual patient level, but also in terms of patient groups and service delivery systems. It will address topics such as the Affordable Care Act, new roles for technology, how socio-economic factors impact health, and medical-legal partnerships. This type of dialogue is critical to generating creative solutions for improving the health of Nevadans.

When you are working on an article or a book, what's your favorite part of the process? My favorite part of the writing process is editing and re-writing. I think of editing as sculpting, in that I chisel a clearly defined form from the amorphous lump that is my first few drafts. The editing process helps me stay organized and focused; it helps me scrutinize and evaluate ideas. I also like editing because it forces me to consider the purpose and value of each word. When I write and when I edit, I rely heavily on diagrams, tables, and other visuals.

How does your scholarship influence your teaching and service and vice versa? The U.S. public health system relies heavily on physicians to be its eyes and ears. To prevent epidemics and consistently monitor health, state and local governments require physicians to disclose when they have diagnosed or treated certain conditions such as, for example, an infectious disease like Ebola. After making a presentation on mandatory disclosure laws to a group of local resident physicians and medical students, I began a project that systematically analyzes physician mandatory reporting laws in Nevada. I am now working with a public health colleague to consider how these laws are constructed and what types of reforms could improve their intended effects.

Student Spotlight: Briana Martinez

You grew up here in Las Vegas and worked in the family business, yes? Yes, I was born and raised in Las Vegas. I worked in the grocery store that my grandfather established more than 50 years ago and then I worked with my father in his real estate brokerage. Being able to work with my family has been the biggest blessing. I was able to see how to run a business and be a part of it.

How did you enjoy your time as an intern for Senator Harry Reid? It was great, as the foreclosure mitigation intern, to have an opportunity to assist struggling homeowners. I was able to be a part of a team dedicated to foreclosure prevention.

Tell us how the Huellas mentorship program, run by La Voz (Boyd's Hispanic/Latino law student association) helped you as an undergraduate ... and how do you intend to help others through your continued involvement in the program? The program has been an invaluable experience for me. When I was an undergrad my mentors helped me with the law school application process, which I was clueless about. My mentors also introduced me to fellow law students with whom I've built great relationships, which I am sure will turn into lifelong friendships.

As a board member this year I am hoping that we can have more events in order to bring the legal community, and those considering it, together. I also intend to stay involved with the law students and undergrads, as a mentor, in Huellas after I graduate.

What are your goals following law school? After celebrating graduation and passing the bar, I plan to clerk for a judge here in Nevada, move into the private sector for a couple of years to hone in my skills, and ultimately open my own firm.
Alumni Spotlight: Tabitha Fiddyment '03

Tabitha is the director of legal services for the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the Las Vegas Valley Water District. She is married and the mother of three.

What's the best business/lawyer advice you've received, and whom did it come from? I think the best advice I have received as a lawyer was from my long-time mentor and friend, Chris Kaempfer. He was good at reminding me that there are people around you who know more than you. Contrary to your every instinct, you do not need to actually know the answer to everything. "I don't know that" is a completely acceptable answer--and sometimes the one that will be best received. Don’t get me wrong, clients like confident lawyers, but they also do not like know-it-alls. Unfortunately, many lawyers have this belief that they have to be the smartest person in the room. At your best, you are a problem-solver, a brain-stormer, a listener, and a finder of solutions. Practice those skills and you will be viewed as a great lawyer.

Tell us about a turning point in your career. About two years ago, I went in-house with the Southern Nevada Water Authority and the Las Vegas Valley Water District. It is one of the best decisions I have ever made and a significant turning point in my career. Not because private practice was miserable. More because private practice was not particularly suited for me. Following a very rough couple years for my family and me, I decided I needed to reevaluate both my professional and personal paths. I decided that I needed purpose. A reason beyond making money to spend most of my awake hours working. Billing hours and being largely focused on the bottom line had become unbearable. Now, I have the luxury of time in that the quality of my work is not burdened by the sometimes incongruous need to bill a certain number of hours in a day. Sure, I have pressures. But my pressures are largely self-inflicted. I want to be a good lawyer. I want to have the time, space and resources to produce good, valuable work product. I want to serve my clients and further the "greater good."

Lucky for me there isn't a much better place to do that than working for a not-for-profit cooperative agency that sells clean drinking water in the drought-stricken western United States!

Community Member Spotlight: Steve Wolfson

Clark County District Attorney, Member of the Dean’s Council at UNLV Law

Tell us about your decision to serve on the Dean’s Council and what makes UNLV Law’s mission meaningful to you. I became friendly with Dean Hamilton a few years ago, and he brought up the idea of me joining the Dean's Council. I currently serve on a lot of boards and commissions, but this one was kind of special because the Clark County DA’s Office is the largest employer of Boyd graduates in the state of Nevada. We have 175 lawyers, and we are the largest law firm in the state of Nevada. We employ more Boyd graduates than any other law firm, so it just made sense for me to be involved with the discussions concerning the law school.

What was your first or most memorable job? This question is really two-fold: my first, or my most memorable. My first job was picking weeds at my parent's house. I was 10 years old and my mother would pay me 10 cents a weed. I made a fortune. I have a couple of
memorable jobs. I worked at Universal Studios Amphitheater in Los Angeles, Calif. So, I got to see, and even mingle, with a lot of famous people. However, my first legal job as a deputy district attorney, 36 years ago, was the best job ever! I loved being a young prosecutor. It was exciting to go to court every day, appear in front of judges, and put on hearings. Being a young prosecutor was very fast-paced, and it was exciting for a young lawyer right out of law school to be able to do that.

What advice would you give to current UNLV Law students? My advice would be to get involved in the community. Law school can be a very stressful, busy time in their lives, but there's always time to get involved in the community, especially if they plan to make Las Vegas their home after graduation. I would also advise them to start cultivating relationships early. If you want to work in the Public Defender’s Office, go to that office and ask to meet with the public defender. The same holds true for if they want to work in the DA’s Office or a private firm. Even though we are a large community, on a day-to-day basis, we're really just a small town. You could go out to lunch or dinner and run into the governor, senators, congressmen, or county commissioners. So, start to forge these relationships early.

Where is your favorite travel destination? That's easy; it's Maui, Hawaii. I love the whale watching, playing golf, the beautiful oceans, the Hawaiian people. I've been to Hawaii almost 70 times, to all different parts, but Maui is our favorite. I've gone to Maui every February for the last 15 years to go whale watching and golfing.

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