

STREET LAW: MSU College of Law

September 2010-April 2011



Audience

- Approximately 200 eleventh grade students at Eastern High School in Lansing, Michigan
- Street Law curriculum involves 14 law students teaching constitutional and criminal law to students in a required high school government class
- Serves lower socio-economic population since this population is underrepresented in both college and law school as well as in the legal profession in general

Funding

- MSU College of Law funds the program including faculty director salary, professor salary, and \$1000 budget
- Applied for a grant through LSAC but was not given funding in 2010-2011

Objectives

- Educate future citizenry regarding applicable laws
- Empower lower socio-economic students with knowledge of rights
- Assist students in improving analytical and problem solving skills
- Positively influence students regarding opinions of criminal justice system and legal system
- Encourage students to seek higher education

Description

- Total of 14 law students involved in Street Law program in 2010-2011
- Law students team taught constitutional and criminal law in 7 high school government class rooms
- Law students taught one hour a week for 14 weeks
- Curriculum aligned with High School Content Expectations for eleventh grade
- 1 faculty director and 1-2 full time professors taught the course at the law school and oversaw the law students in the high school classroom
- Began as collaboration between School of Education and College of Law. Currently staffed by Law College faculty

Impacts

High School Students

- High school students surveyed at end of semester. All students indicated that their knowledge of the law increased as a result of the program.
- Most participating high school students reported that the program influenced them in considering whether to pursue a college degree
- Most participating high school students reported that the program at least somewhat influenced their consideration of a career in the legal field
- Most participating high school students reported that the program somewhat helped to prepare them for college

Law Students

- Law students completed evaluation of program at end of semester. Expressed concern that amount of work was not commensurate with the low number of credits for course
- Submitted proposal to faculty to increase credit awarded to law students for Street Law course and faculty recently approved
- MSU faculty and students are more civically engaged
- Solicited ongoing feedback on weekly basis from participating high school teachers and altered the course accordingly
- Served as a model for another Law College civic engagement program called the Great Lakes Law Clinic in which students teach first amendment rights in area high school classrooms

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