

STREET LAW: MSU College of Law

September 2011-April 2012



Audience

- Approximately 150 eleventh grade students at Eastern, Everett, Sexton, and Waverly High Schools in Lansing, Michigan
- Street Law curriculum involves 12 law students teaching constitutional and criminal law to students in a required high school government class in spring 2012
- 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

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 12 law students involved in Street Law program in 2011-12 chosen from applicant pool of 32
- Law students taught constitutional and criminal law in 6 high school government classrooms
- Law students taught one hour a week for 14 weeks
- Curriculum aligned with High School Content Expectations for eleventh grade
- 1 faculty director and full time professor 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 and is currently staffed by Law College faculty

Impacts

High School Students

- High school students surveyed at end of semester and nearly 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 and over half indicated that the program had a significant influence on the desire to pursue a college degree
- Over half of the participating high school students reported that the program at least somewhat influenced their consideration of a career in the legal field
- Over half of the participating high school students reported that the program helped to prepare them for college

Law Students

- Law students completed evaluation of program at end of semester with favorable outcomes
- Faculty approved increasing credits awarded to participating law students
- MSU faculty and students are more civically engaged
- Professor solicited ongoing feedback on weekly basis from participating high school teachers and altered the course accordingly
- At least one student indicated the experience was the most beneficial class in preparing her for her successful completion of the bar exam
- Program served as a model for another civic engagement program called the Great Lakes Law Clinic in which students teach First Amendment rights in high school classrooms

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