SLS HANDBOOK

Student Legal Services
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Basics

Vision
To be recognized by our students and constituents as providing outstanding legal services that enhances student success.

Mission
To encourage students to fully participate in and complete their academic endeavors by helping to alleviate legal obstacles to degree or program completion. We pursue our mission through legal advice, representation, community partnerships and education to empower student clients.

Values

Retention: To provide students with access to the justice system and to legal information in support of student success and well-being

Academic Success: To provide consultation that reinforces student involvement, ownership, and accountability

Diversity: To be responsible for understanding and being sensitive to the diverse communities represented within PSU

Education: To remain knowledgeable about the legal issues confronting the PSU student community and to be committed to the highest levels of competency in our efforts to assist student clients in resolving legal problems

Community: To interact in a positive, meaningful manner with all components of Portland State University.
Collaboration: To be especially responsive to the needs and concerns of other units providing student services and programs

History
Student Legal Services was initiated in 1975 by the Associated Students of Portland State University (ASPSU) in recognition of the need of PSU's students to have access to affordable legal services. From 1975 to 1981 SLS was staffed with only a coordinator/attorney. Over the past 36 years SLS has had 6 different coordinators/directors and has gradually additional full time staff and student positions.

Location and Hours
Student Legal Services is located in the Smith Memorial Student Union M343, between Cramer and Neuberger Halls. Office hours are 9am-5pm Monday through Friday.

SLS Staff
The SLS legal staff are professionals who are experienced in the areas of law important to students and who are sensitive to the special needs of student clients. The staff consists of a director, two staff attorneys, an office manager, a legal assistant, law clerks, and a paralegal as well as administrative and clerical support staff. New cases are assigned to members of the legal staff according to case topic and current case load. Except under exceptional circumstances, clients may not choose a specific SLS staff member. SLS will make every effort to honor requests for special assignment of sensitive matters.

SLS Governance
SLS is a Department within Enrollment Management and Student Affairs at Portland State University. The Director of SLS reports to the Dean of Student Life.
In addition, SLS has an advisory board that was created to promote involvement, cooperation and accountability in SLS. Its duties are to: advise SLS on its operations; review SLS’ mission, operating policies, programming, resource allocation, staffing, and budget requests; and to provide guidance to SLS on these issues.

The board also facilitates the gathering of feedback from the student body to ensure greater accuracy and accountability of SLS programming and services.

The SLS Advisory Board serves only to offer recommendations and is not a governing (decision-making) board. For information on joining the SLS Advisory Board please visit the SLS website.

The advisory board consists of PSU students, PSU faculty, and members of the Portland Legal Community. The board is chaired by a PSU student.

How to Use SLS
SLS operates on an appointment basis for issues related to Family, Immigration, Name Changes, Employment, Criminal, bankruptcy, and Personal Injury law. Students may make appointments by calling 503-725-4556. SLS does not give legal advice over the phone. If a student is not eligible for SLS services, SLS will provide referrals whenever possible.

SLS provides walk-in services for the following issues: Landlord/Tenant; Debtor/Creditor; Traffic; Consumer;
Wage and Hour; Small Claims issues.

Walk-in services are offered one hour per day Monday through Thursday. Please refer to our website for specifics and requirements.

In addition, SLS distributes numerous free brochures on a variety of legal topics.

Fees & Costs
If SLS legal staff accepts a case for advice and information only, SLS generally will not charge attorney fees to students. Limited attorney fees may be charged for court appearances on a student client’s behalf. Student clients are also responsible for paying court costs, court filing fees, and other fees or costs related to resolving the issue.

If a student’s income is within certain guidelines, the court may grant a fee deferral for court costs and fees. Students should ask legal staff for more information about fee waiver and deferrals.

Policies

Confidentiality
SLS staff will not reveal information relating to the representation of a client unless the client gives informed consent, the disclosure is impliedly authorized in order to carry out the representation or the disclosure is permitted by Oregon Rules of Professional Conduct (rule 1.6 Confidentiality of Information).
Eligibility

Because student fees provide the funding for SLS, legal representation and advice is available only to eligible students. In order to be eligible, a client must (1) be enrolled as a student at Portland State University for 4 or more undergraduate credits or 3 or more graduate credits (2) pay the student fee and (3) have a legal matter eligible for SLS services as described on pages 11-15.

SLS is unable to continue providing service if a client does not continue to meet eligibility criteria.

Missed Appointments

Students are expected to call the office in advance to cancel or reschedule an appointment. If a student does not give proper notice to cancel or reschedule, their student account will be assessed a $10 fee. Excessive missed appointments may result in an inability for SLS to provide assistance or termination of all existing service agreements.

Complaints

If a student has a complaint about SLS, they should first discuss the problem with the attorney or legal staff with whom they are working.

If the complaint is not resolved after discussing it with the staff member you are working with, the complaint should next be addressed with the director. If your complaint is with the director, another SLS staff person will be assigned to address your concerns.

If your complaint still is not resolved, it should be taken to the Dean of Student Life. In order to make a formal complaint you will need to sign a release of information.
allowing SLS to discuss the issues with the Dean of Student Life or other applicable staff.

Finally, you may address your attorney complaint to the Oregon State Bar: Initial screening of all inquiries and complaints regarding lawyer conduct is handled by the Client Assistance Office. For information about filing a complaint or making an inquiry about a member’s conduct, please refer to The Oregon State Bar

EDUCATION AND SPECIAL SERVICES

Education
SLS staff members conduct a variety of educational programs, lectures, and presentations each year to help students understand the law and prevent legal problems. In addition, SLS has prepared a variety of publications to assist students in understanding the law and asserting their rightful claims.

Explore the Law Program
The goal of the Explore the Law is to build a pipeline program for underrepresented PSU Students to prepare for and pursue careers in law through a partnership between Portland State University, The Multnomah Bar Association and The Oregon State Bar.

We hope that underrepresented students recognize their opportunities for legal careers in our community, gain connections to practicing legal professional, and learn how to access pre law advising and other appropriate resources at PSU.

The program duration is one academic year, starting in October and ending in June.
Internships and Volunteer Opportunities

The SLS Internship program was designed to help students interested in a career in the legal field gain real world experience. We work mostly with students majoring in Criminology/Criminal Justice and Political Science but welcome all interested students. See http://www.pdx.edu/sls/how-to-get-involved

Notary Service

SLS staff members notarize documents or signatures free of charge during posted notary hours. No appointment is necessary unless there are numerous documents involved. If a student wishes to have a signature notarized, s/he should bring government issued photo identification. It is important that the student not sign the document until s/he appears in front of the notary. To get a certified copy of an original document, students should bring the original document. SLS will photocopy the document and then notarize the copy as true and correct.

Referrals

SLS maintains an extensive list of agencies and services, which it consults when unable to offer direct services to a student.

Client Advocacy

Advocacy: Scope of Services

The mission of SLS is to encourage students to fully participate in and complete their academic endeavors by helping to alleviate legal obstacles to degree or program completion. We pursue our mission through legal advice, representation, community partnerships and education to empower student clients.
Advocacy services may include advice, document preparation, negotiation, and representation in court. SLS reserves the right to make the final determination of eligibility for services. Regardless of case type, the guidelines exclude matters which may unduly burden program resources to the disadvantage of other eligible students. SLS will not pursue a claim on behalf of a client if the claim is not supported by applicable law.

Advocacy: Guidelines
SLS provides services in the following matters:
- Bankruptcy
- Consumer Law
- Criminal Law
- Employment
- Family Law
- Landlord and Tenant
- Personal Injury
- Traffic
- Debtor and Creditor Issues
- Small Claims Issues

SLS also provides free, confidential immigration consultations. For more information please call our office 503-725-4556

Advocacy: Exclusions
SLS provides services for only those legal matters expressly stated above. All other case types are excluded. Even if a case involves a legal matter listed above, SLS cannot provide service in the following situations:

- Student vs. Student
- Student vs. PSU Administration
- Student vs. PSU faculty or staff
• PSU staff members (even if taking classes under their benefits packages because they do not pay student fees)
• PCC co-enrolled students not paying PSU student fees
• Students not registered for the current term.
• Students with an issue in another state or jurisdiction.

SLS reserves the right to decline representation to any person regardless of eligibility. The following is a non-exclusive list of factors considered when determining whether a case is appropriate for SLS:

• The estimated time commitment required by the case;
• The ability of parties to represent themselves with minimal assistance;
• The complexity of the issues involved;
• The experience level of the SLS attorney regarding the issues involved in the case;
• Previous use of SLS services, particularly for a similar matter;
• Community and other resources available to the student;
• The likely impact of the issue on the student's academic success;
• The urgency of the matter or case;
• The potential positive impact for all students beyond the immediate student's own matter;
• Resources required to competently represent the student;
• The likelihood of resolving the matter while the student is still enrolled at PSU; and
• The appropriateness of the matter for SLS service in the attorneys' professional judgment and discretion.

Advocacy: Client Responsibilities
To assist SLS with representation, clients are asked to:
Be truthful. Clients must provide complete and accurate information about eligibility and about their cases.

Cooperate in the preparation of cases. Clients must promptly provide all available records, documents, and information related to their cases and update this information as needed. Clients must also consult with their legal representatives before doing anything that might affect their legal situations.

Attend all scheduled court appearances and office appointments at the scheduled time. If an urgent matter prevents attendance, clients should immediately inform SLS.

Pay any expenses promptly. Many cases do not require fees or costs. If a case requires a client to pay an expense, they must pay the expense promptly.

Immediately inform SLS of any changes in address or telephone number.

Advocacy: Withdrawal from Representation

Legal representation is available only to students who (1) are enrolled as students at Portland State University (2) pay the student services fee and (3) have a legal matter which falls within the SLS guidelines for representation. SLS will withdraw from a case when a client is no longer eligible.

SLS may withdraw from representation or refuse to take any action on a case for other reasons including: (1) when withdrawal is necessary to comply with the ethical and legal requirements applicable to a situation (2) when a client has been disrespectful to SLS staff (3) when a
CLIENT HAS NOT MET THE CLIENT RESPONSIBILITIES OUTLINED IN OUR HANDBOOK, OR (4) WHEN NECESSARY TO COMPLY WITH CERTAIN UNIVERSITY OR SLS POLICIES. (THE MOST FREQUENTLY ENCOUNTERED EXAMPLES OF THE LAST CONDITION ARE DISCOVERY THAT A CASE INVOLVES A CLAIM ADVERSE TO ANOTHER ELIGIBLE STUDENT OR ADVERSE TO PORTLAND STATE UNIVERSITY.)

Advocacy: Policies and Procedures
SLS follows certain policies and procedures necessary for professional and efficient case management.

File Destruction. SLS must periodically destroy files. A client must contact SLS within ten years of the conclusion of a legal matter to obtain materials from his or her file. If a client does not make a request within that ten-year period, SLS will assume the client has forfeited claim to the file and agreed that SLS can destroy the file.

Advocacy: Withdrawal as Counsel of Record
In some situations, such as family law cases, SLS must withdraw as the attorney named as legal representative in a court file. This withdrawal is done at the conclusion of a legal proceeding and is necessary in order to have notice of any future proceedings sent to the client. This process may require a fee.

Commitment to Global Diversity and Inclusion

We honor, respect, embrace and value the unique contributions and perspectives of all students, faculty, employees, volunteers and our local and global communities. Diversity includes age, culture, disability,
GENDER, GENDER IDENTITY, NATIONAL ORIGIN, MILITARY BACKGROUND, MARITAL STATUS, SOCIAL CLASS, COLOR, RACE, RELIGION, SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AND DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT.