



Innovation Practice Institute University of Pittsburgh School of Law Highlights: October 2016

The Innovation Practice Institute (IPI) trains law students to work with *and to be* innovators and entrepreneurs. In the last year alone, over 185 different law students and over 350 entrepreneurs from Pitt, Carnegie Mellon University and the Pittsburgh community have participated in over 35 IPI activities and events. Those numbers have increased steadily in each of the last 3 years.

IPI events included weekly **Innovators, Esq.** lunch and learns with lawyers/innovators. These lunches bring Pitt Law graduates and other lawyers to the law school to describe their career paths as innovative and entrepreneurial professionals across a diverse range of industries, and to offer both mentorship opportunities to students and alumni engagement opportunities to Pitt and Pitt Law. The IPI partners with Pitt's Innovation Institute and Project Olympus at Carnegie Mellon University in presenting monthly **Start Smart Law** public seminars and workshops in which Pittsburgh's top startup lawyers work with Pitt Law students and Pitt and CMU graduate students and entrepreneurs from the Pittsburgh community to address legal issues of importance to startup ventures. The IPI places law students in **internships and externships** in Pittsburgh's entrepreneurial ecosystem, including internships with Pitt's Innovation Institute, and coaches law students who participate in Pitt's Big Idea competition.

The "innovation and entrepreneurship" theme informs Pitt Law **courses taught by the IPI's executive director and faculty director**. The IPI also supports an innovative **leadership development course** taught on a volunteer basis by the IPI's faculty director, a course that has become part of a national conversation on leadership development at law schools.

Nationally, the IPI's leadership team has published numerous articles on training lawyers as entrepreneurs, including as social entrepreneurs, as well as widely-circulated pieces on leadership and the future of legal education. The IPI has also received two national awards: an ABA Catalyst grant, jointly awarded to Pitt's Legal Service Incubator, to identify innovative and affordable services for "low bono" clients; and, together with Pitt's College of Business Administration, a Service Year Alliance Innovation Challenge, from the new Service Year Alliance, which will fund up to six incoming Pitt business/law students who will serve at local social enterprise incubators and accelerators to help to close the "gap" between Pittsburgh's thriving innovation economy and its underserved communities.

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