

# 2011 Pro Bono Scholars Program



## Washington | New York | Dallas

Started in 2008, the Akin Gump Summer Pro Bono Scholars Program is a two-summer program for top law students who show a strong interest in making pro bono work an integral part of their Akin Gump careers. The Pro Bono Scholars, rising second-year law students, work with a public interest organization before joining the firm for several weeks at the end of the first summer. During the second summer, the Pro Bono Scholars are part of the firm's regular summer associate program.

**In 2011, the Pro Bono Scholars Program will expand from Washington to include both New York and Dallas.**

**FIRST SUMMER:** Following the first year of law school, the Pro Bono Scholars will spend at least seven weeks at a public interest or legal services organization. The Pro Bono Scholar will be given a stipend to work at this organization, which can be located anywhere in the world. The firm will coordinate the placement with the Pro Bono Scholars; in past years, the firm has placed some Pro Bono Scholars directly with organizations, while other Pro Bono Scholars have obtained their public interest positions independently. For the second part of the summer, starting in mid- to late-July, the Pro Bono Scholars will spend three weeks with the firm working entirely on pro bono matters. These matters will give the Pro Bono Scholars substantial responsibility and training in areas in which the firm focuses its pro bono practice.

**SECOND SUMMER:** The Pro Bono Scholars will be part of the Akin Gump Washington, New York, or Dallas office Summer Associate Program for rising third-year law students, which will include pro bono opportunities as well as a commercial workload. As with any other summer associate, a Pro Bono Scholar will be eligible for consideration of an offer of future employment as an associate only after completing the second summer at Akin Gump.

### QUALIFICATIONS

Open to exceptional law students completing their first year of law school in 2011. Applicants must have all the qualifications expected of a summer associate, including a strong academic background (in particular, high grades in the first semester of law school), demonstrated leadership qualities, and a commitment to developing into a successful law firm associate.

### COMPENSATION

In the first summer, upon commencement of work at the public interest organization, Pro Bono Scholars will be paid a stipend of \$20,000. During the three weeks spent working at the firm, the Pro Bono Scholars will be paid the standard summer associate salary. In the second summer, Pro Bono Scholars will be paid the standard summer associate salary.

### COMMITMENT

The firm expects that Pro Bono Scholars will return for a second summer (following the second year of law school) to gain experience in the firm's commercial practice. Accordingly, Pro Bono Scholars will be exempted from the on-campus interviewing process during fall of their second year. In the event that the Pro Bono Scholar's performance does not meet the firm's standards, the firm may decline to have the scholar return for the second summer or to make an offer of future employment as an associate.

### APPLICATIONS

First-year law students interested in this program must submit a resume, transcript and writing sample. Each candidate should also submit a short statement (no more than 500 words) describing his or her interest in having a career at Akin Gump and making pro bono practice a part of that commitment. Please send any submissions to [probonoscholars@akingump.com](mailto:probonoscholars@akingump.com), attention "Pro Bono Scholars Program" with a preferred office specified. Questions can be submitted to Akin Gump Pro Bono Partner Steven Schulman at [sschulman@akingump.com](mailto:sschulman@akingump.com). The firm will accept applications, which must include a transcript, between January 24, 2011 and February 11, 2011. Interviews will start shortly thereafter, with selection of the 2011 Pro Bono Scholars by the end of March.

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## 2010 Pro Bono Scholars

The 2010 class of Akin Gump Pro Bono Scholars worked with three different organizations starting in May 2010, before joining the firm to work in the pro bono practice at the end of the summer.

### Lauren Weinstein – Harvard Law School 2012 – ACLU of Massachusetts

Lauren worked as a paralegal before law school, and chose to work at the ACLU of Massachusetts before joining the firm for several weeks at the end of the summer. At the ACLU, Lauren (coincidentally) worked with Akin Gump to challenge the detention of a Sri Lankan asylum seeker, and also worked on matters relating to police searches, private policing and restrictions on the distribution of unsolicited publications.

“ The Pro Bono Scholars Program furthered my understanding of how lawyers can promote social justice through pro bono work that leverages the resources and institutional knowledge of a major law firm. During the program, we met with many public interest lawyers with whom Akin Gump has cultivated relationships. These practitioners explained the many opportunities for collaboration between the private and public law sectors. I could not have asked for a better summer job. ”

### Hammad Ahmed – Georgetown University Law Center 2012 – Whitman-Walker Clinic

Hammad, a reporter for NPR before he started law school, chose to work with the Whitman-Walker Clinic his first summer. Whitman-Walker, the only Washington, DC area program offering a wide range of pro bono legal services specifically for people living with HIV/AIDS, gave Hammad the opportunity to work on a wide range of legal matters.

“ I knew that as a Pro Bono Scholar, I would get to work directly with clients in asylum and social security cases. But the surprise was getting to work with fantastic lawyers from the entire DC public interest law community and within Akin Gump. I felt very connected and supported. ”

### Josh Sekoski – Harvard Law School 2012 – Tahirih Justice Center

Josh, an opera singer before he entered law school, had his first experience working with a public interest organization at Tahirih Justice Center in Falls Church, Virginia, which has hosted a Pro Bono Scholar since the program's inception in 2008.

“ My Pro Bono Scholars experience impacted me not just professionally, but personally. Working at Tahirih, which helps immigrant women and girls fleeing gender-based violence, I was truly inspired both by the clients' courage and perseverance, and by the impact I saw devoted attorneys have on their clients' lives. In my several weeks at the firm, I worked closely with Akin Gump attorneys exclusively on pro bono matters. It was an incredible experience, and I'm excited to return to Akin this summer. ”

**Steven H. Schulman**  
Pro Bono Partner  
sschulman@akingump.com  
202.887.4071

[akingump.com/probono](http://akingump.com/probono)  
[twitter.com/probonodude](https://twitter.com/probonodude)

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STRAUSS HAUER & FELD LLP