

MINNESOTA LAWYER



Law professor Mark Kappelhoff, Stinson Leonard Street partner Allen Saeks and Minneapolis City Attorney Susan Segal participate in a discussion about the University of Minnesota's a new program that guarantees enrollees future employment in the public interest or government law sectors. (Submitted photo: University of Minnesota School of Law)

Bar Buzz: Guaranteed jobs for law grads

By: Mike Mosedale May 26, 2016 0

A rare promise for law grads: guaranteed jobs

Why are so few people applying to law school these days? The reasons for the free fall in applications are myriad but, of course, the dismal jobs market sits atop that heap.

After all, the prospect of graduating with a mountain of debt and no paycheck is enough to make many an aspiring J.D. opt for an MBA — or maybe just settle for a career in pizza delivery.

How to combat that trend?

This week, the University of Minnesota Law School took a novel tack and announced that it has launched a new program that guarantees enrollees future employment in the public interest or government law sectors. Yes, you read that right: "guaranteed legal employment."

Established via a gift from Stinson Leonard Street partner Allen Saeks (and wife Linda), the Minnesota Law Public Interest Residency Program aims to connect "high-achieving" 3Ls to their future employers via full-time externships. Upon graduation, the U says, those students would be guaranteed a full-time job.

So far, seven organizations have partnered on the venture: the Hennepin County Attorney's Office, Mid-Minnesota Legal Aid, Minneapolis City Attorney's Office, Office of the Public Defender, Second District (Ramsey County), Ramsey County Attorney's Office, and Wisconsin State Public Defender's Office.

"It's a trifecta win: students get excellent legal training from premier local organizations and agencies; the organizations get top-tier law students to help meet their legal needs; and the University of Minnesota Law School spearheads a groundbreaking legal education program," said Mark Kappelhoff, the law school prof and former

federal prosecutor who will direct the program.