

Columbia Law School Praises Success of the Max Berger '71 Public Interest/Public Service Fellows Program

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BLB&G is proud to recognize the resounding success of the Max Berger '71 Public Interest/Public Service Fellows Program ("PI/PS") at Columbia Law School.

According to a recent [CLS article](#), four years after the program's inception, PI/PS is flourishing. Nearly 50 graduates of the program have launched their careers, 58 students from the Classes of 2024 and 2025 are currently participating, and approximately 30 students from the Class of 2026 will enter the cohort this fall. The success of the program has garnered the strong support of the faculty and alumni—21 professors have joined the program's Faculty Advisory Group and 22 alumni sit on the program's Practitioner Advisory Board.

PI/PS has opened the doors for students to receive above-and-beyond support at the law school. Max understands the obstacles faced by law school students who have incurred significant college and law school debt and want to practice public interest law, earning significantly less than their peers. As Max noted:

Because public interest and public service careers can require tremendous sacrifices, financially and otherwise, being part of a community with other like-minded students allows them to give each other the courage to pursue their goals and stay the course... Whether they are interested in voting rights, racial equity, immigration, labor, or LGBTQ+ rights, the program acts like a glue that binds them together.

- Max Berger

Fellows past and present have described the program as "life-changing." Those beginning their careers have earned roles at top agencies and organizations such as the ACLU, the U.S. Department of Justice, Human Rights Watch, The Legal Aid Society, Her Justice, and many others. Max believes the program will continue to inspire Fellows through hands-on experience, advice, networking, and mentoring.

I truly believe that there will be a sense of family among the graduates and those participating to help them find meaningful work and give them the strength throughout their careers to do what their hearts want them to do.

- Max Berger

A graduate of Columbia Law School, Max has remained closely involved as a member of the Dean's Council. In 2011, he received the Law School's highest honor, the Medal for Excellence. He and his wife Dale have also endowed the Berger Public Interest Law Fellowship that assists Fellows with repayment of their student loans.