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Southern University Law Center
Technology & Entrepreneurship Clinic

Next Generation of
LAWYERS
Helping the Next Generation of
ENTREPRENEURS

impact 2021

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CLINIC DIRECTOR

Dear Friends and Supporters,

After spending the last four years with the Clinic, I feel very honored and privileged to be writing this message. This is a special time in our history largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and its immense economic costs for our small business communities and detrimental impacts to vulnerable populations throughout Louisiana.

Affordable legal services have a significant part to play in rebuilding the Louisiana economy and making it the best place to start and scale a business regardless of one's financial resources. It is clear that tailored legal support from professionals who understand the different legal challenges that small business owners face creates a real difference to success rates. The financial support and business development are vital, but help in turning these business ventures into legally sustainable ones is as important.

When we established the Technology and Entrepreneurship Clinic, we did so in order to improve the life chances of starting and growing businesses in and around Baton Rouge. Today, we are proud to serve clients from every corner of the State. Next year, we



will continue to expand our commitment to assisting small businesses and improving communities by building community relationships and helping businesses thrive in peripheral rural settings.

I would also like to take this opportunity to put on record my thanks to our sponsors and partners for their considerable assistance in the advancement of this Clinic. Thanks to the support and kindness of so many, 2021 was our most impactful year yet.

I truly hope you read this report and feel motivated to get involved and make a difference.

Marina A. Biragova

A handwritten signature of Marina A. Biragova in black ink, written in a cursive style.

Clinic Director



The Technology and Entrepreneurship Clinic provides our students with real world experiences that are highly beneficial and transformative. As a result, students gain a sense of accomplishment when they are able to assist entrepreneurs solve difficult problems related to their businesses. The Clinic connects us to the corporate community and gives us the ability to create private and public partnerships that allow the Southern University Law Center to expand its footprint within the community and globally.

**John K. Pierre, Chancellor
Southern University Law Center**



ABOUT SULC TECH

The SULC's Technology & Entrepreneurship Clinic offers free transactional legal services to select small businesses, social enterprises, and nonprofit organizations. The SULC Tech Clinic, as it is more commonly referred to, is certified by the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) by way of the Law School Clinic Certification Program. The Clinic Certification Program allows students enrolled in a participating clinic to practice intellectual property matters before the USPTO. As one of only a few certified clinics nationwide, the SULC Tech Clinic plays a vital role in delivering access to social and economic justice for underrepresented community groups, minority-owned companies, and women-led enterprises.

The Clinic has proven itself invaluable to the local business community. The demand for its services has steadily grown, as well as the demand by its students for the chance to participate in this unique experiential learning opportunity. Under the close supervision of Clinic attorneys, participating students work directly with clients on an extensive range of intellectual property issues, including copyrights, patents, trademarks, and trade secrets. Clinic students also have the opportunity to counsel entrepreneurs and start-up companies on various transactional business law matters such as business formation and structuring, contract review, and compliance.

2021 IMPACT

23

STUDENTS TRAINED

382

HOURS OF DIRECT
LEGAL COUNSELING

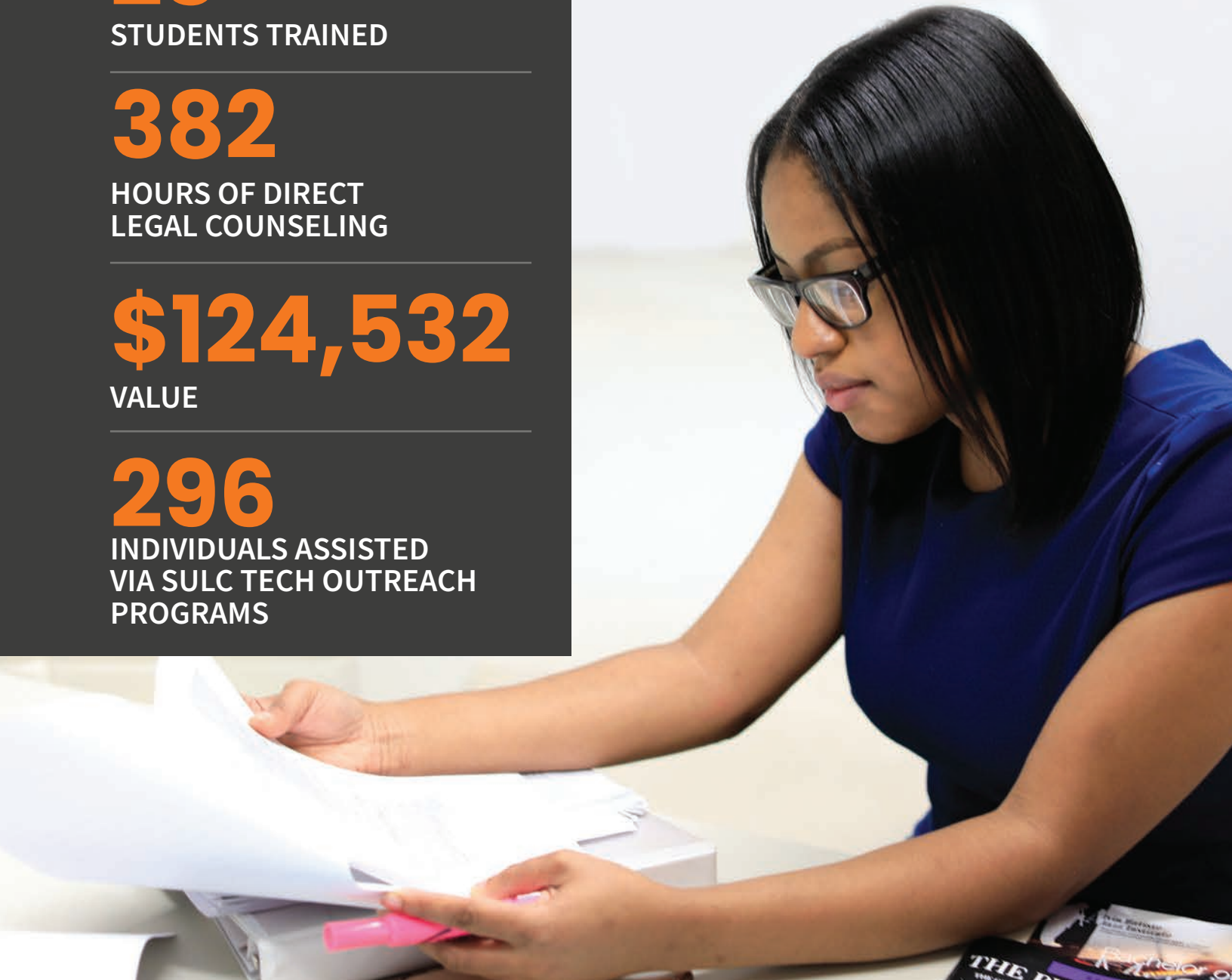
\$124,532

VALUE

296

INDIVIDUALS ASSISTED
VIA SULC TECH OUTREACH
PROGRAMS

The Technology & Entrepreneurship Clinic logged over 380 hours of direct legal counseling in just one year alone. Through our clinical work and service, our students and staff attorneys provided over \$124,000 worth of free legal assistance to the local small business community.*



* The estimates are based on the Clio's Hourly Rate Data which is based on aggregated and anonymized data from tens of thousands of legal professionals. Per Clio, the typical lawyer in Louisiana charges between \$133 and \$349 per hour. On average, corporate and IP attorneys in Louisiana charge about \$326 per hour. The estimates do not include students' initial drafts and training.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



ERIC CITIZEN

“Perhaps the greatest reason the SULC Tech Clinic is important for preparing law students for careers in Transactional and Corporate Law is exposure. After several weeks of instruction, the Tech Clinic gives students numerous opportunities to interact with clients via real world assignments. These become your clients in that you get to know them, and they get to know you. You gain an understanding of their goals and insight into their products and inventions. This exposure transitions perfectly into a career in Transactional and Corporate Law.

I can recall numerous occasions where the instructors of the Tech Clinic would ask what practice areas I wanted to try while there. I was able to pursue anything of interest. Little did I know that this exposure was preparing me for my current role. M&A and MAPE associates are commonly described as quarterbacks. We oversee and drive transactions forward. This requires us to interact with our colleagues in Tax, IP, Employment, and others, all while managing the corporate details of the various companies in the deal. The Tech Clinic provides instruction and exposure to many areas of corporate law, such as entity structures, incorporation, IP, contract drafting, and more. All things that I do or interact with daily.

During my time at Orrick, I have interacted with venture capitalist firms, founders, and tech companies offering products and services across the tech industry. I have assisted on multimillion dollar tech transactions covering areas such as education, autonomous vehicles, and semiconductors. In a pro bono matter involving the Oakland Unified School District and the Oakland Public Education fund, I was able to take the lead in drafting the agreement which transferred WiFi hotspots to the District for all of its students. I have been fortunate to do many great things in just under a year at Orrick.

“ It is because of the exposure provided by the strong support team of the Tech Clinic that I was able to contribute to the firm and our clients on day one.”

Eric Citizen graduated Southern University Law Center (SULC) in 2020. While in law school, Eric served as a Student Attorney for the Technology and Entrepreneurship Clinic at SULC where he assisted with providing pro bono legal services in connection with trademark and copyright law issues, as well as transactional and corporate legal matters on behalf of small businesses and nonprofits with limited financial resources. Eric also served as the Managing Editor of the Southern University Law Review.

While in law school, Eric interned with Chronicle LLC and Google, and in both roles, Eric supported the legal teams of both organizations in corporate legal matters that included transactional matters and cyber security. Currently, Eric works as an associate attorney for the international law firm, Orrick, Herrington, and Sutcliffe LLP, based in San Francisco, CA. In his role at Orrick, Eric serves as an associate attorney of the firm’s Silicon Valley Office, and he is also a member of the firm’s Mergers & Acquisitions and Private Equity Group (“M&A” or “MAPE”).

2021 TECHNOLOGY & ENTREPRENEURSHIP SHOWCASE

The Technology and Entrepreneurship Showcase is an annual event that aims to support, promote, and develop the Louisiana small business community by identifying and rewarding excellence and inspiring its practitioners to continually fuel the region's economy through innovation, leadership, and dedication.

The 2021 Technology and Entrepreneurship Showcase will introduce some of the SULC Tech's most outstanding clients and recognize their groundbreaking accomplishments in five categories:

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Must have been in business for at least 3 years. This business must exemplify professionalism and integrity. This category includes, but is not limited to: law, medical, dental, accounting, financial, insurance, real estate, and other professional service providers. Recognized for outstanding achievements in some or all of the following: Company Growth, Customer Service, Market Development, Sales & Marketing, Community Service.

EARLY-STAGE INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

Must be in business for a minimum of 1 year. Recognizes a startup that demonstrates innovations in some or all of the following: Creative Business Initiatives, Research & Development, Company Growth, Products & Services, Community Service.



START-UP OF THE YEAR

Must be in business for a minimum of 1 year and less than 3 years. Recognizes outstanding achievement as a new business in some or all of the following: Research & Development, Company Growth, Products & Services, Market Development, Sales & Marketing, Community Service.

COMMUNITY ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

Must have been in operation for at least 3 years. Recognizes an organization which exhibits exceptional community service and leadership, community involvement and promotes volunteerism, positive contribution to society, social & community advancements.

SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

Must be in business for at least 3 years. Recognizes outstanding achievement in some or all of the following: Development, Company Growth, Products & Services, Market Development, Innovation, Sales & Marketing, Community Service.



2021 COMMUNITY ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR

ELLEN MCKNIGHT



Ellen McKnight is the owner and founder of The Maxine Firm, a nutrition and wellness firm established in 2017. The Maxine Firm promotes health and nutrition literacy through a curriculum that covers Balanced Nutrition, Mental Health, Urban Agriculture, Chronic Disease Education and Prevention, and other subjects. Powered by an established network of minority healthcare professionals like a nutritionist, clinic psychologist, and horticulturist, The Maxine Firm's primary objective is to increase prevention of chronic diseases in urban and rural communities across the state of Louisiana. "We enjoy making healthy the cool choice by providing culturally appropriate nutrition, wellness, and public health educational experiences that equip urban and rural communities to command their personal health and prevent chronic diseases," said Ellen.



The SULC Technology & Entrepreneurship Clinic has been of service to Ellen through legal consultations in the areas of intellectual property and business law. "Protecting The Maxine Firm's intellectual property has been a priority of ours for quite some time now. I am so grateful to the SULC Tech students and faculty for providing wise counsel and navigating us through the process," added Ellen.

2021 EARLY STATE INNOVATOR OF THE YEAR

GAMBLE ENTERTAINMENT



Gamble Entertainment is a technology and entertainment company that is focused on providing services for artists and agencies alike to innovatively resolve some common issues in the entertainment industry such as exposure. Gamble Entertainment has established itself as an up and coming problem solver for key issues in the music industry, and that includes the individuals that have helped to form the company. “I enjoy problem solving, creating ideas, and implementing those ideas that can possibly enhance their lives,” said Gerren Smith, the founder and CEO of Gamble Entertainment. The first major innovation produced from the team of Gamble Entertainment is the business management and mobile networking platform, IndiPlug. IndiPlug allows for its users to network amongst one another, and such network includes artists, music fans, and venue owners.

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“The Clinic has helped my team and I with our LLC operating agreement, logo trademarks, as well as legal advice on our initial ideas on generation of revenue for our first product (IndiPlug),” stated Gamble CEO, Gerren Smith. “Without resources like Southern University Law Center, many startups, especially inside the technology sector, would find it very difficult to transition from the ‘idea stage’ to the ‘product development stage.’ So with services that the Tech Clinic provides, it allows for learning and implementation of how to bring innovative ideas to life and transform communities.”



2021 PROFESSIONAL SERVICES BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

SEVEN PILLARS ACTING

Sonya Cooke is the founder of Seven Pillars Acting, an international training organization that offers classes for both theatric arts instructors and students. She is also the creator of the seven pillars technique, a concise yet flexible formula of acting technique aimed at helping actors to transform into character by living truthfully under imaginary circumstances. Her book, *Seven Pillars Acting*, is the main textbook for students of the technique across the country.

Seven Pillars Acting was created from Sonya's vision to see young actors and actresses reach their full potential. "I love seeing actors-in-training come to life using their creative tools. Seeing a student embody a role is one of the most thrilling events," explained Sonya.

The SULC Technology & Entrepreneurship Clinic helped Sonya to secure federal trademark registration over the mark "Seven Pillar Acting."



“Artistic and educational programs are not known for having deep pockets which can make it very difficult for them to afford legal services. This is a labor of love and passion, and the support of SULC has enabled Seven Pillars Acting to grow and thrive,” Sonya stated. “By supporting us, SULC is supporting these actors and educators.”



2021 START-UP OF THE YEAR

MEMPHIS MAC

Carlos Thomas is the owner and founder of Memphis Mac BBQ, a restaurant and BBQ pit that serves authentic barbecue-style ribs, chicken, brisket, and more. Memphis Mac was the dream of the former college professor, as it combined Mr. Thomas's love for good barbecue with the entrepreneurship. As a result, the beloved Baton Rouge-local barbecue restaurant, Memphis Mac, was born. Now, Mr. Thomas is focused on expanding the Memphis Mac brand.



The SULC Technology & Entrepreneurship Clinic has been of service to Mr. Thomas through legal consultations and services in the area of intellectual property law. “The Clinic provided me with intellectual property services by facilitating my applications to the USPTO,” stated Mr. Thomas. “The services provided by SULC Tech will allow companies to safeguard the intellectual property developed.”



2021 SMALL BUSINESS OF THE YEAR

JIGGAEROBICS



LaDonte Lotts is the founder of JiggaAerobics, a global lifestyle brand that fuses, fun, fitness, and entertainment into an exhilarating dance-fitness program. JiggaAerobics combines “jigging,” an energetic Louisiana style of dance, with plyometric exercises to create high energy, fast-paced workouts called, “GetRight Sessions.” Each session is treated as a “fitness party” complete with contemporary pop music and easy-to-follow choreography. JiggaAerobics provides over 25 specialized dance fitness programs for kids, seniors, couples, single parents, and even professional dancers.

The joy of JiggaAerobics has allowed for Mr. Lotts to reach a variety of people and provided joy for some where other things might not have. According to Mr. Lotts, “I enjoy using JiggaAerobics fitness sessions as a vehicle to spread ‘cheeses’ [smiles], joy and happiness worldwide. So many people are hurting, depressed, and mentally and physically unfit, and JiggaAerobics allows them to decompress and heal all while having fun at the same time.” Having been featured on the popular ABC TV show, Shark Tank, JiggaAerobics is widely recognized and popular for the high-energy, calorie-burning programs offered.



The SULC Technology & Entrepreneurship Clinic has been of service to Mr. Lotts in growing and securing the JiggaAerobics brand through filing for and receiving federal trademark registration. LaDonte has stated of SULC Tech Clinic’s services, “These types of services are extremely important because they grant young students like myself an opportunity to learn about business assets, strategy, and intellectual property.” Since receiving SULC Tech Clinic services, JiggaAerobics has since been able to focus on the fun and fitness that it has become so well known for, today.

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER RECEIVES FEDERAL GRANT TO ESTABLISH MINORITY BUSINESS CENTER



Southern University Law Center received federal funding to establish a Minority Business Development Agency (MBDA) to help minority-owned firms create jobs, compete in the global economy and grow their businesses.

“As the only historically black college and university that operates an MBDA Business Center, we are closely aligned with the communities the MBDA intends to serve, and we understand both their challenges and their needs,” said Charletta Fortson, program director of the Louisiana MBDA Business Center. “We know that many of our minority-owned businesses were affected by COVID-19 which made our efforts to establish a business center for Louisiana businesses a priority.”

According to data from the U.S. Census Bureau, more than 9.2 million minority-owned firms in the U.S. employ over 8 million American workers and pump \$1.7 trillion into the American economy, with minority women-owned businesses now the fastest rising group within the spectrum of entrepreneurial effort.

The goal of the Louisiana MBDA Business Center is to help grow minority-owned businesses in Louisiana, and throughout the U.S., by creating opportunities for them to have access to capital and contracts with public and private entities. Through a network of partners, the MBDA Business Center will be able to help minority-owned businesses increase their sales, have access to matching opportunities for public and private contracts, and build capacity by developing their management, financial, and technological capabilities.

On November 17, the Law Center will host an Open House for the Louisiana MBDA Business Center. Email info@louisianambdacenter.com for more information.



“With the Law Center operating the Louisiana MBDA Business Center, not only will we support these businesses with technical training and business development, but we’ll be able to tap into our student, faculty, and alumni network to provide certain legal services as these businesses grow,” said Fortson.

GET INVOLVED

We are always interested to hear from potential collaborators. Here are just a few of the many ways to get involved with the Clinic:

- ▶ Offering externship and internship opportunities to our students
- ▶ Sponsoring our programs and initiatives
- ▶ Providing resources to support our faculty and students
- ▶ Conducting trainings and seminars

SPECIAL THANKS

The Southern University Law Center Technology and Entrepreneurship Clinic would like to give a special thank-you to Meta (Facebook), Verizon, Hewlett-Packard (HP), the HP Foundation, and the National Council on Patent Practicum (NCPD), for their continuous support of the Clinic. The impact of your support has created countless professional and educational opportunities for our students and helped to improve the Clinic's ability to serve members of the local community. The SULC Tech Clinic appreciates your support and hopes to continue working together to benefit the student body and community. Thank you.



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Meta

