

Wayne State College

Wayne State Announces First Class for Rural Law Opportunities Program

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Five incoming freshmen and three current students make up the inaugural RLOP class for 2017-18.

Wayne State College is excited to announce the inaugural Rural Law Opportunities Program (RLOP) class for the 2017-18 academic year. Students selected for the program include incoming freshmen Elliott Carraher of Milford, Elizabeth Dunn of Falls City, Makayla Pardun of O'Neill, Abigail Ruda of North Bend, and Megan Tofflemire of Shelton. Current Wayne State students accepted into the program include Gabriella Miller of Wakefield, John Paul Svec of David City, and Rachel Tauber of Norfolk.

RLOP is a new dynamic partnership between Wayne State College and University of Nebraska College of Law designed to recruit students from rural areas and train them to become lawyers that will return and practice in their communities. Similar to the Rural Health Opportunities Program (RHOP), RLOP aims to ensure rural areas of Nebraska have access to legal representation while encouraging students from those areas to pursue legal studies in order to return to their communities to meet the demand for attorneys. Participants in the program receive their bachelor's degrees at WSC and guaranteed admittance into UNL College of Law.

“Wayne State College is very excited to introduce the inaugural class for the Rural Law Opportunities Program,” said Dr. Tammy Evetovich, dean of Wayne State’s School of Natural and Social Sciences. “These premiere students have great potential to succeed in UNL’s College of Law and represent the future of rural law in Nebraska. We are proud of their accomplishments to date and look forward to seeing how they will thrive at Wayne State College in the future as they prepare for law school.”

Each semester, RLOP students will visit UNL to participate in activities organized by the College of Law. This could include observing a classroom, visiting with law students and attending guest lectures. Each RLOP student will have a mentor from Wayne State College and UNL College of Law. Mentors will clearly explain the requirements the student needs to meet to be successful in law school.

The Omaha World-Herald applauded the creation of the program last fall in an Oct 7, 2016, editorial: “All Nebraskans, regardless of where they live, need proper access to the legal system, whether for wills, real estate transactions, estate or business needs or criminal matters. Eleven of Nebraska’s 93 counties have no lawyer and 20 other counties have three or fewer attorneys, the Nebraska Bar Association says. In many cases, those lawyers are in their 50s or 60s, with retirement not that far ahead. Several Nebraska institutions deserve a salute for stepping forward to address this need through what’s called the Rural Law Opportunities Program.”

About the Students

Elliott Carraher, Milford

Elliott Carraher’s accomplishments at Milford High School included High Honor Roll for four years; band Underclassman of the Year in 2014-15; three-year Fine Arts letter; Southern Nebraska Sportsmanship Summit; and two-year football Letter.

His high school activities included concert/marching band for four years; Jazz Band for four years; football for four years; basketball for four years; track for three years; Future Business Leaders of America for four years; Fellowship of Christian Athletes for four years; Future Farmers of America for two years; Leadership/Kindness Retreat Counselor in 2016; Milford Elementary First Friday Representative for two years; junior class Student Council representative; and St. Vincent DePaul Godteens Group for four years.

Elliott is the son of Chad and Sydnie Carraher of Milford.

Elizabeth Dunn, Falls City

Elizabeth Dunn plans to major in journalism and pre-law at Wayne State. She competed in track, volleyball, club volleyball and basketball at Sacred Heart High School. Her activities included band, speech, one-act, choir, school musical, dance team, youth group, and state journalism.

She served as a volunteer for Falls City Library and Arts Center, Community Medical Center, Falls City Saints Peter and Paul Church, Red Cross Blood Drive, and the Washington D.C. March for Life.

Her honors included Catholic Daughters poetry and essay, Nebraska School Activities Association (NSAA) and the Nebraska Chiropractic Physicians Association (NCPA) Academic All-State speech and journalism, Lincoln Journal Star Academic All-State, Conference Play Production Outstanding Performance Award, Southeast Nebraska Academic Excellence in ACT scores, Community Service Award, Academic All-Conference Award, and Top of Class in religion and advanced speech.

Elizabeth is the daughter of Joe and Jenny Dunn.

Makayla Pardun, O'Neill

Makayla Pardun plans to major in political science at Wayne State. She graduated

from O'Neill High School.

She participated in softball, earning a letter all four years, defensive MVP for three years, and All-District Player; basketball, earning a letter for two years, and offensive MVP; track, earning a letter for one year; one-acts; speech; journalism; musical; Interact Club; Eagle Eye Broadcasting; and Book Club.

Her honors included National Honor Society, Honor Roll, and the President's Honor Roll at Northeast Community College.

Makayla is the daughter of Michael and Heather Pardun.

Abigail Ruda, North Bend

Abigail Ruda plans to major in political science with a pre-law minor at Wayne State. She graduated from North Bend Central Jr.-Sr. High School.

She received numerous awards in a wide range of activities while a student. These included Future Farmers of America 2013 Leadership Speaking Event state alternate, 2013-14 chapter Outstanding Freshman Award, 2013 Career Development Event state qualifier in agronomy, 2014 Leadership Speaking Event state alternate, 2014-15 chapter secretary, 2015-16 chapter historian, and 2016 Leadership Speaking Event second alternate; Future Business Leaders of America 2016 state qualifier in business communication, 2016 state qualifier in agribusiness, 2016 state tenth place in agribusiness, 2015-16 chapter president, and 2016-17 chapter president; speech: three-year letter winner, 2014 North Bend Exceptional Freshman Award, 2014 District Finalist, 2015 District Finalist and State Qualifier, and 2016 District Finalist; drama: two-year letter winner, 2015 East Husker Conference outstanding actress recognition, 2015 district actress recognition, and 2016 East Husker Conference outstanding actress recognition; and softball: earning a letter for three years.

She received a perfect score on the NESAs Statewide Writing Test during her junior year and was the district winner of the 2016 VFW Voice of Democracy Essay Contest.

Abigail is the granddaughter of Dallas Olson.

Megan Tofflemire, Shelton

Megan Tofflemire plans to major in criminal justice major with a Spanish minor at Wayne State. She graduated from Shelton Public School.

Her high school activities included volleyball, basketball, track, speech, quiz bowl, academic decathlon, yearbook, Shelton Teens Against Negative Decisions, Future Business Leaders of America, National Spanish Honor Society, National Honor Society, Student Council, one-act play, choir, and Spanish Club.

Megan is the daughter of Christine Stratman and Kelly Tofflemire.

Gabriella Miller

Gabriella Miller, a current Wayne State student, majors in business administration with a concentration in human resources management, and minors in music and pre-law. Her activities at Wayne State include concert choir, Madrigals, Aristocats Dance Team, Honors Program, and Chorale.

Gabriella is the daughter of Angela Adkins-Miller and Daniel Miller of Wakefield.

John Paul Svec

John Paul Svec, a current Wayne State student, majors in criminal justice with a pre-law minor. He was named to the Wayne State Dean's List for academic achievement, and participates in Fellowship of Christian Understanding (F.O.C.U.S.), Newman Center, and the Wayne State College Leadership Program.

John Paul is the son of John and Deb Svec of David City.

Rachel Tauber

Rachel Tauber, a current Wayne State student, is a business management major with a pre-law minor. She participates in dance team and has been named to the Wayne State Dean's List for academic achievement.

Rachel is the daughter of John and Angela Tauber of Winnetoon.