

DFEH News Brief

Date: May 27, 2011
For Immediate Release

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STATE LAUNCHES DFEH-UCD CIVIL RIGHTS CLINIC

ELK GROVE, CA -- The California Department of Fair Employment and Housing (DFEH) announced today that it has partnered with the University of California, Davis, School of Law (King Hall) to establish a new employment discrimination law program. Law students at the clinic will receive instruction and hands-on training in tools, such as class action lawsuits, to combat systematic discrimination.

“This innovative partnership greatly benefits students by introducing them to civil rights law,” said DFEH Director Phyllis Cheng. “The program also benefits members of the public by assisting them in the resolution of civil rights claims.”

The clinic stems from the DFEH’s historic \$6,011,190 settlement, late last year, of a class action employment discrimination case against Verizon Services Corp. and Verizon California, Inc. Working under the supervision of DFEH attorneys, King Hall students will evaluate Verizon claims to determine claimants’ rights under the California Family Rights Act and their appropriate level of award under the class settlement. Eight students will work in this summer’s 10 week Team Verizon project investigating and evaluating claims. The students also will have the opportunity to work on other DFEH class or group action cases under development. An academic clinical program for credit will follow during the school year.

“We are excited about this new opportunity to train and inspire future civil rights lawyers on cutting-edge issues,” said Cheng. “The partnership enhances our mission to protect Californians from discrimination.”

UC Davis Law School Dean Kevin Johnson added, “This collaboration is a great opportunity for UC Davis law students to work on employment discrimination cases. We are enthusiastic about this partnership with the DFEH.”

The Department is exploring the development of more university and college partnerships.

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The DFEH is the state agency charged with enforcing California’s civil rights laws. The mission of the DFEH is to protect the people of California from unlawful discrimination in

employment, housing and public accommodations and from hate violence. For more information, visit the Department's Web site at www.dfeh.ca.gov.