

Testimonials from 2018 Law Fellows

My participation in FASPE represented an excellent journey of personal growth and reflection about my role in the legal profession. I left the trip more aware of the ethical dilemmas I may face as an attorney and with a renewed sense of commitment to stay true to my values.

Dora Duru, FASPE Law Fellow 2018

FASPE was a life-changing opportunity, and I feel truly privileged to have had the chance to participate. The trip was both intellectually and emotionally intense, but for good reason, and I now feel much better prepared to identify and tackle professional ethical challenges as I move forward in my legal career. The faculty and staff were incredible all around, and it was wonderful getting to know and learn from them, the other Law Fellows and the Business and Journalism Fellows. I can't thank FASPE enough for this opportunity, and I very much look forward to staying involved with the community in the years to come!

Sarah Grant, FASPE Law Fellow 2018

One of my favorite discussions during the FASPE Law program centered around a fact pattern where our client confessed to us, his attorneys, that he committed a murder for which another man had been convicted and incarcerated. This discussion happened early in our trip, and it was our first energetic debate about what we should do. We tapped into themes that we'd continue discussing throughout our two weeks together: What are our duties to third parties? When professional duties conflict, which takes precedence? What boundaries can we push, and what lines can we not cross? My peers offered perspectives I hadn't considered, we challenged each other's ideas, and I loved learning from their insights. This discussion was also when I started to understand what drives my own instincts about the ethical course of action—a realization that I continued to reflect on during the fellowship as we worked through more hypotheticals and discussed the role morality of lawyers.

Sophie Kramer, FASPE Law Fellow 2018

Because of FASPE, I am able to identify and analyze ethical questions—both large and small—in the everyday practice of the law. From studying the experience of German lawyers during the Holocaust, I gained a deep understanding and appreciation of the power of individuals to either strengthen or erode the ethical standards of his or her profession. I am confident I will use what I learned as a new associate.

The first time I left Auschwitz-Birkenau, a man on my tour said, "What I don't understand is how humans could do this to one another." That is the question that Auschwitz compels me—if not to answer—at least to ask. That the Nazi crimes, that the murder of over six million Jewish men, women and children, were perpetrated by ordinary people in a modern state with functioning legal and governmental systems, says something not just about Nazi Germany but about us—about the weaknesses of our institutions and the capacity for evil in the people that they are made of. We must ask how Auschwitz came to exist, because Auschwitz was the result of policies and decisions that began with discrimination and marginalization, and culminated in murder.

I am beyond grateful to FASPE for the past two weeks of learning about and reflecting on the Holocaust and what it means to modern professionals. I'm equally grateful for meeting so many intelligent, thoughtful and passionate people, who made the experience so meaningful.

Katie Sohacki, FASPE Law Fellow 2018

Thanks again for making this trip possible. This was truly a once-in-a-lifetime experience to explore complex issues in a unique setting with people from so many diverse disciplines and backgrounds. I've gotten so much more out of this trip than I could've imagined going in, and a huge part of that is the extensive logistical support which made it possible to really focus on the core discussions.

Tomo Takaki, FASPE Law Fellow 2018

Community: When I was at Birkenau, our guide started talking about the gas chambers and crematoria, and all of a sudden I got completely inundated with emotion. We were sitting on the steps and I put my head in my hands. One of my colleagues from the Business program silently put her hand on my shoulder. Every inch of me hated Birkenau and wanted to leave, but her reassurance and accompaniment helped me to face, process and productively reflect on the immense sorrow and repulsion that I felt, rather than shutting it out. The FASPE community helped me to have a much deeper experience.

Choice: As I watched the movie on the Stanley Milgram experiments, I was amazed to see so many participants in the Milgram experiments say the same thing at some point: "I do have a choice!" I feel like that will be a good mantra for me, so that when I feel stuck, I will remember that even if one option is clearly the one that is socially-expected or even professionally-expected, it is not the only way and it may not be the right way. Thinking about Milgram's study on (dis)obedience reminded me to identify ethical choices. Sometimes the barriers to exiting a situation are substantial, but there is always a choice.

Ethical leadership: One element of our discussion about ethical leadership that recurred was that ethics is a practice, not a one-time decision. I ask myself whether I am the kind of person that colleagues will confide in and look to for ethical advice, if I am a person who allows for discussion and invites genuine ethical debate. We determined that to be an ethical leader you can't be self-righteous or unapproachable. You have to be strategic, persuasive and respected, and keep open lines of communication.

Ethical issues and the practice of law: In our seminar on "Ethical Issues and the Practice of Law" we discussed a lawyer's role in correcting a careless but important mistake by the opposing counsel. I struggled to find footing on why I thought we should tell the other lawyer and why I didn't think it would be appropriate to rely on the client's decision about the matter. All I could say was that it seemed to me like the right thing to do for the health of the legal profession, for the reputation of the firm and myself, and perhaps for the long-term outcome for the client. I had no authority in the legal ethics rules or norms to "net the benefits," so to speak. The rules of legal ethics seemed to invite us to stand on the rock of unquestionable loyalty to the client, but it seemed short-sighted to me. I felt compelled as a lawyer to counsel the client and to demand the honest and just outcome. It made me uncomfortable to feel unsure whether that decision would be supported by other members of my profession. In this seminar, we talked through so many alternatives and to such an extent that they all sounded unideal, but justifiable. As lawyers we are trained to think critically, to assess alternatives and to make (sometimes snap) judgments. I realized that, like anything else, ethics can get cluttered and clouded. You've got to remember to step back and clear your head; ask someone you know will disagree with you; consider all options; sleep on it. And at the end of the day, choose the resolution that you honestly feel good about.

Resistance: Talking about resistance was challenging because so many people resisted, but also acted as bystanders and sometimes even as perpetrators. It was strange to realize that people fell into different categories at different times; that to be ethical, we have to choose the right thing over and over and over,

even when it's impossible. I had not properly considered resistance as a spectrum, and it made me reflect on where I fall on that continuum today.

Memory and memorials: We talked a lot about memory and memorials. We visited many monuments and memorials and critiqued them. While doing the memorial proposal project our interdisciplinary group was able to consider elements that worked well in memorials we had seen, and other aspects that caused practical or aesthetic problems or conveyed ambiguous messages. We found that engaging with the present and future was critical to properly recognizing and honoring the reality of the past.

Mary Waller, FASPE Law Fellow 2018

Thank you so much for paving the way for the 2018 FASPE Fellows to embark on this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity together. I return from my FASPE experience much enriched by the discussions that I shared with my fellow FASPE colleagues over our seminars, walking tours, meals and group activities. FASPE has shaped the way that I view my role as a law student and future member of the legal profession by showing me what it means to balance ethical lawyering with commitments to clients, colleagues, supervisors and society as a whole. These last two weeks in Germany and Poland marked just the beginning of my relationship with a strong interdisciplinary community of fellows that I will collaborate with often in the future. Above all, I feel privileged that FASPE has chosen to invest in me, my career and my professional success. I hope to pay this investment forward in the way that I embody and practice FASPE's ethos.

Catherine Yuh, FASPE Law Fellow 2018