I have explored and promoted principles of health justice through a rigorous curriculum in legal bioethics courses and advocacy for marginalized communities’ access to safe, sanitary housing in my intern work. The litigation firm where I interned for the past year embodies the principle that everyone has the right to raise a family in safe and sanitary conditions. I helped marginalized families bring lawsuits against their abusive landlords based on theories of constructive eviction and violations of the implied warrant of habitability. Our cases focused on how landlords’ failures to fulfill their contractual and statutory obligations created conditions hazardous to the health and safety of vulnerable families. The majority of clients I worked with were undocumented, single mothers, and through my experience I observed how severe gaps in health and safety code enforcement disproportionately impact marginalized communities.

My experience working with city housing codes through landlord-tenant litigation motivated me to continue exploring the intersection of bioethical principles in law and policy in a search to find ways to improve existing systems. Professor Whelan’s course on Food and Drug law was particularly impactful because she demonstrated the effectiveness of federal regulatory systems that are managed by experts and insulated from political pressures. I received the CALI Award for my performance in the class, and her course challenged me to consider a career in regulatory law as a means to promote a broader health justice framework. I further researched the role of regulatory bodies in implementing health justice principles in Professor Lombardo’s class on the Law and Eugenics. I presented my course paper on Eugenic Policies in Cuba at the World Conference on Bioethics this past fall in Portugal. My experience at the conference as well as the theme of my paper highlighted how the international exchange of ideas on bioethics has a profound impact on how lawmakers and regulators shape and pursue public health law objectives. I hope to continue my momentum in the bioethics research space through a post-graduate health law fellowship while also fighting for health justice through public interest or regulatory law. Thank you for your time and consideration for this prestigious award.