

STATE OF WISCONSIN
SUPREME COURT
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53701-1688

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CHAMBERS OF
CHIEF JUSTICE SHIRLEY S. ABRAHAMSON

December 8, 2011

Mr. Rolf Wegenke, President
Wisconsin Association of Independent Colleges & Universities
122 W. Washington Ave, Suite 700
Madison, WI 53703-2723

Dear Mr. Wegenke:

I am writing in connection with the court's consideration of the civil "Gideon" petition and at the suggestion of several justices. The civil "Gideon" petition seeks court appointment of counsel at government expense for indigent civil litigants under certain circumstances. For more information about this petition, #10-08, see our website at <http://wicourts.gov/srules/1008.htm>.

In addition to providing counsel for the indigent, we can further help them in judicial matters by providing them with knowledgeable, trained non-lawyers. The private college system, with its many campuses and programs, has numerous internship programs. These programs perform vital public services and provide significant educational experiences for your students. I would be interested in meeting with you or your designee to discuss the possibilities of placing undergraduate and graduate student interns in the court system in the communities in which the colleges reside. We have some experience with such internship programs and would be interested in expanding these programs.

If I am not communicating with the proper office, I would appreciate your advising me and forwarding this letter to the proper persons. You might want to circulate this letter to the appropriate persons in the individual institutions and might want to publish this letter or a more detailed statement in your newsletter. Or you might have a better idea. I am open to your suggestions. Your knowledge of the colleges would be invaluable in this endeavor.

I would appreciate hearing from you. Until then my best wishes for the holiday season and for a good new year.

Sincerely,



Shirley S. Abrahamson

cc: All justices
Julie Rich
Clerk of Supreme Court - Rules Petition 10-08 file