



2022 D'Amore Law Group Scholarship

APPLICATION ESSAY
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As a mis- and disinformation researcher, I have struggled to find impactful ways to respond in an ecosystem that lends itself to extremes. Through the study of law, I want to deepen my understanding of how policymakers can play a more active role in protecting vulnerable groups while upholding the democratizing tenets of the internet.

This issue is not only at a critical juncture in the United States; the challenge of hate speech, privacy, and access is an international one in need of comprehensive, global solutions. In the future, I aim to support an interdisciplinary group of researchers, policymakers, and technology platform leaders committed to developing innovative approaches to regulation.

My interest in this intersection of the law is borne out of my work at Planned Parenthood. I witnessed:

- individuals seeking abortion care on search engines and being directed to crisis; pregnancy centers that deliberately concealed that they do not offer abortions;
- Spanish-language misinformation not promptly corrected on social media platforms, and
- misleading ads claiming that medication abortion is dangerous.

Additionally, 54% of LGBTQAI+ people report facing harassment online. This online hate speech translates into real-world transphobic state policy that reflects disinformation being spread by bad actors. In my work, I have supported the creation of surveys that examine how Planned Parenthood supporters and patients encounter and navigate disinformation about abortion and COVID-19, and work across departments to develop programmatic strategy on how the organization can inoculate patients and supporters.

Serving in this role as a queer person has impacted how I encounter and operate within this work. As a law student, I will also continue to serve and learn from disproportionately targeted communities by participating in civil rights clinics and pro bono service.

This first-hand experience with harmful online disinformation uniquely prepares me for work with legislators, where I hope to contribute a perspective that is deeply informed by intersecting disciplines and to ensure that the future of technology is safer and more equitable for all.

Subsequently, I hope that the innovation required to produce these regulations will create a model for future global governance in our increasingly connected international society.