

patient-specific treatment. Unless misguided patent law gets in the way.

Although concerned about how the court's ruling will affect the personalized medicine industry, Ghosh

cautions against abandoning the natural phenomenon doctrine. "The doctrine allows tools of future innovation to emerge," says Ghosh, who will join Wilmer Hale's patent litiga-

tion group this fall. "If it is to be rejected, that should be based on its merits rather than on the occasional mistakes of courts applying it."

—Andrew Cohen



**HEARING AIDES:**  
Ioana Tchoukleva '14 and  
Katherine Katcher '13

## An Appealing Program for Potential Parolees

For most of society, prisoners are literally out of sight and out of mind. Not so for Ioana Tchoukleva '14 and Katherine Katcher '13, who help protect one of the few rights prisoners retain—to be considered for parole.

California "lifers" have a statutory right to counsel in parole hearings, yet most are represented by parole board-appointed lawyers who, for various reasons, often fail to provide competent representation. "Many of them meet their attorneys literally minutes before their parole hearings," says Tchoukleva.

Enter Boalt's new Post-Conviction Advocacy Project (P-CAP)—led by Tchoukleva and Katcher—which helps inmates navigate the parole process and assists them with

appeals if they were denied parole.

"It's a real injustice to keep people in prison who are truly rehabilitated, prepared to reintegrate into society, and no longer threaten public safety," Katcher says.

P-CAP is one of the law school's 20 Student-Initiated Legal Services Projects. It is supervised by Oakland attorney Keith Wattlely, who has overseen similar programs at UCLA and Stanford, and has worked on prisoner and parole cases for 15 years. Students devote 30 or more hours per semester to P-CAP.

Katcher says the zealous counsel of Boalt students "vastly increases lifers' chances of receiving a fair parole hearing." In doing so, the students "strengthen their skills in client counseling and interviewing,

legal research and writing, and oral argument."

In addition to co-leading P-CAP, Katcher has worked at the Prison Law Office in Berkeley, which offers free legal services to California inmates through class action and other impact litigation, and at Legal Services for Prisoners with Children in San Francisco. She also volunteered for Wattlely's nonprofit Uncommon Law, which guides prisoners facing parole and their families.

Tchoukleva spent many Thursday nights last year hashing out restorative justice issues with inmates at San Quentin State Prison. "Some of them had great insight into the factors that influenced their crimes, took full responsibility for what they did, and contributed to peace and security inside the prison," she says. "Yet, even though they had spent decades behind bars and posed no threat to society, many were repeatedly denied parole."

Tchoukleva and Katcher are heartened by recent trends, though. Eager to reduce its overcrowded prison population, California is approving more parole hearings and grants. The passage of Proposition 36 also means that about 3,000 convicted felons serving life terms under the Three Strikes law will become eligible to petition for reduced sentences.

"We wanted to tap into our students' passion and talent and offer them a way to hone valuable legal skills," Tchoukleva says. "To do that while addressing mass incarceration, which impacts so many people, is extremely gratifying." —Andrew Cohen