

# Graduate Programs for Foreign Lawyers

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Newsletter of the  
Association of American Law Schools  
Section on Graduate Programs for Foreign Lawyers

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Fall 2006

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## A Message From the Section Chair

Greetings from Chicago! As you have settled into the fall semester and marked the successful beginning of another academic year, it is time to book your trip to the **2007 AALS Annual Meeting** in Washington, D.C. if you haven't done so yet. This year, the conference will take place from **January 3 - 6, 2007** and for all the members of the Section on Graduate Programs for Foreign Lawyers, the Executive Committee and Sections Officers have plenty planned for you!

Two of our meetings take place on **Friday, January 5**, starting with an informal networking **Continental Breakfast** that I hope you won't skip in spite of the early hour (7:00 – 8:30 a.m.). The breakfast is immediately followed by our section's main program (from 8:30 – 10:15 a.m.). As the conference theme this year is "*Expanding Knowledge and Serving Our Communities*", our section is sponsoring a program in line with the general theme on "*Serving Our International Students:*

*Supporting Excellence and Success*". The panel includes representatives from large, small, recent, and long standing programs for foreign-trained lawyers. The speakers will address questions we all ponder upon every year -- how can law schools best serve foreign trained lawyers who join their LL.M. programs? What are the particular needs of this diverse population, and how do we meet these needs? What constitutes a successful outcome for these students and for our schools? On **Saturday, January 6** (9:00 – 10:45 a.m.) our section co-sponsors a program on "*Best Practices in International Programs*" with the Section on International Legal Exchange. In a rather unique setting for AALS meetings, participants will be able to join discussion tables hosted by several moderators on topics such as orientation, marketing, forming global alliances, program evaluation, integration, and academic support. We hope this format will foster lively and informal exchange of ideas and

information, and will let all of us learn from each other. Our section also co-sponsors a program on “*Marketing the Post-Graduate Law Programs*” with the Section on Post Graduate Legal Education. While some of the speakers in this particular program represent specialized post graduate degrees aimed mostly at American J.D. students, (rather than foreign trained LL.M. students), members of our section will find the session quite useful and relevant regardless of the different target market. The program will take place on **Thursday, January 4** (8:30–10:15 a.m.). I urge you to join our section for the 2007 conference and I hope to see you all there!

Included in this newsletter are two short articles that are connected, in my view, to the Annual Conference general theme. **Maureen Stratton** (Northwestern

University School of Law) writes about offering public service opportunities to LL.M. students, and **Jennifer D’Arcy Maher** (Duke University Law School) describes language program in which LL.M. students serve as language instructors for J.D. students. Many of us who work closely for and with international students realize that by providing superior services to the students, by organizing programs such as these two, our students can contribute back to the community, thus enriching the law school life, and transforming the educational experience of both LL.M. and J.D. students alike into a truly culturally diverse one. I am sure many of you can share similar stories from your own experience, and I invite you to do so in the upcoming conference!

Adi Altshuler  
Northwestern University School of Law

## **Community of Language Learners: LL.M. Students Facilitate Language Acquisition by J.D. Students**

By Jennifer Mahe  
Duke University School of Law

Directors of LL.M. programs for foreign lawyers often worry about how to integrate foreign LL.M. students with American J.D. students. After all, LL.M. students come to study in the US in part to meet and get to know American J.D. students. But J.D. students are hard to get to know because they are busy their own concerns: first-years with getting to know their classmates and surviving the shock of

their courses; second-years with interviewing and working on journals; and third-years – well, who knows what they’re doing, but they’re busy, too.

Some LL.M. program directors also are responsible for other international programs at their schools. At Duke Law School, for example, our office works closely with students in the combined J.D./LL.M. in international and

comparative law. We also run two overseas summer institutes (in Hong Kong and Geneva) and multiple exchanges programs. Through these programs, we have contact with J.D. students who aspire to international practice, and the conversations often get around to “How do I get an ‘international’ job?” Whether this means working for a domestic US firm with an international practice, or in an overseas firm, or with an international organization, a piece of advice we give is that the ability to speak and understand another language stands out in the competitive market for international jobs. Yet it is difficult for busy J.D. students to improve or keep up languages that perhaps they learned in high school or picked up studying abroad in college.

How were those two paragraphs related? Well, it is possible to both integrate LL.M. and J.D. students and strengthen language skills at the same time. Duke Law School has two programs that do so. One is the series of “Language for Legal Studies” courses offered in Duke Law School’s curriculum. The second is the Law School’s “Language Lunch Tables.”

The Language for Legal Studies courses in different years may teach French, German, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Portuguese, or Spanish. In order to enroll in these credit/no credit courses, students need at least an intermediate level of language skill. The courses assign reading materials that describe the legal vocabulary, structures, and processes of another country, written in the language of that country. Instruction and class discussions are also in the language of that country, though

some instruction and discussion may be in English at the beginning of the course.

The Language for Legal Studies courses are taught by mature LL.M. students or visiting scholars from countries where the language being studied is spoken. So, while J.D.s are studying another legal system and language, they are also getting to know some of the LL.M. students, and vice versa.

The Language Lunch Tables are more casual and designed to improve conversational language skills. They bring together LL.M. and J.D. students who want to speak a language other than English, usually, as the name implies, over lunch. Again, the range of languages offered is wide, sometimes even including Hebrew, Arabic, or American slang (not counted as English), in addition to many of the languages offered in the courses. The group members, which include native speakers (usually LL.M. students), first-generation Americans who grew up with another language, and Americans who have studied the language, become friends over conversations about food, beverages, customs, and comparative legal systems. Sometimes the luncheon meetings expand to include a foreign-language movie or restaurant or home-cooked meals.

In keeping with Duke Law School’s leadership development goals, students in the International Law Society are responsible for organizing the Language Lunch Tables. An initial meeting for anyone interested allows students to meet and exchange contact information. After that, they set a time to get together in language groups, and the fun starts.

After graduation, students (now alumni) stay in touch with us, and their messages include news of working overseas or visiting friends in other countries. Perhaps the languages skills they strengthened at Duke Law School may

have helped land those overseas jobs, and some of the friends they are visiting were made in our Language for Legal Studies courses or Language Lunch Tables.

## **Learning Beyond the Classroom: Foreign Lawyers and Public Service**

By Maureen Stratton  
Northwestern University School of Law, Chicago

Involving foreign lawyers in public service opportunities as part of their graduate studies program in the United States can enhance the educational value of their experience. Participation in public service provides foreign students with real world opportunities to hone skills, make valuable connections, and gain a deeper understanding of the American legal system and culture. Public service work not only provides much needed benefits to the community but generates great personal satisfaction for foreign student volunteers when their efforts make a difference in the lives of others.

Northwestern Law has successfully incorporated LL.M. students in its public service program. In 2002, Northwestern Law initiated a Public Service Strategy, designed to build an ethic of service and giving among all students, regardless of their career path. Acknowledging that not all students will choose public interest law as a career, the strategy broadly defines public service to include legal and non-legal work in community organizations, advocacy groups, legal services offices, government agencies and a wide variety of non-profit organizations.

We set a goal that each Northwestern Law LL.M. student performs at least 15 hours of public service before graduation, (25 hours for two year transfer students, 40 hours for three year J.D. students). Students who fulfill our public service hourly goal are honored at a special luncheon and awarded certificates of outstanding commitment to public service. Their names are highlighted in the graduation bulletin, and they receive distinctive gold and purple honor cords and tassels to wear at the graduation ceremony.

Our commitment to public service is introduced to students at orientation through a day dedicated to participation in various service projects. Students may choose from four to five different activities. Last year, students packed food at the Greater Chicago Food Depository, cleaned up a beach and analyzed Lake Michigan's water for pollution levels, and helped clean and paint public housing units. For our foreign students enrolled in our law and business program who arrive earlier in the summer, we plan a separate service project to orient them to our program.

To encourage participation of foreign lawyers in our program, we have established a few key partnerships with agencies that have a special need for the tremendous language skills and cultural competency our students bring with them to the United States. For example, many of our foreign students have volunteered with The Unaccompanied Children's Advocate Project, to assist immigrant children in government custody. The students act as advocates for immigrant children who arrive in the U.S. without a parent or legal guardian. The children come to the U.S. for various reasons, many are fleeing persecution, some are smuggled into the U.S. for work, and others are escaping conditions of serious poverty. As a volunteer Child Advocate, students assist the child as they navigate through the U.S. Immigration system and help identify the child's best interest.

Translation skills, especially from volunteers with a legal background, are

highly valued. Many of our students have acted as translators for clients in political asylum cases. Others have translated self help brochures for legal service agencies.

Because most of our foreign students have excellent English language skills, they are welcome to participate in any of the public service opportunities available through our program. Some have read aloud to third graders as part of our Chicago Public School partnership exchange and acted as pen pals to improve the reading and writing skills of fourth graders. The added depth a volunteer from another culture brings to the partnership always enriches the experience.

*For more ideas about involving foreign students in public service opportunities, contact Maureen Stratton at [m-stratton@law.northwestern.edu](mailto:m-stratton@law.northwestern.edu).*

### **The benefits to incorporating foreign students in public service include:**

- An opportunity to gain an understanding of culture and the community needs.
- Development and enhancement of many legal practice skills, including interviewing, research, writing, and interpersonal skills.
- Gaining professional experience, enhancing resumes and building relationships with practicing attorneys who may be important contacts for the future.
- Personal fulfillment that will help increase the foreign student's connection to the community, while making it a better place to live.
- Learning to balance responsibilities and integrate public service work into their lives.

# **American Society of International Law Teaching Interest Group**

## **International Law Roundtable**

Saturday, January 6, 2007

10:45 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.

Marriott Wardman Park Hotel, Harding Room, Mezzanine Level

Many members of the AALS Section on Graduate Programs for Foreign Lawyers are also members of the American Society of International Law (ASIL). One of the Interest Groups within the ASIL is focused on those who teach international law, including those who teach international law at law schools outside the United States. This year, the ASIL Interest Group on Teaching will hold a special program on at the end of the AALS meeting. The session will begin immediately after the Saturday morning program on “Best Practices in International Programs.”

The ASIL Teaching International Law Interest Group provides a forum for those involved in or interested in teaching international law to discuss approaches, methods, and new techniques taking place both in the United States and abroad. The Group operates under the premise that effective teaching leads to increased public awareness and a greater understanding of international law. Although innovative new practices are often highlighted, standard approaches are also examined in order to keep them fresh and effective. The Group has previously addressed topic areas such as curriculum and pedagogy in both doctrinal and non-doctrinal courses, requiring international law courses, infusion curriculum, and international law certificate programs within the J.D. program. The Group addresses these topics through discussions and workshops, as well as through co-sponsorship of international conferences.

The three-part roundtable discussion on January 6, 2007 will: (1) share innovative ways and materials to help professors include international law materials in courses that do not traditionally focus on international law; (2) discuss the experience of law schools that have “international law certificate programs” within their J.D. programs; and (3) consider how international law professors have incorporated the Society’s Centennial Resolution relating to the laws of war and the treatment of persons in custody.

Individuals who are interested in speaking on one of the three topics on the program should contact Prof. Mark E. Wojcik, Co-Chair of the ASIL Interest Group on Teaching International Law, at The John Marshall Law School, 315 S. Plymouth Court, Chicago, IL 60604, [7wojcik@jmls.edu](mailto:7wojcik@jmls.edu), or 312-987-2391.

# Call for Papers and Panel Proposals

## Global Legal Skills Conference

A Global Legal Skills Conference will be held **May 4-5, 2007** at The John Marshall Law School in Chicago. The intended audience for this conference includes LL.M. Program Directors who have students from other countries (especially if they do not presently offer specialized courses for ESL students); Legal writing professors who teach students who speak English as a Second Language (ESL); Teachers in Intensive English Language Programs (IEPs) and Orientation Courses for U.S. Law (and individuals who want to learn about teaching in those programs); Legal Writing Program Directors; Writing advisors who work with international students; ESL teachers who teach law students, lawyers, and business people who deal with legal issues; Court translators; and Graduate students who are learning to teach ESL.

The deadline for proposals for the 2007 conference is **January 18, 2007 (that is after the AALS meeting in Washington D.C.)**, however earlier submissions of panel, paper, and workshop proposals is of course welcome. The Program Planning Committee will review all the submissions. Contact Professors Molly Lien or Mark Wojcik at The John Marshall Law School in Chicago for more information.

## From the Newsletter Editor

Mandatory Disclaimer: Any views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of the Association of American Law Schools or the Section on Graduate Programs for Foreign Lawyers.

Mark E. Wojcik  
The John Marshall Law School, Chicago

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