

Converging Trends in Legal Education: Globalization Meets Experiential Education

Over the last decade, legal educators have increasingly recognized the need to prepare students for practice in an era of increasing globalization. A parallel development has been to provide more experiential education for our students. These trends can create conflicting pressures, but it is also possible to achieve both goals. Professors Fatma Marouf (University of Nevada, Las Vegas, William S. Boyd College of Law), Raquel Aldana (University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law), Hannah Garry (University of Southern California, Gould School of Law), and Linda Carter (University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law) addressed that challenge and presented four different models in which these trends are complimentary rather than competing. In each model, students have the opportunity to engage in practical legal work with an international or comparative impact. Students have found each program to be a highly educational and personally transformative experience.

Professor Marouf leads a 3-week intercession program in which the students work together on one project in India. In the most recent program, they partnered with an Indian NGO to do field work on labor issues. The U.S. students worked with Indian law students to interview workers in their work places. They then compiled their data, and wrote research reports when they returned to their home campus. The Indian NGO will be able to use this data as they pursue legal action on behalf of the workers.

Professor Aldana directs an Inter-American program that includes a 3-week summer classroom component in Guatemala, followed by an 8-week externship in Latin American countries. Students may do only the classroom component but, if they want to do the externship, they must do the classroom component first. Although one course is taught in English, the other courses are taught in Spanish. Students study legal issues in Latin America with students from the region, gain fluency in Spanish, and adapt to living in a developing country during the 3-week program before beginning their externships. Students must be fluent in Spanish to enroll in the externship. Some of the placements have included Guatemalan government agencies and NGOs, the Supreme Court of Costa Rica, and the Public Defender Office in Chile.

Professor Garry teaches a year-long Human Rights Clinic in which students work on cases locally and from international criminal tribunals, such as the Special Tribunal for Lebanon and the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia. Students may opt to intern with one of the courts after completing the on-campus clinic. When they arrive for their internship, the students have already had the benefit of working on issues for the court during the school year.

Professor Carter directed a 3-week Law and Development Seminar in Kampala, Uganda, last summer that included internships in the High Court and a seminar with Ugandan law students. There was also an optional 7-week externship in the courts or NGOs that followed. The externship is occurring in Lesotho this summer. Students conducted comparative law research projects for the judges to assist them in their cases.

Each program has a different innovative approach, but each combines an international experience with an experiential activity. The models allowed participants to compare summer/intercession programs with clinical programs, short programs with semester-long

approaches, on-campus work with in-country work, and group projects with individual placements. A dialogue followed about challenges and strategies for how best to combine the valuable experiential education approach with international legal education.