

Embrace Change by Embracing the Library!

With budgetary concerns abounding in almost every area of legal education, now more than ever is the time to exploit the existing synergies in your law school when thinking of how to enhance and support your international programs without undertaking unnecessary cost. Law school libraries are equipped not only with resources that can inform and educate students on the legal systems and cultures of other countries, but also with qualified librarians who are able to provide research training for students before they depart. Alison Shea, Reference Librarian/Foreign & International Specialist at Fordham Law School, and Stephen Young, Senior Reference Librarian at The Catholic University of America School of Law, presented examples of how they have helped their school's study abroad programs, and further provided ways in which attendees could reach out to their own libraries for further assistance.

Ms. Shea's presentation focused on her support for Fordham's Belfast and Dublin summer abroad program. Drawing from her own experiences as a study abroad student both as an undergraduate and a law student, she highlighted the various ways in which she helps prepare students for their externships abroad. Ms. Shea delivers a pre-departure lecture which provides information on everything from bank holidays to tea time to the structure of the two jurisdiction's legal systems. She then prepares a "dossier" of information for each student with an externship placement highlighting important information about both the organization and, if possible, the supervisor. She also works one-on-one with any student who might like more substantive information regarding their placement before they depart. Over the past three years, Ms. Shea has been in the UK at the same time as the Fordham students, and thus has been able to provide an on-site lecture on UK, Irish and EU legal research for the students participating in the internship. Students are then encouraged to follow up with her via email throughout the course of the summer with any questions they may have, and have also reached out to her following their return for assistance with writing papers on topics they encountered during their experience abroad. Reception to Ms. Shea's participation in the program has been very positive.

Mr. Young's presentation focused on library support for The Catholic University of America's American Law Program (ALP) in Krakow, Poland. Set against the current crisis in legal education, and the responsibility of law schools to "do more with less," the presentation highlighted how to exploit existing synergies within the law school to enhance and maintain legal education abroad programs. The ALP at Catholic University, a cooperative program with the Jagiellonian University Law School in Krakow, is now in its 14th year. Although Catholic University offers two traditional summer study abroad programs for students from American law schools, the ALP is a program for Polish law students in Krakow. Taught by members of the Catholic University faculty, the program has been supported by the staff of the Law Library in a number of ways, some traditional, some non-traditional. Long distance support for the ALP has included curricular and administrative support. Research is often performed by library staff prior to faculty departure to assist them with their teaching; however support has also included travel related research and assistance with course management software (TWEN). Ground support for the ALP is also offered in the form of an embedded librarian. At the beginning of each year's program, a librarian travels to Krakow to offer a five day class in researching American law. In addition to providing instruction on the basics of legal research the librarian also provides assistance with Westlaw and TWEN and a general introduction to the American law school pedagogical style.