

## *Globalization: Law schools get serious; Acknowledging a business imperative*

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### **Body**

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Michele DeStefano Beardslee was not overflowing with enthusiasm when her law dean suggested last year that she organize an academic conference on globalization. An assistant professor at the University of Miami School of Law, Beardslee wasn't sure how yet another series of panels would provide her students with practical skills in dealing with global business issues.

She hit upon the idea of bringing law students from different continents together to work on problems within legal education or the professions, the way judges interact across national borders, or how to pay for international litigation. The program, Law Without Walls, will start in January with students from Miami; Peking University School of Transnational Law in Shenzhen, China; Harvard Law School; Fordham University School of Law; New York Law School; and University College London.

"Today's world is no longer contained by country boundaries. The lawyers of tomorrow, if they want to be successful, are going to have to interact with businesspeople from around the world," Beardslee said.

Many law schools recognize that the profession has gone global and that young lawyers need more than just a solid foundation of U.S. law. They are starting to move beyond theoretical discussions of globalization to focus on the real-world skills students need to succeed in that environment. That transition is still in the early stages.

Nearly 130 of the 200 American Bar Association-approved law schools already offer ABA-sanctioned programs in foreign countries during breaks in the regular school year, and now the organization is weighing whether to offer accreditation to overseas law schools. At least two relatively new foreign law schools, Jindal Global Law School near Delhi, India, and Peking University School of Transnational Law, have announced plans to seek accreditation should the ABA move forward with that initiative.

In the meantime, schools are launching their own programs intended to add international opportunities. Jindal has forged partnerships with three U.S. law schools during the past two months. The University of Wisconsin Law School announced in October that it is launching a new executive LL.M. with the East China University of Political Science and Law in Shanghai, making it the school's third such partnership with an Asian institution this year.

Indiana University Maurer School of Law, Bloomington, has added opportunities for faculty to collaborate with foreign law professors and for students to study and intern abroad since the launch of its Center on the Global Legal Profession in 2009. The University of Pittsburgh School of Law in 2012 will start

requiring all juris doctor students to take at least one international or comparative law course during their second or third year.

### 'I THINK WE'RE DOING BETTER'

"I think we're doing better than we did even a decade ago," said University of Michigan Law School Professor Vikramaditya Khanna. "I think in some respects the need to do more is quite pressing, but what we're doing right now are good first steps."

ABA President Steve Zack makes a point of speaking with law students when he travels overseas and is always impressed with their knowledge of the American legal system. On a recent trip to China, law students asked several pointed questions about race relations in the United States and notable court cases.

"I doubt that any similar questions could be asked if the president of the Chinese bar or even the English bar came here," Zack said. "Whether lawyers want it or not, clients will insist on the global practice of law. We need to train our young lawyers for that."

Zack has asked several law school deans about the possibility of making a study-abroad semester mandatory for U.S. law students. He figures that living overseas is the best way to produce young attorneys who are comfortable working on international matters. The deans have countered that a mandatory semester abroad would be too costly.

The point of Law Without Walls, which starts in January, is for students to work across borders while learning the basics of business and entrepreneurship, Beardslee said. Each student will be assigned both a practicing attorney and an entrepreneur as mentors, and lectures will cover topics including developing new business ideas and the future of legal services in the digital age. Four students from each of the six schools will participate; they will all meet in person during a two-day kickoff conference in London in January. The participants will meet again to present their final projects in Miami in April.

"We can't teach globalization the way we have traditionally taught law," Beardslee said. "That doesn't work when it comes to teaching the skills you need to be successful in an international world."

Jindal, which opened last year and follows the U.S. law school model by emphasizing research and faculty credentials, has been aggressive in finding international partner institutions. It has signed agreements with University of Michigan Law School, Indiana University Maurer School of Law, Bloomington and Yale University, and is in talks with additional U.S. and Canadian schools.

Khanna will teach a course at Jindal next semester. Half the students will be in Michigan; half will be in India. Lectures will be broadcast in real time via the Internet and the students in both countries will be able to interact with each other. Jindal's partnership with Indiana will include student exchanges in which Indian students come to the United States and intern at U.S. firms, while American students intern at Indian firms.

"This is an evolving perspective at U.S. law schools, but I think it's gaining in momentum," said Jindal president and law dean Raj Kumar. "Increasingly, it's being driven by the law firms. Now that business operators and functions have moved to China and India, the clients want expertise in those countries."

### CULTURAL SENSITIVITY

Erica Oppenheimer, a 2L at Indiana, hopes that the 10 weeks she spent interning in India last summer will set her apart in the eye of employers. Oppenheimer was one of six Indiana students working in India; she spent seven weeks in Delhi at Amarchand & Mangaldas & Suresh A. Shroff & Co., one of India's largest and most prestigious law firms, before working for three weeks in the Indian solicitor general's office.

"There's something very unique about working side-by-side with colleagues who went through a different legal education and legal system, rather than just being in a classroom with other Americans," she said. "It's very important to have cultural sensitivity when you are conducting business in a new place. You need to be aware that things are done differently."

That said, such programs can be tricky to monitor and endorse. "The issue, of course, is quality," Khanna said. "You don't want to send your students someplace where you don't know what they're doing and what they're learning. The way law is taught in other countries doesn't always coalesce."

Even law schools that have had a strong international focus for years are boosting their offerings with new programs and partnerships. For example, the University of Wisconsin Law School launched two executive LL.M. programs in collaboration with law schools in Thailand and Japan during the past year. Students spend one semester abroad and one semester in Wisconsin.

The school is adding a similar degree program in Shanghai. It has a variety of academic partnerships with law schools throughout Asia and sends J.D. students overseas on summer internships with law firms in Bangkok, Thailand, and Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. "If you spend your summer at a Madison or Milwaukee firm, you're not going to see anything international," said John Ohnesorge, director of Wisconsin's East Asian Legal Studies Center.

Integrating foreign LL.M. students into the fabric of law school life is another way to create a more international atmosphere on campus, said Andrew Guzman, director of graduate programs and associate dean for international and executive education at the University of California, Berkeley School of Law. Berkeley offers a course on international business transactions that pairs American J.D. students with foreign LL.M. students to work on international legal issues.

There is no shortage of foreign LL.M. students to bring into the mix; U.S. law schools have rushed to add those programs during the past decade. The number of LL.M. students at U.S. law schools grew by 65% between 1999 and 2009, and most of them were from overseas.

"I don't think that law schools, collectively, have figured out what it is they should be doing," Guzman said. "A lot of schools are trying different things with the word 'international' in them. I think the dilemma is that we know our students will be dealing with cross-border matters, but they'll probably be sitting in a law firm office in the U.S. It's still a work in progress."

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