



PENN STATE'S DICKINSON SCHOOL OF LAW INTERNATIONAL LAW SOCIETY

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The ILS Reporter

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Being a part of Penn State's international Law Society has many advantages, such as the privilege of interacting with colleagues from other countries, learning about careers and opportunities in international law, and keeping up with news, hot topics, events, and issues in the international legal field. Members and affiliates of ILS have reaped such benefits through the Society's programming, including the student/law faculty reception, Attorney Tom Snider's presentation of his experience with the Ethiopia-Eritrea Claims Commission (cosponsored with Professor Catherine Rogers), and a comparative law panel with our esteemed LL.M. colleagues and Professor Louis Del Duca. We look forward to more events in the spring; these events include the Iran roundtable "Beyond Rhetoric: The State of Iran –Its Policies, Politics, and Global Impact" and a career panel cosponsored with the Human Rights Law Society. Please partner with us as we seek to continue in our mission to explore issues of importance to the international legal community, assist students in pursuing international legal careers, promote awareness of international legal topics, and increase the understanding of international law practice in general.

-- R. Michelle Boldon

Reporter's Corner:

Tips for International Law Job Applicants By Sarah Stec

This past October, I attended the American Bar Association Section of International Law's Fall Meeting in Miami Beach, Florida. Many law students from the South Florida area attended, as well as some, like me, who had traveled from other parts of the country. One question on the attorney's minds, which they asked us the students multiple times over to our chagrin, was whether or not we had jobs. Unfortunately, most students attending the conference did not. Needless to say, the room for the Associates' Boot Camp program, *Pathways to Employment in International Law*, was standing-room only by the time the session began.

I attended one of these programs at school my 1L year and hoped that this program would be different. Thankfully, it gave me a lot of good ideas and ways to expand my job search in international law. Although most of the program was dedicated to International Commercial Arbitration instead of Public International Law or other non-ADR focused areas of international law, I walked away with many new pointers and ideas to re-focus my job search.

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INTERNATIONAL LAW FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Professor Laurel Terry was featured as a guest blogger on the IntLawGrrls website. The website highlights Professor Terry's work and expertise in legal ethics and lawyer regulation in the area of comparative, transnational, and international law. Visit <http://intlwgrrls.blogspot.com/search/label/Laurel%20Terry>.



Professor Larry Catá Backer has recently been published in the following journals (among others):

- ◆ *Small Steps Toward an Autonomous Transnational Legal System for the Regulation of Multinational Corporations*, 10(1) MELBOURNE JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL LAW 258 (2009).
- ◆ *From Constitution to Constitutionalism: A Global Framework for Legitimate Public Power Systems*, 113(3) PENN STATE LAW REVIEW 671 (2009).
- ◆ *Theocratic Constitutionalism: An Introduction to a New Legal Global Ordering*, 16(1) INDIANA JOURNAL OF GLOBAL LEGAL STUDIES 85 (2009).
- ◆ *Globalizing Cuba: ALBA and the Construction of Socialist Global Trade Systems*, Proceedings of the 19th Annual Conference of the Association for the Study of the Cuban Economy (2009).

Professor Backer has also recently presented on the following (selected) topics: "The U.N. Global Compact, the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the Emergence of a Constitutional Order for Economic Enterprises," "The Drama of Corporate Law: Between Citizen and State From the South Sea Bubble to the Financial Crisis of 2008" and "Globalizing Cuba: ALBA and the Construction of Socialist Global Trade Systems."

MEET THE ADDITIONS TO THE BOARD



Jonathan in Seville, Spain

Jonathan Brandon, 1L Representative, Carlisle – jpb344@psu.edu

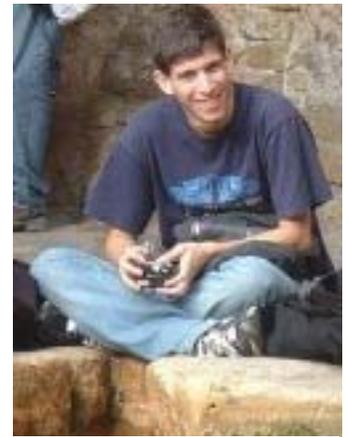
Jonathan is a 2004 graduate of Allegheny College with a BA in International Studies and Spanish. He worked for an international development consultancy based in Washington, DC, serving primarily as a program and proposal coordinator on USAID-funded projects. This experience introduced him to several avenues in which global service and the practice of law intersect. Jonathan had the opportunity to learn from and work with attorneys dedicated to conflict resolution, legislative strengthening, planning, and international trade. These experiences were a primary source of motivation to study law.

Personal Goal for ILS: To share my interest and enthusiasm in the diversity of opportunities presented through the field of international law. ❖ **Countries Visited:** Italy, Spain, France, England, Belgium, The Netherlands, Portugal, Albania, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Canada, Vatican City, Germany ❖ **A Favorite International Attraction:** Petra, Jordan ❖ **An Admired International Figure:** Nelson Mandela

Wesley Corning, University Park – wrc138@dsl.psu.edu

As an undergraduate studying Political Science and Criminal Justice, Wesley focused on international political and legal issues. His classes in Chinese Politics and Comparative Criminal Justice exposed him to many legal and political systems from around the world. As a senior, Wesley spent a semester in London where he was placed in a Labour MP's office working as a Legislative Correspondent, communicating with constituents about their concerns, including concerns about British law. After entering the working world, Wesley spent about six months with Hughes Hubbard & Reed, a firm in DC which has an international trade practice. As a paralegal there, he worked with the attorneys to develop business with international clients, and research complicated issues regarding economic and political ramifications of trade law.

Personal Goal for ILS: Provide a forum for students interested in international law at all levels, from career to curiosity, to discuss, debate, and learn more about the issues in modern international law. ❖ **Countries Visited:** Mexico, Jamaica, Dominica, the UK (England and Scotland), France, Italy, Vatican City ❖ **A Favorite International Attraction:** The Old Bailey ❖ **An Admired International Figure:** Bernard Kouchner, French Minister of Foreign and European Affairs



Wesley in Bath

The Practice of International Law: Lessons from Tom Snider, International Law

On October 19, 2009, Mr. Tom Snider, an attorney at Wilmer Hale in Washington D.C., visited Penn State Law. Mr. Snider gave two presentations, one in Professor Rogers' International Arbitration course and another specifically for the International Law Society and Alternative Dispute Resolution Society. His presentations focused on two areas: his experiences working with the Ethiopia-Eritrea Claims Commission and the practice of international law.

The Ethiopia-Eritrea Claims Commission worked to resolve claims that arose out of the Ethiopia-Eritrea war of the late '90s. Mr. Snider was part of a team brought on as representation for Ethiopia before the Claims Commission. Mr. Snider described the Claims Commission to be very unique in that it was composed of four U.S. attorneys, with a non-U.S. president. Both parties hired U.S. attorneys to represent them even through the tribunal concerned claims that were far removed from the U.S. Concerning this phenomenon, Mr. Snider commented on the "Americanization" of International Arbitration, which has traditionally followed a Continental approach to legal procedure that has been occurring as U.S. companies have entered the global economy over the past 50 years. However, the Claims Commission was even more unique because of its status as a war crimes commission, meaning that the tribunal was not merely composed to resolve an international commercial dispute, but issues of war and human rights.

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The Practice (Continued)

This, of course, raised interesting questions in Mr. Snider's presentation about the role of private tribunals deciding issues of public law. Concerning the practice of international law, Mr. Snider shared interesting and useful insights. He said that some of the most important skills that international lawyers will need come from the most basic law classes; in other words, excelling in "core" law classes, as well as, corporations, trusts and estates, sales, etc., is very important. To illustrate his point, he said that one of the most important legal concepts that he worked with at the Claims Commission was not *jus cogens*, *thalweg*, or *renvoi*, but was proximate cause—a concept from Torts, a first-year course. Mr. Snider stated that while taking classes in international law is important and perhaps more interesting than other classes, making sure that you have a solid foundation in the basic classes is perhaps more useful in the long run. Finally, Mr. Snider encouraged us, saying that sometimes in order to practice in the area of international law, we have to make the opportunities happen themselves: sometimes we, as junior associates, have to look for opportunities, or be willing to take on extra assignments, in order to end up working in international law.

-- Samuel Wiest, 3L and SIA Candidate



EDITORIAL

Improvement of World's Legal Systems – A Timely Need

We, in the United States and in certain European countries are fortunate to have evolved legal systems that at least serve their avowed purposes and aspirations. Other countries have problems ranging from accessibility, severity, enforcement, practice and even complete misuse, usurpation and corruption of theirs. This is not to say that ours are above criticism, repair, and partial overhaul.

As I sat through my LL.M. classes, I held my breath in awe for the powerful minds of the architects of our system on the one hand and for the dismal plight of archaic, half-borrowed and even disabled legal systems of some of my colleagues overseas. What I felt as the saving grace of our system is the daily, even moment to moment evolution of laws here in the United States, thanks to what I call the most critical components of our evolutions i.e. judge-made law coupled with

highly technological legal databases, and superbly qualified teachers, legal professionals and technicians. Yes, I can speak volumes on the bias and injustices that flaw our system but that is nowhere close to the colossal, deep-seated, irresolvable problems I have seen elsewhere.

In talking with a visiting Chief Justice of a foreign country, I noted how vehemently he held to his bench-system of decision-making as opposed to our jury system. Legal precedents, another saving grace of our system, keep our legal evolution running at pace with the ever-changing social needs of the day. And yet, all of this is comfortably grounded in hallowed legal tradition.

This line of thought is evaded by both sides; I mean the great divide that gulfs us apart from them. The reach of our legal research into their systems is as limited as theirs to benefit from ours. For them, it is the 'denial' policy of their sovereignty to self-examine or allow other scholars to critically evaluate their systems. How European nations came to sacrifice part of sovereignty for the sake of international or regional collaboration could be apparently ascribed to incomparable horrors of conflicts that humbled their sovereignty time and time again, a not-so-comforting thought for the rest of the world if their legal systems are to resurrect from the horrors of their own injustice, repression and rule of corruption by the powerful for the powerless. Now, please do not take that as a sweeping condemnation of all, but in the same spirit as we did for our system that slowly but surely bestowed unparalleled legal enlightenment we are now proud of. I urge Dickinson Law School to take the initiative to conduct research in improving legal systems of countries where LLM scholars come from or go to. It is the need of the times. Who else will do it?

-- Dr. Fazal Ahmed, LLM Candidate 2010



**Fazal Ahmed, PhD (Wharton),
LLB, MA Eco, MA Criminology
(UPenn)**

Some Tips on Getting a Job in the International Law Field

- **Write a great cover letter.** I was a bit confused, as I heard that since no one reads cover letters, they should be short and to the point. I asked one of the panelists, Eduardo Ramos of Holland and Knight’s Miami office, about this after the lecture. Hiring managers read cover letters when it is apparent that the candidate took time to research the company or firm and state why the candidate is a good fit for the firm. Hiring managers can determine very quickly if a candidate took the time to research the firm and think about their application decision, or if the candidate simply took the time to change the address and name at the top.
- **Think outside the box.** Foreign law firms have different hiring criteria and hiring times than do American firms, so make sure to research those before you start applying to foreign firms. Also, be open to doing something you think you may not be able to do at first. Clerkships for International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes, the International Criminal Court, the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia, the International Chamber of Commerce, and other agencies are all unpaid. However, if you know you want to practice in a certain area, one of these clerkships might be worth the extra debt because of the opportunities that come afterwards.
- **Try to learn another language.** While this is not mandatory because English is still an international language, it can only help. Instead of Spanish, look into languages of emerging markets such as Portuguese (Brazil), French (Francophone Africa, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia), Arabic (the Middle East), and Hindi (India). More than once I heard of a firm hiring someone simply because the firm wanted to expand their practice into an emerging market and the candidate knew the language. Even if you know just a little, the effort goes a long way.
- **Try to show how you can adapt to other cultures.** If you studied abroad in college or law school, make sure that is on your resume. While some career services offices may tell you to take it off, work and study abroad signals to a hiring manager or partner your interest in an international career. Also, the fact that you experienced something you are not used to and lived among a different culture goes to your adaptability.
- **If you can, get an international LLM.** Foreign LLM programs in International Law also signal how committed you are to international law.

-- Sarah Stec, 3L

Opportunities in International Law

The **International Law Students Association** invites Chapter members to submit papers for the **ILSA Spring Conference Writing Competition**. The competition topic is *“How international law has evolved over the years from governing relations among states to obligating and protecting individuals in accord with international norms.”* Completed papers are due by **February 15, 2010**. For more information, visit <http://www.ilsa.org/conference/spring/competition.pdf>.

The **Human Rights Program at UVA** is hosting a weekend workshop on **March 20-21st** that will be focus on international humanitarian law. It is open to all law students in the region, and will be free of charge for all participants. For more information, visit http://www.law.virginia.edu/html/academics/humanrights/hr_program.htm

**Opportunities in International Law
(Continued)**

American Branch of the International Law Association's International Environmental Committee Book Project

The **American Branch of the International Law Association's International Environmental Committee** is producing an edited **book on climate change geoengineering law, policy and ethics** for Cambridge University Press. The ABILA IEL Committee is seeking a number of law students to assist in the production of the book. Anyone interested in working on the project, or receiving additional information, should contact Dr. Wil Burns, Co-Chair of the ABILA IEL Committee: wburns@scu.edu or 650.281.9126.



**2010 Spring Calendar and
Upcoming Events**

- 1/27 International Legal Research Workshop with Westlaw – **CARLISLE**, Room 116. Lunch will be served. Please RSVP to shw129@psu.edu.
- 1/29 International Legal Research Workshop with Westlaw – **UP 116**, from 1-2. Lunch will be served. Please RSVP to shw129@psu.edu
- 2/4 General Meeting and Lunch and Learn
- 2/15 “Beyond Rhetoric: The State of Iran – Its Policies, Politics, and Global Impact” – Iran Roundtable with the School of International Affairs Student Government
5 p.m. Reception, 6 p.m. Roundtable
Lewis Katz Building Auditorium, UP
(Simulcast to Carlisle)
- TBD International Law and Human Rights Law Day – Career Panel with the Human Rights Law Society.

Contact R. Michelle Boldon at rmb317@psu.edu if you are interested in assisting with any of the Society’s events.