The International Law Society seeks to inform the student body of contemporary issues and career opportunities in international law, engage its members to pursue their relevant interests, and to develop and support programming responsive to these goals. As students, it is particularly important to learn about the impact of public and private international law upon our lives. Issues such as the development of the rule of law in post-conflict states, the prosecution of alleged war criminals, and immigration are engaging debates worldwide. As law students, we are challenged to identify and understand the legal aspect of international news headlines, and for many of us, these developments are a means to find inspiration for future careers. The International Law Society hopes to build on the strong foundation of last year’s achievements while looking forward to new programs and opportunities for our members and the legal community. The executive board and I look forward to your participation and active engagement this school year.

- Jonathan Brandon ’12, ILS President

INTERNATIONAL LAW FACULTY SPOTLIGHT

Professor Thomas Carbonneau holds the Orlando Distinguished Professorship at Penn State Law. Professor Carbonneau has been involved in teaching law for 30 years. He is a valued professor and mentor to many law students. Professor Carbonneau’s interest in global law and transborder litigation led him to work on international commercial arbitration, first, in the form of a doctoral thesis at Columbia. He has since authored several pioneering books on domestic and international arbitration. Professor Carbonneau has taught arbitration at McGill, Queen Mary in London, Hamline’s Dispute Resolution Institute, Fordham, Tulane, Denver, and the University of California at Davis. He is the author of a casebook, teachers manual, nutshell, and a treatise on arbitration. He also has written more than 80 law review articles on various legal topics. He has been associated with La Revue de l’ Arbitrage and, for a decade, was the Editor-in-Chief of the World Arbitration and Mediation Report. Professor Carbonneau is a faculty adviser to the Yearbook on Arbitration and Mediation and the Vis Moot Court team. He is also currently pursuing a Fulbright grant at McGill law faculty in Montreal and is engaged in writing a book tentatively entitled Freedom and Governance in the U.S. Law of Arbitration.

For more information on the Montreal Study Program in Arbitration: http://law.psu.edu/academics/specialized_fields_of_study/international_and_transnational_law/education_abroad/montreal_program
Looking for a little diversity in law school? You may want to think about taking a class or two with the School of International Affairs (SIA) or even pursuing joint Juris Doctor (J.D.)/Masters of International Affairs (M.I.A.) degrees. Both the professors and the students come from all over the world and with varying backgrounds. As a joint degree student, I have been able to learn about a variety of viewpoints that are well grounded in different societies and/or cultures that I have not considered before. The SIA courses center around issues relevant to working, participating, and thinking in an international context. Moving forward with our careers and education in law, I think it is important for us to have a broad international perspective in order to connect with diverse clients and multi-faceted cases. Honestly, where else in law school will you be obliged to whisper what "flatulence" means to a Chinese student while sitting next to a Turkish economist? You know the answer as well as I do, but the important point is that you take the opportunity to grow your cultural intelligence right here at DSL.

—Lisa Pex Shevlin, JD/MIA Candidate 2011

In preparation for a Spring 2011 course, Professor Stephen Ross has been working with Professor Pierre de Vos, a leading South African constitutional scholar, focusing on the different approaches the United States and South Africa take on issues including federalism, hate speech, equal protection, property rights, and constitutional values in private litigation.

In addition, Professors Ross and Pierre de Vos will study the history of the treatment of French Canadians under Canadian Constitutional Law and African Americans under U.S. Constitutional Law to determine whether judicial protection is really the best way to ensure equality for minorities.

Another distinct project, hopefully for a European publication, is to compare U.S. and European competition law as applied to essential facilities that are jointly owned by competitors. There is a substantial amount of law and academic discussion about problems where a single firm develops an asset that others need to compete; less attention is paid to situations where rivals join together. Professor Ross argues that this situation is worse, because in addition to monopoly prices, the essential facility is distorted to protect the parochial interests of the members.

Finally, Professor Ross will co-teach an MBA class in Sports Business for the Cass Business School, City University of London, via AV.

Professor Catherine Rogers together with fellow reporters Professor George Bermann of Columbia Law School, Professor Jack Coe Jr. of Pepperdine University School of Law, and Professor Christopher Drahozal of the University of Kansas School of Law presented for approval the first Tentative Draft of the Restatement of the U.S. Law of International Commercial Arbitration at the 2010 American Law Institute (ALI) Annual Meeting. The draft was approved and will be submitted to the ALI Council for approval in fall 2010.

The Restatement project, which got underway in 2007, includes the monumental task of bringing clarity and consistency to the field of international arbitration law. Last year, the four professors published an article previewing the project in the Penn State Law Review titled "Restating the U.S. Law of International Commercial Arbitration." Upon its completion, the Restatement will cover international conventions, federal and state court decisions, and national and international conflict of laws principles.
Don Shemanski and Dickinson alum John Brew participated on the panel of the 2010 career symposium hosted by ILS and the Human Rights Law Society. Brew and Shemanski both shared valuable insight with regards to the practice of international law. ILS is fortunate to have an opportunity to gain a more intimate portrait of their respective careers:

Describe your career path and current position:

Brew: My career path has been a bit random, but with certain logic to it – kind of like Darwin’s theory of evolution. During law school I worked at the Pennsylvania Attorney General’s Office, Criminal Appeals Division. I did a fair amount of work on seizure of property and did my law review article on the topic. After law school I clerked for Judge McEwen in the Pennsylvania Superior Court. Afterwards, I was fortunate to find a position with a New York based customs and international trade boutique law firm. I soon learned that international trade work had evolved from a New York based tax type practice to more a Washington, DC based federal regulatory practice. Breaking out the want ads, I was able to find a job with a mid-sized (70 lawyer) firm in DC that specialized in international trade law and had just hired the Commissioner of Customs (they needed someone to do the grunt work). This was a great experience working with fun and talented people. But, the firm was more a US based practice, and to take my practice to the next level I felt it was necessary to join a more global or international firm. I am currently a partner in the International Trade and Arbitration Group at Crowell & Moring. Crowell has over 500 lawyers and is based in DC with offices and affiliates around the world.

In 1985 I joined the U.S. Foreign Service, and spent 23 years serving as a U.S. diplomat in Washington and in a number of countries, including Germany, Austria, Italy, Bosnia, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Cyprus. My diplomatic assignments have included serving as coordinator for State Department refugee assistance programs for the former Yugoslavia, delegate to the U.S. Delegation to the Vienna CSCE Follow-up Meeting, Deputy Special Envoy to the Afghan Mujahedeen and Alternate U.S. Delegate to the foundation “Remembrance, Responsibility and the Future,” which administered payments to former World War II-era forced and slave laborers of the Nazi regime. I retired from the Foreign Service in 2008 and joined the faculty in Penn State’s college of Information Sciences and Technology as a Professor of Practice. I teach undergraduate courses focusing on the threat of terrorism and crime as well on the legal and regulatory environment of information science, privacy and information security.

What skills or competencies do you consider most important for an international lawyer?

Brew: Generally, the basic skills and competencies for an international lawyer are no different than those of lawyers in other fields: strong writing, communication and analytical skills, attention to detail and thick skin (for calming burdened clients and handling time pressures and inane decisions). Another key is listening and being able to empathize with decision makers, adversaries, clients or potential clients. To persuade you must understand the positions of all interested parties and be able to adjust and adapt your position accordingly.

Shemanski: As with most legal positions, effective speaking and drafting skills are crucial. Familiarity with non-U.S. legal structures and systems is a big plus. Finally, competency in foreign language and experience with foreign culture/societies is very useful.

Selected questions from the interviews with Mr. Brew and Mr. Shemanski are continued on the next page. You can find the full interviews, on our website: http://law.psu.edu/current_students/student organizations/international_law_society
What complimentary skills can be helpful to an international law career?

Brew: Experience counts, so it is good if you can intern, take classes, write law review articles, or join groups like the International Law Society. This will help build the resume, help in interviews and provide a sound knowledge base for your international law area of choice. If you know what area of international law you wish to focus on, then you can target appropriate complimentary skills – e.g., economics, accounting, administrative law for trade, business related courses for corporate, and litigation courses for arbitration. Being fluent in a language is also very helpful and may be required in some areas such as international arbitration work. Further, many types of international work are regional in nature (e.g., representing clients in the Latin or South America Region), and being completely fluent in the main dialect of the region is necessary. Note that being able to speak a little Spanish is really not that helpful – you need to be completely fluent and able to conduct business and read legal documents in the language for your language skills to be a big plus.

Most law school students and graduates with an interest in international law focus on private law firms and governmental service, are other avenues where a law degree with an international focus can be applied?

Brew: If you are seeking a career in international law, there are a number of alternatives to law firms and the government. Many non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) and trade associations focus on international trade, development, economic and environmental issues. Also there are many consulting firms and big accounting firms that have large international practices. Clerkships at the US Court on International Trade, or working for a global business (whether in the legal department or not) offer other options for those seeking international law careers.

Shemanski: Many positions in international organizations are staffed by lawyers. The United Nations, for example, has a large international staff with quite a few positions that have either a direct or tangential connection to law. As the pace of globalization increases, so will the number of large, multinational corporations, most of whom will require lawyers who can think globally and operate in a cross-cultural, international environment.

What advice would you give to future international lawyers who are facing a tough job market?

Brew: Don’t give up. When I started practicing in this area, US GDP related to global trade was about 5 percent, and now it is more than 30 percent. International law has grown from a niche practice to a diverse conglomeration of unique practices. The question used to be -- do you do international work. Now the question is -- what type of international work do you do. It is hard to find an area of the law that does not somehow touch or overlap with international issues. So, just because you do not have a job that has “international” in the title, or just because you work at a smaller firm, does not mean you cannot gain international experience, or experience that is helpful to an international law career. General corporate experience can be parlayed into international corporate work, and litigation experience can be parlayed into international arbitration work. If you get a job offer that is not purely international in focus, you need to think about how you can maximize that experience to obtain a more internationally focused position five years down the road (of course you do not want to tell potential employers that you want this job so you can leave to do international work).

Shemanski: My best advice would be to try to carve out a niche, such as a particular area of expertise -- including foreign language or area expertise, that will distinguish you from other young lawyers competing for scarce jobs. As someone who has at times sifted through stacks of resumes in making hiring decisions, I can assure you that the applicant has done something different or who has interesting, atypical skills will immediately attract positive attention.
DICKINSON SCHOOL OF LAW ILS 2009-2010 RECEIVED NATIONAL RECOGNITION:

The International Law Students Association (ILSA) honored the International Law Society at Penn State Law with its top “Best All-Around Chapter” award from among 200 student chapters worldwide. Citing numerous events that the International Law Society (ILS) held this year, ILSA Programs Coordinator Jill Schmeider Hereau said, “The ILSA Student Officers selected Penn State because the students enthusiastically promoted the study and understanding of international law throughout the Penn State student body and local legal community.”

Under the leadership of Michelle Boldon ’10, the organization held a wide array of programs designed to meet the interests of a broad spectrum of students interested in pursuing international law. “We started out strong and formed a number of key partnerships. Working with the School of International Affairs and the Human Rights Law Society, for example, allowed us to keep the momentum going throughout the year,” Boldon said.

“We also worked closely with Penn State international law faculty Professors Louis Del Duca and Catherine Rogers for two of our events, which was particularly important.”

Boldon stressed that because students have a variety of interests, the organization felt it was important to target its activities to attract these various segments. “We organized scholarly events such as ‘Beyond Rhetoric: The State of Iran—It’s Policies, Politics and Global Impact’ as well as a networking event which allowed students to get to know our amazing faculty better. Our panel on careers in international law went extremely well,” Boldon said.

The complete article highlighting this award can be found at: http://www.dsl.psu.edu/news/ils
To read more about the International Law Students Association, visit their website at: http://www.ilsa.org/

ILS PROJECTS IN THE WORKS…

Lunch and Learn Lecture Series
International Partnership working group
Networking Events!!

ILS Reporter
Newsletter

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A special thank you to Michelle Boldon ’10 who started the International Law Society at DSL in 2009. Boldon also coordinated, organized, and facilitated the production of this newsletter. We wish you the best Michelle, thank you for all your hard work!!!