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New General LL.M. program launched for international students

The University at Buffalo Law School has launched a new General Master of Laws (LL.M.) program. This post-professional degree program, open to students who have completed their first professional degrees in law, has initially admitted six international students who hold a first degree in law from a university in their own country.

The new general LL.M. is designed to offer a variety of options for graduate legal study and research. Although other programs will be phased in gradually, the Law School's new LL.M. provides lawyers from other countries an overview of the American legal system, as well as an opportunity to specialize in a specific subject area, such as finance transactions, intellectual property, family law, labor law, legal history, corporations, tax, or law and society.

Students enrolled in the program must complete at least 24 credit hours of coursework and will have the opportunity to choose among 50 courses and 40 seminars, allowing them to tailor their LL.M. degree to meet their individual career objectives.

All students will participate in the yearlong LL.M. Colloquium designed to provide students trained in other legal systems with an overview of the American legal system and institutions of law and government; the analysis and interpretation of legal materials as commonly practiced in classroom settings; legal research methods and resources; skills and conventions involved in writing legal scholarship; preparation for satisfying the LL.M. writing requirement; and

exposure to American legal practice, including visits to private law firms, public-interest and government law practices, federal and state courts, and meetings with federal officials.

Prior to their enrollment, international LL.M. students have the option of participating in English for Law Study Program (ELSP) offered by UB's English Language Institute in cooperation with the Law School. This unique summer program prepares international LL.M. students for the linguistic, academic and social challenges for study in U.S. law schools.

Now up and running, the program has attracted students from such locales as Turkey, Korea, Colombia and Austria. "I am delighted to have such a diverse and accomplished group of students entering our inaugural class," says Johanna Oreskovic, director of post-professional programs for the Law School. "We look forward to having an excellent year."

UB Law Forum spoke with three of the international students in the LL.M. program to hear their perspectives on how a Buffalo legal education works for them.

Adriana Brigatti is from Colombia, but has lived in the United States for 10 years. She holds a master of public health degree from Yale University, as well as a J.D. earned in her home country. Her main interest is in health care law; she has worked at Rochester's Strong Memorial Hospital on an institutional review board, ensuring that human subjects are treated ethically dur-

ing research studies.

"I wanted to get a better idea of the American legal system and delve deeper into what I have learned here," Brigatti says. "Students who

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come here have a great opportunity, because the Law School will tailor the program to your area of interest. UB has a strong health law curriculum. It is something that not every student has the opportunity to do in other countries."

As the mother of a 3-year-old, and a commuter from Rochester, she also appreciates the school's flexibility. "It is possible to schedule subjects in a way that you can be a mom, you can be a commuter, you can be somebody with other activities and still take these classes," Brigatti says.

Also coming from Rochester is Gunce Okat, whose husband is an MBA student at the University of

L.L.M PROGRAM
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS
AT A UNIQUE PLACE

AT BUFFALO LAW SCHOOL
State University of New York



Rochester. Okat holds a law degree from Ankara University in Turkey. Her area of specialty is finance law. She is on a leave of absence from her work as a legal adviser to one of the biggest private banks in Turkey, Garanti Bank in Istanbul.

"I am familiar with banking law and commercial paper," Okat says. "Finance law is a little bit different. I want to ac-

quire an in-depth knowledge of finance law, and there are very good classes at Buffalo. I think it will be a good opportunity for me."

Lukas Stuhlpfarrer, an Austrian who earned his law degree in the United Kingdom, also has an MBA from the University of Chicago. He has practiced law, has been managing director of a real estate law firm and has worked as a consultant in real estate.

"My prime interest in Buffalo is in focusing on real estate finance and public real estate securities, dealing with publicly traded securities like real estate investment trusts," he says. "What I found appealing about Buffalo is that I can customize my program. It is not a full-fledged curriculum that is set out for you. That is really appealing for professionals who have a clear set of interests.

"My law firm has been working with international accounting firms as legal counsel, doing securities law and taxation. For example, we have worked with corporate leasing contracts with Austrian, American, and Japanese companies. You need to know corporate, real estate and tax law in each country and be knowledgeable about American law.

"I was looking at other universities, but I found Buffalo the most attractive. It is going to be an interesting first year as the inaugural class – a new experience for everybody involved here."



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