New Leader for the New York City Program; Library Director Takes Interim University Role

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New leader for the New York City Program

When the UB New York City Program on Finance and Law, a signature program of the Schools of Law and Management, convenes this fall, it will have both a new director and a glorious new space for learning.

David A. Westbrook, Louis A. Del Cotto, Professor of Law, has assumed leadership of the long-running New York City Program, in which talented UB students spend a semester in Manhattan learning from top-level lawyers and financiers in the nation’s financial capital. This year’s cohort will gather in a well-appointed space in an Eighth Avenue building, splitting time there with art students from SUNY’s Stony Brook University.

“This is a great opportunity,” says Westbrook, a veteran instructor in the program. “It’s a wonderful program, and it really does help students become far more sophisticated practitioners.”

He’ll continue to teach in the program as well – a role he says mainly consists of helping students connect the dots as they wrestle with the guest lecturers’ ideas. “Students are used to things that are more packaged,” he says. “Presentations in New York will not be doctrinally pure – there are no courses on contracts, no subject matter boxes to be checked off. Instead, we start from actual practices, and try to understand the law and economics at issue.

“We’re trying to take these different practices and different perspectives and different contributions and tell a story, so that the pieces cohere into a narrative. So we will start with business associations and basic ideas in finance, move to financing and financial instruments, markets, and institutions, think about leverage and regulation and distressed situations, which will lead us to compliance and a concern for rule-making. I believe this narrative arc will help the students make sense of the different things to which they will be exposed.”

The core of the program is the practitioners, most of them UB alumni, who share their knowledge and their experiences. “People really want to help,” Westbrook says. “They get to a certain stage in their life and realize they have learned something, and they want to give back. There’s an aspect of sharing to the program that I really like and try to foster.”

Also this year, students will have the opportunity to work two days a week in externship placements, doing legal and financial work at banks, financial services firms, courts and regulators – another contribution by interested alumni, and one that helps the law students meet new ABA standards for experiential learning in law school.

The program also has a new Facebook page where students can share photos and stories from their experience. To find it, search “University at Buffalo – NYC Program on Finance & Law.”

Library Director takes interim University role

A familiar face will be missing from the Charles B. Sears Law Library for a while, as library Director Beth Adelman takes on a major University administration role.

Adelman, the School of Law’s vice dean for legal information services, has temporarily relocated to Capen Hall to serve as UB’s interim vice provost for University Libraries. In the role, she will oversee the management team that runs SUNY’s largest and most comprehensive library system – one that includes more than 3.8 million print volumes, as well as digital collections, multimedia resources and substantial special collections.

Her appointment, announced by UB Provost Charles F. Zukoski, will last for approximately one year while a nationwide search is conducted for the permanent vice provost. During this time, UB School of Law librarian Theodora Belniak will be oversee the Law Library.

The interim posting, Adelman says, “will give me a broader perspective on what’s going on in the University, particularly the financial outlook.” She notes that she’s already familiar with many of the librarians on the management team, because – like only a handful of U.S. law schools – the Law Library is a fully integrated part of the University Libraries system.

In the position, Adelman will help steward the funds allocated for the library system, make acquisition decisions and help set library policy.

Adelman has directed the Law Library since 2011 and was previously associate director and head of collection management. An elected member of the American Association of Law Libraries Executive Board, she previously served as chair of the Society of American Law Library Directors. She has co-authored four books and written numerous articles and electronic legal research tutorials, called “CALI Lessons.”

Adelman has both J.D. and Master of Library Science degrees, and has been honored with the SUNY Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Librarianship.