



The Pre-Law e-Newsletter from Pre-Professional Programs & Advising

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Friday, December 4, 2015

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1. MESSAGE FROM ANA L. DROSCOSKI, ESQ.

This is the final Pre-Law e-Newsletter of the Fall 2015 semester. Best of luck wrapping up Fall 2015 semester and to those taking the December LSAT.

Happy Holidays!!!

2. LEGAL EDUCATION & THE LEGAL INDUSTRY IN THE MEDIA

McMurtrie, Beth. "Universities Set Up Legal Clinics to Help Student Innovators."

The Chronicle of Higher Education. Web. 8 Nov. 2015. <http://chronicle.com/article/Universities-Set-Up-Legal/234094>. -- "Law students from BU will guide MIT student entrepreneurs as they navigate the legal complexities of setting up a business or commercializing their ideas."

Weiss, Debra Cassens. **"Are law students driven by money? It's not most important, survey finds."** *ABA Journal.* Web. 9 Nov. 2015.

<http://www.abajournal.com/news/article/are-law-students-driven-by-money-its-becoming-more-important-but-not-most-i/>. -- "Northeastern University School of Law grads cited three top reasons they decided to go to law school: having a satisfying career, helping individuals and improving society."

Gershman, Jacob. **"Could Computers Have First Amendment Rights?"** *The Wall Street Journal: Law Blog.* Web. 18 Nov. 2015.

<http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2015/11/18/could-computers-have-first-amendment-rights/?mod=newsreel>. -- "Could the First Amendment cover artificial intelligence speech?...Two law professors who've written [a new paper exploring the subject](#) urge readers to take the question, in their word, more 'Siri-ously.'"

Randazzo, Sara. “**Bar Exam Passage Rates Nationwide Keep Dropping**” *The Wall Street Journal: Law Blog*. Web. 24 Nov. 2015. <http://blogs.wsj.com/law/2015/11/24/bar-passage-rates-keep-dropping-across-the-country/>.

3. OPPORTUNITY: INTERNSHIPS AT THE INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE (IRC) IN BALTIMORE

The International Rescue Committee of Baltimore is a non-profit, non-sectarian refugee resettlement agency dedicated to working together with legally admitted refugees to assist them in rebuilding lives and reuniting families in the greater Baltimore area. A committed staff of professionals and volunteers provide essential resettlement services to refugee families including basic necessities, education, employment, social services and advocacy. Steps to becoming an IRC Intern: *This is an unpaid internship.*

1. Get to know the IRC in Baltimore and learn more about how you can be involved by attending a monthly information session. The information session is held on the last Monday of every month from 5:00-7:00pm at the IRC in Baltimore office located at 3516 Eastern Ave., Baltimore, MD 21224. To RSVP for the information session, email us at Volunteerbaltimore@rescue.org.
2. When you are ready to join the IRC as an intern, apply using our online system. To see a list of current internship openings, please visit the [IRC Careers page](#) select Search Jobs and Apply and select "US- MD-Baltimore" in the location menu.
3. Complete an interview with the Volunteer Coordinator and additional staff as required to determine whether there is an appropriate internship position available for you.
4. Once you complete an interview and accept an offer, the IRC will conduct a background check. Your internship placement will only be confirmed after your background check is cleared.
5. When your placement is confirmed, the Volunteer Coordinator will work with you and the appropriate staff person to schedule your first day. All newly accepted interns are required to attend an orientation session to learn about office policies, confidentiality, and communication guidelines, and to make all efforts to participate in ongoing training opportunities. The application process typically takes at least two weeks to complete (including the background check).

For more information, please visit: <http://www.rescue.org/us-program/us-baltimore-md>.

4. INTERVIEW: LAURA KOKOTAILO (JHU '15), TEACHING FELLOW, KING'S ACADEMY (MADABA, JORDAN)

Laura Kokotailo is currently a Teaching Fellow at King's Academy, an independent, co-educational, private day and boarding school, in Madaba, Jordan. She teaches two sections of 9th grade history. Laura previously lived in Jordan the Fall of her junior year, when she studied abroad in Amman through CIEE and focused on Arabic, Arab Diplomacy and Jordanian History and Politics.

Laura graduated Phi Beta Kappa and with General University Honors from Johns Hopkins University (JHU) in May 2015. In addition to her semester study abroad in Jordan, Laura also attended the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) the summer following her junior year, where she completed Intensive Arabic and Middle East Politics coursework. While at JHU, Laura was a Tutor and eventually an Organizer for the Tutorial Project. She was also a Pre-Orientation Leader for JHU Experiential Education the Fall of her sophomore year.

The Fall of her senior year, Laura was a U.S. Protection Intern for the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees in Washington, D.C. The summer immediately prior, she was a Journalism and Communications Intern with the American Task Force of Palestine (ATFP) in DC. While studying aboard the Fall of her junior year, Laura was a Project Development Intern for The Visions Center for Strategic Development Studies in Amman, Jordan. The preceding summer, she was an Immigration Services Intern at the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Baltimore.

Laura Kokotailo speaks Advanced Modern Standard Arabic, Intermediate Colloquial Levantine Arabic, and Beginner Spanish. Her interests include hiking and outdoor activities, Islamic Art, world religions and political theory.

Questions:

Describe a day in the life of a Teaching Fellow at King's Academy in Madaba, Jordan.

A day in the life of an American, 22-year old high school History teacher in Jordan is frequently unpredictable, often confusing, but always amusing. I teach two sections of 9th grade world history to classes made up mostly of Jordanians, with one or two Iraqis, Saudis or Palestinians thrown in. I also coach swimming and live in an upperclassmen girls' dorm, so I'm very involved in the lives of many of the students on my campus. The actual teaching part itself is much more demanding and involved than I expected. I can't just prepare lectures on historical topics because the students won't listen or they won't learn. I've realized I can't just *tell* students things, but I rather have to guide them to their own conclusions and allow them to discover things themselves. All of these theoretical concepts make planning lessons (which takes up much of my time) extremely challenging. I also work closely with students on other issues ranging from plagiarism and cheating to emotional health.

The best part about all of this, which is also the reason why I'm even here, is that I get to live and work in Jordan. Life here for me is a constant challenge, and every day presents a new, strange set of issues, problems and opportunities. I can never let my guard down fully here, but I get to be swept up in all sorts of crazy things, like meals at the royal palaces, endless amusing border crossing anecdotes (I was dropped off by a bus in the middle of the desert once) and, of course, the daily task of attempting to charm people with my mediocre Arabic.

What made you choose this particular position and has it met your expectations?

My main goal was to live abroad after graduation, preferably in the Middle East. Teaching sort of just happened for me; it was initially just a way to achieve that goal while getting paid and working for a reputable organization. I always knew that I wanted to take some time off before going to law school. I needed a break from studying and I wanted to take advantage of my youth and (relatively) few responsibilities to live abroad and have adventures. I also wanted to further demonstrate my interest in the Middle East and reinforce the commitment that I have made to this region, both to myself and on my resume.

Living abroad is the best decision I've ever made. Even when it frustrates me that I can't get quinoa to save my life or that my phone company decides to charge me \$1700 for two days of data roaming, even when the entire country shuts down every time it rains because the drainage is so terrible that no one can drive or when my students copy and paste entire paragraphs of their essays from the internet because they don't understand the concept of plagiarism, I still feel incredibly lucky to be here. I get to have the opportunity every day to engage with people from a corner of the world that is vastly misunderstood. I can get two falafel sandwiches for 75 cents. Even teaching, which I was sort of thrown into, has become a real passion. Teaching, just like Jordan itself, is a new challenge every day and is both frustrating and incredibly rewarding. I have never felt like I have earned my weekends as much as I do here, but when I help a student finally perfect a thesis statement or moderate a heated discussion about the role of religion in politics, I feel like I've succeeded in some small way. I am lucky to work with amazing kids who have fascinating stories and enviable ambition, and I have grown to absolutely love seeing them every day.

Did you pursue anything else during your interim years before beginning law school? How did you go about researching each of these opportunities?

Nope, this has been it!

What do you think you have gained from the experiences and from taking time off before law school? Given the choice, would you do it again?

Taking time off to work between college and law school has allowed me to pursue a line of work that I never imagined myself getting involved in. However, my experience as a teacher and as an expat have contributed greatly to my growth as a person and my potential contribution to law school (hopefully!). I strongly believe that teaching hones many skills necessary for successful attorneys. Every day in the classroom I have to craft arguments, convince a bunch of rowdy fourteen-year-olds that not only am I worth listening to, and guide them to their own conclusions through questions and various classroom structures. I'm constantly having to think on my feet, rephrase my thoughts, and be as clear and concise as possible. It really is a new challenge every day, but it is also extremely exciting. In terms of living in Jordan, I would highly recommend anyone considering taking time off to look into living abroad. The lessons that you learn, the people that you meet, and the places that you go have a massive impact on you as a person. You will emerge more aware, more well-rounded, and more self-sufficient than you ever thought possible. I would absolutely repeat this experience.

What types of undergraduate opportunities did you pursue that led to your decision to apply to law school? Were there any other experiences that you felt were particularly helpful in strengthening your application to law school?

My decision to go to law school was a direct result of my college internship experience. In fact, before college I had never even considered law school. I probably thought it was not for me because I was unclear about the vast variety of things you can do with a law degree, and, conversely, the wide array of fields that need people with law degrees. My work at the International Rescue Committee and at the UN High Commissioner for Refugees exposed me to the vast, disparate challenges that refugees and displaced people around the world face, especially in terms of immigration law and policy, and the opportunities that perspicacious attorneys have to assist these individuals on many levels. It wasn't until I experienced firsthand the work that attorneys do in organizations such as these that I realized that my interest in international issues and refugee rights could actually translate into a meaningful career that would take advantage of skills that I already have. It wasn't long before I was buying LSAT books and researching schools. So for me, it was a very specific type of law that attracted me to applying to law school in general, but the more I learned about it and the more current law school students I talked to, I realized that this was definitely the right path for me.

Contact Information

If you would like to learn more about being a Teaching Fellow at King's Academy in Madaba, Jordan, or have additional questions for Laura Kokotailo, you may reach her via email at laura.kokotailo@gmail.com.

5. UPCOMING PRE-LAW STUDENT MEETINGS & PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENTS

Upcoming LSAT Administration

Location: Visit <http://www.lsac.org/jd/lsat/testing-locations> for testing location information.

Date: December 5, 2015 / February 6, 2016

Time: Registration begins at 8:30 am for the December exam -- consult with LSAC for all controlling details.

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**STAFF IN THE OFFICE OF PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS AND ADVISING**

Ana L. Drososki, J.D., Associate Director, Pre-Law Advisor, Pre-Dental & Pre-Med Advisor

David Verrier, Ph.D., Director, Pre-Med Advisor

Ellen Snyderman, M.S., Assistant Director, Pre-Med Advisor

Katie Cruik, M.S., Assistant Director, Pre-Med, Pre-Nursing, & Pre-Health Advisor

The Administrative Coordinators are available to answer questions regarding your file:  
Carolyn Mae Krause, Administrative Coordinator, [ckrause@jhu.edu](mailto:ckrause@jhu.edu) 410-516-6744  
For students whose last name begins with A-L, contact Mrs. Krause.

LaTonia Sanders, Administrative Coordinator, [ladytee@jhu.edu](mailto:ladytee@jhu.edu) 410-516-4140  
For students whose last name begins with M-Z, contact Mrs. Sanders.

Angie Decker, Office Manager, [decker@jhu.edu](mailto:decker@jhu.edu)

Please visit our website <http://web.jhu.edu/prepro/> for additional information.