

# Equal Education for All: A Conversation About the Obligation to Provide Equalized Education to Foreign Law Students

Moderated by Lurene Contento

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## The ABA's Ethical Obligation to Educate All Law Students Equally

LL.M. students have a right to expect that their expensive degrees have value. However, the American Bar Association, charged with accreditation and oversight of American law schools, provides no standards or oversight of LL.M. programs. The ABA, as gatekeeper to the legal profession, has an ethical obligation to all law students. LL.M. students, like their J.D. peers, should meet some minimal standards of competence. This necessarily requires establishing experiential requirements, learning objectives, and learning outcomes for LL.M. programs.

*See Kathleen Darvil and Carrie W. Teitcher, Towards a More Ethical LL.M. Degree: Let's Give International Lawyers the Value They Deserve (forthcoming, Florida Journal of International Law).*

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Materials available on request.

## Integrating Academic Success Skills into Legal Writing and Analysis Courses for LL.M. Students

At UNH Law, we have a long-standing LL.M. and Master's program for international students, built mainly on the school's reputation for delivering expertise in Intellectual Property. Increasingly, however, resources have decreased for our LL.M. and Master's students, in part because of declining enrollments in the J.D. student program. As a result, I have had to be flexible in how to provide our international students with instruction, not only in legal writing and analysis, but in academic success skills that will help them navigate their law school studies successfully.

Kate Brem  
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Materials available on request.

## Integrating Foreign Candidates Produces Globally-Aware, Practice-Ready J.D. Graduates

At no cost to our schools, we can integrate foreign LL.M. candidates – many of whom have substantial practice experience – into the J.D. curriculum and, in so doing, enhance both the educational experience of the foreign LL.M. candidates and the practice-readiness of our J.D. graduates. U.S. legal practice is increasingly globalized. To compete, U.S. J.D. graduates require a thorough understanding of civil law systems, the frequent preference for international arbitration as opposed to litigation in U.S. courts, and the difficulties involved in cross-national transactions. Foreign LL.M. candidates can provide this understanding and, in so doing, acquire lasting relationships with future U.S. lawyers and, more immediately, relationships with current students to guide them through a new educational system that focuses on the Socratic method and the mentally and emotionally taxing experience of law school exams.

## **THE PANELISTS**

### **Lurene Contento, Moderator**

Co-Chair, LWI Global Legal Writing Skills Committee

Lurene Contento has been teaching legal skills courses for nearly twenty years. She bases her course around interactive teaching, experiential learning, and problem solving. She has taught legal skills abroad, including in China, Costa Rica, Czech Republic, and Italy and has presented widely to law faculties, both in the U.S. and abroad, on topics ranging from helping international students to avoid plagiarism to integrating foreign students into U.S. law communities. She is currently co-chair of LWT's Global Legal Writing Skills Committee and has held leadership roles with the Global Legal Skills Conference series since its inception in 2005. She was the keynote speaker at Australia's first legal skills symposium held at Melbourne Law School in 2015, and in 2018, she received the Global Legal Skills Award for her contributions in promoting and improving legal skills around the world.

### **Kate Brem**

Clinical Associate Professor, University of Houston Law Center

Katherine Brem is a Clinical Associate Professor of Lawyering Skills and Strategies at the University of Houston Law Center. She serves as academic advisor to foreign LL.M. candidates and works closely with those candidates to provide the necessary legal research, writing, and analysis skills and understanding of fundamental principles of U.S. law required to sit for the Texas bar exam. In addition, she teaches lawyering skills and upper-level litigation-based writing courses to J.D. students at the University of Houston Law Center. She has ten years teaching experience and, prior to joining the faculty at the University of Houston, she practiced as a litigation associate at Baker Botts LLP in Houston, Texas.

### **Jen Davis**

Director of Graduate Skills, University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law

Jennifer Davis is the Director of Graduate Skills at the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law. In that role she works closely with many of UNH Law's international students in the LL.M. and Master's programs, providing them with foundational skills in legal analysis and writing and an understanding of the American legal system. She also currently teaches Legal Writing & Analysis to J.D. students at UNH Law and teaches a course on LSAT preparation and law school academic success skills to UNH undergraduates. Davis taught J.D. legal writing at UNH Law for a number of years, most recently as the assistant director and came to UNH Law in 2004, after teaching legal writing for four years at Suffolk University School of Law.

### **Carrie Teitcher**

LL.M. Legal Writing Coordinator  
and Assistant Professor of Legal Writing, Brooklyn Law School

Carrie Teitcher is the LL.M. Legal Writing Coordinator and an Assistant Professor of Legal Writing at the Brooklyn Law School, New York. She joined the faculty at Brooklyn Law School in 1984 and teaches legal writing to J.D. and LL.M. students. She has written and lectured on the importance of using computer technology in both doctrinal and skills courses. As LL.M. Legal Writing Coordinator, she created two writing courses to meet the needs of international students and has conducted workshops to help the LL.M. students prepare for the bar exam. Carrie is also a member of the GLS-13 Conference Committee. She has presented at several Global Legal Skills Conferences (Chicago, 2015; Verona, 2016; Melbourne, 2018) and looks forward to the next GLS Conference in Phoenix this coming December.