



ONLINE LEARNING

FALL 2019

NEWSLETTER



TRAILBLAZERS

Fostering Agents of Change



Vermont Law School
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FROM THE DIRECTOR

Autumn is a season of change and this change is reflected in the work of our Online Learning Program. Over the past few months, we've been working hard to meet the needs of our dynamic students, communities and the world. As we cultivate the next generation of change makers, we are leading by example with our student services, faculty expertise, and program offerings.

I'm proud that we are changing the way students "do law school." The option for a third year away, made possible through Online Learning, allows residential law students a way to carve out unique educational and professional experiences, so that they are prepared for the changing professional market. This newsletter features two third-year law students who have designed opportunities to complete their final year of law school far beyond the small village of South Royalton, in the nation's seat of power. Faculty and staff here at Vermont Law School support this student-led architecture and innovation. In fact, this fall, we will be sending on-campus leaders to present at a Conference hosted by the Sturm College of Law-University of Denver, about how we create tailored educational experiences using Online Learning. I'm looking forward to joining Professors Joe Brennan, Jeannette Eicks, and Beth Locker, in Denver this September, as we share our vision for shaking up run-of-the-mill education.

We are also innovating the model for teaching law and policy by recruiting faculty keen to apply their expertise in a format unlike that found in the traditional classroom. Because of the flexibility afforded by our Online Program, our students benefit from practitioners, policy makers, and traditional professors—all with varying perspectives. We've broadened and deepened the faculty bench, and recruited ten new faculty members. More than half are residential faculty, which brings the unique culture of Vermont Law School online.

Finally, we are challenging the deficiencies in our justice system with our new restorative justice graduate degree, offered completely or partially online. This program is off to a strong start, serving as a valuable tool for students as they work to change the justice system.

Online Learning cannot help but be driven to challenge the status quo. In this season of change, we feature students, faculty and staff innovating to make the world a better place.

Sincerely,

Professor Sarah M. Reiter
Faculty Director of Online Learning

“I want to make an impact through my work in international ocean and climate governance efforts. I knew I needed to gain expertise both within and beyond the residential classroom. The ability to take courses online allows me to better accomplish my goal of solving the major challenges facing our global ocean because I am able to do coursework where the action takes place.”

~ Gabriela McMurtry JD'20



Gabriela McMurtry JD'20 spent her 2L summer at the Office of General Counsel for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration of the U.S. Department of Commerce. She is exploring a spring term externship with the U.S. Department of State, and has taken Professional Responsibility online. She will take Evidence online this spring.



SWAN SPOTLIGHTS

“Being able to complete my 3L year remotely through the online program and SIP program will allow me to make lasting connections in D.C.”

~ Megan Knight JD/MELP'20

Megan Knight JD/MELP'20 spent her 2L summer at the Department of the Interior, Office of the Solicitor, Division of Parks and Wildlife. In addition to a fall semester externship at Earthworks, Megan took the following courses online to extend her reach beyond South Royalton: Professional Responsibility, First Amendment, Environmental Dispute Resolution, and Bar Exam Skills and Tactics. The

flexibility of a VLS degree is paramount, and made possible through the Online Learning Program. “In my internship at the Department of the Interior I met several VLS alumni. Being able to complete my 3L year remotely through the online program and SIP program is allowing me to make lasting connections in D.C. which is where I hope to practice law after graduating.”





“...no other law school offered a degree which intersected policy, law and social justice.”

~ Ricardo Edwards JD'22/MARJ'19



Ricardo Edwards JD'22/MARJ'19 applied to the MARJ program because “no other law school offered a degree which intersected policy, law and social justice.” Rico believes that Restorative Justice should be a way of life and finds himself utilizing what he learns in day-to-day conversations, disputes and critical thinking. His love for the program is best captured in his own words, “I have never been around a group of faculty, staff and students wanting to change what criminal justice reform means.

I have been challenged to rethink punishment, rehabilitation, and healing for survivors/responsible parties. The program provides a new vision as to what people can do to transform the lives of everyone affected by harm.” Rico networks through the online learning platform, Moodle, with his classmates. Rico’s goal is to become a prosecutor and use restorative justice in his “philosophy of lessening the harm our system often causes to survivors/responsible parties.”



Delinda Passas MARJ'20

Delinda Passas MARJ'20 was enrolled in a masters program at a different university but found herself looking for a program that would incorporate the legal perspective with restorative justice. She discovered just that in VLS' MARJ Program when searching online and enrolled in the program. Based in Colorado, Delinda relies on the Online Learning Program to "learn from and with the amazing people at Vermont Law School." Delinda finds herself viewing interactions, at home and at work, through a restorative lens. She stated, "While in the Ethics in Restorative Justice class with Professor Clark, I experienced a shift in how I held a personal experience of harm by applying the principles she taught in class. That was unexpected and profound." Working in the judicial system, Delinda applies and shares all that she is learning in the program with her clients, and is in the process of trying to start a Restorative Justice program in her judicial district. Reaching beyond her community is also important to her: Delinda's ultimate goal is to develop alternative restorative programs for sexual assault on college campuses.

CENTER FOR JUSTICE REFORM A YEAR IN REVIEW

The inaugural year of the Center for Justice Reform at Vermont Law School is in the books!

In the Master of Arts in Restorative Justice (MARJ) program, the Center welcomed 12 students to campus and 14 to our online environment. Three students enrolled in the Professional Certificate program

and an additional three also enrolled as joint JD/MARJ students, with a number of MARJ graduates continuing now in the JD and AJD programs. The Center is exceedingly proud of the seven students who comprise the first graduating class of MARJs ~ Congratulations!

The year also brought experiential opportunities to our students. Several participated in externships, one with the Vermont Attorney General's Office and another with a Community Justice Center that led to continuing part time work in restorative justice. Other opportunities included training for expungement clinics and to participate in COSAs (Circles of Support and Accountability) to support individuals who are returning to a community after a period of incarceration.

LOOKING AHEAD

The Center is equally excited about the year that's just getting underway. With new MARJ, Professional Certificate, and joint JD/MARJ students getting oriented in person and online, there is a general buzz of excitement and enthusiasm. The "RJ Team" is striving to create collaborative and supportive communities for all our students and we are energized by the depth of interest our students bring in all facets of restorative work and approaches.

Upcoming events will include additional Expungement Clinic trainings, a Juvenile Justice Conference, Circle Training with Kay Pranis, and much more. The Center will continue hosting our drop in get-togethers every few weeks in the Rogers House conference room, and the RJ Team is looking to set up "virtual get-togethers" every few weeks as well. Stay tuned for more details.

The future of the Center looks bright as the RJ Team transitions slightly. Professor Robert Sand is now the founding director, and is already planning "big picture" projects. Professor Stephanie Clark has stepped in as the director, and Erin Webster-Chambers remains our amazing program coordinator. Please call, email, or stop by to see us anytime!



Director and Professor Stephanie Clark



FACULTY FEATURES

“Online learning is the planet friendly way to study environmental law from the comfort of your own home—saves gas, saves paper, reduces pollution.”

~ Professor Pat Parenteau



Patrick A. Parenteau is Professor of Law and Senior Counsel in the Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic (EN-RLC) at Vermont Law School. He previously served as Director of the Environmental Law Center at VLS from 1993-1999; and was the founding director of the ENRLC in 2004. Professor Parenteau has an extensive background in environmental and natural resources law. His previous positions include Vice President for Conservation with the National Wildlife Federation in Washington, DC (1976-1984); Regional Counsel to the New England Regional Office of the EPA in Boston (1984-1987); Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (1987-1989); and Senior Counsel with the Perkins Coie law firm in Portland, Oregon (1989-1993). Professor Parenteau has been involved in drafting, litigating, implementing, teaching, and writing about environmental law and policy for over three decades. His current focus is on confronting the profound challenges of climate change through his teaching, publishing, public speaking and litigation. He is a Fellow in the American College of Environmental Lawyers. In 2005 he received the National Wildlife Federation's Conservation Achievement Award in recognition of his contributions to wildlife conservation and environmental education. In 2016 he received the Kerry Rydberg Award for excellence in public interest environmental law. Professor Parenteau holds a BS from Regis University, a JD from Creighton University, and an LLM in Environmental Law from the George Washington U. He will be teaching Climate Change, Extinction and Adaptation. Professor Parenteau will also serve as a Senior Faculty Advisor to Early Career Faculty.

“As a sustainability-focused economist and an alumna of Vermont Law School, I am excited to promote not only the discipline’s tangibility in daily life but also the significance of economics in the facilitation and development of sustainable ecosystems.”

~ Professor Madhavi Venkatesan



Madhavi Venkatesan earned a PhD, MA, and BA in Economics from Vanderbilt University, a Masters in Sustainability and Environmental Management from Harvard University, and a Master of Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School. A recipient of a Fulbright Distinguished Lectureship (Philippines), she has contributed to numerous books and journal articles on the subject of sustainability and economics, including writing her own text books: *Economics Principles: A Primer*, *A Framework for Sustainable Practices*; *Foundations in Microeconomics, A Framework for Sustainable Practices*; and *Foundations in Macroeconomics, A Framework for Sustainable Practices*, as well as, her most recent title as of August 2019, *Sustainable Development Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth*. Her present academic interests include the integration of sustainability into the economics curriculum.

Prior to re-entering academics, Professor Venkatesan held senior level positions in investor relations for three Fortune 250 companies. In this capacity she was a key point of contact for investors and stakeholders and was instrumental in the development of socially responsible investing strategies and corporate social responsibility reporting. She started her financial services career after completing her post-doctoral fellowship at Washington University in St. Louis where she held a joint appointment in Economics and Afro-American Studies.

Professor Venkatesan is presently a full-time faculty member at Northeastern University in Boston and the executive director of Sustainable Practices, a 501(c)3 based on Cape Cod committed to environmental stewardship. The organization, as of 2019, initiated a grassroots effort across the 15 towns that comprise Cape Cod (Barnstable County), focused on the prohibition of town purchase of single-use plastic bottled beverages and the sale of beverages in single-use plastic containers referred to as the Municipal Plastic Bottle Ban.



Professor Esther Akwii

Professor Esther Akwii holds a Postgraduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the Law Development Centre, a Bachelor of Laws (Hons) degree from Makerere University and a Diploma in Law (First Class) from the Law Development Centre, all in Kampala, Uganda. Before joining the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems team, she worked at the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations' Agriculture and Consumer Protection Department in Rome, Italy. She also worked with smallholder farmers on land tenure, right to food, climate change, and natural resource governance. Professor Akwii will be teaching Law and Policy of Local Food Systems.



Professor Emily Spiegel

Before joining the Center for Agriculture and Food Systems, **Professor Emily Spiegel** was a consultant and law fellow at the Duke Environmental Law and Policy Clinic. She has been an International Agricultural Development Specialist with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Foreign Agricultural Service, and has interned in Rome, Italy at the legal offices of the Food and Agriculture Organization and the International Fund for Agricultural Development. Professor Spiegel received her JD from Duke and her BS in Foreign Service from Georgetown University. She also served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Jordan. She will be teaching Global Food Systems.





Professor Richard K. Sala

Professor Major Richard K. Sala, USMC (Ret.), retired from the U.S. Marine Corps on August 1, 2018 after 21 years of military service including service as an Infantry Marine, Infantry Officer, and Judge Advocate. As an Infantry Officer, Richard served as platoon commander, 3rd platoon, Company C, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion and as Company Executive Officer, Company C, 1st Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion. As a Judge Advocate, Richard served as a criminal prosecutor before managing a criminal prosecution office. He also served as general counsel to the Commanding Officer of Marine Rotational Force-Darwin, Australia and as Assistant Deputy Staff Judge Advocate to the Commanding General of the 1st Marine Division. He holds a BA in Political Science and International Affairs from the University of Colorado; a MELP and JD from Vermont

Law School; and a masters in Business Administration from the Simon Business School. His military decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal and the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal. He is the recipient of the Lieutenant Colonel Vic Taylor Award for infantry excellence and the Major General Edwin B. Wheeler Award for being the Distinguished Graduate of the Marine Corps' Infantry Officer's Course. He is also the recipient of Vermont Law School's Maximilian Kempner Award. Richard lives in New Hampshire's Upper Valley with his wife, Melanie; daughter, Lidia; and son, Taggart. He worked as Attorney to the Office of the Commissioner at the New Hampshire Department of Education before returning to VLS, where he now serves students in the Academic Success Program. He will be teaching Bar Exam Skills and Tactics.

Professor Alison Milbury Stone is an Assistant Attorney General with the Environmental Division of the Office of the Vermont Attorney General. She currently serves as legal counsel to the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets. In this capacity, she advocates for the Agency's interests in Public Utility Commission proceedings regarding proposed energy generation facilities, among other responsibilities ranging from oversight of farmland conservation easements to contracts to produce safety regulation. Previously, over the course of five years of private practice in Vermont, she represented independent power producers and utilities seeking permits for energy generation and transmission projects. Stone has a diverse international background spanning the private, public and non-profit sectors, including work with The Nature Conservancy and U.S. Department of State in Washington D.C., and at the law offices of White & Case in Stockholm, Sweden. She holds a JD from Vermont Law School, a MELP from the University of Cambridge, and a BA from Brown University. Stone currently serves as Vice Chair of Vermont's Judicial Nominating Board and an officer of the Women's Division of the Vermont Bar Association. She will be teaching Energy Law and Policy this semester.



Professor Alison Milbury Stone

STUDENT SERVICES



Melody DeFlorio has been serving as the Director of Financial Aid at Vermont Law School since 2015, and is excited to be taking on her additional role as Director of Online Enrollment Services. Prior to starting at VLS, Melody led the Online Enrollment Services Team at Norwich University for their degree completion programs as Associate Director of Online Enrollment Advising. Melody grew up in South Royalton, Vermont, and after graduating high school went on to pursue her bachelor's degree at Wheaton College in Norton, Mass. She received her master's of Business Administration with a concentration in Organizational Leadership at Norwich University, in Northfield, Vt. She is excited to bring her skills and passion for student services and advising to VLS's online student population.



Jesse Lawrence joins the Student Services Team as our new Online Enrollment Advisor. Jesse brings with him over 15 years of customer service experience, with a passion for student success and helping students meet their goals. He has experience as an online student and understands on a personal level the unique needs of our students. In his spare time Jesse serves as a mentor for his local church, offering peer support to children and teens in need.







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