

News Briefs

Introducing New Staff



Preston Nicholson took on the role of director of admissions in May 2015. Nicholson comes to Washburn Law from Drake University Law School, where he was associate director of admission and financial aid. Alumni can contact him

with prospective law school students or to volunteer at recruiting events.

preston.nicholson@washburn.edu

785.670.1706



Karli Davis stepped in as director of alumni relations in July 2015. A Washburn undergraduate alumna and one-time Washburn Law student, Davis went on to work in communications for more than a decade, last serving as UMKC Law's director

of communications. Graduates can look to her for information on alumni events and staying connected to the law school.

karli.davis@washburn.edu

785.670.2013



Rachel Schafer became assistant director of admissions in July 2015, and works alongside Nicholson on recruiting and admittance. In her former positions, Schafer specialized in academic

advising and student services, at both the University of Texas at Arlington and Kansas State University's

Global Campus.

rachel.schafer@washburn.edu

785.670.2685



Tammy King joined Washburn Law as its director of professional development and pro bono in September 2015. King most recently acted as assistant dean for career development at Creighton University School of Law. With student and alumni

careers as her top priority, King helps graduates with job searching and marketability.

tammy.king1@washburn.edu

785.670.1703

The Oil and Gas Law Center: Today and Tomorrow

For students to understand the oil and gas industry, they have to go where it all happens. For years, **Professor David Pierce, '77**, director of the Oil and Gas Law Center, has been finding a way to get them there.

Over the last school year, select oil and gas students ventured to sites in Colorado, Alaska, and even Colombia for educational institutes. The Center relies on alumni support, as well as the Rocky Mountain Mineral Law Foundation, to make those treks possible.

When it's not possible to take students to the industry, Pierce brings the industry to them — with an impressive breadth of speakers and content. An astounding 100-plus practitioners combine to teach the law school's oil and gas curriculum.

Given the proper resources, Pierce and his associate director, Freddy Sourgens, have their next moves already in mind. Namely, 1) to ramp up the number of students who can do educational travel, and 2) to add another faculty member, and therefore, more programming. In both cases, the demand is certainly there.

Though the Center was formally established in 2013, Pierce has been growing and guiding the program since 1989. His efforts have paid off, building one of the most extensive and recognizable oil and gas programs in the country — and a go-to source for industry hires.

Learn more:

David Pierce, '77, Director
Oil and Gas Law Center
david.pierce@washburn.edu
785.670.1676

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Study Abroad: Law Across the Globe

Nearly 3,000 miles separate Washburn Law from Cave Hill, Barbados. Roughly 4,600 lie between Topeka and the Dutch city of Maastricht. But that distance isn't stopping students from making the trip. More than 70 students have taken part in the law school's current study abroad partnerships, according to Tonya Kowalski, director of international legal programs.

Established in 2010, the Barbados program is a six-week summer opportunity in conjunction with The University of the West Indies — one of only a handful of Caribbean law schools. The Netherlands program, founded in 2006, is a semester-long exchange at Maastricht University, where almost 45 percent of the student population is international. Both partnerships give students an immersive look at how attorneys practice abroad.

International travel isn't new to Washburn Law, with study abroad programs dating back to 1968. What's more, nearly

every tenured or tenure-track faculty member has worked, studied, or lived in another country.

With student travel clearly a priority, faculty and staff work to uncover every possible scholarship source. More support, of course, means more students can afford to participate. For those who take the plunge — most of whom have never before left the country — the time away offers cultural literacy skills and a different legal perspective. Those takeaways make students better prepared to practice, wherever their careers lead them.

Learn more:
Tonya Kowalski, Director
International Legal Programs
tonya.kowalski@washburn.edu
785.670.1668

The LL.M. Program: A Bigger World

The program may be new, but the LL.M. in Global Legal Studies has already opened up a broader world at Washburn Law. In less than two years, the law school has become a home away from home to LL.M. students from Tanzania, Taiwan, Saudi Arabia, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

Headed by Professor Lori McMillan, the program launched in fall 2014. The one-year curriculum prepares foreign-trained attorneys to practice law stateside or with U.S. lawyers.

These students are already accomplished professionals in their own right, in everything from academia to courtroom practice. While one of this year's scholars plans to apply her new skills back home in Taiwan, another — a professor from Saudi Arabia — sees the degree as a stepping-stone to an SJD program. Meanwhile, the Congolese student has temporarily

put his study on hold. A former presidential spokesperson in his home country, he was recently recalled for government service. As for the law school's first LL.M. graduate, he's prepping for the Uniform Bar Exam, and making plans for his wife and child to join him in the United States from Tanzania.

The LL.M. students work alongside JD candidates in courses, study groups, and the like. While they earn a degree that will further their careers, they also bring a decidedly international element to the halls of Washburn Law.

Learn more:
Professor Lori McMillan
Director, LL.M. Program
lori.mcmillan@washburn.edu
785.670.1874