

Global Legal Education Forum

Harvard Law School

March 23-24, 2012

Conference Organizers: Harvard Law S.J.D. Students Association,
Marking the 100th Anniversary of the Harvard Law School S.J.D. Program

Sponsored by: Harvard Law School Graduate Program

Background:

Coupled with the academic turn to the study of “globalization”, “global governance” and “transnational networks”, legal education reform is increasingly being articulated in global terms. Particularly since the end of the Cold War, and with the expansion of transnational markets and institutions, national governments and members of the legal profession and academy are revisiting the content and methods of legal education. Many governments and law faculties are innovating with a view to creating new roles and more expansive purposes for legal education. While these efforts are often self-styled as global in outlook, there has been little concentrated discussion of what this means in terms of substantive content or practice. This Forum will examine the question of global legal education from a series of regional, pedagogical, professional and academic perspectives.

Some states are looking globally for models to produce more academically trained domestic lawyers to meet market demands. In Korea and Japan, the Korean National Assembly and the Japan Justice System Reform Council have led efforts to implement postgraduate law schools and more American-style professional training with ethics classes, legal clinics, and specialized courses. In North America, where most law schools became “national” in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, more law faculties are aiming to become transnational by integrating international, transsystemic, and comparative law approaches into their curricula.

Universities and law schools are also becoming more global by establishing formal partnerships, exchange programs, and cross-institution degree and diploma granting agreements. The European-American Consortium on Legal Education, which came into existence in 2000, includes partnerships among ten American and European law schools and faculties. Harvard Law School recently entered a dual J.D. and LL.M.-degree granting agreement with Cambridge University in England and has exchange agreements with the University of Sydney Law School, the Fundação Getulio Vargas Schools of Law, the University of Chile School of Law, Fudan University Law School, Sciences Po Law School, the University of Tokyo the University of the Witwatersrand School of Law, and the University of Geneva Faculty of Law and the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies.

The global turn is perhaps most evident in the emergence of self-described “global law schools.” Many of these “global law schools” seek to bring the world to the law school by attracting foreign and local faculty, students, and fellows for short and long-term positions. The Jindal Global Law School in India, the NYU Hauser Global Law School Program, the China-EU School of Law at the China University of Political Science and Law, the International University College of Turin, Central European University and the National University of Singapore, Faculty of Law all exemplify this approach.

Finally, there is some political will, particularly in the Global South and evidenced in the Global Clinical Legal Education movement, to use legal education to challenge and broaden the available repertoire of economic and governance models. through legal education. In Ghana, law schools have become leading centers for advancing political agendas related to access to health, urban development and education. The FGV Law School in Brazil is a key player in local debates around access to technologies and more global debates concerning Brazil’s growing geopolitical power. On the clinical side, the Global Alliance for Justice Education is an example of a global program that aims to foster collaborative clinical programs, share methods and insights across jurisdictions, and promote greater access to justice. These examples illustrate the potential role for legal education in debates and programs around development and global resource distribution.

Aims of the Global Legal Education Forum:

The aim of the Global Legal Education Forum is to develop a thicker understanding of the intellectual and professional trajectories of contemporary legal education reforms, their implications for global and national elite leadership, the potential distributive effects for law schools that lack the material, technological, or faculty resources to “go global,” and the uniqueness or similarity of these reforms relative to those being undertaken in other professional disciplines. In short, we aim through the workshops and Forum to intensively study the phenomenon of contemporary reforms and their distributive effects for different actors.

The March 2012 Forum also marks the 100th Anniversary of the Harvard Law School S.J.D. Program. The Graduate Program at HLS has from the post-WWII era, with strong renewal during the 1980s, attracted leading candidates with foreign legal training. Doctoral candidates and SJD alumni have longstanding experience and expertise in global, comparative, and transnational scholarship, research, and practice. Global legal education is a natural fit with the educational background and expertise of many doctoral candidates and Alumni.

To foster cross-cutting discussion, the Global Legal Education Forum will convene law school deans, law professors, legal practitioners, law students and graduate candidates and HLS S.J.D. Alumni from various regions, as well as academics from other professional disciplines undergoing “global reform.”

Preliminary Seminar Series, 2011-12: “Mapping the Globalization of Legal Education”

A series of small, focused workshops with invited speakers at Harvard Law School in 2011-12 will lead up to the Forum. These workshops are intended to provide a stronger foundation for discussion at the Forum and beyond. The workshops will illuminate questions, concerns, and insights and consolidate the thematic vision for the Forum.

The following workshops are planned:

What is a “Global law school”?

Oct. 25, 2011 (12:15-1:30, Hauser 1010)

Oishik Sircar, Assistant Professor, Jindal Global Law School, India

Jasper Kim, Associate Professor, Graduate School of International Studies, Ewha Women’s University & Visiting Scholar at the Korea Institute, Harvard

Seung Wha Chang, Professor of Law, Seoul National University School of Law; Visiting Professor of Law

“Learning and Teaching across Systems and Traditions”

January 27, 2012 (2:00-3:30, Room TBA)

Daniel Jutras, Dean, McGill University, Faculty of Law

Christophe Jamin, Dean, Sciences Po Law School

Joaquim Falcão, Dean, FGV Law School, Brazil

Doctoral Student Forum (Mar. 23, 2012)

A half-day Doctoral Student Forum will precede the opening of the Forum on March 23, 2012. This Forum will provide an opportunity for doctoral students at law schools in North America and beyond to meet and discuss the role of doctoral studies in legal education reform and to share skills and methods in undertaking comparative, global, and transnational legal scholarship.