

## INTERNATIONAL TRANSITIONS AND NEW OPPORTUNITIES

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This was my first experience attending the LWI Biennial Conference. I attended as an independent, unsponsored (self-funded) participant looking to repurpose my former career in project finance and to transition from an adjunct position teaching U.S. Business Law and Legal English in Colombia into a full-time teaching position in an LL.M. program in the United States. The conference was an expense I struggled to justify, but I took the risk thanks to the kind encouragement I received from an LWI member, Diane Edelman, whom I had the fortune to meet at the Spring ABA International Law Section meeting. In the process of transitioning from being a practitioner and an adjunct to actively seeking an opportunity focused on teaching, I arrived at Marquette shyly wondering, “What I could possibly contribute? Who is going to want to talk to me?” Until Milwaukee I was skeptical that my experience with Colombian law students would be interesting or useful to professors in U.S. law schools. I was surprised by how wrong I was.

By far my most valuable takeaway was not the unexpected ego or job search boost; it was the remarkable source of practical and academic knowledge within the LWI community that I absorbed through the presentations and personal interactions, particularly for ESL-directed legal writing. With much gratitude I am now successfully applying much of what I learned to the challenges I face teaching civilian, ESL lawyers in Colombia, many of whom are eager to pursue LL.M. degrees in U.S. law schools. Until July, I approached my class planning ad hoc, without any support or resources other than my own ideas developed over time by trial and error and the textbooks I periodically research and purchase online. Joining LWI has been a true game changer, even before the conference. I am so grateful for the Teaching Bank and other resources on the website and the random golden nuggets of knowledge I extract from the LWI listserv.

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While at the conference I was thrilled to attend so many high-level presentations focused on international students and reflecting my view that globalization is—and should be—recognized as mainstream by U.S. law schools and faculty, such as “Incorporating Ideas from Applied Linguistics,”<sup>1</sup> “Teaching Students to Think Globally,”<sup>2</sup> and “Understanding Cultural Competency as a Core Legal Skill.”<sup>3</sup> But even in the sessions that did not have an international focus, still I observed that not only do many law schools care about constantly evolving their foreign LL.M. programs, but also professors actively seek opportunities to expand their professional development by pursuing sabbaticals and visiting professor positions abroad! Combined with the trend I observe in Latin America to practically require young associates to pursue LL.M. degrees abroad to advance within their firms, I am excited to help cultivate others’ interest in teaching in Latin America.

Finally, glimpsing my potential contributions to the community while interacting with fellow attendees interested in hearing about my classes in Colombia was validating and worth every penny of attending “on my own dime.” I credit the collegial and welcoming LWI community in general and the individual members I had the privilege of meeting in July with a renewed purpose and direction for my own professional development.

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<sup>1</sup> Jeremy Francis, Alissa Hartig, Diane Kraft, and Lurene Contento, *Incorporating Ideas from Applied Linguistics and English Education into the Legal Writing Classroom*, LWI Biennial Conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (July 13, 2018).

<sup>2</sup> Rosa Kim, Diane Penneys Edelman, Susan DeJarnatt, and Adrienne Brungess, *Teaching Students to Think Globally: The Why, What, and How of Infusing Transnational Law into the Legal Skills Curriculum*, LWI Biennial Conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (July 13, 2018).

<sup>3</sup> Cara Cunningham Warren, Sha-Shana Crichton, Sandra Simpson, and Jeff Proske, *Understanding Cultural Competency as a Core Lawyering “Skill,”* LWI Biennial Conference, Milwaukee, Wisconsin (July 14, 2018).