

Center for Japanese Studies

2008-09 Noon Lecture Series



Law Schools under Siege: Any Way Out?

Setsuo Miyazawa, Aoyama Gakuin University Law School

*Thursday, September 25, 12:00 noon
Room 1636 School of Social Work Building*



Seventy-four post-graduate professional law schools were established in Japan in 2004 and 2005 as the centerpiece of the new system of the training of lawyers meant to produce better-educated lawyers with a broader range of intellectual and social backgrounds. As a result, various institutional and pedagogical changes were introduced in a short period of time. Unfortunately, the rate of applicants passing the bar exam has been much lower than expected and it is predicted to decline even further. In addition, the number of applications to law schools is declining as well. To combat this, the Japan Federation of Bar Associations has proposed delaying the need for additional lawyers while the Justice Minister and the Education Minister have proposed mergers or closing schools with low passage rates. Furthermore, a bypass, which eliminates the need for a law school degree as a prerequisite for taking the bar exam, will be introduced in 2012. This could deliver a death blow to the fledgling law schools. What went wrong? Is there any way out? A law school faculty member will try to answer.

Setsuo Miyazawa is a legal sociologist with a Ph.D. in law from Hokkaido University and a Ph.D. in sociology from Yale University. He was a full-time faculty member at Hokkaido University, Kobe University, Waseda University, and Omiya Law School, before moving to Aoyama Gakuin University Law School in 2007. He was also a visiting professor in the law schools at York University (Canada), the University of Washington, Harvard University, UC Berkeley, UCLA, New York University, the University of Hawaii, and UC Hastings. Professor Miyazawa is active in several international associations, including the Law and Society Association where he has been twice elected as a Trustee.

This lecture is co-sponsored by the U-M Law School Center for International and Comparative Law (wls@umich.edu).

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