

# MEMORANDUM

TO: Applicants for Fall 2009 Externships in South Africa

FROM: Christine Gregory

DATE: January 21, 2009

SUBJECT: Application Process

There will be 13 available placements in the fall of 2009. Descriptions of the 2009 placements are attached. You will note that there are potential placements in three different South African cities: Cape Town, Durban and Johannesburg. Although the externship location may be a factor in your decision regarding where to apply, your decision should be based primarily upon your area of academic interest and the type of work you want to do.

## SAFETY

Safety is a significant concern for our South African externs. During the fifteen or so years of the Law School's program, several law students have been victims of crime in South Africa. The incidents rate from "minor" to severe and are listed below.

1998

- Student's book bag stolen at train station in Johannesburg.
- Female student mugged at knifepoint on a major thoroughfare in Pretoria on her way home from work. No physical injuries but student was understandably shaken.

2001

- Student's car was broken into – windows smashed to steal car radio. No injuries.
- Female student was mugged while waiting for the bus across the street from her house in Durban. Bag was taken. Student not injured.

2002

- Male student mugged as he was walking down the street, in broad daylight, in Durban. Cell phone was taken. Student was not injured.

2003

- Male student robbed of ATM card while using an ATM. Student not injured.

2004

- Female student and companion, while on their way to Durban from Drakensburg Mountains, stopped to change a flat tire. While changing the tire, they were robbed at gunpoint and the car was stolen. They were made to walk into the woods and were tied to a tree. They were not physically harmed.

2007

- Armed gunman held employees at the HRC Cape Town. He was a disgruntled client who sought representation at one time. No one was harmed and the gunman was arrested. At the time no Michigan externs were assigned to the office.
- Female student's cell phone was stolen from her locker while she was exercising at a popular gym in Cape Town.

2008

- Several students were robbed during a hike up Table Mountain in a very open well-trodden path during daylight hours. Cash was stolen but they were not physically harmed.

Please keep in mind that some of the Michigan externs may have been the victim of property crimes over the years, but failed to report them to the Law School administration. Consequently, there is no "safe" city. Common sense and safety precautions should always rule the day.

Your comfort level with safety is a personal matter. My consistent advise to students who choose to go over is to avoid unnecessary risks like driving alone at night, walking alone at night, keeping a cell phone or computer in plain sight while walking or driving, wearing flashy jewelry, etc.

I also encourage externs to live together. In addition to the safety advantage, having a roommate also has financial advantages such as reducing apartment and car rental costs, should roommates decide to share a car during their stay.

Every student selected to participate in the externship program will be given a safety orientation "on the ground" by their host supervisors once externs have arrived in South Africa.

## **COMMITMENT**

Before completing and submitting an application, you should first decide whether or not you are definitely committed to going to South Africa. If you submit an application and are accepted by one of the organizations, we'd like to be able to assure the organization that you will be coming unless illness or some other unforeseen catastrophe strikes. Deciding whether or not you want to participate in this program includes thinking through and resolving the issues that bear on a decision, including safety issues and a willingness to satisfy the requirements of the program. You should also consider the fall hiring season, and missed other opportunities for courses and clinics here in Ann Arbor.

It is possible that a few additional externship opportunities will be developed beyond those on the attached list. If you are selected for one of the externships on the list, you will need to commit to it and may not apply for a different one at a later date. In addition, it is possible for students to have applications pending at more than one site. You are required to accept the first offer extended, regardless how the site was ranked in order of preference.

Before making a final decision about whether to apply, you may want to consult the South African Guidebook or the articles in the Summer 2002 issue of the “Law Quadrangle Notes,” both available from Trudy in 307 Hutchins.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

You should submit to my office applications to three placements. You will be asked to rate them in order of preference. The application will be sent to your first choice, and to at least one of the other two. The application form can be used to record your preferences.

Each applicant is required to submit a two-page essay, indicating why he or she wishes to participate in the program, and a copy of his or her transcript. In addition, a one-page resume and a one-page cover letter about yourself and your interest in the work of the host organization should be submitted for each organization to which you apply. While your cover letter should be tailored to the specific organization, each letter may have a common core describing background, work experience, etc.

Updated applications will be available online on Wednesday, January 21, 2009, or from my office, 307 Hutchins Hall. Your completed application form, and transcript should be submitted to Trudy Feldkamp in Room 307, Hutchins Hall, and your essay, resume and cover letters should be **emailed** to her ([tfeldkam@umich.edu](mailto:tfeldkam@umich.edu)), **no later than 4:00 PM on Wednesday, February 4, 2009.**

### **REQUIREMENTS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN EXTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

**14 Weeks of Work:** You will work in South Africa for 14 weeks from early September to mid-December. You may, if you wish, begin in late August and return to the United States earlier. That has been an option that has been especially attractive to summer starters graduating in December of the year they go to South Africa, because coming back early permits them to attend the December graduation. The exact dates you work are for you to arrange with your placement. Most students wish to do extensive travel within South Africa while they are there. We urge you to do much of this travel by coming to South Africa a few weeks before beginning work or by staying in South Africa past mid-December. You are expected to be at your work placement during the placement’s regular working hours during the 14 weeks you are there, with the exception of the Workshop Weekend (see below).

**Safety Orientation:** In early September the Law School will require that all externs are given a mandatory training session in South Africa by the host site. More details on this to follow.

**Workshop Weekend:** In early November, you and the other students in the program will gather for a three-day weekend. Each extern will be responsible for leading a one-hour discussion on a topic growing out of his or her work or experiences.

**Biweekly Online Dialogue:** Students participating in the South Africa externship are required to participate in a biweekly online dialogue under the supervision of Professor Bridgette Carr. This will provide an opportunity for you to engage in a group dialogue about your overall employment experience, the practice of law, ethical issues that arise during the course of the externship, how discrimination or “isms” play out, and the ways in which the experience fits into your career objectives

Bridgette Carr is an assistant clinical professor. She graduated from the University of Notre Dame in 1998 with a B.A., cum laude, and earned her J.D., cum laude from the University of Michigan Law School in 2002. Professor Carr’s research and teaching interests focus on human rights, immigration, and international refugee law. Her previous scholarship and clinical work has centered on the plight of asylum seekers, battered immigrants, and victims of human trafficking. She is on the Board of Directors of Freedom House and a member of the Michigan Human Trafficking Taskforce.

**Biweekly reports:** Under the general externship requirements of the Law School, you will email reports to Professor Carr, the Office of Student Affairs, and your faculty sponsor every two weeks while there. You are also expected to write about your work experiences in the biweekly reports. These reports should include a description of your work assignments and any other observations. The reports are due every other Monday on a schedule that will be sent to you. It is important that these reports be submitted in a timely fashion.

**Final Report:** Upon your return you are required to prepare a brief final report for submission to Professor Carr and the Office of Student Affairs.

**Independent Research Paper:** Each student proposing an externship program must secure, in advance of submitting a proposal, a faculty sponsor who will be responsible for supervising the student’s research project. Prior to the commencement of the externship, the student and the faculty sponsor should work out the areas of study to be pursued and establish the general topic to be developed in the required research paper, to the extent possible. Details regarding the subject matter, form, and length of the required research paper and due date should be agreed upon.

Satisfactory completion of a research paper is required before the student can receive credit for the paper or for the external studies program as a whole. The independent research paper must be assigned a letter grade by the faculty sponsor. The remaining credit hours for external studies will be treated as mandatory pass/fail. The paper need not be completed until your return to the United States, but must be submitted prior to the end of classes in the semester after your return.

#### **A FEW ADDITIONAL NOTES ON LAW SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS**

**Good Academic Standing:** Students are eligible for externships only if they are in good academic standing (i.e., not on academic probation) at the end of this semester. If you are on academic probation or at serious risk of becoming on probation, we urge you not to apply.

**Incompletes:** If you have more than two outstanding incompletes at the time of your application, your proposal will likely not be approved by the Curriculum Committee. Students with two incomplete grades who receive permission from the Committee to participate in the program will be required to resolve at least one incomplete before the externship term. Students are not permitted to enroll in an externship with more than one incomplete grade on their transcript at the time of their departure.

**Clinical Credits:** In order to graduate, you must have at least 64 credits in regularly scheduled law school courses. The 12 externship credits, clinical credits, credits for courses taken outside of the Law School, and independent research credits do not count toward the 64-hour total.

**Pass/Fail Credits:** Nine of the twelve credits you receive for the externship will be counted as mandatory pass/fail credits. In order to be eligible for honors at the time of graduation (3.4 and above cumulative GPA), you must have at least *60 graded credits* (62 for those students who entered the law school in May, 2005, or after). For example, if you graduate with the 80 credit minimum, no more than 20 of those credits can be pass/fail. The cap includes mandatory pass/fail credits, like those received for Legal Practice and externship, and elective pass/fail credits.

**December 2009 Graduates:** If you will be graduating in December 2009, you will need to secure the permission of the Curriculum Committee before going. Such permission has been granted in the past. You will need to commit to a specific timeline with regard to the written requirements of the externship. December 2009 graduates should see me if they have questions regarding this.

**Semester Study Abroad:** You may pursue either one externship or one semester study abroad toward your JD, but not both.