Sharan Suri,
Second-Year Law Student

"Intelligent, warm, respected and respectful, confident yet modest, Professor Hammer is one hundred percent professional and one of the best teachers at this law school. It is refreshing to see a faculty member so young and so accomplished master the art of commanding hard work from his students by treating them like the adults they are and the professionals they will soon be."

Peter J. Hammer,
J.D. University of Michigan Law School,
Ph.D. Michigan,
B.A. Gonzaga
For me, this job combines a commitment to teaching, a commitment to research and a commitment to public service. When done right, these activities will overlap and complement each other, which is a large part of the fun. Education and learning involve the continual discovery of interrelationships. Magic in the classroom occurs when students discover these patterns for themselves. Successful research takes place with the discovery and careful exposition of similar sets of interconnections.

I teach courses in antitrust law, contracts and health care. The antitrust course involves the study of how markets function. The contracts course examines how private parties reach agreements, and what types of agreements should be enforced. My seminar, "Health Care: The Firm, the Market and the Law," is largely devoted to examining how contracts, markets, and firms are really different instruments designed to accomplish the same objective, and then exploring with the students the implications of this lesson for law and policy in the context of modern health care markets.

My current research is closely related to the topics covered in the seminar. My most recent work, "An Evaluation of Physician and Hospital Proposals for Antitrust Reform: Arrow, Coase and the Changing Structure of the Firm in Emerging Health Care Markets," looks at proposals to reform federal antitrust laws. The piece develops a framework in which to assess when non-market interventions in medical markets might be appropriate, applies the framework to antitrust reform proposals, and ultimately rejects physician and hospital reforms that would permit greater levels of provider cooperation in medical markets. The modern trend of integrating physician services, hospital services and medical insurance into a single economic entity is defended as a rational Coasian reformation of the firm. Vigorous antitrust enforcement is advocated as a means of counteracting the incentives that integrated health care providers may have to under-provide medical care.

In addition to health care, I have a strong interest in issues relating to Cambodian law and development. I have participated in a number of different Cambodian law reform programs and currently serve as president of the board of directors for Legal Aid of Cambodia — an organization dedicated to meeting the legal needs of Cambodia's rural poor. In an effort to integrate this work into my research and teaching, I plan on putting together a seminar devoted to Cambodian law and development issues and devising ways for Michigan law students to engage in supervised research projects that would provide assistance to organizations working in Cambodia. This past summer, three Michigan law students worked as interns for Legal Aid of Cambodia, making valuable contributions to the organization.

As I write this, I am preparing to travel to Cambodia to continue this work. The goal is to combine teaching, research and public service in the kind of way that I find most satisfying: teachers continuing their own education and sharing it with students; students learning and improving their own skills, whether in the legal or academic arenas; and the two efforts combining in a way that helps people who might not otherwise get help. Who could ask for more?