Congressional & Administrative Law Externship

An Increasingly Common Trajectory: Washington U. to Washington, D.C.

ERIN KAWELL

HAVING A PLACEMENT in Washington, D.C., through the Congressional & Administrative Law Externship makes many law students want to circle back to the nation's capital to start their careers in the federal government.

As a third-year law student, Raphael B. Moreen, JD '11, spent last fall at the State Department, where he worked in the Office of the Legal Adviser. He split his time doing research and writing for attorney-advisers in two sections of that office, the Office of Treaty Affairs and the Office of Oceans, International Environmental and Scientific Affairs. He also attended meetings with internal clients and participated in international law sessions hosted by the Office of the Legal Adviser.

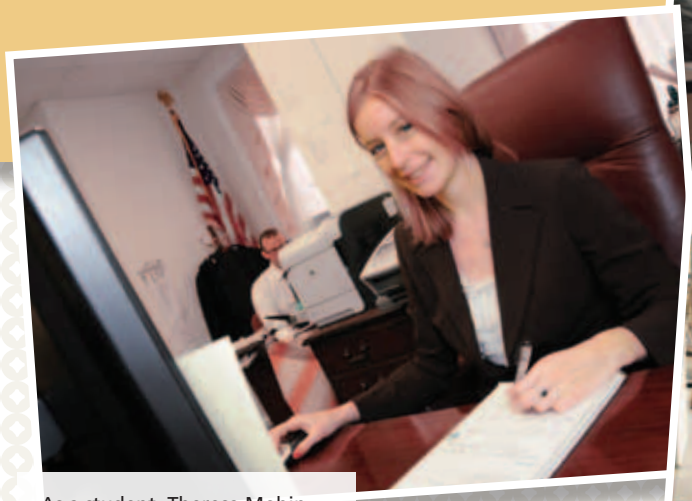
"Having the chance to serve in the Office of the Legal Adviser has given me a solid foundation in international law and an understanding of what it means to represent clients in the Executive Branch," Moreen says. "The attorney-advisers whom I had the chance to serve with are extremely talented, and their professionalism is inspiring."

Last spring, Moreen served as a primary editor of the *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy*. Post graduation, he planned to be back in Washington, D.C.

Ebony Gayles, JD '11, another recent clinic student, externed at the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) in its Office of Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity. She performed most of her work with the Compliance and Disability Rights Division, including joining a team that reviewed a local condominium complex for compliance with the Fair Housing Act. Gayles also briefed and responded to appeals related to violations of civil rights laws covering people with disabilities.

"I specifically wanted to participate in the Congressional & Administrative Law Externship because I knew it would provide me the opportunity to extern with HUD, deepen my understanding of the fair housing laws HUD enforces, and make professional contacts relevant to my future career goals," Gayles says.

"Prior to my externship, I knew I wanted to specialize in housing law, and thanks to the opportunity provided to me through the Congressional & Administrative Law Externship, I was able to confirm that specialty."



As a student, Theresa Mohin, JD '11, externed at the Council on Environmental Quality.

Above: Students in the Congressional & Administrative Law Externship learn about new placement opportunities in Washington, D.C. **Below:** Associate Dean Tomea Mayer Mersmann, JD '91, left, meets with then law student Katherine McRobbie, JD '11, in Washington University's new space in Washington, D.C. Mersmann brings her strong background in teaching legal writing and in career advising to the expanded program.

Her supervisor, HUD Assistant Secretary John Trasviña, says Gayles "helped us immeasurably on fair housing issues ranging from drafting guidance on housing needs of people with disabilities transitioning out of institutions to drafting a white paper on fair housing issues regarding returning veterans.

"The law school's program gives students like Ebony, who already have a passion for civil rights law enforcement, the experience and exposure to the role of lawyers in the federal government, which, in turn, provides them with greater skills for their legal careers," he adds.

Washington University has made a significant investment to increase its presence in the nation's capital. New resources, including a classroom, office space, and the Washington University alliance with the Brookings Institution, have allowed the law school to greatly expand its offerings in Washington, D.C. One of the oldest legal externship programs in the nation's capital and one of the law school's oldest clinical opportunities, the program annually attracts more than 10 percent of each third-year law class.

THE PROGRAM was initiated in the late 1970s through the efforts of Merton Bernstein, now the Walter D. Coles Professor of Law Emeritus. Opportunities were further developed under the direction and mentoring of Professors Karen Tokarz and Kathleen Clark and Senior Lecturer Susan Kaplan. Currently, Kaplan and Tomea Mersmann, JD '91, associate dean for strategic initiatives and lecturer in law, are working to expand student placements in externships on Capitol Hill, in federal agencies, and at the Brookings Institution itself. They also are coordinating efforts with Steven Jackson, director of Washington University's academic program in the nation's capital.

"Law students are very interested in these placements," Mersmann says. "In addition to Raphael's externship with the State Department and Ebony's work at HUD, some of the other recent externships are those with the Council on Environmental Quality, the Securities and Exchange Commission, Department of Health and Human Services, and the Department of the Treasury.

"We also have a strong history of placing students in congressional committee offices such as the Senate Judiciary Committee and the Committee on Foreign Relations. The expanded resources have allowed us to increase the number of students experiencing the D.C. program from 24 to between 36 and 38 students each academic year," she adds.

Robert Kuehn, associate dean for clinical education, agrees that the Congressional & Administrative Law Externship is in high demand: "It has long been one of the leading programs attracting students to our school. Many of our students go to work in Washington after law school. In fact, Washington, D.C., is one of the largest markets for our alumni."

ANDRES ALONSO PHOTOS

Left: Recent Congressional & Administrative Law Externship students Nick Bernier, JD '11, left, and Brian Stief, JD '11, gained firsthand experience through their externships with the Securities and Exchange Commission. **Right:** Then Congressional & Administrative Law Externship student Ebony Gayles, JD '11, meets with HUD Assistant Secretary John Trasviña as part of her externship placement.