The internships are one component of the multifaceted Africa Public Interest Law & Conflict Resolution Initiative, coordinated by KAREN TOKARZ, the Charles Nagel Professor of Public Interest Law & Public Service and director of the Negotiation & Dispute Resolution Program. The initiative also facilitates semester-long internships through the International Justice & Conflict Resolution Practicum, an interdisciplinary course on sustainable development in Madagascar, and on-campus lectures and seminars on Africa by leading scholars and diplomats.

“This generation of law students is enormously interested in international law and in understanding global North–South relationships. They’re also very interested in working in emerging democracies and economies,” Tokarz says.

In the summer internships, students work at agencies ranging from Lawyers for Human Rights in South Africa, Ghana, Tanzania, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), providing legal services and dispute resolution assistance through local organizations, the Supreme Court of Ghana, and the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. It was the 10th year for the summer internship program, which also has taken students to Nigeria, Kenya, and Burkina Faso.

The internships require students to perform community service projects while in Africa and to submit weekly journals. “In my view, it is essential that the students get to know the context and the community from which their clients come through projects that involve education and training, such as ‘street law’ projects, and reflect on their experiences while in a new country,” Tokarz says.

Several summer Africa interns have developed professional connections in Africa after graduation. Tom Burgess, JD ’10, interned at Black Sash in Cape Town, South Africa, in summer 2008. He returned after graduation to volunteer at Legal Aid South Africa and to teach English and peace-building skills at Sophumelela School in Samora Machel Township outside Cape Town. Debora Rogo, JD ’09, interned at the African Centre of Legal Excellence, based in Kampala, Uganda. In addition, Webster Scholar Alex Hendler, JD ’03, recently set up an online documentation center for Tanzania High Court decisions.

Similarly, Ibadat Dhillon, JD ’06, interned at the Children’s Rights Centre in Durban, South Africa, in summer 2004. After graduation, he pursued a master’s degree in international global health law at Georgetown. Since then, he has been collaborating with Mary Robinson and the Aspen Institute on access to health care issues, based in Dar es

From left: Sena Dei-Tutu, JSD ’06; social worker Rose Walls; and Professor Karen Tokarz collaborated to create summer student internship placements in Ghana.
opportunity I had at The Hague,” says Ruff of his summer 2011 placement. “I was able to sit in on meetings with all the judges and attorneys on multiple occasions and participate directly in the drafting process, which was fascinating. It was incredible to be given an active voice in those deliberations.”

Like Wilkinson, Ruff felt another key benefit was the opportunity to interact with judges, attorneys, and other law students from around the world. “I worked with people from the Netherlands, Australia, Germany, France, Belgium, South Africa, China, and many other countries,” Ruff notes.

Adding to the intensity of the experience for Ruff was the arrest of longtime ICTY fugitive Ratko Mladic in May and the commencement of his prosecution at The Hague during summer 2011. “Following the arrest of General Mladic, a lot of excitement surrounded the tribunal. Staff who had been working there for many years seemed to take a special, personal satisfaction in knowing that this important chapter of the Yugoslav conflict will see some kind of resolution,” adds Ruff.

Global Justice Institute

Each year, the Summer Institute for Global Justice enrolls 50 students from the United States and abroad to study issues of international law. Now in its seventh year, the institute brings in prominent experts to teach courses in such areas as atrocity law and policy, international criminal law, international human rights, comparative antitrust and constitutional law, international tax law, international institutions, and international intellectual property law. Justices and prosecutors

Salaam, Tanzania. “My internship at the Children’s Rights Centre and my HIV/AIDS work in the Civil Rights, Community Justice & Mediation Clinic with Professor Tokarz cemented my commitment to do international public health law work,” he says. “Her mentorship inspired me to pursue a career overseas in international public health.”

Tokarz has been working in Africa since she served as a visiting clinical faculty member at the University of KwaZulu-Natal (UKZN) law school in Durban, South Africa, in fall 2001. She has continued to collaborate with UKZN and other law faculties in South Africa, and with various NGOs and courts in southern Africa over the past decade.

She served as a Fulbright Senior Scholar at UKZN in 2008. She also has coordinated summer and semester internship placements for more than 100 Washington University law students, facilitated law student exchange programs with UKZN and the University of Pretoria, and mentored LLM and JSD students from Africa.

One of the more imaginative international law initiatives takes students to Madagascar to work on sustainable community development programs during the spring semester. The trip is part of an interdisciplinary course offered in conjunction with the Missouri Botanical Garden.

Taught by faculty in law, business, and design, the course stresses finding sustainable answers to intractable problems in this impoverished country. A simple water purification system, a new strain of rice, and sustainable housing are among the projects students have undertaken as part of the Madagascar course.

“This course enhances the legal representation currently provided by the Intellectual Property & Nonprofit Organizations Clinic to the Missouri Botanical Garden’s project and provides a great opportunity for law students to learn about intellectual property issues in a unique setting,” says David Deal, lecturer in law and co-director of the IP/N0 Clinic, who co-teaches the Madagascar course.

Each year, the Africa Initiative also brings experts to the law school for presentations and workshops on Africa. In fall 2010, for example, the initiative co-sponsored with the School of Medicine a presentation on “World Cup 2010: Human Trafficking and Forced Prostitution,” featuring John Barr, ESPN commentator for Outside the Lines. 