WO GROUNDBREAKING international programs are giving law students both here and abroad cross-border legal training to help them compete and practice effectively in an increasingly global marketplace. At the same time, the programs are working to increase the school’s international footprint.

The Transnational Law Program (TLP), initiated in 2008 by Washington University and four partner European institutions, enables select U.S. and European students to earn a domestic law degree and a subsequent foreign LLM (master of laws) via an integrated and coordinated curriculum.

“The program allowed me to explore my passion in international law,” says McCall Carter, who graduated with the TLP’s inaugural U.S. class in spring 2011, earning a JD from Washington University and an LLM from Utrecht University in the Netherlands.

“I was in a perfect location to get an internship in The Hague. I interned for two different defense teams at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia,” she says. “The experience has been valuable for me. It’s allowed me not only to study international law, but also to observe it in practice—which is important because international law in theory and international law in practice are often quite different.”

Carter, who plans a career in international organizational or nonprofit law, represents a growing cadre of law students, both in the United States and abroad, who recognize the need for transnational legal skills in an increasingly interconnected world, according to Michael Peil, TLP executive director and associate dean for international programs. The TLP, he says, provides an innovative solution.

“If there are other programs out there that do this, I’m not aware of them,” he says, “and I’ve looked.”

A Unique International Legal Education

Peil says other dual-degree law offerings lack the TLP’s integration and support. “What we’ve added is a high degree of coordination among the administrations of the schools, so that students at Washington University, for example, are getting counseling from the faculty both here and abroad as to what courses they should be taking and what opportunities they should be pursuing. So when they get to their second country to study, they hit the ground running,” he says.

Dorsey D. Ellis, Jr., dean emeritus, the William R. Orthwein Distinguished Professor of Law Emeritus, and TLP academic director, also stresses the TLP’s unique approach. “The Transnational Law Program is the first and only program of its kind in the world. With our partner schools, we have created a fully integrated educational experience that offers more than just a JD program in St. Louis followed by an LLM in Europe. Students are acquiring a multilegal ability to think in the legal systems of both Europe and the United States.”

Indeed, the TLP addresses major trends—both economic and legal—in a changing world, says Peil. “The world has globalized. At American law schools, including the top international schools, it’s just not possible to offer students, who want to
perform at the highest level in that new global legal practice, everything they need at a single campus.

“So we initially looked at this and said if we pick three or four top law schools here and abroad, us included, we each have some piece of the puzzle,” says Peil. “If we pool our faculty resources and our student program resources, we can create a program that will prepare those students for the global practice of law.”

Henk Kummeling, dean of the Faculty of Law, Economics and Governance and professor of constitutional law at Utrecht University School of Law, says his school was eager to further its partnership with Washington University to address what he views as a growing need for both students and legal employers.

“We believe that the major international law firms, as well as international governmental and nongovernmental organizations do need lawyers with a ‘multijurisdictional’ approach to legal questions—lawyers capable of working within different legal environments, as well as across their borders,” he says. “We are proud to be part of this international network of innovative law schools offering the TLP.”

THANKS TO LONG-STANDING relationships of Washington University law faculty at top European law schools, the school was able, after years of discussions and negotiations, to secure the collaboration of four strategically placed partners: Católica Global School of Law in Lisbon, Portugal; Queen’s University in Belfast, Northern Ireland, U.K.; University of Trento in Trento, Italy; and Utrecht University.

“We feel that by having four very different European states represented in the Transnational Law Program, we’re giving the students some sense of how diverse the European marketplace and European cultures are,” says Ellis. “Strategically, each of these partner schools brings something very, very different to the table.”

Peil stresses that all four European partners are, like Washington University School of Law, ambitious institutions seeking new challenges on the international stage.

“These are not typical law schools,” he says. “Católica Global School of Law, for example, has one of the best English-language master’s programs in global and European business in the world right now.

“Utrecht University is one of the highest ranked law schools in Europe. They do excellent work across the board, particularly in areas like public international law, trade law, and law of the sea.

“Queen’s University, because of Belfast’s tumultuous history over the last 30 years, has developed a very solid expertise in human rights and post-conflict law, and also gives our students access to the United Kingdom legal system,” Peil continues.

“While Italian law schools tend to be very traditional, Trento is an innovator and has developed fine expertise in both administrative law and criminal law.”

Peil says the TLP makes sense for both American and European students seeking international legal careers. “While China is now the world’s biggest consumer market, the U.S. will remain for the foreseeable future one of Europe’s most

(top, left) Representatives of the partner schools sign the agreement for the creation of the Transnational Law Program (TLP). (below, left) H.E. Christopher Greenwood, a judge from the United Kingdom at the International Court of Justice, speaks to students and faculty in the Summer Institute for Global Justice, which is offered in affiliation with the TLP. (above) Located at the crossroads of Central and Western Europe, Trento is a vital part of the TLP.
important trade, business, and cultural partners,” he says. “For a European student who is thinking internationally, the U.S. is one of the most accessible markets for that young lawyer and likely one of the most immediately important in that student’s practice.”

But that goes across the Atlantic both ways, says Peil. “Likewise for Americans. At this stage of the game, Europe remains one of the more achievable markets for American law students. And as far as the clients they are going to be representing one day, it’s still one of the most important trade and business partners.”

The TLP’s pioneering efforts to address Euro-American legal educational needs have been recognized by both the European Commission and the U.S. Department of Education. The TLP was the first legal education program to receive a grant from the jointly administered European Union–United States Atlantis Program.

International Graduate Programs

The master of laws (LLM) in U.S. law for foreign-trained lawyers at Washington University helps overseas law graduates like Chia-Ling Lee, LLM ’11, bolster their knowledge of U.S. and international law while furthering their career paths in today’s global legal environment.

Lee, who received her first law degree in Taiwan, enrolled in the LLM program to advance her goal of working in a law firm on her way to becoming a professor in Taiwan. Lee says she benefited from all of her courses, but found the mandatory LLM course, Introduction to U.S. Law, particularly useful.

“It gave a complete introduction to American jurisprudence in the first semester,” she recalls. “During the second semester, we were asked to write a persuasive memo, and in the last class we had to represent a plaintiff or a defendant making a strong argument to the judge. These practices are very useful. I believe this gave me a head start and helped me better understand the discipline I will need for practicing law.”

She also appreciated the opportunity to take classes alongside American JD students and the immersion into American culture. Additionally, Lee participated in a JD/LLM mentoring program in which American students helped her better understand lectures and reading assignments.

Among the program’s other assets, Lee says she found the comparative aspect of the courses interesting. “Every class inspired my thinking and comparison of laws and principles between the United States and Taiwan,” she says. “When I learned something new in American law, I always compared it to the same or similar principles in Taiwanese law. The LLM program improved my practical skills, stimulated my creative thinking, and helped to prepare me for my future career.”

In addition to the master’s degree in U.S. law, Washington University also offers LLM degrees in taxation and in intellectual property and technology law (IP/TL). The IP/TL LLM, which is open to both foreign and U.S. law graduates, is particularly appealing to students like Xiao Chen, LLM ’11, who graduated from Shanghai Jiao Tong University in 2010.

“I felt it would be helpful if I could gain some international education and at the same time focus on a specific area of law. Washington University turned out to be the ideal choice for me,” says Chen. “My classmates were either foreign-trained lawyers who already had years of practice in IP or students...
who had already received their JD degree but chose to spend one more year learning about IP.”

Lee and Chen epitomize scores of young international attorneys and law school graduates—from China, India, Georgia, Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Korea, Europe, Latin America, and elsewhere—who are taking advantage of Washington University’s distinctive LLM curriculum for foreign-trained lawyers, says Peter Cramer, assistant dean for graduate programs, who oversees the program.

“Many come from jurisdictions with different legal systems and are trying to get insight into common law and to see how the American legal system works,” says Cramer, “since common law is used in the international arena and American law is pervasive.”

Their Washington University education helps them better represent clients who have business dealings with U.S. companies and firms, as well as with American clients conducting business abroad. The program also improves their English skills.

Cramer was recruited in 2010 to assist the law school in expanding opportunities for international students and in creating synergies with other Washington University international efforts. Established in the 1990s, the LLM in U.S. Law program has attracted hundreds of students over the years, and the law school is

International Background Bolsters Cramer’s LLM Leadership

IT SHOULD BE NO SURPRISE that Peter Cramer, assistant dean for graduate programs, can relate to the stories he hears from LLM students. After all, Cramer is a non-native speaker of English, himself, and like most of the LLM students, he studied law in a civil law country and received an LLM from an American university.

Cramer first studied law in Germany, then pursued his advanced degrees at Indiana University, Bloomington, where he received his MA in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) in 1992, PhD in language education in 1997, and LLM in 2006.

“The combination of legal and language education has been very beneficial in my field of work,” says Cramer, who has become an expert on Legal English education over the last 20 years. He first taught as an instructor at the Intensive English Program (IEP) at Indiana University, then at the Maurer School of Law. “Once I received my LLM degree, I realized that LLM students need more academic and linguistic support, and I set out to create programs that would do just that.”

Subsequently, Cramer accepted a position as associate director of the Center for Global Legal English at George-town University Law Center in Washington, D.C., where he created a two-year LLM program that focused on study skills and linguistic preparation within a legal context in the first year, so the students could fully and efficiently focus on their substantive law studies in the second year.

“When I started my position at Washington University, I proposed to take parts of this model and integrate them into the LLM program,” he says. In the first year of his work, Cramer created workshops on note-taking, outlining, and exam-taking strategies, as well as workshops on the effective use of English in legal writing, to name a few.

The coming year, according to Cramer, is going to be even more exciting: “We added one more week to our LLM Orientation in August and can now work much more on those skills that are needed to survive and succeed in law school.”

Cramer and a team of professors also created a new class for the fall semester that introduces LLM students to three major areas of law—civil procedure, contracts, and corporations. Additionally, students receive guidance in how to interact with their professors and peers, how to participate actively, and how to learn most efficiently from their assignments.

“I couldn’t be happier about this move,” Cramer says. “That’s what legal education can and should do for international LLM students, and Washington University School of Law is at the forefront of this development.”

(clockwise, from left) Students in the JSD program conduct in-depth legal research; Xiao Chen, LLM ’11, focused her course of study on intellectual property and technology law; and Assistant Dean Peter Cramer, standing, works closely with foreign-trained LLM students to polish both their language and legal skills.
continually working to add diversity to the countries and judicial systems represented. The IP/TL LLM was added in 2001.

The LLM degrees allow graduates to sit for several state bar exams, including the New York State Bar Exam, the most popular among foreign-trained lawyers. Additionally, a six-week observation program under the tutelage of state and federal judges gives students insights into the inner workings of the U.S. court system. The majority of the LLM students intend to work as legal counsel for international corporations, and a few hope to join law firms or become judges or law school faculty.

“My main role is to help our graduate-level students have a smooth transition into their studies, as well as gain a rich academic and cultural experience on their way to becoming professionals with advanced legal training,” Cramer says.

While the graduate program is designed to give its students a leg up in the international legal community, it does the same for Washington University and the law school.

“IT’S OF GREAT BENEFIT TO Washington University,” says Cramer, noting that the LLM programs now attract some 60 foreign-trained students annually. “Through these programs we send out new ambassadors each year across the globe who promote Washington University and its values. Quite a few of our graduates are political and business leaders.”

Globalization Fast Facts

**DURING THE PAST DECADE**, top law firms have nearly tripled their number of overseas offices. The 112 largest firms have 670 foreign offices among them.

**AMONG U.S. LAW FIRMS IN 2010**, the United Kingdom was the first most popular foreign office location and China was the second most popular.

**OF THE 250 LARGEST FIRMS IN AMERICA**, nearly half have foreign offices. At these firms, 1 in 7 lawyers works abroad, and 1 in 4 offices is located in a foreign country.

**AS THE U.S. ECONOMY FALTERED**, the number of lawyers sent abroad from the top 250 U.S. law firms in 2008 increased with destinations such as Abu Dhabi up 144 percent; Dubai, 81 percent; Istanbul, 52 percent; Baku Azerbaijan, 50 percent; Hong Kong, 48 percent; and Beijing, 39 percent.

**AMONG THE LARGEST 250 U.S. LAW FIRMS**, 78 have offices in London, 70 in China, 33 in Paris, 21 in Russia, and 19 in Latin America.

Source: Various news media reports.