Third-Year Law Students Laura Crane and Daniel Tierney will begin their legal careers with a unique foreign policy perspective thanks to an internship with Thomas Schweich, the law school’s Ambassador-in-Residence for 2008–10.

In addition to serving as a visiting professor of law, Schweich is working as special representative for Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean for the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Crane and Tierney were selected to aid Schweich in preparing for meetings with senior diplomats, politicians, and law enforcement officers in the region.

Both students are preparing for careers in corporate law after graduation in May. Tierney will be working at Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft LLP, a New York-based law firm, and Crane has accepted a position at Cravath, Swaine & Moore LLP in New York City. They find that the internship with Schweich has influenced how they will practice law.

“There is no question that we are all members of a global community and that our actions affect one another,” Tierney says. “This position has heightened my international awareness and given me skills that I will employ throughout my career.”

Crane agrees: “Having the chance to experience the ‘policy’ side of international diplomatic work has opened my eyes to career possibilities that I would never have been exposed to outside of this internship.”

The students first conducted research on opportunities for possible UNODC programs in Central America, Mexico, and the Caribbean involving international policy and justice issues, as well as working to develop potential areas for UNODC involvement with the Merida Initiative. The Merida Initiative is a partnership of the United States, Mexico, and Central America to help stop illegal drug trafficking.

“Laura and Dan are very bright, capable people,” Schweich says. “They are true triple threats. Both are excellent oral presenters and skilled writers, and they show real potential as diplomats, as well. The two produced high-quality papers that were extremely well-received.”

In summer 2008, Crane accompanied Schweich on a trip to the UNODC headquarters in Vienna to discuss concerns facing Mexico and opportunities for the UNODC to build its presence in Central America and the Caribbean.

“I worked closely with Ambassador Schweich in advance of our trip to Vienna to become versed in the challenges that the region faces,” Crane says. “This knowledge was quickly put to use in our visit to Vienna, where I was able to see firsthand the way in which high-level diplomatic meetings are conducted.”

Crane also planned to accompany Schweich for a ministerial meeting on Central American security in Costa Rica in spring 2009.

Tierney traveled with Schweich to the First Inter-American Meeting of Ministers Responsible for Public Security, which was hosted by the Organization of American States (OAS) and held in Mexico City in October 2008.

“During the OAS conference, I sat in on very high-level meetings with foreign officials and worked actively with the UNODC,” Tierney says. “I witnessed domestic, regional, and international policy being created; it was incredibly exciting.”

Other highlights of Tierney’s trip to Mexico included meeting President Felipe Calderón of Mexico and U.S. Attorney General Michael Mukasey.

In February, Tierney attended meetings with Schweich at the U.S. State Department, the Justice Department, and the Department of Homeland Security in Washington, D.C. Before heading to Washington, he also put his advocacy skills to work at the National Environmental Moot Court Competition in New York, where he was named “Best Oralist” in the last preliminary round and where he and his teammate ranked third out of 70 teams going into the quarterfinal round.

The Ambassador-in-Residence Program, administered by the Whitney R. Harris World Law Institute, brings foreign service professionals to the law school to share their experiences and knowledge with the law school and University community.

Schweich served the Bush administration as the ambassador for counternarcotics and justice reform in Afghanistan, as the government’s deputy assistant secretary of state and acting assistant secretary of state for the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, and chief of staff to the U.S. Mission to the United Nations.