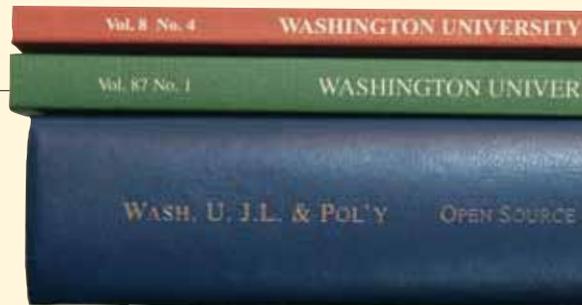


# Student Journals at Front Lines of Legal Scholarship



**W**HILE MANY LAW STUDENTS are pressed for time, three third-year students especially would love to figure out how to double the 168 hours found in a week. Jason Batts, Jocelyn Chong, and Joel Christensen are serving as editors-in-chief respectively of the *Washington University Law Review*, *Washington University Global Studies Law Review*, and *Washington University Journal of Law & Policy*. All three are committed to daunting schedules, filled with study and classroom time on the one hand, and seemingly nonstop editing, planning, and journal staff meetings on the other. The three estimate that their journal duties add on average 40 to 60 hours a week atop a like amount of course work and studying.

“I was urged last spring to apply for editor-in-chief by my immediate supervisor on the journal,” says Chong. “I figured that my colleagues would choose the best one to guide the journal, so I applied. To my surprise, I was elected. I thought: ‘Well, good, but I guess I’ll have to work really hard now.’”

“For me, it’s all about time management,” Batts says. “I live and die by to-do lists on a daily basis. I have to figure out what my law review responsibilities are in comparison to my class responsibilities. There are no extracurricular activities. That’s for next year!”

Christensen adds: “I’m probably reading the same amount of law as my classmates because so much is submitted to the journal, but I definitely don’t have time for legal blogs or newspapers. I also don’t have time to read a secondary source to be better prepared for class.”

Each editor-in-chief works with faculty advisers and a staff of approximately 90 editors, production personnel, and board members. Current faculty advisers are Professors Annette Appell, Kathleen Clark, John Haley, Charles McManis, Neil Richards, and Karen Tokarz.

Although making for many extra hours in the journals’ new Seigle Hall suites, Christensen stresses that the added duties are worth it: “While it’s not always pleasant to log those extra hours, I never resent it because it’s such a fantastic experience.”

All three combine a thorough grasp of the history of their respective publications with visions for putting their own “stamps” on their journals during their tenures.

## *Global Studies Law Review*

**CHONG’S JOURNAL IS THE NEWEST** of the three, begun nine years ago to address global studies, specifically in relation to the advancement of legal specialization around the world. While not a formal part of the journal’s structure, the school’s Whitney R. Harris World Law Institute often collaborates with the journal.

“Normally, we focus on notes and articles, but in the spring issue, we recognized the work of one of the University’s great professors, John Haley, a foremost academic in Japanese law,” she says. “Prior to that issue, the Harris Institute hosted a symposium on that topic.”

The *Global Studies Law Review* has established a reputation as a significant international law review, focusing on topics beyond comparative law. “As a journal, we want to give a broad perspective, but find the commonalities,” Chong says. “We present the opportunity to see so many new ideas about the law worldwide.”

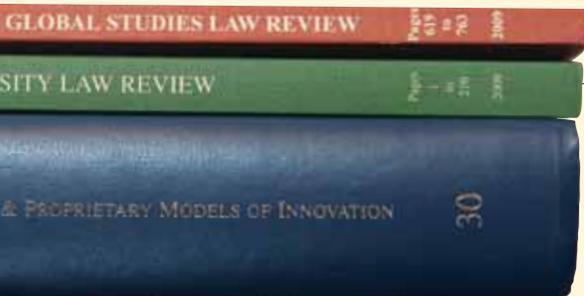
An upcoming article, for example, demonstrates how Jewish law is sometimes employed by the Israeli secular court. Because of the journal staff’s linguistic limitations, Chong and her editors went the extra mile working with not only the authors, but also a Modern Hebrew lecturer at Washington University, an alumnus, and several JD and LLM students—one from Israel—in perfecting the manuscript.

“We met with a couple of rabbis, for instance, to clarify some points. I figured that’s what we should be doing, engaging the community,” she says.



2009–10 *Global Studies Law Review* Editorial Board

MARY BUTKUS



## Law Review

**PRIOR TO ATTENDING LAW SCHOOL**, Batts worked nearly three years at the White House and on Capitol Hill, including a position as communications director for a congressman.

“I was interested in the editor-in-chief position because a lot of the responsibilities mirrored those of a communications director,” he says. “Those long hours in D.C. tempered me for the hours required with the *Law Review*.”



2009–10 *Law Review* Editorial Board

Formerly the *Law Quarterly*, the *Law Review* is now in its 87th year, making it the oldest of the three and the most competitive. Batts noted that it receives about 2,000 submissions yearly for just 18 spots in the annual six volumes. To address changing issues in the law, Batts has emphasized a relatively new feature, a “current commentaries” section, which allows law practitioners and scholars to write about legal topics that are more fluid.

“We take submissions as they come in, and they run the spectrum with no real theme per issue,” he explains. “While I want to honor the *Law Review*’s history, I always look to improve. One of our main goals is to provide an avenue to drive the law forward and help it evolve; the commentaries section does that.”

A recent issue, for example, included scholarly articles on shaken baby syndrome, the phenomenon of hidden taxes, and fiduciary-based disclosure; a student “note” on the Veterans Educational Assistance Act; and a “commentary” on sustainable practices and government entities.

## Journal of Law & Policy

**CHRISTENSEN’S JOURNAL BEGAN** in 1968 as the *Urban Law Annual*, with an emphasis on land-use law. Midway in its existence, it changed to the *Journal of Urban & Contemporary Law*, then became the *Journal of Law & Policy* in 1998. The current journal reflects an interdisciplinary approach with each volume based on a symposium.

“We’re on a different end of the spectrum from the other two journals,” Christensen explains. “Each spring, we meet to generate ideas for the volumes that will be published over the next 24 months and then look for symposium sponsorship of the topic.”

“For instance, last spring, we decided to do a volume on labor and employment law,” he continues. “Professor Marion Crain is well known in that field, and she agreed to oversee getting a roster of authors for a symposium. So, instead of winnowing from thousands of article submissions to dozens, we start with dozens of authors and hope to end with dozens of articles.”

The publication’s model relies heavily upon Washington University law professors’ knowledge of related scholarship. “With their help, we know we’re getting authors of a high level,” he says. “Every volume is its own treatise.”



2009–10 *Journal of Law & Policy* Editorial Board

**THE EDITORIAL TRIO** has become good friends in a system where journals are the main vehicle for the dissemination of legal scholarship.

“I think it’s a safe assumption that the three of us were overwhelmed, honored, and humbled to be chosen for our positions,” Christensen says. “We have the sense that we’re temporary placeholders—that we’ve inherited a legacy to which we have to give our all.” IIII