



Skills to Succeed

The new Legal Skills Program will produce practice-ready attorneys

The Law School is instituting an innovative Legal Skills Program designed to teach practical lawyering skills, with the aim of turning out new graduates who are practice-ready on Day One—ready to file a brief, cross-examine a witness or make a special pleading.

The program encompasses courses and experiences in legal research and writing; litigation and non-litigation skills, such as mediation; and professional development.

“These offerings complement black-letter law and courses that focus on the jurisprudence and theory of law,” says Dean Makau W. Mutua. “Put together, these two sides are critical to the education of a well-trained, analytically sound and thoughtful lawyer.”

SUNY Distinguished Service Professor Charles Patrick Ewing has been appointed Vice Dean for Legal Skills to oversee the program.

“The idea is to integrate and coordinate these programs so we have better control over them—to be sure they offer a better learning experience for the students,” according to Ewing. “Right now, there is a demand for lawyers coming out of law schools who are able to do things right out of the gate.”

Key components of the new program include:

◆ *Legal Research and Writing.* First-year students learn the basics of these vital skills; advanced courses are offered for upper-division students. Seven research and writing instructors—some new to the Law School, some with continuing ties—will teach in this area. “The program that I inherited is already strong and solid,” Ewing says. “My goal is to make it one of the best in the country.”

◆ *Litigation Skills.* Basic courses in trial technique—how to make an opening statement, examine and cross-examine a witness, and make a closing statement—and more advanced trial advocacy courses, most of which are taught by judges and legal practitioners. This area also covers trial and other non-appellate moot court competitions.

The school has enlisted two well-known figures in the Buffalo law community to co-direct the courses: Erie County Court judge Thomas



Photo: Douglas Levere

CHARLES PATRICK EWING HAS BEEN APPOINTED VICE DEAN FOR LEGAL SKILLS.

P. “Tim” Franczyk, a longtime champion of the Law School’s mock trial program; and Chris O’Brien of O’Brien Boyd, an experienced teacher of trial advocacy.

◆ *Appellate Advocacy Skills.* Appellate-style moot courts and other writing-based competitions, as well as courses designed to teach the basics of brief-writing and appellate oral advocacy. Ewing says the school will carefully evaluate the dozens of moot court competitions available nationwide, as well as several sponsored by the Law School, with an eye toward maximizing student participation. Professor George Kannar will be the director of moot courts.

◆ *Non-Litigation Skills.* Courses in negotiation, alternative dispute resolution, mediation and counseling. “It’s important for students to understand that it’s not all about litigation,” Ewing says.

◆ *Professional Development.* A wide range of opportunities for students to grow into the profession, including programs to support students and new graduates preparing for the bar exam, a vast array of externship and clerkship placements, and a program in the important area of legal ethics.



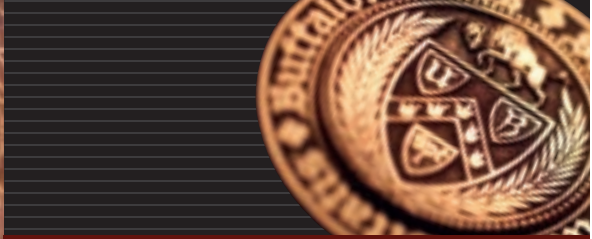
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Inside

LAW *Briefs*

New Legal Skills Program puts the practical into practice.



Practicing to be ready

The University at Buffalo Law School is putting new emphasis on practical skills lawyers must master. UB Law graduates will be ready to distinguish themselves from the moment they become professional advocates. Here, UB Law students get ready to make their case in the Albert R. Mugal National Tax Moot Court Competition.

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