Law and Harmony: An In-depth Look at China’s First American Style Law School

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In 2008, the Peking University School of Transnational Law was dedicated in Shenzhen, China. STL is China’s first Western-style law school. Its Juris Doctor program is delivered in English and its students are thoroughly trained in Anglo-American common law.

The training at STL competes with that of the best American law schools. In addition, STL students have the advantage of a background in “li”, the Confucian ethical code which emphasizes collective harmony and the primacy of relationships. In the Confucian vision, social harmony rather than justice is the symbol of the ideal society. Disputes are settled according to what is best for social functioning, rather than in terms of legal rights.

The hallmark of the transnational lawyer in a global economy is the ability to not only critique legal argument, but also to effectively communicate and influence the perspectives of the recipient of the communication. STL students – with their training in Western critical legal analysis and their heritage of valuing relationships and compromise – are uniquely positioned to join the ranks of transnational lawyers. American legal education can, and should, learn from this overseas experiment.

**Professor Anne Burr, Academic Director of the Legal Research and Writing department at Wayne Law, was recently a Visiting Assistant Professor at Peking University’s School of Transnational Law (STL). She assisted in designing and implementing the legal practice program for STL, the first Western style law school in China. Her law review article on teaching at STL is being published by U.C.L.A.’s Pacific Basin Law Journal this month. She is co-authoring a textbook on teaching U.S. legal practice skills to foreign students, which will be released by Carolina Academic Press in 2012, and she is speaking on the subject of teaching legal practice skills to Chinese students at the American Association of Law Schools Annual Meeting in January 2012.**

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**2339 Faculty/Administration Building**

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