

Erfahrungsbericht über einen Studienaufenthalt am Center for Transnational Legal Studies in London

The extremely memorable time at the CTLS changed a lot for me. As I dive into the depths of the legal concepts in general and characteristics of different systems, it was a great foundation for the ensuing early first state exam of German law.

It's very helpful to not just know, but *understand* why our legal systems are the way they are and what separates them from others, what exactly the function of a law graduate is in this system. The exercises provided an inspiring step into possible career options, allowing me to find out which positions suit me best and how much fun legal practice can be. This turned out to be a very valuable motivator for my following German state "bar" exam.

My CTLS friends and I, over a year after we turned the Center for Transnational Legal Studies into the Center for Transnational Long-Term Friendship, are still in everyday contact. This makes the work much more enjoyable. A nice side-effect is that we can see what issues are based on being a lawyer, and where your national system could use improvements. But one on one video conferences, talking on the phone and chatting via Facebook is just not the same and planning a meeting with people across several countries and continents is difficult enough without taking an airplane somewhere. So we're currently planning regular transnational alumni video conferences to be able to better recreate the good times we had at the Center.

The excellent connections to professors are proving to be much more than just invaluable for scholarship applications and my further study plans. Currently I'm pursuing an LL.M. in Intellectual Property Rights in the U.S., which for many reasons would have been out of the question prior to my stay at the CTLS and is directly inspired by it. I'm very happy I found motivation and challenge, allowing me to achieve better than before in my studies – a motivation I could take into the challenging German state exam. After finding out in more detail where my practical skills lie and talking to the professors at the CTLS, where contact was on a completely different level due to the high professor per student ratio and the different setting in general, the idea to pursue an LL.M. in the US grew. It had been a great, but vague and hardly possible idea before, now it's a concrete chance I embraced.

But there's also a downside. I miss the extremely high breadth and depth of knowledge, experience and well reasoned views in one room, which made it such an incredibly inspiring time. I fear the experience will be hard to match. And I miss being with my CTLFs every day. It was all over so quickly. In the end I got much more at the Center than I had asked for or expected: I perfected my legal, communication and cultural skills, strengthened my love for law, made many important and crucial connections, developed the plan for my following legal career and among all the people from all these countries I met many friends for life. As commencement speaker together with my Israeli friend Nadav – a very special and wonderful thing in itself - let me just repeat what I have heard from many of my friends and let it be known for our class of 2009: Academically as otherwise, we had the time of our lives. And talking about the commencement speech, let me recapitulate: "Now it's time to fight for what is right and fair, take risks for that which matters and give help to those in need. Now it's our turn to go out and facilitate understanding, cooperation and justice to promote peace around the world."

Dennis Jansen, CTLS 2009/10