
Your Successful International Career Seminar at Faculty of Law

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As the shortest month of the year was drawing to a close, I had the pleasure of attending the seminar “Your Successful International Career” in the Faculty of Law on February 26th, held by Stephen Denyer, Global Markets partner at the illustrious international law firm Allen and Overy and senior officer with the IBA and ABA. The Englishman, who joined the firm over 35 years ago, outlined that his talk would concern his own experience as well as how budding lawyers could establish and develop a career in legal services.



Denyer commenced his address by informing the attendees of Allen and Overy’s notable repertoire of work in the legal world. Founded in London in 1930, the firm transcended the decades to remain within the bracket of top 8 largest firms in the world today, with an annual turnover of € 1.5 billion and continuous growth which the speaker attributed to the firm’s continuous efforts to hire young lawyers. He described how they were at the forefront of the transition from national to international firms, and it is easy to see why, as with 43 offices in 30 countries, Allen and Overy impressively boasts that its 5000-plus employees do business in every country in the world.

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Denyer continued by delving into the big trends that would have a material impact on how future lawyers will operate. He explained that there is more commercial activity in the world than ever before, as well as huge volumes of people migrating, therefore resulting in a necessity for the lawyers of the future to work in multiple jurisdictions and in a multi-lingual, multi-national society. He explained how it’s no longer possible to have just an asymmetrical knowledge base between providers and clients as people are now informed about laws and business. Changes regarding the global movement of capital, regulation and the growth of world law are also trends which need to be observed, and Denyer concluded this segment by advising that if all these aspects can be managed then one is equipped to be a successful lawyer.

The talk continued with a discussion of the implications for how lawyers work. Denyer stressed the imperativeness for lawyers to have an awareness of comparative law. He described how clients won’t be satisfied with paying to be told the law of one country alone, and that lawyers will need a sense of how global legal systems interact. He gave helpful tips on how one would have an opportunity to gather such skills through work experience, class choice and other reading. He also advised that the law should be thought of less as a series of rules to be followed slavishly, but rather more as a mechanism for what the government and society wish to achieve and articulate it in that way, i.e. an outcomes focused world. Denyer then focused on the client-lawyer relationship which is an intrinsically important aspect that future lawyers will need knowledge of. He spoke of the fact that clients see lawyers as trusted advisors who observe the wider context in which the law operates and who can relate laws to the objectives of both society and the clients themselves. He declared that lawyers are expected by their clients to perform three different self-explanatory functions simultaneously: trusted advisor, project manager and risk manager. He then revealed three practical things that must be continuously in one’s mind in these situations. The first is accessibility, because as a lawyer, one must be organised in a way that

provides a seamless service to the client. The other attributes needed are speed and value, with the latter being of special importance as legal services are overheads for businesses in which less is spent each year, so the firm needs to be more efficient than the year before in order to reconcile with the fact that they must make a profit too. Denyer's final feature of the talk concerned the implications for successfully practicing law in the future. He explained how lawyers must be guided by the rules of deontology, as well as by the knowledge that legal practitioners possess more experience and qualifications than ever before. He listed a number of aspects which one must be aware of if contemplating entering the legal profession. These included the fact that "unbundling" is widespread, i.e. clients will divide aspects into segments to be completed by various firms, as well as "commoditisation", with legal services being seen as commodities with a fixed price. He repeated the importance of comparative law awareness which is tied in with his emphasis on having a dual qualification (for example in various countries in Europe) in order to increase the chances of landing a successful job. Involvement was also stressed as a key method of achieving this, both in international competitions such as moot and in organisations and conferences, as well as collaborating with lawyers across the globe. The seminar concluded with an opportunity for attendees to pose any questions to Mr. Denyer, most of which concerned internships, future applications and potential language barriers which may occur. The hour long talk was extremely well received by everyone, with Mr. Denyer's engaging oration and invaluable, helpful advice for future lawyers proving thoroughly beneficial and encouraging for all those interested in a successful career in legal services.

Marita Moloney is a third year Law International student at University College Cork, and is currently on Erasmus studying at the Faculty of Law in Charles University. She has a vast array of interests, ranging from art and culture to current affairs and literature. She decided to write for iForum as she believed it would be an excellent opportunity to continue developing her journalistic skills, gain valuable work experience and meet other Erasmus students with the same interests.