

INTRODUCTION

This book, *The Unofficial Guide to U.S. Legal Studies: For Foreign Lawyers*, is based on the authors' varied experiences as foreign law students, attorneys, and professionals in the United States. The authors share the commonality of having been born, raised, and/or educated outside the United States and facing challenges in the pursuit of careers in the intensely competitive world of corporate America. It was conceptualized out of a strong desire to share experience-based views on legal education in the United States to those who may follow in our footsteps.

By design, the team of coauthors represents different parts of the world (e.g., Asia, Latin America, and Europe), and each chapter is written with a different voice—in order that ideas may be communicated from the unique perspectives of different cultures.

As expressed in its title, this *Guide* is unofficial: While it is an ABA publication, it was researched, written, and produced independently of the Council and the Accreditation Committee of the ABA Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar, which is recognized by the U.S. Department of Education as the accrediting agency for U.S. law schools.

This *Guide* was written strictly for the benefit of foreign lawyers—and perhaps, in support thereof, people and organizations around them, their families, employers and counselors, administrators of schools who cater to them, and policy makers who influence legal education—whom we believe should pursue legal studies in the United States fully prepared and with reasonable goals and realistic expectations.

In this *Guide*, we endeavor to provide relevant information regarding educational opportunities in the United States for foreign lawyers. We start with a discussion of factors that prospective students consider in deciding whether or not to pursue legal studies in the United States, and the *caveats* that are not always considered by prospective applicants (Chapter 1). In succeeding chapters, we provide (1) information on degree or nondegree programs, choice of schools, comments on law school rankings, and financing your legal education (Chapters 2 and 4); (2) guidance regarding the application and admission process (Chapter 3); (3) an overview of the U.S. law school experience, including the common-law system and reasoning, the

Socratic method, U.S.-style exams, and language and cultural issues, among other things (Chapter 5); (4) information on U.S. bar exams, including eligibility and preparation (Chapter 6); (5) insights into career opportunities, including job hunting in the United States (Chapter 7); and (6) other relevant information, e.g., living in the United States, immigration issues, travel ideas, etc. (Chapter 9).

This *Guide* also seeks to provide inspiration. Chapter 8 presents profiles of select U.S. law school alumni who represent different geographic regions, cultures, age groups, and career tracks. Their experiences and achievements are cited throughout the book. It is our hope that you will see yourselves in one of them and, as they did, follow a passion for excellence and achievement.

We have also included a few personal photographs to provide a glimpse into the life and adventure that awaits you. We hope that visual images will enhance the information we seek to provide in this *Guide*.

By no means are we offering this *Guide* as a main resource for information, ideas, and insights. In fact, it is intended as a reference material for the early stages of a foreign lawyer's interest in legal studies in the United States. The hope is that it will inspire a deeper interest in legal education and point its readers to publications, periodicals, websites, blogs, and other materials, including, but not limited to, those listed in the "Available Resources" section.

It bears emphasis that information contained in this *Guide* relating to legal education, admission to the bar, and the legal profession is subject to rapid changes, and we do not expect the information to be current beyond the time each part was written.

Furthermore, we wrote this *Guide* partly in furtherance of our responsibilities as members of the American and international bars, as we believe that diversity enriches our global community of lawyers. Our goal is to inform foreign attorneys who stand to contribute to such diversity and weigh into their preparation for legal careers that will hopefully make our community a more collaborative one.

We thank you for your interest and we wish you good luck in your academic, professional, and personal endeavors.