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Tom Shaffer's Post

September 27, 2016

The 'Master of Studies in Law' Takes Off!

Posted by Tom Shaffer on 09/27/2016 at 01:14 PM

This semester, we have a number of pioneering students at RWU Law: the first participants in our new one-year master's program called the **Master of Studies in Law**, or **MSL**.

The program is open to learners who seek deep exposure to law and legal methods in order to broaden their professional skill set or add value to their résumé – but who do not want to be practicing attorneys. Anyone who works (or would like to work) regularly with lawyers, or with laws and regulations, can benefit from the MSL program.

The [course of study](#) provides students with a foundational understanding of law and the American legal system and allows them to specialize in those specific legal subjects most important to their current or desired job.

Part of the MSL program replicates the experience of a first-year J.D. student. MSL students study such staple law school topics as torts, contracts, criminal law, and civil procedure alongside J.D. students, writing the same papers and taking the same exams; but they also have access to higher-level elective law courses applicable to their particular career fields. And they will graduate after accumulating just two semesters of credit instead of the six needed to earn a J.D.

Human resource and health care professionals, for-profit and non-profit business managers, journalists, government employees, realtors, accountants, IT professionals, educators, compliance officers, and those who work in the criminal justice system and in various positions related to environmental law are just some of the professionals who could benefit from this course of study.

And these examples only hint at the possibilities. Students have the freedom, with the help of a faculty advisor, to design a course of study that permits them to specialize in the area most valuable to their business and professional development.

As **Dean Michael J. Yelnosky** explained:

“
Law now influences human activity as never before. One consequence is that a growing number of non-lawyers come into contact with lawyers and the law as a regular part of their work. As a result, many people would benefit from some rigorous legal training, but don't need a J.D. Our MSL program is designed to serve people who are seeking that edge.”

One important note: the MSL program is not intended to train lawyers or to undermine traditional legal practice. It is simply a practical response to evolving realities and changing times.

And we're always seeking new students interested in exploring the exciting possibilities!