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Newsroom: Law Scholarships For Syrian Refugees 01-26-2017

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National Law Journal

Roger Williams University School of Law

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January 26, 2017

Newsroom

Law Scholarships for Syrian Refugees

RWU Law announces it will provide two Syrian refugees with full scholarships as part of a consortium of schools vowing to help those from the war-torn country.

From the **National Law Journal**: "[Syrian Refugees to Receive Law School Scholarships](#)" by Karen Sloan



January 25, 2017: Roger Williams University School of Law will provide two Syrian refugees with full scholarships as part of a large consortium of schools vowing to help those from the war-torn country.

The Bristol, Rhode Island, law school is the first among the Institute of International Education's 60-campus Syria Consortium to offer a free Juris Doctor degree to Syrian refugees. Roger Williams will also host two graduate architecture students.

The scholarship announcement came one day before President Donald Trump was expected to sign an executive order temporarily blocking Syrians from entering the country over terrorism concerns. It was unclear Wednesday what impact that move will have on the law school's plans to admit the two Syrian students, **said Roger Williams law Dean Michael Yelnosky.**



“Even in a scenario where the United States prohibits Syrians from entering the country, there are displaced Syrians and refugees already here who would be eligible to participate in the program,” he said.

A number of law schools have programs or initiatives for Afghan attorneys and students aimed at promoting the rule of law there, but there has thus far been less of a focus on Syria, which remains in chaos amid more than five years of civil war.

But helping Syrians to the law school was an easy sell to Yelnosky.

“It felt like a perfect fit,” he said. “There’s a real ethic here of trying to be a good member of the community and give back, and Syria is a community that is being ravaged. It felt, frankly, like the least we could do.”

As many as 200,000 Syrian university students have been forced to stop their studies amid fighting between President Bashar al-Assad’s government forces and rebel groups, according to the Institute of International Education, a nonprofit organization that promotes international educational opportunities. Providing displaced students with an opportunity to study elsewhere offers a path forward, said **institute president Allan Goodman**. “An investment in education is a long-term investment in peace,” he said. “Syria needs students to continue their university education so that, even in the midst of crisis, the country is producing the leadership and knowledge necessary for a successful future.”

Kate Greene, the director of international program development at Roger Williams, said the university selected the law and architecture schools to receive the Syrian students because rebuilding Syria’s infrastructure and rule of law will be vital to the country’s recovery.

The institute’s Syria Consortium has thus helped 500 Syrian students continue their educations.

The hope is that studying law at Roger Williams will be enriching for the Syrian law students and eye-opening for their American classmates, Yelnosky said.

“I think the prospect for intellectual and personal growth is incredibly exciting,” he said. “We always look for a mix of people who can learn from each other’s experiences.”

For full story, visit the [National Law Journal](#).