

Welcome, Brooklyn Law School, entering class of 2018! Take a look around. The students sitting with you will not only be your classmates, but also potentially your colleagues, your support group, your legal network, your mentor, or even your spouse! You are among an accomplished, diverse, and inspiring group of students who bring years of dedication, passion, and initiative to our community. In the coming years, you will learn that your fellow students are your greatest assets here at Brooklyn Law School. Take the time to forge new connections, to challenge yourself intellectually, and to become immersed in all the educational, legal, and cultural opportunities that will present themselves to you during your tenure here.

The 2018 entering J.D. Class is composed of 360 students who were selected from more than 3,600 applicants from around the world.

- 308 of you have enrolled in the 3-Year Program,
- 26 are in our 2-Year Accelerated J.D. Program,
- 26 in the extended 4-Year Program, and
- Joining the incoming JD students are 12 new second-year students who have transferred to Brooklyn Law School.

Our campus is proud to stand at the frontier of a broad global community. This year we welcome 17 new LL.M. students, who come to us from 15 countries including Jordan, Sri Lanka, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Switzerland, and Mexico. All of them hold law degrees in their home countries and have come here to study alongside the J.D. students. We also welcome 6 exchange students who will join us this fall from France, the Netherlands, and China.

In the first-year J.D. class alone, your birthplaces span 5 continents and 20 countries. 78 of you – 22% of the incoming class – are first-generation Americans. You speak 40 languages and dialects other than English -- ranging from Farsi to Polish to Vietnamese. 64 of you – 18% of the incoming class -- speak at least three languages. You hail from 30 U.S. states and seven foreign countries. 52 of you reside in the center of the universe, otherwise known as Brooklyn.

Some more statistics: The class median age is 24. The youngest is 20 and the oldest is 42. For the student who is 20, remember that using a fake ID is a misdemeanor and you will have to report it to the Character & Fitness Committee.

No matter the age, we are always pleased to see students follow in the footsteps of family members who are graduates of Brooklyn Law School. Tonight, we welcome 28 such students. And with over 23,000 alumni, that is not surprising.

All of you are here because we know you're prepared to excel academically, both in the classroom and in the field through clinics, externships, internships, and pro bono work. Collectively, you graduated from 179 colleges and universities, having pursued 62 different academic majors. 31 have earned post-graduate degrees, including M.A.s, MBAs, MFAs, and PhDs. Listen to some of the fascinating examples of work you have done:

- An osteological dig of funerary graves in an ancient Roman port city, utilizing biochemistry and archaeological techniques to appropriately excavate remains and classify bones in a lab;
- Reexamination of body surface area as a preoperative predictor of risk of prosthetic joint infection;
- Research for the Calgary Public Interest Law Clinic supporting environmental protection of a rare species of fish in Alberta;
- A presentation exploring the benefit of an interdisciplinary approach to domestic violence in the legal system, emphasizing the importance of a victim advocate's presence in the courtroom; and
- An investigation of the role of transient receptor protein channels during the ingestion of bacteria by phagocytes and amoeboid protozoans.

Many of you come to Brooklyn already having achieved career success. You've held such impressive positions as:

- Vice President of Business Strategy and Client Relations at a law firm;
- Behavioral therapist for children with disabilities;
- Creative manager for world-famous electronic music festivals and nightclubs;
- Global Financing Project Manager for IBM;
- Legal Coordinator at Michael Kors;
- Lead Fire Protection Engineer at a construction engineering company; and
- Political reporter and analyst whose work has been published by *The Wall Street Journal*, *New York Magazine*, *The New York Times*, and *The Guardian*.

You are not only intellectually and professionally impressive, you are accomplished artists and athletes. We call it, "Brooklyn's Got Talent." Among you today are several Varsity athletes, a basketball coach for the Long Island Muslim Basketball Association, a competitive figure skater, a Broadway sound designer, a ukulele player, an artist who has written, directed, and produced her own short film, a founder of an LGBT+ opera society, a competitive rifle shooter, a classically trained chef, an ocean rescue swimmer, a performer of Xiang-sheng, a type of traditional Chinese comedy performance, and an award-winning creative writer.

Public service and working for the greater good have been part of Brooklyn Law School's mission since our founding more than a century ago. Now, you will carry on and add to this tradition. Many of you have done truly inspiring volunteer work to give back to your communities and the world, including fighting against human trafficking, helping asylum seekers and refugees, and traveling all over the globe to volunteer in orphanages, among many other examples. We look forward to seeing you apply this dedication and compassion as law students and in your future careers as lawyers.

Others have worked for public interest and government organizations, including:

- The founder of a nonprofit organization that benefits orphans who have been neglected due to some type of disability;

- A US Navy Nuclear Senior Supervisor on a guided missile submarine;
- An individual who worked within the Department of Education to counsel and assist victims of crises;
- A Program Officer at the Human Rights Foundation; and
- A Field Director for the advocacy nonprofit Maryland Working Families.

I've also noticed that many of you are former bartenders, brewers, and night-life promoters. I've written down your names for the faculty in case one of us needs to hire a student worker.

So many stories, experiences, and talents. All in all, we are astonished by this extraordinary group of students who have traveled many different paths to arrive at this singular point tonight. Can you guess who is who? Well, you will have the next one to four years to find out as you become classmates, lifelong friends, and members of our extraordinary Brooklyn Law School community.