

**INTERNATIONAL LL.M. STUDENTS AND THEIR
EXPERIENCES: A CASE STUDY OF SYRACUSE
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW'S LL.M. PROGRAM**

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INTRODUCTION

Universities and colleges have opened their doors to international students for decades.¹ More recently, U.S. law schools have developed and expanded programs for international students by creating specialized graduate LL.M. programs. These LL.M. Programs offer graduates from law schools in other countries the opportunity to continue their legal education in the United States. Although the number of such programs have proliferated in many years, little research has been conducted about these programs. This Article seeks to fill this gap. This Article reports on the first empirical evaluative study about the experiences of LL.M. students and alumni, their professors, and their peer mentors at Syracuse Law's LL.M. Program.

The Article begins in Part I with a brief discussion of the background of LL.M. programs in the United States, followed in Part II by a discussion of the benefits of international legal education to law schools and their international and U.S.-born students. Part III discusses the findings of a recent collaborative research project conducted between the Office of International Programs of the Syracuse University

College of Law ("Syracuse Law") and a team of Program Evaluation experts of the Syracuse University School of Education. This study aimed to assess the efficacy and outcome of the Syracuse LL.M. Program, through surveys and interviews of Syracuse Law LL.M. students, alumni, faculty, and peer student mentors. The findings of this study may inform other law schools about factors that contribute to the success of an LL.M. Program as well as serve as a model for the evaluation of other programs. Based on the study's findings of the overall success of the LL.M. Program at Syracuse Law, this Article may also provide an impetus for the development of future LL.M. programs and initiatives.

I. AN OVERVIEW OF LL.M. PROGRAMS IN THE UNITED STATES

In recent years, the number of LL.M. programs at U.S. law schools has increased dramatically.² In 2012, 55 of the 201 ABA-approved law schools offered

1. See Carole Silver, *Globalization and the Legal Profession: States Side Story: Career Paths of International LL.M. Students, or "I Like to be in America,"* 80 *FORDHAM L. REV.* 2383, 2413 (2012) (explaining that law schools enroll international students in LL.M. and J.D. programs).

2. Kathleen Darvil & Carrie W. Teitcher, *Resetting the Clock for International Students: A Call for the ABA to Establish Standards for LL.M. Students and for Law Schools to Rethink Their LL.M. Curricula,* 4 *INT'L J. BUS. & APPLIED SCI.* 10, 11 (2018).

LL.M. programs.³ By 2022, that number had increased nearly threefold, to 153 programs.⁴ As the number of LL.M. programs has increased, so too has the number of international students enrolled in J.D. degree programs.⁵ In 2009, fewer than two percent of J.D. students were international students.⁶ As of 2019, this percentage increased to more than three percent, representing an eighty-one percent increase in ten years, in the number of international students enrolled in J.D. programs in the United States.⁷ Despite the increase in the number of international students who are

3. *Id.* at 10, n. 11 (noting that, in 2012, “At least 114 law schools offer LL.M. or similar one-year programs. . . fifty-five of which offer U.S. Legal Studies Programs for Foreign Lawyers or International Students”); *see also* Jennifer Smith, *Crop of New Law Schools Opens Amid a Lawyer Glut*, WALL ST. J., Jan. 31, 2013 (stating that there were 201 ABA-approved law schools in 2012); *see also* ABA, *Legal Education*, AM. BAR ASS’N, available at <https://www.abalegalprofile.com/legal-education.php> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024).

4. *See* ABA *List of Approved Law Schools*, AM. BAR ASS’N, available at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/aba_approved_law_schools/ (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (As of January 2023, the American Bar Association has accredited and approved 199 law schools conferring a J.D. degree); *see also* *Office Guide to LL.M, Master’s, and Certificate Programs*, LAW SCH. ADMISSIONS COUNCIL, available at <https://www.lsac.org/llm/choosing-a-law-school/alpha-llm-program-guide> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (153 law schools offer LL.M. International Law Programs or Certificate Programs out of the 199 ABA accredited law schools); *see also* *Post J.D./Non J.D. Programs by School*, AM. BAR ASS’N, available at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/llm-degrees_post_j_d_non_j_d/programs_by_school.html (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (Over 150 law schools presently offer post-J.D. graduate programs).

5. *Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar – ABA Required Disclosures*, AM. BAR ASS’N, available at <http://www.abarequireddisclosures.org/Disclosure509.aspx> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024); *Statistics Archives*, AM’ BAR ASS’N, available at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/statistics/statistics-archives/ (last visited Apr. 25, 2024).

6. The term “International students” here refers to students holding a F1, M1, or J1 Visa. *See* *Student Visas*, INT’L STUDENT, https://www.internationalstudent.com/study_usa/preparation/student-visa/ (last visited Apr. 25, 2024); 8 U.S.C. §1101(F)(i); 8 U.S.C. §1101(J); 8 U.S.C. §1101(M)(i); *Section of Legal Education and Admission to the Bar Enrollment Date 2020-2022*, AM. BAR ASS’N, available at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/statistics/ (last visited Apr. 25, 2024); As of 2022, 2.1 percent of the total 116,723 J.D students are international students. *See* *Statistics*, AM. BAR ASS’N, (Feb. 10, 2023), available at https://www.americanbar.org/groups/legal_education/resources/statistics/ (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (providing data as to 1L enrollment by gender and race/ethnicity and indicating that in 2022, 3,507 J.D. students were nonresident aliens).

7. *See infra* Table 1 (illustrating that in 2009, there were 2595 total foreign national students, while in 2016, that number rose to 3,530, and highlighting an increase in the number of J.D. students that are international students); *2022 Standard 509 Information Report Data Overview*, AM. BAR. ASS’N (Dec. 19, 2022), available at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/Questionnaires/2022/2022-aba-standard-509-data-overview-final.pdf (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (indicating that in 2022, 24,134 students enrolled in other than J.D. programs, including LL.M. programs, which is an increase of 3270 students enrolled in other than J.D. programs since 2021, highlighting an increase in the number of international students enrolling in law

enrolling in U.S. law schools, little is known about them or the programs in which they enroll.⁸

One reason for the lack of information about LL.M. programs and their students is that LL.M. programs, unlike J.D. programs, are not subject to any external approval, accreditation, or reporting requirements.⁹ Neither the ABA nor any other

schools). Some states define “foreign law graduate” for the purpose of bar admission, such as New York State. See *Foreign Law Graduate Eligibility - New York Bar Exam*, N.Y. BAR EXAMINERS, available at <https://www.newyorkbarexam.com/foreign-law-graduate-eligibility/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024). Table 1 below shows the gradual increase in the number of international J.D. students over nine years, together with the steady decrease in the total number of J.D. students. (Note: Three decimal places were rounded off in the total percentages shown).

Table 1: The Number of Non-Resident International JD Students by Years

Year	Non-resident international JD Students	Total JD Students	Percentage
2009	2,595	144,645	1.79 percent
2010	2,500	148,596	1.68 percent
2011	2,609	146,930	1.78 percent
2012	2,748	139,504	1.96 percent
2013	2,972	128,799	2.31 percent
2014	3,232	119,845	2.70 percent
2015	3,641	113,876	3.20 percent
2016	3,530	111,095	3.18 percent
2017	3,656	110,176	3.32 percent
2018	3,703	111,581	3.32 percent
2019	3,653	112,879	3.24 percent

8. See Frank Sullivan, Jr., *International LL.M. Students: A Great Resource for U.S. Law Schools*, 22 IND. INT'L & COMP. L. REV. 219, 224 (2012) (reviewing George E. Edwards, *LL.M. Roadmap: An International Student's Guide to U.S. Law School Programs* (2011)).

9. Chapter 5, *ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools 2019-2020*, AM. BAR ASS'N (2019), available at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/standards/2019-2020/2019-2020-aba-standards-and-rules-of-procedure.pdf (last visited Apr. 25, 2024); see *Council Statements 2013-2014*, AM. BAR ASS'N (2013), available at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/misc/legal_education/Standards/2013_2014_council_statements.authcheckdam.pdf (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (Council Statement 1 indicates that the American Bar Association's approval of a law school extends only to the first professional degree in law, thereby excluding LL.M. degrees from eligibility for ABA approval); see also Helmut Kohl, *LEGAL CULTURE: LL.M. Programs: The Frosting on the Cake of Legal Education?*, 4 GERMAN L. J. 735, 737 (2003) (finding that while the ABA closely monitors primary law degree programs, it does not accredit or supervise LL.M programs).

entity collects or maintains any centrally collected data about LL.M. programs, their outcomes, or their students.¹⁰

Despite this lack of data, some scholars have begun to collect information about LL.M. Programs, anecdotally. The next section of this Article will discuss the scholarship that has been conducted to date about LL.M. programs and their students.¹¹ None of these articles, however, involve the type of empirical research conducted about Syracuse Law's LL.M. Program, as discussed in Part III. Following Part II's discussion of what we currently know about the advantages of LL.M. Programs, the existing literature, Part III discusses the first-of-its-kind mixed method (qualitative and quantitative) study of Syracuse Law's LL.M. Program.

10. Law schools are required to provide data to the ABA on their compliance with the ABA Standards. See *Chapter 5, ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools 2019-2020*, AM. BAR ASS'N, available at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/standards/2019-2020/2019-2020-aba-standards-and-rules-of-procedure.pdf (last visited Apr. 25, 2024). Standard 509, for example, requires law schools to submit an Annual Questionnaire that includes information and data on a range of issues, including the number and ethnicity of J.D. students. See *Guide to Compilation – All Schools' Data, ABA Standard 509 Information Report Spreadsheets*, AM. BAR ASS'N, available at <http://www.abarequireddisclosures.org/Disclosure509.aspx> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024). However, Standard 509 does not apply to LL.M. programs. Instead, the only requirement the ABA imposes on law schools relevant to LL.M. programs is included in Standard 313. Standard 313 prohibits all "degree program(s) other than [the] J.D. degree program" unless the following situations apply: (a) the law school is fully approved; (b) the ABA Council has granted acquiescence in the program; and (c) the degree program will not interfere with the ability of the law school to operate in compliance with the Standards and to carry out its program of legal education. *Id.*; see also *Chapter 3, ABA Standards and Rules of Procedure for Approval of Law Schools 2019-2020*, AM. BAR ASS'N, available at https://www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/administrative/legal_education_and_admissions_to_the_bar/standards/2019-2020/2019-2020-aba-standards-and-rules-of-procedure.pdf (last visited Apr. 25, 2024). According to this Standard, all law schools seeking to start a new LL.M. program, or any other new degree-granting program must seek and obtain ABA Acquiescence. One of the grounds for acquiescence is that the new program will "not interfere with the ability of the law school to operate in compliance with the Standards and to carry out its program of legal education." Law schools typically interpret Standard 313 to mean that LL.M. programs (and other law school programs such as S.J.D. programs) may not interfere with or dilute the school's J.D. program, but no ongoing supervision or acquiescence by the ABA is required.

11. See e.g., Carole Silver, *States Side Story: Career Paths of International LL.M. Students, or I Like to Be in America*, 80 *FORDHAM L. REV.* 2383, 2394 (2012); Carole Silver, *Perspectives on International Students' Interest in U.S. Legal Education: Shifting Incentives and Influence*, 49 *NEW ENG. L. REV.* 463, 465 (2015); Carole Silver & Swethaa S. Ballakrishnen, *Sticky Floors, Springboards, Stairways & Slow Escalators: Mobility Pathways and Preferences of International Students in U. S. Law Schools*, 3 *UC IRVINE J. INTER. TRANSACTIONAL AND COMP. L.* 39, 60 (2018).

II. ADVANTAGES OF LL.M. PROGRAMS

In order to practice law in the United States, any student – U.S. or foreign born – must complete certain requirements. These requirements typically include graduating from an ABA-accredited law school with a J.D. degree, passing a state bar exam, and gaining admission to a state bar, in compliance with the state bar association's rules for admission.¹² No LL.M. degree is required to practice law in any state or federal jurisdiction in the U.S. Even for those law graduates who wish to enter the legal academy, an LL.M. is not required. In fact, due to the increasing interdisciplinary nature of legal education, many law schools now favor faculty candidates with advanced degrees in fields other than law.¹³ As a result, LL.M. programs in the U.S. are not designed to attract students from the United States.¹⁴ Instead, most LL.M. programs are aimed at international lawyers and law graduates who received their first degree in law in another country, and who seek to continue their legal studies in the U.S. for professional or personal reasons.¹⁵

A. *The Benefits of LL.M. Programs to International Students*

For international lawyers, an LL.M. degree from an ABA-accredited law school is a highly coveted credential that will hopefully increase their job prospects as well as their professional standing in their home countries.¹⁶ For some, it is the “obvious next step” in their careers.¹⁷ For others, it may open up opportunities for

12. Sullivan, Jr., *supra* note 8 at 227-28.

13. See generally Heather A. Haveman & Ogi Radic, *Educational Background and Stratification in the Legal Academy: Invasion of the Body Snatchers ... or More of the Same?*, 21 J. GENDER RACE & JUST. 91 (2017).

14. See *International Lawyers Getting an LLM in the USA*, INT'L STUDENT, available at <https://www.internationalstudent.com/study-law/international-llm/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (stating that an LL.M. degree is most often requested by applicants to the bar who were educated in or practiced outside the U.S.). On exception is the Master of Laws Programs in Tax, which are popular with U.S. students, as well as international students. See e.g., *Program Overview: Master of Studies in Law in Taxation*, NYU LAW, available at <https://www.law.nyu.edu/llmjsd/taxation> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024).

15. Online Master of Legal Studies Programs, *Guide to Master of Laws (LL.M.) Programs*, 2U INC., available at <https://onlinemasteroflegalstudies.com/law-degrees/llm/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (stating that there are LL.M. programs offering concentrations, including but not limited to, concentrations in Global Food Law (Michigan State University), American Legal Studies (Regent University), Health Law (Seton Hall University), and Advocacy (Stetson University)).

16. Carole Silver, *Internationalizing U.S. Legal Education: A Report on the Education of Transnational Lawyers*, 14 CARDOZO J. INT'L & COMP. L. 143, 156 (2006).

17. Swethaa Ballakrishnen, *Homeward Bound: What Does a Global Legal Education Offer the Indian Returnees?*, 80 FORDHAM L. REV. 2441, 2463 (2012) (finding that for many students, a global legal education is valuable and that an LL.M. is an “obvious” next step after obtaining an LL.B. or bachelor's degree in law).

legal employment and residency in the United States.¹⁸ Although an LL.M. degree is not a necessary prerequisite for law jobs in either the U.S., the LL.M. degree has been shown to be a prestigious, and even necessary, credential for certain jobs in some countries.¹⁹ In fact, many international law students who enroll in LL.M. Programs report the value of the degree when seeking employment in their home countries.²⁰ Foreign law graduates have described the “halo advantages” that comes with simply being associated with a law school in a “high status country,” such as the United States.²¹ Other LL.M. graduates report that their LL.M. degrees are valuable for making contacts “within a global legal community.”²²

For students who may wish to relocate permanently in the U.S., LL.M. programs also offer the opportunity to take state bar exams and become admitted to practice law in the U.S. This option is especially appealing to those students from countries undergoing political and/or economic hardships.²³

Attending a law school in the U.S. also allows an international student the opportunity to improve their English proficiency.²⁴ Because English proficiency is such an important skill for legal practitioners in today’s world, developing one’s English fluency is one of the most commonly cited reasons students in the past have sought to enroll in LL.M. programs in the U.S.²⁵

18. Sullivan Jr., *supra* note 8, at 220-21, 227.

19. Matthew S. Parker, *The Origin of LL.M Programs: A Case Study of the University of Pennsylvania Law School*, 39 U. PA. J. INT’L L. 825, 887, n. 309 (2018) (citing John Treu, *Should You Go for an LL.M Degree After Law School? It Depends*, JD ADVISING (Jan. 16, 2014), available at <https://jdadvising.com/is-getting-an-llm-worth-it-after-law-school/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (stating that obtaining a license in a new jurisdiction is invaluable in LL.M. students’ respective home countries).

20. Sullivan Jr., *supra* note 8, at 221; Ballakrishnen, *supra* note 17, at 2446 (finding that the LL.M. credential is often used as capital and can offer vast advantages in some countries).

21. Ballakrishnen, *supra* note 17, at 2445.

22. *Id.* at 2446.

23. Silver, *supra* note 16, at 158. However, according to BARBRI, citing the National Board of Law Examiners’ Bar Admission Guide, only a handful of states allow students with LL.M. degrees from ABA-approved law schools to qualify for their bar exams. *U.S. Bar Exam Foreign Eligibility*, BARBRI, available at <https://www.barbri.com/usbar/bar-exam-foreign-eligibility/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024); citing the National Council of Bar Examiners, *Comprehensive Guide to Bar Admissions Requirements* (2023), available at <https://www.ncbex.org/publications/bar-admissions-guide/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (explaining those states are Texas, District of Columbia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Tennessee, and Washington).

24. Silver, *supra* note 16, at 156-57.

25. Carole Silver & Mayer Freed, *Translating the U.S. LL.M Experience: The Need for a Comprehensive Examination*, 101 NW. U. L. REV. COLLOQUY 23, 25 (2007), available at https://www.academia.edu/5854151/Translating_the_U.S._LLM_Experience_The_Need_for_a_Comprehensive_Examination (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (stating that, for some, specifically international students from countries with

In addition, an LL.M. degree from a U.S. law school may help international students who are unable to become admitted to practice law in their home countries, especially in those countries with low bar passage rates.²⁶ In such cases, graduates of LL.M. programs who take and pass a state bar in the U.S., may be eligible to waive into admission to the bar in their home countries, without taking their countries' bar exams.²⁷

Some lawyers from other countries may simply prefer to continue their legal studies in the U.S. due to the unique aspects of an American legal education. U.S. law school classes typically incorporate the Socratic method, consideration of precedent and policy, and teaching students to "think like lawyers."²⁸ These practical aspects of an American legal education, may be considered beneficial in preparing students for the increasing globalization of law practice.²⁹ Moreover, the curricula of most U.S. law schools also provide opportunities for smaller, elective, and experiential classes, as well as clinics and externships. These opportunities encourage the development of practical lawyering skills as well as closer relationships between

low bar passage rates like Korea and Taiwan, the prospect of earning a license to practice law in the US is important).

26. Silver, *supra* note 16, at 158 (stating that, notably, in Japan and Korea, there is a low bar passage rate and many law graduates do not pass the bar exam, but if they pass the bar exam in a U.S. jurisdiction, they can return home and be recognized as a foreign lawyer, so many students will utilize the LL.M. as a "process to get a license"); Silver & Freed, *supra* note 25, at 25 (stating that, for some, specifically international students from countries with low bar passage rates like Korea and Taiwan, the prospect of earning a license to practice law in the U.S. is important).

27. Silver, *supra* note 16, at 158.

28. Justin W. Evans & Anthony L. Gabel, *Preparing Legal Entrepreneurs as Global Strategists: The Case for Entrepreneurial Legal Education*, 32 ARIZ. J. INT'L & COMP. LAW 728, 732 (2015).

29. *Id.* at 778 (explaining that with an increase in globalization, it is important that lawyers acquire "the skills needed for these new practice settings," and therefore that law schools need to offer progressive clinical experiences and experiential opportunities); see Randall Robbins & Thomas Matthews, *Cultural Diversity: Is It Present In American Law Schools and the Legal Profession?*, 9 J. DIVERSITY MGMT. 75, 75 (2014) (discussing the critical role of law schools for making balanced cultural diversity in an attempt to shape young lawyers into future leaders); David R. Barnhizer, *The Purposes and Methods of American Legal Education*, 36 J. LEGAL PROF. 1, 42 (2011) (introducing the concept of "thinking like a lawyer"); Donald G. Marshall, *Socratic Method and the Irreducible Core of Legal Education*, 90 MINN. L. REV. 1, 3-5 (2005) (arguing that the Socratic method can support dynamic group involvement and interaction in relation to the legal profession, which is intellectually based and humanistically motivated); see generally Charles Szypszak, *Socratic Method for the Right Reasons and in the Right Way: Lessons from Teaching Legal Analysis Beyond the American Law School*, 11 J. POL. SCI. EDUC., 358 (2015) (introducing advantages and disadvantages of Socratic method and ways to improve it).

faculty and students, which may be less common in the law schools in other countries.³⁰

Finally, the overall U.S. law school experience may support the development of students' intellectual potential, especially among those students whose legal education in their home countries is in a "state of crisis."³¹

In sum, from the international students' point of view, earning an LL.M. degree from a U.S. law school may offer them opportunities for professional advancement, networking, and to gain knowledge about the American legal system, as well as to improve their English proficiency and other lawyering skills relevant to the increasingly globalized practice of law.³² Moreover, the unique pedagogical methods and curriculum in many U.S. law schools provide an additional appeal to those international students who seek new academic challenges, as well as practical lawyering experiences not available in their own countries' law schools.

B. The Benefits of LL.M. Programs to U.S. Law Schools and Their U.S. Students

For law schools, LL.M. programs have been promoted as a way to increase law school revenues. The promise of new tuition dollars is desirable, especially now. In the past decade, the overall J.D. enrollment has dropped by 20.9 percent.³³

30. See generally Allison Korn & Laila L. Hlass, *Assessing the Experiential (R)Evolution*, 65 VILL. L. REV. 713, 758 (2020) (explaining the results of Korn and Hlass' 2018 study titled "Emerging Models of Experiential Courses," in which they learned that schools have undertaken major changes to experiential learning curriculum, including by, among other things, guaranteeing placement or requiring enrollment in law clinic and externship courses and adding more experiential learning courses); see also Deborah Burand, *Crossing Borders to Create Value: Integrating International LL.M.'s Into a Transactional Clinic*, 19 LEWIS & CLARK L. REV. 441, 457 (2015) (stating that classroom conventions, like clinics and experiential learning experiences, are unusual to foreign-educated law students).

31. Jayanth K. Krishnan & Vitor M. Dias, *The Aspiring and Globalizing Graduate Law Student: A Comment on a Lazarus-Black and Globokar LL.M. Study*, 22 IND. J. GLOBAL LEGAL STUD. 81, 87 (2015) (noting that in some LL.M. students' home countries, the system of legal education is in crisis, teachers teach in outdated methods, and research and writing are left unsupported, among other concerns, so students look abroad to "obtain self-actualization and maximize their intellectual potential," and that India and Brazil are examples of two countries in which legal education is in crisis, the state of legal education is weak and basic necessities are lacking, and these weaknesses are adversely affecting law students domestically).

32. Dorra-Maria Sonderhoff, *The Costs and Benefits of Pursuing an LL.M. Degree in the United States*, 20 ILSA QUART. 36, 37 (2012).

33. Data compiled by the ABA Section on Legal Education and the Bar, reported at *Law School Enrollment*, LAW SCHOOL TRANSPARENCY, available at <https://www.lawschooltransparency.com/trends/enrollment> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024); see also Silver & Ballakrishnen, *supra* note 11, at 42-43 (noting a decline in J.D. enrollment for ABA-approved law schools in all degree programs from 140,000 in the 2013-2014 academic year to below 125,000 by the fall of 2016).

Moreover, since LL.M. programs are not subject to ABA reporting and monitoring requirements, as discussed above,³⁴ law schools are free to use their LL.M. tuition dollars as part of their general budget, without running afoul of ABA Standards, and without any adverse impact on the standing of their J.D. programs within the ABA.³⁵

In addition to adding revenue to law school budgets, the increasing popularity of LL.M. programs can be understood as part of the larger trend towards internationalization and globalization within legal education,³⁶ as well as the legal profession.³⁷ As one commentator has observed, "...from the perspective of the incoming students, changes in the world market for legal services have created a new environment in which an international legal education has practical value and demand."³⁸

Other studies have found that the interaction between U.S. and international students enhanced the overall climate of law schools, as well as the outlook, open mindedness, support for differing viewpoints, understanding of international matters, cross cultural understanding, and intercultural sensitivity and awareness among the students.³⁹ For example, the presence of international students may enhance the

34. See Silver, *supra* note 16.

35. *Id.* at 147 (stating that graduate programs are not subject to the same ABA oversight as J.D. programs, so law schools are able to focus more on cost efficiencies with LL.M. and graduate programs than they can with J.D. programs); see AM. BAR ASS'N, *supra* text accompanying note 6.

36. See UNESCO 2009 World Conference on Higher Education, July 5-8, *Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic Revolution*, 27, Ed.2009/Conf.402/inf.5. (explaining that internationalization was apparent at all levels of the higher education enterprise around the world over the last decade, and its pervasiveness was amongst the most critically important characteristic of internationalization); Bohm et al., *Global Student Mobility 2025: Forecasts of the Global Demand for International Higher Education*, IDP EDUC. AUSTRALIA, 3 (2002) (forecasting the number of international students in the world would increase from 1.8 million in 2000 to 7.2 million in 2025); see also Krishana and Dias, *supra* note 31 at 82-83 (noting that law schools view accepting and educating LL.M. students as a way to add international diversity and expand their networks abroad); see Swethaa Ballakrishnen, *Homeward Bound: What Does a Global Legal Education Offer the Indian Returnees?*, 80 FORDHAM L. REV. 2441, 2444 & 2471 (2012) (finding that an LL.M. degree is one of great value because of the international experiences associated therewith and that there are increasingly globalized demands of the legal services market, warranting a need for lawyers with international experience).

37. See e.g., Theresa Kaiser-Jarvis, *Preparing Students for Global Practice: Developing Competencies and Providing Guidance*, 67 J. LEGAL EDUC. 949, 950 (2018) (finding that all lawyers of the 21st century, not just U.S. lawyers, should be prepared to address international, trans-national or cross-border legal issues, and how all law schools and programs should prepare their students for this reality).

38. Carole Silver & Swethaa S. Ballakrishnen, *Sticky Floors, Springboards, Stairways & Slow Escalators: Mobility Pathways and Preferences of International Students in U.S. Law Schools*, 3 UC IRVINE J. INTER. TRANSACTIONAL AND COMP. L., 39, 42-3 (2018).

39. See Alvija Sumskaitė & Inga Juknyte-Petreikiene, *Parameters for the Assessment of the Impact of Internationalisation Policy on Quality in Higher Education and its Influence on the Development of Society: the Lithuanian Case*, 10 CENT. EUR. J. PUB. POL'Y, 1, 4-5 (2016)

U.S. law students' understanding of their own culture, increase their support for internationalism, generally, and their interest in international career options, in particular.⁴⁰ Similarly, U.S. students who attend classes with international students have been found to have higher levels of intellectual engagement and self-assessed academic skills.⁴¹

In order to attract international students, some law schools have developed new or expanded their existing international and comparative law courses and programs. For example, a 2009 longitudinal study of U.S. J.D. graduates found that 44 percent of the respondents engaged in work involving non-U.S. clients or cross-border matters within their first seven years of practice.⁴² In the same study, more than 60 percent of attorneys working in various law office settings, including large private firms, in-house corporate counsel, legal services, and public defender offices, reported that their work involved cross border legal matters.⁴³ Another 2009 study of members of the Philadelphia Bar Association found that 67.5 percent of 1,050

(presenting an extensive literature review regarding positive effects of internationalization of higher education); Richard C. Sutton & Donald L. Rubin, *The GLOSSARI Project: Initial Findings from a System-Wide Research Initiative on Study Abroad Learning Outcomes*, 10 FRONTIERS: THE INTERDISC. J. OF STUDY ABROAD, 65, 73 (2004) (finding that the students who studied abroad showed greater levels of functional knowledge, knowledge of world geography, knowledge of cultural relativism, and knowledge of global interdependence compared to the other students); see generally Madhav P. Sharma & Loren B. Jung, *How Cross-Cultural Social Participation Affects the International Attitudes of U.S. Students*, 9 INT'L J. INTERCULTURAL REL. 377 (1985) (explaining the results of a study on the interactions between U.S. and international students that showed that U.S. students who interacted with international students developed a greater cosmopolitan world outlook, cultural pluralism, world-mindedness, understanding of their own culture, more support for internationalism, international career aspirations, and political liberalism).

40. See Sharma & Jung, *supra* note 39, at 381; see also Carole Silver, *Getting Real About Globalization and Legal Education: Potential and Perspectives for the U.S.*, 24 STAN. L. & POL'Y REV. 457, 472 (2013) (citing to Rebecca Lindsey Parsons, *The Effects of the Internationalisation of Universities on Domestic Students*, 41 (June 2007) (unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Griffith University) (on file with author)), available at <https://research-repository.griffith.edu.au/handle/10072/365867?show=full> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024); see generally Sullivan Jr., *supra* note 8; see Sharma & Jung, *supra* note 39, at 381.

41. Patricia Gurin et al., *Diversity and Higher Education: Theory and Impact on Educational Outcomes*, 72 HARV. EDUC. REV. 330, 351 (2002) (indicating that academic skills include self-rated academic ability, writing ability, listening ability, self-reported change in general knowledge, analytic and problem-solving skills, ability to think critically, writing skills, and foreign language skills).

42. See generally Ronit Dinovitzer et al., *After the JD II: Second Results From a National Study of Legal Careers*, THE AM. BAR FOUND. & THE NALP FOUND. FOR L. CAREER RESEARCH AND EDUC., 18, 35 (2009), available at <https://www.americanbarfoundation.org/resources/after-the-jd-ii-second-results-from-a-national-study-of-legal-careers/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024). The research was conducted with a sample of J.D. graduates with approximately seven years of work experiences; *id.* at 12-14.

43. *Id.*

responding active members reported handling matters that required knowledge of foreign and/or international law.⁴⁴

Former Supreme Court Justices Ginsburg, O'Connor, and Breyer have all acknowledged the value of understanding international and comparative law in applying U.S. law.⁴⁵ In fact, Justice Breyer has observed that because 15 to 20 percent of cases require judges to consult facts, laws, and decisions from other countries, judges should have an understanding of foreign law as well as international law and practice.⁴⁶

Moreover, international students add to the diversity of law schools.⁴⁷ Although it has been assumed that most international students who come to the U. S. to attend law school are English speaking⁴⁸ and wealthy, given the high cost of tuition

44. Susan L. DeJarnatt & Mark C. Rahdert, *Preparing for Globalized Law Practice: The Need to Include International and Comparative Law in the Legal Writing Curriculum*, 17 LEGAL WRITING: J. LEGAL WRITING INST. 3, 20 (2011) (showing the support for the thesis that international and comparative legal issues are now a part of the general practice of law).

45. Assoc. Just. Stephen Breyer, *Speech at the American Society of International Law 97th Annual Meeting*, U.S. SUPREME COURT (Apr. 4, 2003), available at https://www.supremecourt.gov/publicinfo/speeches/viewsspeech/sp_04-04-03 (last visited Apr. 25, 2024). During this speech, Justice Breyer explained that, among other things, the Supreme Court has seen an increasing number of domestic legal questions that directly implicate foreign or international law which increasingly require the Supreme Court to rely on decisions of foreign courts for comparison. As a result, he noted the importance of understanding international law and practice for today's American lawyers; *Id.*; Theresa Kaiser-Jarvis, *Preparing Students for Global Practice: Developing Competencies and Providing Guidance*, 67 J. LEGAL EDUC. 949, 954 (2018) (citing Robert Barnes, *Breyer Says Understanding Foreign Law is Critical to Supreme Court's Work*, WASH. POST, (Sept. 12, 2015, 9:24 PM), available at https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/courts_law/breyer-says-understanding-foreign-law-is-critical-to-supreme-courts-work/2015/09/12/36a38212-57e9-11e5-8bb1-b488d231bba2_story.html) (last visited Apr. 25, 2024) (stating that Justice Breyer estimated that fifteen to twenty percent of cases require judges to consult facts, laws, or decisions from abroad). Although the law and the legal profession are becoming more "internationalized," the U.S. has a long history of opposition to the ratification of international treaties, as well as citing international law in U.S. decisions. Former Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sandra Day O'Connor even reported receiving anonymous death threats for citing international law in their opinions, and, as recently as 2006, Senate Republicans introduced bills to "prohibit federal courts from referring to foreign laws or rulings in interpreting the U.S. Constitution." Tony Mauro, *Justice Ginsburg Says Death Threat Fueled by Dispute Over International Law*, CAL. SUP. CT. MONITOR (ONLINE) (Mar. 16, 2006), available at <https://www.law.com/almID/900005548196/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024).

46. Breyer, *supra* note 45.

47. See Christine Gregory, *Building Social Justice Leaders: The University of Michigan Law School's Diversity Program*, 63 J. LEGAL EDUC. 302, 302 (2013) (describing efforts of the law school adopting admission policies to enhance diversity of student body).

48. English as the most popular language in the world for both native and non-native speaker, representing about 1.132 billion people who speak English. *Cochrane Evidence in Different Languages*, COCHRANE (Feb. 12, 2024), available at <https://www.cochrane.org/news/cochrane-evidence-different-languages> (last visited

of U.S. law schools, many LL.M. students are from diverse backgrounds, based on nationality, ethnicity, gender as well as their economic background.⁴⁹ Given their diversity, they often contribute to the overall racial, ethnic, and economic diversity of law school student bodies.⁵⁰

III. THE CASE STUDY: AN EVALUATION OF THE SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF LAW'S LL.M. PROGRAM

A. *An Overview of Syracuse Law's LL.M. Program*

Syracuse Law is one of many law schools that recently expanded their international LL.M. programs.⁵¹ Although Syracuse Law has had an international law program for decades, including the first summer externship program in London, it was not until 2012 when Syracuse Law inaugurated its LL.M. Program for international students, followed by an international S.J.D. Program in 2021.⁵²

Apr. 25, 2024); *The Most Spoken Languages in the World*, BERLITZ (Feb. 8, 2024), available at <https://www.berlitz.com/blog/most-spoken-languages-world> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024).

49. Bryant G. Garth, *Notes Toward an Understanding of the U.S. Market in Foreign LLM Programs: From the British Empire and the Inns of Court to U.S. LLM Programs*, 22 IND. J. OF GLOB. LEGAL STUD. 67, 76-77 (2015) (explaining that LL.M. students who attend elite U.S. law schools likely come from elite backgrounds, and that LL.M. students attending non-elite law schools also likely come from some type of privileged background, making LL.M. students a nondiverse group).

50. See Jan Hoffman French, *At Play in the Field of Law: Symbolic Capital and Foreign Attorneys in LL.M. Programs*, 22 IND. J. GLOBAL OF LEG. STUD. 95, 101 (2015) (debunking the stereotype that all foreign law students come from the highest economic echelons of their countries of origin by pointing to an LL.M. student body that is diverse in nationality, ethnicity, gender, and economic background).

51. James R. Maxeiner, *Learning from Others: Sustaining the Internationalization and Globalization of U.S. Law School Curriculums*, 32 FORDHAM INT'L L.J. 32, 37 (2008) (explaining additive, integrative, and immersive approaches of internationalization at law schools); Julie M. Spanbauer, *Lost in Translation in the Law School Classroom: Assessing Required Coursework in LL.M. Programs for International Students*, 35 INT'L J. LEGAL INFO. 396, 397 (2007) (indicating that law schools invite international students to participate in LL.M., J.D., S.J.D., and J.S.D. programs that are exclusively or primarily for international students or to which international students are admitted); Rosa Kim, *Globalizing the Law Curriculum for Twenty-First-Century Lawyering*, 67 J. LEGAL EDUC. 905, 921 (2018) (discussing approaches of globalization of law schools and efficiency of strategies of providing globalized curriculums); John Edward Sexton, *The Global Law School Program at New York University*, 46 J. LEGAL EDUC. 329, 330 (1996) (providing information regarding the program at NYU's backgrounds and strategies).

52. Syracuse Law has long been committed to an international approach to legal education. For more than forty years, Syracuse Law has offered the nation's first summer study abroad externship program in London, as well as additional short-term study abroad programs. In 1969, Syracuse Law inaugurated the internationally known Center for Global Law

As of 2023, the Syracuse Law LL.M. Program has enrolled 261 LL.M. students from fifty-seven different countries.⁵³ The Syracuse Law LL.M. program has grown each year, although it is designed to remain small in order to allow for individualized student support, and the development of meaningful relationships between faculty and students, a hallmark of the Syracuse Law legal education. The Syracuse LL.M. program also offers opportunities for the development of academic and professional skills through various extracurricular, externship, volunteer and study abroad programs, and other opportunities.⁵⁴

In 2020 the Office of International Programs proposed a research project to evaluate the LL.M. Program. A team of experts in evaluation at the Syracuse University School of Education agreed to conduct a mixed method evaluative study of the LL.M. Program. During the first phase of the research, graduate students, under the supervision of Professor Moon-Heum Cho, developed survey instruments for

and Practice, directed by the late Peter Herzog. This Center later housed the Lockerbie Trial Families Project, under the direction of the late Donna Arzt, which documented, in real time, the developments in the criminal trial following the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. See Andrew I. Killgore, *Prosecution Stumbles in "Lockerbie Trial" of Pan Am Flight 103*, WA. REPORT ON MIDDLE EAST AFFAIRS, 24, 78 (December 2000), available at <https://www.wrmea.org/000-december/prosecution-stumbles-in-lockerbie-trial-of-pan-am-flight-103.html> (last visited Apr. 25, 2023). The Center also housed the Sierra Leone Project, directed by David M. Crane, former Chief Prosecutor of the Special Court of Sierra Leone. Today, Syracuse Law continues its commitment to international programming with the Syrian and Ukrainian Accountability Projects, the Institute for Security Policy and Law, directed by the Hon. James Baker, former Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces and the Global Law Program, its Journal, the Journal of Global Rights and Organizations, and Impunity Watch News, directed by Professor Cora True Frost. The College of Law's Disability Law and Policy Program, founded and directed by Professor Arlene Kanter, works with governments and disability organizations around the globe to advance disability rights and justice. In addition, all of these opportunities are available to and attract the interests of LL.M. students.

53. Master of Laws (LL.M.), SYRACUSE UNIV. COLL. OF LAW, available at <https://law.syr.edu/academics/master-of-laws-ll-m-in-american-law/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024). To earn the LL.M. degree, students must take two required courses in their first semester (Introduction to the American Legal System and Legal Writing for International Students) and successfully complete a total of twenty-four additional credits. LL.M. students are also permitted to take two graduate-level elective courses in other colleges and departments of Syracuse University. Prior to enrolling, international students are provided an opportunity to enroll in an "English for Lawyers" summer program, supported by the English Language Institute of Syracuse University. This program is designed to provide a foundation in legal terminology and language usage in listening, speaking, reading, writing, and research for the law students who are not English native-speakers, and is open to students admitted to Syracuse Law's LL.M. Program, as well as any other law school program in the United States.

54. The International Scholar Lecture Series, at which international LL.M. and S.J.D. students are invited to present their research to the greater Syracuse University community; and the opportunity to become involved in one or more of thirty student-led law school organizations and affinity groups.

current LL.M. students, alumni, and their J.D. student mentors.⁵⁵ The surveys covered a range of topics, including the motivations for international students enrolling in the Syracuse Law's LL.M. Program, their pre-arrival expectations, and an assessment of their overall experience. Later, the team sent surveys and conducted interviews of law faculty who taught LL.M. students.

The response rate of current students was quite good, and their experiences, favorable. As a result of the pandemic, the alumni response to the initial survey was very low, however. But the survey and interview questions were refined and administered again to all alumni, with an impressive response rate of 40 percent. Of those, an overwhelming ninety percent reported that the Syracuse Law LL.M. program exceeded their expectations. In addition to the alumni, the researchers surveyed peer mentors, J.D. students who were selected by a competitive process, and law faculty who were involved in the LL.M. Program, several of whom several agreed to be interviewed. All research was conducted with the approval of the University's Institutional Review Board (IRB).

1. Surveys and Interviews of Current LL.M. Students

In March 2020, a survey was sent to all students enrolled in the LL.M. Program during the 2019-20 academic year. Of the thirty-two LL.M. students surveyed, twenty-one responded, resulting in a sixty-five percent response rate. Of the twenty-one respondents, ten were female and eleven were male; six were twenty-five to twenty-nine years of age, with nine respondents thirty to thirty-four years of age, and six respondents over the age of thirty-five. These respondents represented thirteen different countries from East Asia, Southeast Asia, the Middle East, Europe, South America, and the African region. About half of the respondents indicated they planned to return to their home countries after graduation, while the other half indicated they would seek to remain in the United States, including those with plans to take the NYS Bar Exam. Most of the respondents reported high satisfaction with the program. When asked whether respondents felt the LL.M. Program met their expectations and whether they would enroll in the program, if they had the option to go back in time, most responded affirmatively. On a five-point scale with a five being "Very Satisfied" and a one being "Very Dissatisfied," the average score for satisfaction with the program was a 4.25 and 4.5, respectively. However, female respondents gave a lower rating to their overall experience (3.79/5) than male students, (4.01/5).

A total of 38 percent of the respondents reported that their main reason for enrolling in Syracuse Law's LL.M. program was the opportunity to take the NYS

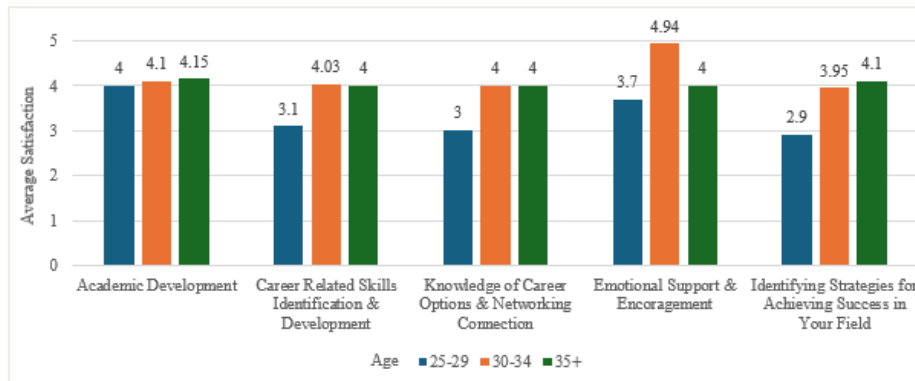
55. Two of the groups also arranged for interviews of some of the current students but were not able to complete the interviews due to the closing of school when COVID-19 arrived in Syracuse in March 2020. Upon completion of their analysis, the students prepared and sent their findings to the staff of the Office of International Programs in May 2020.

bar exam, regardless of whether their ultimate desire was to stay in the U.S., return home, or to use their knowledge to advance their career outside the US. While some students planned to become eligible to sit for the NYS bar in order to increase their employment opportunities at home, others hoped to remain in the U. S. to practice law. Some students chose to enroll in order to gain exposure to the American legal system. In addition, 19 percent of respondents noted that the primary reason they chose Syracuse Law was because of its Disability Law and Policy Program.

The respondents were highly satisfied with their legal education. Respondents reported a 73 percent improvement in their understanding of the American law system, a 12 percent improvement in their understanding of the legal system utilized in their workplace, and a 20 percent improvement in their understanding of the general international legal system and other legal topics. The LL.M. students' responses also revealed high satisfaction with their professors and faculty advisors. At the time of the data collection, each LL.M. student was assigned a faculty advisor to discuss and plan their academic program. To promote greater integration between J.D. and LL.M. students, LL.M. students are now included within the law school-wide faculty mentorship program.

In terms of their overall satisfaction with the faculty, every student (100 percent) responded that their professors helped them to achieve academic success. Ninety-five percent of the respondents favored their professors' teaching styles. For example, one student commented that the professors "respected" them, and that they were "kind and supportive." However, when the students were asked about specific areas of support offered by the faculty, the satisfaction levels varied depending on the age of the student. As Figure 1 shows, students aged twenty-five to twenty-nine years reported lower satisfaction levels, compared to the satisfaction levels of students aged thirty or older.

Figure 1 Satisfaction with Professors by Age Group



The respondents also indicated satisfaction with the extracurricular activities offered at the law school, with an average satisfaction rating of 3.8 on a scale from one (poor) to five (excellent). The overall satisfaction level with extracurricular activities was higher among female respondents (average score 4.11) than for male respondents (average score 3.90). Younger students, between the ages of twenty-five to twenty-nine, rated the importance of extracurricular activities to their success at 3.66, relatively lower than students aged thirty to thirty-four years (3.88) or students over thirty-five years (3.8). Approximately 49 percent of respondents suggested more job-related extracurricular activities, including internships, law-clinic experiences, and networking with local attorneys. Further, of the twenty-one respondents, 76 percent felt “confident” or “highly confident” that they developed the job-related skills they would need to successfully pursue employment following their LL.M. program.

Several students reported relatively less satisfaction with career development opportunities and the support they received from the Office of Career Services. When asked about what offices the students use, one student reported, “We have a career office in [the] law school, but they only take care of JD students. They don’t know how to support us.” Some students reported being “ignored” by certain law school offices and having the impression that these offices worked only for their J.D. peers.⁵⁶ Since the study, the law school hired a new director and new staff in the Office of Career Services.

The current LL.M. students also commented on their interaction with their J.D. student peers. Fifty percent of the respondents said they enjoyed attending off-campus events with other Syracuse Law students. Seventy one percent of the respondents reported favorably about one event in particular, the university-wide Martin Luther King Dinner, that the Office of International Programs had arranged for them to attend. Some current LL.M. students also expressed a desire for more interaction with U.S. students, both academically and socially, including more opportunities to participate in cultural and local events and activities with their J.D. peers.

2. *Surveys and Interviews of LL.M. Alumni*

In February 2021, a survey was sent to all alumni of Syracuse Law’s LL.M. Program.⁵⁷ Of the more than 200 LL.M. alumni who received the surveys, eighty responded, resulting in a forty percent response rate. In addition to the eighty respondents, four were

56. School administrators have addressed the relationship between the Office of Career Service and LL.M. students. In 2021, a new director of Career Service was hired who has identified as a priority additional programs and support for all international students, including LL.M. and S.J.D. students.

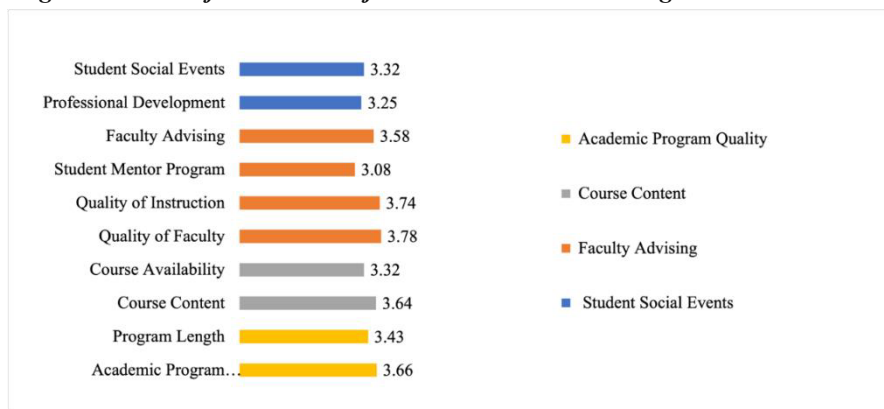
57. Syracuse Law’s LL.M. Program celebrated its 10th anniversary in 2021, and at that time, which is also when the survey was sent out, the program had about 200 alumni.

interviewed.⁵⁸ Three of the alumni who agreed to be interviewed graduated in 2019 and one graduated in 2017. Of the eighty respondents, half were male (50 percent) and nearly half were female (46 percent). The alumni ranged in ages from eighteen to forty-four years old.

The alumni respondents represented diverse ethnic groups. Of the respondents, 38 percent were Caucasian, 24 percent were Hispanic/Latino, 14 percent were Asian, and 10 percent were African or African American. Prior to enrolling in the Program, almost half of the respondents had two to five years of full-time work experience (41 percent), followed by participants who had five or more years of experience (33 percent), and those who had no legal experience or one year of experience (25 percent). Prior to enrolling in the LL.M. program, half (50 percent) of the participants were practicing lawyers, 15 percent were students, 8 percent were consultants, 5 percent were judges, and 4 percent were academics.

To evaluate the alumni respondents' satisfaction with the LL.M program, the survey reported descriptive statistics, or means and standard deviations, in four categories: Academic Program Quality, Course Content, Faculty Advising, and Student Social Events. Figure 2 shows the level of alumni respondents' satisfaction with the LL.M. Program.

Figure 2 Levels of Alumni Satisfaction with the LL.M. Program⁵⁹



Note: Four point-Likert scale was used in which 1 denotes “not satisfied at all” and 4 denotes “very satisfied.”

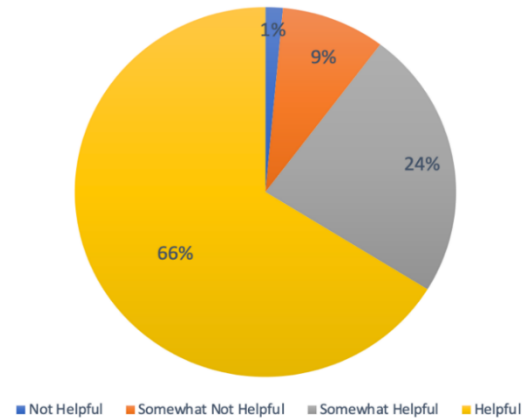
58. While alumni were surveyed and interviewed, another study was conducted with current LL.M. students. In March 2020, the survey of current students was sent to all thirty-two students enrolled in the LL.M. Program. The current students' responses to their respective survey were similar to those of the eighty-one alumni surveyed, and the current students made similar suggestions to the alumni suggestions on how to improve the program.

59. The numbers reflected in Figure 2 illustrate the means as the dimension of evaluation.

The students' motivation for enrolling in Syracuse Law's LL.M. Program varied. The primary motivation was the LL.M. Program's overall reputation, based on the positive recommendations by Syracuse Law alumni, followed by the schools' general reputation regarding the quality of its courses, faculty, and curriculum.

Other reasons cited by alumni for enrolling in the LL.M. Program included the availability of financial support, the diversity of the student population, the low cost of housing in Syracuse, the availability of tutors, the proximity to NYC, and other personal reasons. Some alumni reported that they chose Syracuse Law because it offered the opportunity for successful graduates to sit for the NYS Bar Exam. As one student observed, "our law system in Brazil ... is a completely different from American legal system.... So, my main goal was to take the bar exam ... in the United States such as New York and Washington DC." Some alumni reported that the law school's specialized programs, such as the Disability Law and Policy Program, was the primary reason they chose to attend Syracuse Law.

Overall, the alumni respondents reported high satisfaction with their Syracuse Law education. More than half of the respondents reported that they gained and learned more than they had expected. Additionally, 38 percent of the respondents reported favorably on the practical skills they learned, and 44 percent reported favorably regarding the professional networking events offered to them as LL.M students. The alumni responses also showed high satisfaction with their employment opportunities after graduation. Of the eighty-one alumni who responded, 66 percent reported that they were employed full time after graduation, while only 3 percent of respondents reported being unemployed. Further, within one year after graduation, 84 percent of the alumni were employed, and of the remaining 16 percent, the majority were not seeking employment. An overwhelming 99 percent of alumni reported that attending the Syracuse Law LL.M. Program was "helpful" to them in attaining their career goals.

Figure 3 Helpfulness of LL.M. Program in Attaining Career Goals**SU COL LL.M Helpfulness in Attaining Career Goals**

Inevitably, not all alumni will be able to secure jobs especially in the U.S., even if that is their preference. Factors such as their professional and linguistic backgrounds as well as their lack of legal experience in the U.S. may hinder their ability to secure legal jobs in the U.S. after graduation. As a result, some alumni reported a preference for additional career training and networking opportunities relevant to their fields of interest. Other alumni would have liked greater support in their search for employment after graduation.

The issue of career counseling for LL.M. students is challenging. Most LL.M. students attend law school in the U.S. on an F-1 student visa, which prohibits them from working off campus, including in law offices, during the academic year and summers. By contrast, U.S. law students typically work in law offices during their first and second summers of law school, and many also work during the year as employees or externs. As a result, LL.M. students have less experience working in U.S. law offices, and are therefore disadvantaged in competing for law jobs in the U.S. One way international law students may gain legal experience is through the Optional Practical Training (OPT) Program.⁶⁰ This Program permits international students to receive temporary authorization to work for up to 12 months, following graduation. However, additional research is needed to identify the specific barriers LL.M. students face in securing employment after graduation, as well as the strategies that have helped those who have succeeded in finding jobs in their chosen fields.

60. The Optional Practical Training Program, administered by the Office of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, allows students on F-1 visas to receive temporary employment authorization for up to 12 months before and/or after completing their academic studies. *Optional Practical Training (OPT) for F-1 Students*, U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGR. SERVICES (Mar. 27, 2024), available at <https://www.uscis.gov/working-in-the-united-states/students-and-exchange-visitors/optional-practical-training-opt-for-f-1-students> (last visited April 25, 2024).

3. *Surveys and Interviews of J.D. Peer Mentors*

Syracuse Law's LL.M. peer mentorship program is unique. No other law school, as far as we are aware, has developed a peer mentorship program specifically for LL.M. students. For this reason, it was especially important to collect data about and from the mentors to guide the development of future programs.

All Syracuse Law LL.M. students are assigned a student mentor, typically a second-year or third-year J.D. student. During the 2019-20 academic year, the five mentors were asked to complete a survey, with a request for follow-up in-person interviews. Four of the five student mentors agreed to be interviewed. The survey questions and interviews focused on the performance of the mentors, their perception of their accomplishments and challenges as mentors, as well as their impact, if any, on the academic progress and successful integration of LL.M. students.

The findings of the mentor surveys revealed that most J.D. students chose to become mentors not because of the monetary compensation, but because of their "intrinsic motivation,"⁶¹ such as their desire to help others and learn about the legal systems of other countries. As one of the mentors explained: "I think that's my biggest incentive [is] getting them to reach their goals [and that] is something that's really huge for me. We do get paid. ... I probably would do this even if it wasn't paid ...". Some mentors reported feelings of empathy towards the LL.M. students, based on their own personal struggles in law school. As one mentor explained, "I struggled in my first year trying to adjust to the high demands, the reading or writing in law school. Since I had gone through a year already ... I can work with the students that were struggling in that area in the same way that I have struggled..." The mentors also suggested that their success as mentors may be related to their prior experience and skills in such areas as tutoring, writing, knowledge of American law, as well as their personal social skills. Another mentor explained, "I help them out . . . It's fun . . . I'm developing my personal network at the same time. I'm helping students with stuff that might seem easy to me, but for them it's a little difficult..."

Other mentors shared their personal experiences of studying abroad or their relationships with family members who came from other countries as motivating factors in their decision to serve as mentors. One mentor, for example, stated, "I had gone abroad when I was an undergrad and I knew how many questions and fears that I had during that experience, so I thought I could relate in that kind of way." Some mentors also reported having an interest in different cultures and a desire to learn about foreign legal systems. As one mentor explained, "some of [the LL.M. students] were judges in their home countries. And we would talk about . . . the law system is their country. It was just so different.... So, I really enjoyed that."

61. See e.g., Richard M. Ryan & Edward L. Deci, *Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New Directions*, 25 CONTEMP. EDUC. PSYCHOL. 54, 56 (2000) (defining intrinsic motivations as doing an activity for its inherent satisfactions, such as fun or challenge, rather than for some separable consequence like external prods, pressures, or rewards).

To assist them in their role, all mentors received training and a copy of the LL.M. Handbook, prepared by the Office of International Programs. The mentors reported that the training they received during the mentor orientation session as well as the information provided in the LL.M. Handbook played an important role in helping them to understand their job responsibilities. One mentor noted: "I like to have something to be able to refer to, so a lot of the information contained in the handbook is similar to the information from our training. But I like to have it as a reference point in case there's a particular issue that I have a question on..."

The findings also indicated that different mentors played different roles for their mentees. Some mentors provided primarily academic support by helping their mentees overcome language barriers or deal with the stress brought on by the high amount of coursework. As one mentor responded, the mentor's role was to "look at the students' needs, tutoring in small group sessions, study groups. . . one-hour tutoring, subject matter that is extremely difficult for students, provide English paper editing, and explain some legal concepts for the students..." Other mentors saw their role more as tutors for specific classes, or as advisors about social and professional opportunities in Syracuse. One mentor observed that "...there are a lot of things that they need to do in a very short period of time, and so getting them ready if they want to take the bar, helping them with job searches, helping them with pro bono ..."

The mentors worked approximately ten hours per week, which they found sufficient to perform their duties. However, the mentors indicated that their availability was not limited to formal appointments. As one student mentioned, "I do not start and stop on a clock." In other words, the duration of each session between the student and the mentor varied, depending on the issues, academic schedules, coursework, or social events.

The mentors reported that they communicated most often with their mentees online rather than in person, even before the pandemic. However, some mentors commented that email was not always the most effective way of communicating with LL.M. students since they did not always respond. Two mentors reported that they struggled to maintain contact with their LL.M. mentees. As one explained, "emailing does not seem to entice them to respond or participate;" while another reported, "I reach out to them via email a lot and I just don't hear back." All the mentors surveyed agreed that in-person communication or communication via social media and WhatsApp was the most effective and easiest way to build a relationship with their mentees.

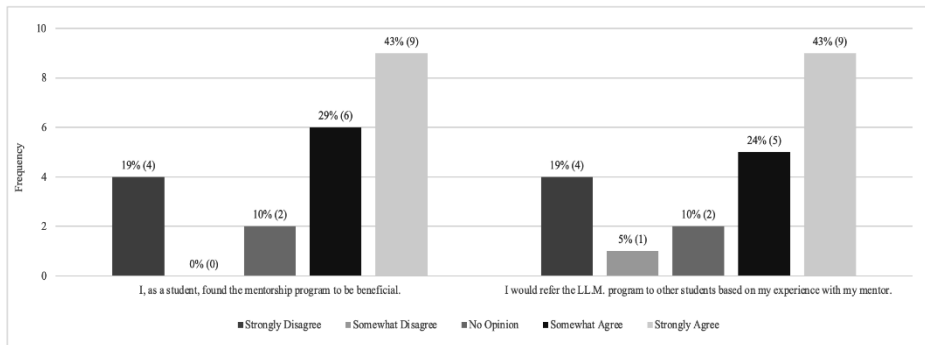
Overall, the mentorship program is highly valued as beneficial, and personally and professionally valuable to mentors and mentees, alike. As one mentor noted, "... I want to someday teach law and so this is like a really good opportunity for me to do that ... getting to know people from different cultures, getting to see different perspectives both on the law and on the world in general ..."

The LL.M. student-mentor relationship was not without challenges, however. In addition to the communication challenges mentioned above, some mentors noted that because their group of mentees were from different countries and with different cultural backgrounds, there were challenges with communication, as well as challenges meeting the mentees' varied needs. As one mentor reported, "... it is a very diverse group of people; they have different kinds of needs and interests..."

However, from the LL.M. students' point of view, they were highly satisfied with their mentors. Seventy one percent of the LL.M. students agreed or strongly agreed that the mentorship program was beneficial to them. Sixty seven percent responded that they would refer the Syracuse Law LL.M. Program to other students based on their experiences with the mentorship program.

The surveys also revealed that not all LL.M. students met regularly with their mentors. One LL.M. student noted that since the mentor had less legal experience than the student, themselves, they had "no need" to meet with the mentor. But the majority of LL.M. students (76 percent) met with their mentors, and of those, 66 percent met regularly, while others (4.8 percent) met with their mentors only when they had specific issues to discuss. The most common topic LL.M. students discussed with their mentors related to their "academic development." Over half (62 percent) chose to discuss only academic issues with their mentors. As one LL.M. student explained: "The mentors are a great source. They are U.S. law students, and they try to help us, not only to study but also to adapt to the new environment. Every week, they have sessions for international students. Some mentors are in the same class, and they help explain the legal terms." Figure 4 illustrates the evaluation of the Mentorship Program by LL.M. students. As reported here, the mentorship program has had a mutually beneficial impact on LL.M. student mentees and student mentors, alike.

Figure 4 Evaluation of the Mentorship Program by LL.M. Students



4. *Faculty Surveys and Interviews*

The other unique aspect of this research is the collection of data from law faculty who teach LL.M. students. Little research, if any, has been conducted on the role of law faculty in LL.M. Programs. Yet faculty can play an important role for LL.M. students as teachers, advisors, mentors, as well as references for future job opportunities for LL.M. students. Accordingly, including faculty in this research was essential. The purpose of the faculty portion of this study was to collect information from the law faculty about their attitudes and experiences with the LL.M. program, generally, and the LL.M. students in particular. The faculty survey also sought to elicit faculty suggestions about areas, if any, in which the program could be improved.

Most faculty at Syracuse Law encounter LL.M. students in their classes since LL.M. students are required to enroll in only two courses offered only for them. All the other courses LL.M. students take are part of the general J.D. curriculum. The research team sent surveys to 52 members of the Syracuse Law faculty. A total of 27 valid responses to the survey were collected, and four volunteers were also interviewed. Over half of the survey participants were male (52 percent), with less than half who were female (37 percent). Among the participants, 30 percent have taught in the law school for 1-10 years, followed by 11-20 years (19 percent), 21-30 years (26 percent) and 31-40 years (7 percent). In terms of faculty responses to their ranks, not all faculty responded, but of those who did 38 percent of the participants were teaching professors, (non-tenure track), followed by full (with tenure) professors (26 percent), adjunct professors (11 percent), and associate (with tenure) professors (7 percent). Individual in-depth interviews were conducted of four volunteer participants (one male and three females).

The faculty spoke highly of the LL.M. program in terms of the overall program, and their experiences with the students. The faculty respondents highlighted the beneficial impact of the diversity LL.M. students bring to the law school, including differences of perspectives, experiences, and thought. Faculty also emphasized the potential impact of the LL.M. Program beyond the law school, and in other countries throughout the world. Faculty viewed the LL.M. students as professionals and saw them as “great role models” for less experienced U.S. J.D. students. Faculty also expressed their gratitude and appreciation to the LL.M. Program administrators for their dedication to the Program and its students. Finally, faculty thought that the services provided to the LL.M. students, such as the mentorship program, were meaningful and helped to facilitate student success.

Faculty also commented about the extent to which LL.M. students participated in class. Figures 5-7 below show how often LL.M. students participated in class and how faculty viewed their participation. According to Figure 5, about 40 percent of the faculty respondents reported that LL.M. students sometimes participated in their classes, followed by most of the time (37 percent) and always (22 percent). To the

extent that some faculty believed that LL.M. students added value to their courses, over half the faculty respondents (63 percent) reported they are very valuable, followed by somewhat valuable (26 percent), and not very valuable (11 percent), as shown in Figure 7. In response to questions about participation by LL.M. students in class, 70.37 percent of the faculty respondents reported that LL.M. students always contributed in class, while 14.81 percent of faculty described their contribution as fair, 11.11 percent responded they had little contribution, and 3.7 percent of faculty found that the LL.M students had no contribution to class, as shown in Figure 6.

Figure 5 LL.M. Students' Participation Rate in Classes

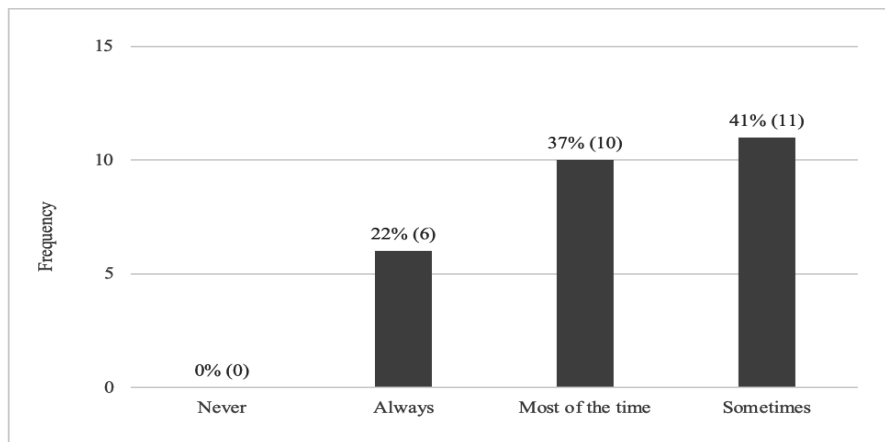


Figure 6 Faculty Perspectives on LL.M. Students' Participation in Classes

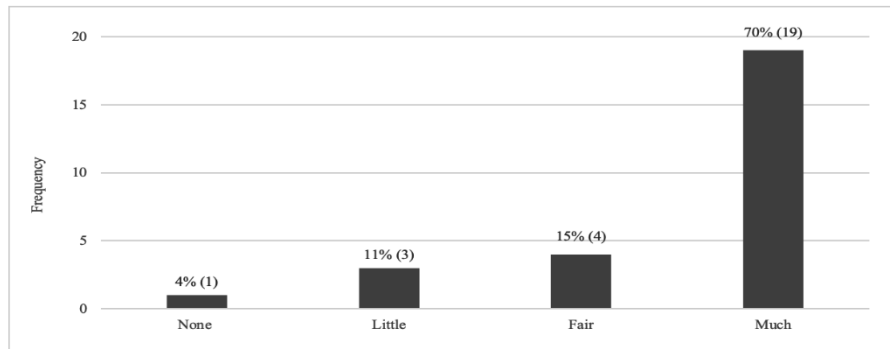
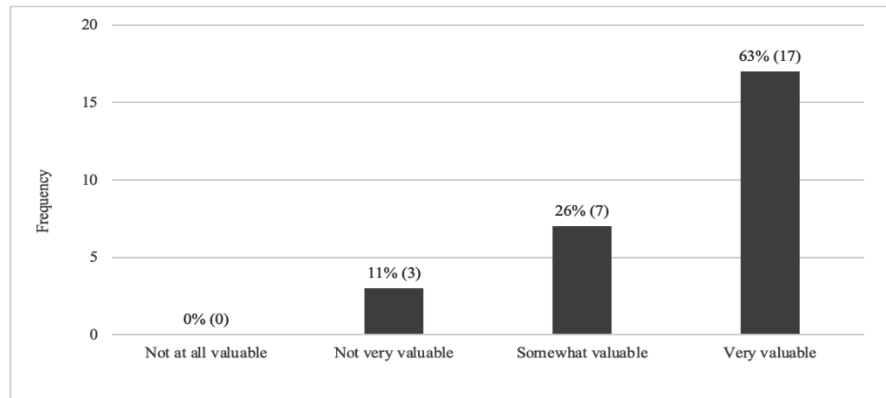


Figure 7 Faculty Perspectives on LL.M Students' Value in Classes

When faculty were asked about whether LL.M. students bring value to their classes, the four faculty who were interviewed answered affirmatively. For example, one faculty interviewee observed: “I think our LL.M. students bring to the law school, diverse experiences, information about other countries that we would never hear about or read about but for their presence in the class.” A different faculty member explained: “I believe LL.M. students do bring value to my class, and actually to the College of Law...[including] many different types of experiences that are very different from our J.D. students. [The LL.M. Program] adds a type of diversity to the college, which I think is fantastic.” A third faculty member said: “They bring value to classes because they bring their perspectives. In my view, it’s very different having students with their personal direct experiences discuss the laws of their countries.”

In terms of the faculty members’ teaching experiences, 89 percent of the faculty respondents reported that there was no difference teaching LL.M. students and J.D. students. However, 11 percent of the faculty respondents disagreed, noting that it was more challenging to teach LL.M. students than J.D. students, but they did not say why. In addition, most faculty (52 percent) believed that LL.M. students “sometimes” participate in law school-sponsored, non-academic social events outside of class, followed by 22 percent who believed they participate “most of the time,” and 11 percent who believed they never participate.

In terms of the faculty members’ observations of the interactions between J.D. and LL.M. students, 70 percent of the faculty reported that they saw LL.M. students communicating with J.D. students, including collaborating on school projects. As one faculty member observed, “It’s one of my course goals when I have LL.M. students in the class, [to] pair them up with J.D. students, so they get to meet and work together.” Only 4 percent of the faculty reported that they never saw LL.M. students communicate with J.D. students. As for faculty expectations, 48 percent of the

faculty reported that the current communication frequency between J.D. and LL.M. students met their expectations. Thirty-three percent of the faculty respondents expected higher communication frequency between the LL.M. and J.D. students. Only 7 percent of the faculty respondents reported that the current communication frequency between the two groups of students was beyond their expectations.

Most faculty (71 percent) also reported that they heard positive comments from LL.M. students about their experiences at the law school, followed by 19 percent who reported that they never heard any comments from LL.M. students, and 7 percent who reported that they heard both positive and negative comments from LL.M. students. As one faculty member noted during an interview, “Well, they certainly seem happy when they come to class, and they have their own group of friends... so it’s just my observations of LL.M. students, but I believe that they are happy with the program because they look happy.” Another faculty member noted: “There seems to be some positive feelings towards the school from some of those students. I assume they’re not excluded, and they have enough of a community here.”

In terms of their own interaction with LL.M. students, most faculty reported that they discussed the academic program and requirements with LL.M. students (23 percent), with 17 percent recommending specific courses. At least 19 percent of the faculty also reported discussing professional career planning with the students and agreed to write letters of recommendation for them. Fourteen percent of the faculty respondents reported providing non-academic advice to LL.M. students.

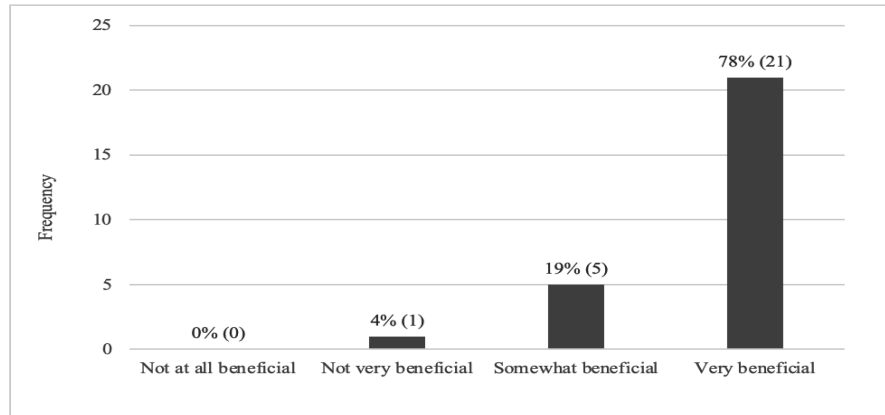
In terms of the law school faculty’s attitude toward the LL.M. Program, generally, 70 percent “strongly like” the Program, with 11 percent who neither like nor dislike the program, and 7 percent, who dislike the Program. Of the faculty interviewees, they all “strongly liked” the Program because of the “richer experience and perspectives” that LL.M. students brought to the program, and the “internationalization” of the program.

Faculty respondents also reported on challenges they observed relating to language differences, academic background gaps, and the failure of some LL.M. students to seek academic help. Faculty respondents recommended additional support for LL.M. students. For example, some faculty suggested the availability of translation services, advanced English training, and adding closed captioning for videos and presentations for those students who lacked a high level of English proficiency.

The faculty expressed pride in the success of the LL.M. program, overall. Figure 8 illustrates the view of faculty regarding the benefits of the LL.M. program to the law school, with 77.8 percent of the participants reporting that they thought the program was very beneficial, and an additional 18.52 percent reporting it was somewhat beneficial. When asked during the interviews how they think the Program contributed to Syracuse Law overall, all of the faculty mentioned its “global perspectives,” as well as the influence of the LL.M. program throughout the world because of the contributions of LL.M. alumni. As one interviewee said explicitly, “...

the reputation of the College of Law is now established in many different countries around the world as a result of the LL.M. program...”

Figure 8 Faculty Perspectives on the LL.M. Program



The faculty respondents indicated their appreciation for the support provided by the Office of International Programs, and that no additional support from that Office was needed. However, when asked if and how the LL.M. program could be improved, faculty offered several suggestions such as offering additional English training, higher admission standards, admitting students from additional countries, additional funding for scholarships, and additional activities designed to increase contact between LL.M. and J.D. students. Nonetheless, most faculty responded that the LL.M. program was excellent and stated that no improvements were necessary.

IV. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Although this study has broad application beyond Syracuse Law, as a model for the evaluation of other law school programs, and with findings that may provide a blueprint for other successful programs, this particular study has several limitations. First, the surveys and interviews were distributed and conducted in the spring of 2020 and 2021, the height of the Coronavirus pandemic. Although the response rate was relatively high for students, alumni, peer mentors, and faculty, it is likely lower than it could have been, had the study had not been conducted not at the height of the pandemic. Second, although this study is the first to utilize mixed methods to assess an LL.M. program from the perspectives of current LL.M. students, alumni, peer mentors, and faculty, future research is needed to assess the views of other stakeholders, including law school administrators, budget personnel, as well as the general J.D. student body. Finally, although data for this study was collected from diverse perspectives, all the data is from only one LL.M program at one law school.

CONCLUSION

This article reports on the first mixed method—qualitative and quantitative—research study of an LL.M. program. As such, the findings, as well as the methodology, should be useful for further research involving LL.M. programs and their students. Conducted by an expert team of researchers in 2019-21, this study of Syracuse Law’s LL.M. Program revealed high overall satisfaction among current and former LL.M. students, their J.D. student peer mentors, as well as the law faculty. The data collected revealed the many reasons students have for enrolling in LL.M. programs, the high confidence in English proficiency among LL.M. students, and their success in securing employment upon graduation.⁶² The findings also confirmed the Syracuse Law alumni’s high satisfaction with the LL.M. Program, as well as the “helpfulness” of attending the LL.M. Program to attain their future career goals. The findings of this study also highlighted the value of Syracuse Law’s unique peer mentorship program. Both the peer mentors and the LL.M. students valued their relationship. The LL.M. students also valued the different types of assistance and support their peer mentors provided, as well as the support of their professors. To the extent there were differences in satisfaction among the students, the reasons focused on specific issues, such as the need for additional career counseling, and greater interaction between J.D. and LL.M. students. Younger female LL.M. students also reported slightly lower satisfaction in certain categories than did the older male students. However, the findings also revealed overwhelmingly positive experiences by the LL.M. students, with 90 percent of alumni reporting that the program exceeded their expectations, as well as positive reactions by faculty about their LL.M. students. The authors hope that these findings as well as the methodology used in this first-of-its-kind study, will be instructive for other law schools as they consider the development and expansion of their own LL.M. programs.

62. See Spanbauer, *supra* note 51 at 410-11 (stating that language barriers of international students have been a concern of the U.S. law schools for a long time). Their confidence in their English skills may be attributed to a variety of factors, including the fact that some come from English-speaking countries and for those that do not, they may have studied English in the past or attended academic programs in English prior to joining the Syracuse Law LL.M. Program. In addition, some LL.M. students attend the Syracuse University English Language Institute during the summer prior to the beginning of their LL.M. Studies. This program also offers continuing support with English speaking and writing throughout the academic year. See *English for Lawyers*, SYRACUSE UNIV., available at <https://eli.syr.edu/programs/english-for-lawyers/> (last visited Apr. 25, 2024).