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Boston College Law School

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Wirth Appointed Director of International Programs

6/13/02--Boston College Law School is pleased to announce the appointment of Professor David Wirth as Director of International Programs. This position will serve to coordinate and streamline the many BC Law efforts in the field of international law.

"I want to thank David and the many other members of the faculty and staff whose efforts over the past few years have brought about the impressive growth—in size and quality—of our international programs," said BC Law Dean John H. Garvey. "For David, this is more a change of title than of responsibility. Since joining the permanent faculty he has directed or assisted a large number of international programs and activities. Attaching a title to these obligations gives him recognition that he deserves."

The last few years have seen a remarkable growth in the Law School's institutional commitment to the field of international law. BC Law has a number of faculty members whose teaching and research interests include international or comparative aspects, and many are fluent in a language other than English. The Director of International Programs will be responsible for, among other duties:

- Coordination of the London Program.
- Advising the International and Comparative Law Review
- Jessup International Moot Court
- Visiting foreign students studying at BC Law
- BC Law students studying abroad in places other than London
- Advising the International Law Society
- Co-convenor of the Faculty International Forum, a university-wide group
- Creation of externship-based courses
- Other new initiatives

"In our era of increasing globalization, the international component of our program has consequently assumed increasing significance," said Wirth. "We are attempting to craft a comprehensive international law program, and create hands-on overseas opportunities for our students in both public interest and business law settings. We also strive to effectuate the Jesuit mission of social justice and the moral imperative that comes from our identity as a Catholic institution of higher learning by being responsive to the major social concerns of the day. To facilitate those aims, we have institutionalized a number of major initiatives designed to create overseas opportunities for our students."

Those initiatives include:

- London Program. Ten upper-level law students (primarily third-year) participate in the program under the supervision of the on-site Director, always a BC Law faculty member. Students take courses taught by the on-site Director and at Kings College, London. But the defining feature of the program is its internship component. BC Law students have worked with a number of environmental organizations, including Amnesty...
International, Liberty (a civil rights organization), a barrister's chambers, the Financial Services Authority (the analogue of the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission), Freshfields (a major British law firm), and the London branches of three major United States law firms. The students spend 20-25 hours per week at their placement under supervision, and maintain journals relating to their research, writing and life experiences in London.

- International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY). BC Law students are offered internships at the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia in the Hague. 2 - 3 students are placed there each semester of the school year, as well as during the summer. The ICTY, established by the UN Security Council in 1993, is charged with prosecuting and trying persons allegedly responsible for serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the former Yugoslavia during the conflict resulting from the breakup of that country. BC Law students have had extensive opportunities to work on the case of Slobodan Milosevic, former President of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Otherwise, typical work includes the investigation of pending cases and drafting of indictments in a setting that is one of the principal focal points for the current development of international law. This program also offers the unusual opportunity to "learn by doing" in the area of international law and to identify long-term academic and career options in the field.

- Foreign study at BC partner universities abroad. The Law School is committed to making other study abroad opportunities in addition to the London Program available to students for whom a particular program of foreign study is appropriate. Boston College has exchange and partnership arrangements with more than 60 foreign universities, of which more than a third have law programs at which our students can study during their second or third years. Unlike the London Program, study abroad through this channel is approved by the Law School in response to a request by an individual student based on that student's identification of his or her own particularized course of study. Through this conduit, students have pursued specialized interests, for example, in European Union law, the law of Pacific Rim nations, international human rights law from a regional perspective, and the law of particular foreign countries. BC Law now sends several students abroad every semester, and student interest in this option is increasing. BC Law students have recently studied or are planning to study at Trinity College in Dublin, Université de Paris -- X (Nanterre), the University of Amsterdam, Pontificia Universidade Catolica do Rio de Janeiro (PUC-Rio), a private Catholic university in Brazil, and the University of New South Wales and the University of Melbourne, both in Australia.

- Summer positions for 1Ls at London offices of Boston-based firms. Thanks to the generous initiative of three Boston area law firms -- Bingham, Dana; Brown, Rudnick; and Hale & Dorr -- BC Law has been able to identify three dedicated positions for first-year students in London. Student interest in these opportunities was overwhelming. The Law School hopes to be able to increase these opportunities in the future.

- Holocaust and Human Rights Project (HHRP) summer internships. Named for its founder, a 1986 Boston College Law School graduate, the Own M. Kupferschmid Holocaust and Human Rights Project, a student organization, helps to ensure that the precedential value of Holocaust-related law is fully realized and applied to state-sponsored human rights violations today. The project also organizes major conferences to address specific legal issues related to the Holocaust and other human rights violations, such as the annual Kupferschmid lecture. Every summer, the Project's endowment supports two to three students doing on-the-ground human rights work overseas. In recent years, students have worked with the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Tanzania; Legal Aid of Cambodia; the Palestinian Authority; and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in Ecuador. The Law School is increasingly trying to build on the students' summer experiences during term-time opportunities, such as the International Human Rights course.

David A. Wirth joined the faculty of the Boston College Law School in 1999. His areas of research and teaching include administrative law, public international law, and international environmental law. As a Fulbright Scholar at the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Regional Research Program in 1996-97, Professor Wirth researched environment as a
security issue. His other professional experience includes serving as director of the Trade, Health, and Environment Program of the Community Nutrition Institute in Washington, D.C.; senior attorney at the National Resources Defense Council; and attorney adviser, Office of the Legal Adviser, U.S. Dept. of State.

A graduate of Yale Law School, Professor Wirth was editor of the Yale Journal of World Public Order. He served as law clerk to Judge William H. Timbers, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, New York, and has been admitted to the bar in New York, the District of Columbia and Virginia.

Professor Wirth was appointed a member of the national advisory committee to the US representative to the Commission for Environmental Cooperation, in January. He was also recently appointed a member of the Fulbright Senior Specialist Advisory Panel, a new peer review group organized by the Council for International Exchange of Scholars, which administers the Fulbright program.

Professor Wirth's website