

New York Law School and the Interfaith Center of New York Announce New Partnership and 2019–20 Training Programs

NYLS and ICNY Are Collaborating on Religious Diversity Education Programs That Will Benefit Students, Practicing Lawyers, and the City's Diverse Religious Communities

New York, NY (October 17, 2019) – New York Law School (NYLS) and the Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) today announced that they will partner on new classroom and community-based training programs to benefit NYLS students, practicing lawyers, and the city's diverse religious communities.

The partnership capitalizes on ICNY's two decades of work with grassroots and immigrant religious leaders and NYLS's active clinical program in the heart of Lower Manhattan. It is made possible by generous seed funding from Diane Abbey, Founder of NYLS's Diane Abbey Law Institute for Children and Families, and Arthur N. Abbey '59, Chair of NYLS's Board of Trustees.

"NYLS is proud to partner with ICNY to prepare our students for 21st-century legal practice while serving New York City's faith-based communities," said **Anthony W. Crowell**, Dean and President of NYLS. "As a 128-year-old law school with a proud history of building on-ramps to legal education for people of all backgrounds, we're uniquely positioned to lead these timely discussions. Indeed, programs like this are critical to serving the needs of our diverse communities and advancing access to justice."

"At this moment in our history, we are honored to partner with New York Law School," said the **Rev. Dr. Chloe Breyer**, Executive Director of the Interfaith Center of New York. "In offering religious-diversity training to the next generation of legal advocates, we seek to ensure that the vastly diverse immigrant communities of New York will be well-served by religiously-literate attorneys and law students working to uphold the rights of vulnerable New Yorkers in a clinical setting."

"Respect for litigants is critical to the fair and effective administration of justice, and this program, by increasing understanding of religiously diverse communities, will importantly serve that end," said **Chief Judge Robert A. Katzmann** of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. Judge Katzmann is the afternoon keynote speaker at the attorney-training program described below.

NYLS and ICNY will partner on three educational programs during 2019–20, with additional programming being contemplated for future years:

Community Education Program for Diverse Religious Congregations

Through this program, NYLS students, supervised by faculty members, will present curated "know-your-rights" trainings to ICNY partner congregations, beginning in early 2020. Training topics might include immigration, domestic violence, nonprofit and small business law, investor protection, and housing rights, which align with clinics at NYLS. ICNY and NYLS will collaborate to plan the programs. NYLS's Diane Abbey Law Institute for Children and Families, Office of Clinical and Experiential Learning, and clinical faculty will take part in this work.

Attorney Training on Religious Diversity and Legal Practice

In spring 2020, ICNY and NYLS will co-host a large religious diversity and legal practice symposium for attorneys throughout New York State. NYLS will offer continuing legal education credit in Diversity, Inclusion, and Elimination of Bias to symposium attendees. The event will feature speakers with expertise on religious diversity, social justice, human rights, and the law. It will also include breakout sessions with faith-based activists, diverse religious leaders, social service providers, and attorneys who work with multi-faith populations. The afternoon keynote speaker is Chief Judge Robert A. Katzmann of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, who founded the Immigrant Justice Corps. NYLS's Office of Diversity and Inclusion is leading the School's efforts on this event. *Additional details will be released later this year.*

On-Campus Religious Diversity and Inclusion Dialogues

ICNY and NYLS will offer religious literacy and interfaith dialogues for students and other members of the NYLS community. The sessions, which will begin this fall, will complement NYLS's existing cultural competency program but with a specialized focus on religious diversity, as informed by ICNY. The program will provide first-year and upper-level students with the skills to sensitively approach the diversity of religious practices and beliefs already present at the School and to build a greater sense of connection and common purpose across faith lines. Topics will include an introductory discussion of American religious diversity, conversations with local faith leaders, peer-to-peer interfaith dialogue, and others. NYLS's Office of Diversity and Inclusion will lead the School's involvement in this work.

"I'm excited about the many ways this program will benefit students, alumni, and the broader community," said **Ella Mae Estrada**, Associate Dean for Enrollment Management, Financial Aid, and Diversity Initiatives at NYLS. "NYLS students have a wide range of cultural backgrounds, experiences, and world views. This training will help us learn from one another while providing the tools all lawyers need to better understand their clients' perspectives."

"Our clinics provide legal representation to a diverse population of New Yorkers who wouldn't otherwise have access to counsel," said NYLS Professor **Carol Buckler**, Director of the Office of Clinical and Experiential Learning. "We welcome the opportunity for students to see and experience the ways in which law and access to legal services can support the diverse communities of New York City."

"This will be an impactful and exciting initiative for the Law School's clinical program and the Interfaith Center of New York," said NYLS Professors **Kirk Burkhalter '04** and **Ann Thomas**, Co-Chairs of NYLS's Faculty Committee on Diversity and Inclusion. "The greater metropolitan area has always been one of the most religiously and ethnically diverse regions in our country. New York Law School embraces the core mission of the legal profession—service to clients and community. This partnership will further that mission training and educating attorneys so that they may serve a diverse population, not only by providing meaningful representation, but also by engaging with, and educating the community at large."

About the Interfaith Center of New York

The Interfaith Center of New York (ICNY) is a nationally recognized nonprofit that works to overcome prejudice, violence, and misunderstanding by activating the power of the city's grassroots religious and civic leaders and their communities. ICNY also helps grassroots and immigrant religious leaders to better understand New York's civic institutions and government agencies, through partnerships with the New York State Unified Court System, the New York City Police Department, the Mayor's Office of Immigrant Affairs, and others. ICNY was founded

in 1997 by the Very Reverend James Parks Morton, former Dean of the Cathedral of St. John the Divine. For over two decades, the organization has worked with hundreds of leaders from a wide range of religious, spiritual, and ethical traditions including the African Diaspora, Buddhist, Christian, Confucian, Jain, Jewish, Hindu, Humanist, Muslim, Native American, Sikh, and Zoroastrian communities of New York City.

About New York Law School

Founded in 1891, New York Law School (NYLS) is an independent law school located in Tribeca, the heart of New York City's legal, government, financial, and emerging tech centers. Known as "New York's law school," NYLS embraces the city as its classroom by complementing a rigorous legal education with an innovative and diverse set of "uniquely New York" experiential learning opportunities. Since opening its doors, NYLS has produced graduates who have gone on to hold high elected and appointed office in the city, lead large and small firms, and gain broad recognition as captains of business and industry. Its renowned faculty of prolific scholars has built the School's strength in key areas of the law, including business and financial services, intellectual property and privacy, and government and public interest law. NYLS has more than 18,000 graduates and currently enrolls more than 1,000 students in its full-time and part-time J.D. programs. The School also offers an advanced-degree program in Tax Law.

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