

January 12, 2010

2010-01-12: Law School lands grant for human rights scholarship

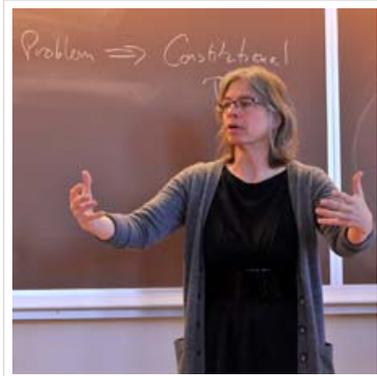
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Recommended Citation

Kornwitz, Jason, "2010-01-12: Law School lands grant for human rights scholarship" (2010). *News@Northeastern*. Paper 489.
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20001732>

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Law School lands grant for human rights scholarship



Law professor Martha Davis worked closely with the Ford Foundation to help the law school secure the grant. Photo by Craig Bailey.

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The Ford Foundation has recognized Northeastern's School of Law for its commitment to promote human rights and sustainable economic development, awarding the school a \$300,000 grant to bolster its scholarship in these areas.

The nonprofit foundation, which is dedicated to advancing international cooperation to end poverty and injustice, awarded the grant to the law school's Program on Human Rights and the Global Economy. The program connects social and economic justice activists around the world with scholars whose work focuses on solving a slew of social and economic problems.

Northeastern's law school is among a select few that have received funding from the foundation for this sort of work, said law professor Martha Davis, faculty director of the program.

Davis, who worked closely with the foundation to help the law school secure the grant, said that Northeastern is uniquely positioned to build bridges between scholars and activists "because of our connections to the advocacy world through co-op and faculty members, many of whom have practical experience and remain engaged with real-world issues."

"The award is an endorsement of what we've been able to accomplish without grant support," she added. "It's really a vote of confidence that will enable us to significantly expand our work and effectiveness."

The law school intends to use the grant to hire an executive director in order to increase the visibility of the program; to host a conference on immigrants' rights; and to create an online seminar series on economic and social rights issues as a way to bridge the gap between scholars and activists.

"Advocates are very savvy," Davis said, "but they don't read law reviews. We're hoping to scout out scholarship that will actually be stimulating and useful to them in their day-to-day work."

The program currently produces an online human rights law journal that is circulated internationally, and has sponsored a series of human rights law training sessions for lawyers and judges. A global workshop convened by the program will look across nations to consider the critical issue of domestic judicial authority over economic and social rights.

The Ford Foundation award is the program's first major grant. An earlier, smaller grant from the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities funded development of a curriculum on race and human rights issues in the United States.

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