

Press Release

NIU College of Law Welcomes French Law Students from the University Montesquieu-Bordeaux

September 2, 2008

DeKalb, Ill. – The Northern Illinois University College of Law is once again hosting a delegation of French law students and professors for a three-week program titled *Introduction to the American Legal System*.

On August 23, the NIU College of Law welcomed two professors and 19 law students from the University Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV in Agen, France. Through classes and visits to various legal institutions, the purpose of the program is to provide the French students with a basic understanding of the American legal system and the ways in which it is different from their own. This is the second year that NIU College of Law Professors David Gaebler and Daniel Reynolds coordinated the program in cooperation with the NIU Division of International Programs.

“We hosted the French law students last year for the first time and the program was a resounding success,” Professor Gaebler remarked. “The French students and faculty were especially pleased and impressed by the time and attention they received from state and federal judges whose courts we visited and by the opportunity to meet and get to know our own NIU law students.”

The French delegation will attend lectures taught by NIU College of Law faculty that focus on the structure of American court systems, the relationship between federal and state legal systems, and the institutional structure and procedural dimensions of the American criminal justice system. The group also will take a number of field trips, which includes visits to the Illinois State Capitol, Illinois Supreme Court, and the United States Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals.

“This year’s schedule allows more interaction between the French and NIU College of Law students, thereby increasing the opportunity for dialogue,” Professor Gaebler said. “It is our hope that as the students learn more about each other’s legal systems, they will gain insight and perspective regarding their own as well.”

This exchange program comes about from a 13-year relationship between NIU College of Law and the University Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV. Since 1996, more than 200 NIU Law students have participated in a summer study abroad program to Agen, France, in cooperation with the University of Bordeaux. The six-week program introduces NIU law students to France’s Civil Law system as well as to the European Union Legal system. According to Professor Reynolds, “Our French hosts at the University of Bordeaux have always been very gracious and generous to our NIU students and this gives us a chance to reciprocate.”

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Pictured outside the NIU College of Law are students and professors from the University Montesquieu-Bordeaux IV in Agen, France. This is the second year that NIU Law Professors David Gaebler and Daniel Reynolds (third row, far right) coordinated the three-week program titled Introduction to the American Legal System.

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