

## Then and Now

Ankita Patel  
Class of 2007

“Law School!!! Papa, I want to go to law school,” I said a few years ago. Reflecting back to that conversation, I knew that I would have to spend long hours at the library, brief cases, and learn a lot of new words. However, I did not know that I would have emotional and mental breakdowns due to the gruesome five hour finals, panic with the thought of failing Skover’s Constitutional Law class, or feel as though I was in the wrong place. These feelings were very foreign to me in my educational endeavors. At that time, all I knew was that I wanted a higher education that would enhance my intellect, and challenge me to take initiative to make things better. In addition, I could not bear the thought of ending my education with a mere B.S. (a.k.a bull s\*\*\*) in Computer Science. Even though I graduated with a decent GPA, I dread writing a C++ program, or even fixing my own laptop.

You must wonder why I did not switch majors in undergraduate. The simple answer is that paying a healthy amount of tuition at the international student rate was a waste of money only to redo pre-requisites and requisites for another major. I was 15 years old when I was applying for college in the U.S, and there was no one in Zambia who could give me helpful advice on what my education options were. Based on the trend, my parents – who had not been to the U.S at that time – suggested three lucrative options for my education: something medical, business, or computers. I quickly ruled out the first two options, and committed to the third option for four years.

I faced a similar dilemma when I decided that I wanted to go to graduate school. Out of the many explored options, I reasoned law school was the best one that fit my criteria. Armed with determination, strategy, and hope, I started to connect with law students, attorneys, friends of attorneys to find out what I could do with a J.D. Out of the 15 schools I applied to, Seattle University School of Law opened its doors to give me an opportunity to prove why I made the right decision.

At this moment, I am confident that I made the right decision because I have the skills to seek the career I want. Thanks to SJSJ, I am able to edit fairly well, and was able to write a 30-page academic article on social justice issues surrounding sustainable development in Zambia. Through the SBA, I was able to gain leadership and marketing skills relating to diversity. I even gained experience through the Ronald Peterson Clinics in areas of International Human Rights, and Youth Advocacy, and through an externship with the International Rescue Committee. When it comes to academics, I have learned to form principles and arguments on how laws can be improved in certain areas.

With less than 50 days left for graduation, I smile with pride that I am going to be a graduate of an institution that has a social justice mission, welcomes diversity, and takes the effort to establish strong and meaningful relationships with the legal community. At this school, I have met inspiring leaders amongst my friends, I have bonded over traumatic finals, and I have grown with all my classmates. I would not trade this experience for anything else that I can think of. Staying connected and contributing to this school is what I can do since I have been given the privilege to say, "Papa, I am graduating from law school on May 12, 2007 from Seattle University School of Law."