Law school establishes new program at Rome Center
By Sallyann Price
February 16, 2011

The new information commons at the Rome Center can be utilized by students who take part in the PROLAW program that has been launched there for people looking to further specialize in law.

With the recent launch of a new post-baccalaureate law program at the John Felice Rome Center campus, law students from LUC and around the world now have the opportunity to receive a specialized and global law education in Rome.

The one-year program, named PROLAW, was funded by a $1.1 million grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to promote global development.

The PROLAW program confers a Master of Law degree (or LL.M.) in rule of law development, a highly specialized field that prepares students to advise governments on establishing rule of law in developing countries.

The program is aimed at students who have already completed a Juris Doctor, the standard law degree, and are looking to further specialize in a field that is broad in scope and international in nature. Students will take eight courses spanning the field of development law and complete a thesis, due in October, after graduating in April.

"The idea of this program is to equip students with the tools necessary to bring about changes that allow for more equal societies, more democratic societies, societies that are attuned to the needs of people," said Ian Barney, a third-year Loyola law student and prospective PROLAW applicant.

PROLAW is headed by William T. Loris, the program director, who has more than 10 years of experience serving as a legal advisor for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) abroad in Africa and the Middle East. Loris spent a full year at the JFRC as an undergraduate at Santa Clara University.

"We are hoping to attract both U.S. and international students," wrote Katariina Nuotio, associate program director of PROLAW, in an e-mail from Italy. "A typical PROLAW class could consist of not only American but also Sudanese, Ugandan, Ethiopian, Iraqi, Egyptian, Russian, Dutch and Chinese students, to mention a few, all driven by the passion to use their legal education to enhance peace and justice in the world."

Barney is currently in the process of applying for PROLAW's inaugural term, which will begin in September. A Chicago native and alumnus of Loyola's undergraduate program, Barney looks forward to the change of scenery offered by the new program after graduating in May with a J.D. and Master's in international relations.

"I never studied abroad as an undergrad at Loyola," Barney said. "It's almost like I missed an opportunity, and I'm getting a second chance."
Development law first piqued Barney's interest as an undergraduate political science major, but he said it can be a tricky field to break into as a recent law graduate. Barney is confident that an LL.M. in development from Loyola will be a boost in the post-graduation job search.

"I've been focused on getting jobs here in Chicago, but if I'm able to go over to Rome, I think the chances of me getting an international job increase exponentially," Barney said. About entering the workforce, Barney said, "It's going to totally change the landscape of what I'm trying to do."

Loyola's PROLAW program is among the first of its kind to offer an LL.M with a specific focus on international development, which is a wide-ranging area of study unto itself, and one that is uniquely suited to Loyola's Jesuit goals for social justice and equality.

"It's this really broad idea that you want to be able to advise a government that's trying to modernize a country," Barney said. "There are so many countries that have a lot of poverty and inequality, there's not really democracy and you have a lot of oppression."

The administration also recognizes these global problems, and has identified PROLAW as an opportunity to serve others and live out the Jesuit goals of social justice and equality.

Loyola President, the Rev. Michael J. Garanzini, S.J., said in a statement that "this program exemplifies our commitment to knowledge in the service of humanity, and we are enthusiastic about preparing graduates who will be uniquely equipped to promote the rule of law around the world."