

Law Personal Statement

Graduate study at University of California, Los Angeles School of Law would be the natural step in advancing my academic and professional career for three reasons. First, UCLA Law Immigration Studies Program is a rigorous and stimulating curriculum that will follow up my previous education smoothly. Second, the program will provide meaningful and necessary preparation for further growth and involvement of my current position at Japan's Ministry of Justice (MOJ). Finally, located in the city with one of the largest foreign born population, UCLA Law offers a rich hands-on experiences for me pursuing immigration rights.

When I joined Kyoto University's international law society, I befriended a 1970s refugee from Vietnam and learned about her struggles and achievements regarding discrimination. Her moving story cemented my desire to improve Japan's immigration policies so as to better respect the diverse backgrounds of people and their ways of living. My ambition and commitment to make such changes was the core of my decision to join the MOJ's Legal Affairs Division. At the MOJ, I had the fortune to launch a research project about the permanent residency legislation of nine other countries, including the United States. The research has become the basis of several Immigration Control Act amendments and Japan's upcoming immigration reform. Through my research, I came to realize that Japan's permanent residency system needs profound reform for the forthcoming diversification of society.

Among the many issues relating to the future of Japan's permanent residency system, a key decision will need to be made about changing the present policy of not issuing permanent residency permits to unskilled laborers—an issue I hope to address in my future work at the MOJ. As such, in the short term, I plan to develop operational guidelines to direct immigration officers on how to examine permanent residency applications in a more comprehensive and equitable manner. I want to extend this effort by amending the Immigration Control Act to create a new permanent residency system that will include a cogent permanent residency program for unskilled laborers. To these ends, it would greatly benefit me to study related US legislation, including the country's limitations on the number of unskilled workers granted permanent residency.

At UCLA Law, home to the US's strongest Immigration Studies program, I wish to learn from Professor Motomura, who is a leading scholar in US immigration law. In particular, I am interested in taking Professor Motomura's Immigration Law, Immigrants' Rights and International Migration, where I will learn the fundamentals of immigration law, as well as the underling constitutional and philosophical issues so germane to my growth. In addition, I am eager to learn various aspects regarding the workplace rights of immigrant workers from Professor Victor H. Narro, who has exceptionally rich experience in this particular field. I believe these courses represent meaningful links to my educational and professional background, and are greatly relevant to my abovementioned career goals at the MOJ.

Finally, I am attracted by the environment which the city of Los Angeles can provide. As it has one of the largest foreign-born populations in the world, I hope to gain hands-on exposure to immigration issues in downtown, where the Immigration Court and various volunteer opportunities will allow me to work with immigrants facing the issues I am concerned with. Furthermore, I will contribute by becoming a bridge for organizing activities that both UCLA students and Japanese government officials can benefit by bringing in people from the Consulate General of Japan in Los Angeles.

In conclusion, UCLA's LL.M. Program represents the perfect choice for me. Moreover, I believe that my education, combined with my work experience, could also contribute to the program by stimulating insightful class discussions and creating invaluable projects that others can participate in. I look forward to sharing real case examples from my experiences at the MOJ in Japan with my future classmates. I am prepared to, and furthermore would be honored and proud to utilize the valuable knowledge UCLA's LL.M. Program can offer me back in my home country.

Yours Sincerely,
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