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## Lawyers Are Often Called Upon as Leaders, But Aren't Typically Taught How to Lead Effectively

"When you think of lawyers, most are inquisitive, highly intelligent, and are asked to take on responsibilities within numerous spheres and sectors, yet, we're not properly trained to be leaders," Andrew Gratz said.

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Legal Education



Christine Charnosky



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### What You Need to Know

- Andrew Gratz, an associate GC and former Big Law associate, returned to his alma mater at the University of Houston Law Center as an adjunct professor to teach 'Lawyers as Leaders.'
- Gratz aims to utilize the expertise he's gained throughout his career working internationally to help train young lawyers to be effective leaders.

Throughout his career, **Andrew Gratz**, associate general counsel at LyondellBasell and former law firm lawyer, has learned that lawyers are often expected to be leaders, but are rarely trained to do so.

"When you think of lawyers, most are inquisitive, highly intelligent, and are asked to take on responsibilities within numerous spheres and in numerous sectors, yet, we're not properly trained to be leaders," Gratz continued. "So I thought, 'OK, I've identified a problem. What can I do about it?'"

**About 20 years after earning his J.D. from the University of Houston Law Center, he returned to the school as an adjunct to develop and teach a course called "Lawyers as Leaders."**

Topics in Gratz's course, which he began teaching last year, include leadership styles and strategies, personality assessments, public service and professional responsibilities, as well as leadership opportunities for lawyers, according to his [syllabus](#).

After graduating from UHLC in 2002, he worked as an associate at Gardere Wynne Sewell, which has since merged with Foley & Lardner, and Baker Botts, according to his LinkedIn [profile](#).

But working in litigation didn't "feel right," Gratz said, so he went back to school for an MBA.

He graduated with his MBA from the Naveen Jindal School of Management at the University of Texas at Dallas in 2006 and, two years later, was recruited by LyondelBasell as in-house counsel.

Prior to joining LyondelBasell as an in-house counsel in 2008, he worked as an associate at Gardere Wynne Sewell, which has since merged with Foley & Lardner, and Baker Botts, according to his LinkedIn [profile](#).

His experience at LyondelBasell, where he has since held several positions within the legal department, has allowed him to travel internationally to work with the company's offices around the world, including Singapore, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia and several European countries, he said. This exposure to different cultures and backgrounds strengthened his leadership skills.

"I started thinking about my leadership journey and all of the mentors and leaders I've worked for and worked with, including in-house and in private practice," Gratz said, "and I realized, while I received a tremendous amount of helpful training, mentorship and guidance in my MBA program, we within the legal profession don't really focus on that, and we don't really put an emphasis on collaboration, on mentorship and on leadership."

As an adjunct professor, Gratz worked with the Law Center's Associate Dean Greg Vetter to implement this course and put it on the schedule.

Leonard Baynes, the Hugh Roy and Lillie Cranz Cullen Dean, distinguished chair and professor of law at the University of Houston Law Center, referred to Gratz as a lawyer who is a leader.

"UHLC prides itself on having a comprehensive curriculum with a variety of course offerings," Baynes said.

"Lawyers are always called upon to be leaders," Baynes said. "In the world of politics, our president, vice president, speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives and ranking member, Senate majority and minority leader are all lawyers."

"Because of our analytical training, advocacy skills and well-thought-out problems to solutions, lawyers are also called upon to lead in business and their communities by serving in leadership roles," Baynes said, adding that even in practice, the lawyer has to lead his/her team or office, or has to use leadership skills to influence a judge or jury.

Additionally, law school leadership courses fit in with American Bar Association standards helping students develop their professional identity, as well as the standards regarding cross-cultural understanding, Baynes said.

"The ABA has set forth a requirement that leadership, or elements of leadership, need to be taught at the law school level, but it seems like different forces are converging as we speak, recognizing this is this is a deficiency that is harming the legal profession," Gratz said.

ABA's [Standard 303-5](#) states that “professional identity focuses on what it means to be a lawyer and the special obligations lawyers have to their clients and society,” and adds that developing a professional identity “requires reflection and growth over time,” so students should have frequent opportunities for such development in a variety of courses and co-curricular and professional development activities.

Gratz said he capped his class at 15, but has had 10 students each time he’s taught it. He said he has received feedback from his students that 10 is a good number because it is a discussion class where each student shares their personal and professional journeys and challenges.

As a result of the class, students have taken risks—whether it’s different jobs, Law Review and other opportunities—that “they’ve told me they would not have taken on, but for this class,” he said.

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