



# The Graduate Advisor

PERICLES ABLE PROJECT (AMERICAN BUSINESS AND LEGAL EDUCATION)

WWW.PERICLES.RU/ABLE

SPECIAL: A ROADMAP TO GRADUATE & B-SCHOOL FALL 2005 ISSUE: 15



*Alexei Mineev Outside University of Michigan Business School*

## A Picture is Worth a Thousand Words:

*A Pericles Student Shares His Tour of Top US Business Schools.*

*By Alexei Mineev, MBA applicant & Pericles Alumnus*

Having come back to Moscow from the US, where I took a two-month language course and then toured the schools I am applying to this year, I came up with an idea to make up an account of my experiences in the US. Therefore, I will provide you with my impressions about Wharton, Babson, Columbia, Michigan, Chicago, Kellogg, and their locations. This writing is by no means a comprehensive analysis. You know, all schools say pretty much the same things about themselves. Rather, it is the way I view these places after my visits. No doubt, there is a lot of subjective perception here. Moreover, a first impression is sometimes wrong. So, take it easy and enjoy!

### Wharton-UPenn

Wharton, the business school of the University of Pennsylvania, is located in Philadelphia, 100 miles south-west of New York. The campus is in the western part of the city, a 30 minute walk from downtown. In the center lies the part free from roads – studying facilities, libraries, some dorms,

cafes, and alleys. Other buildings might be several blocks away from that part. In the vicinity of campus stands a lot of housing rented by students mostly in the west of campus. As a result, all this area in west Philadelphia is called University City.

At first, the area of UPenn, a contraction from the University of Pennsylvania, did not make me happy. I lived off campus and thus could be able to see every day what was happening in the

### See A PICTURE, Page 2



*Woodland Presbyterian Church, UPenn*

## Roadmap to Graduate and B-School – The Beginning of a Journey

*By Elena Schachter, Associate Dean, Pericles, alumnus of University of Michigan MA program in Comparative Languages & Literature.*

**“The journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step” Lao-Tzu**

In the words of Albert Einstein, “time is something human beings invented so that we wouldn’t be doing everything all at once.” When one thinks about a timeline, starting in October 2005 to enter graduate or B-school in September 2007, **time management** is the most important factor. Getting from point A to point B involves dividing time into a series of deadlines for accomplishing fixed goals, segmenting your existence to steadily cope with the potentially infinite details that are involved in a successful first step into the wonderful world of graduate or B-school education. Time management goes hand in hand with **strategic planning**, which is basically the evolution of a long-term objective from its genesis through its maturity to its closure.

Before we get down to the concrete technical details, here are some internal preparatory stages that should be in our thought processes from the beginning of the journey and every step of the way:

### First Steps – How to Prepare for a Smoother Journey

#### 1) Evaluation of the past/Self-Evaluation, Self-Critique

Whether thinking about essay writing, interviews or recommendation letters, you must evaluate what past developments, achievements, failures and learning

### See JOURNEY, Page 3

## A PICTURE continued from Page 1

streets. (I stayed with a family of native speakers of American. Their place was a 15 minute walk from campus.)

Perhaps, the main reason for my feeling that way was my sweet remembrances of California. For example, I had gotten a feeling that you could sit down smack dab on sidewalks and not risk dirtying your pants. When it comes to Philly, a contraction from Philadelphia, first, I saw litter in the streets. Second, there was evidence of quite a high rate of crime – for example, you could see the wreckage of bicycles left at parking places by their unlucky owners. Apparently, criminals stole some parts of these bicycles, and the owners decided not to bother to take the remains to the garbage dump. Third, healthy food might be either expensive or scarce. At ELP (English language Program), they advertised so-called food-trucks. They are trucks equipped to cook inside and sell food through a window in the side. Having used food trucks to save some 20-30% in comparison with other student food places, I gave them up because I had to throw away food three times. (For your information, lunch from a food truck costs some \$5-6, whereas in a cafeteria it amounted to \$7-8) Moreover, food-truck people served food with the same hands as they handed cash – without any gloves. Fourth, you can see poor people and beggars in the streets. I guess that the bottom line is the fact that the rate of Philadelphians who do not have a college education is on the 90<sup>th</sup> percentile



*A UPenn Native*

among big cities nationally, as I read in Philadelphia Inquirer, a local newspaper. I cannot fathom how this situation corresponds with the fact that UPenn is in the top twenty US universities and Wharton contends for the first place.

Well, enough negativity. Finally, when I came back to Philly after a trip around Boston, New York, Ann Arbor and Chicago, I felt that it was my home away from home. Amazingly, when I started feeling

comfortable in Philly, we came across five squirrels in one view sporting on the lawn in front of Van Pelt Dietrich Library, the main library. The campus abounded in squirrels. They even fell from the skies; making a loud smack, a couple of squirrels plunged a meter away from us and frightened us when my wife and I were walking along the central alley.

John M. Huntsman Hall, \$140 million worth building of Wharton, opened in 2002. Incidentally, John M. Huntsman, who donated more than \$50 million to the school, just published a book “Winners Never Cheat.” This fact highlights western society’s concerns about ethics in the global marketplace nowadays.

In the library, as well as in some other buildings, wireless Internet is available, and there are plugs for cable connection. In addition, students can use the library’s computers. Penn students have access to a number of databases on the Internet including e-magazines like Business Week. The staff is very kind and willing to help you. For instance, once I thought that I left a cable behind with a consultant a week after my visit to her. I came back to her office to check to see if my cable was there. The kind consultant decided to present a new cable to me, yet she saw me only for the second time, and obviously she did not have to do that.

UPenn people came across as very enthusiastic, smart, and supportive. For example, when you stop to consult you map on campus, chances are that someone will offer you some help.

University City is safe. There are special emergency phones set up and blue lights on the posts above those phones to show their locations in the dark. Incidentally, I found later that most other university has the same emergency phone systems. UPenn police cyclists patrol the areas of campus and common student residences day and night. Once I was walking home late and met with a stranger who warned me “Be careful, there is no one in the dark down the street.” I was pleased to know that people think so much about others.

About Wharton, I did not make time to learn a lot. I took it for granted that it is one of the best schools. Actually, the school was not in session then. Of course, I attended an information session. Not counting me, there were two other visitors. One of them was from Japan and the other from Los Angeles. Both were in Philly on business and stopped by the school to learn more about it. Nothing specific to share:



*A Big Globe decorates Babson’s Campus*

allegedly, faculty is available, no quotas for countries; actually, it is an excellent school in the combination of my interests – finance and entrepreneurship. All its alumni I saw in Moscow came across as very pleasant, smart and supportive people.

### **Babson**

Here goes Babson. It is located west of Boston in a quiet woody place. I dare say Babson’s campus is the most beautiful I have seen. Everything is green because Boston is in the north of country, I believe. The lawns are mowed accurately. Local roads have two lanes and wander through forests. For some reason, the image of “Rublevo Uspenskoe shosse” came to mind, yet it does not hold a candle to Boston area.

Parking is free even for visitors. You must get permission from an office, and it takes no more than a couple of minutes!

Last year, an article came out in Business Week with the headline “Hidden Gem.” It reflects the fact that Babson is ranked 20<sup>th</sup>, yet it has been ranked first in entrepreneurship for 11 years in a row. A



*Alexei outside Olin GSB, Babson College continues . . .*

strange fact is that the average GMAT is some 630. I sat in on a couple of classes of the one year program, which just started a month ago. As far as I remember, the auditorium seats 80 people in an arch with four rows, each higher than the previous one. What I noticed is that about 30% of the class is kind of brain storming when the instructor collects ideas of students on the issue at hand and he or she leads the discussion in the right direction. The instructors confirmed to me that they always tried to push students to think through that kind of class. I saw a team of two students in the program “Fast Track”. It is a kind of program that suits students who are launching entrepreneurial projects while they are studying. A year ago, these guys got an idea for “toy furniture.” They had some designers design furniture for them and found some manufacturer in Brazil. Sounds unusual. I estimated roughly on the spot that the projected first year sales would hardly cover initial expenses. Then they were going to see if there was any market for expansion. I have not decided so far if Babson is a “gem” or not. People with whom I discussed that matter said that it might be too risky to have an MBA like Babson’s. However, I believe that most of them perceive the term entrepreneurship as too narrow – but think instead of new venture creation. In fact, as Babson defines it - “A Way of Thinking and Acting that Creates Value. The Pursuit of Opportunity for Growth in the Individual, Business, and Society. Creating One’s Own Path to Success.” Certainly, the place is marvelous, but this beauty will hardly help you find a job after your graduation. I hope to find some more info in the coming months.



**Michigan**

Michigan came across as a very friendly school. I am grateful to Deepika, an Indian MBA, who reached out to us. She just graduated and landed a job with McKinsey in Chicago. She took us in for a couple of nights, so we could have a great opportunity to see how a Michigan MBA lived. She showed us around the campus. There are really a great number of places for hanging

around. When you are walking on the street, you have a feeling that it is a town of the university. Ann Arbor is a small town 100 miles west of Detroit, and some 200 miles east of Chicago.

I took one picture that I think typifies U-Mich. Although it is not a building of Ross School of Business, it is part of the campus. Actually, as far as I remember, it is a law school. This style of architecture with a garnish of plants decorating the walls differentiates Michigan. Unfortunately, the business school’s building is quite modern, rather than a medieval kind of building suggesting castles that predominate other parts of the campus. And, the school just got some donation for reconstruction, so apparently in the coming two years MBA students will have to manage with rooms not free from reconstruction.

Lately, Michigan has considerably improved its image in finance. They said that they recommended some 7 grads for private equity last year. One of Michigan’s principles is learning through action, so they are proud of their MAP project. MAP is a several month field project at the end of the first year, after which goes an internship, perhaps in another company. I talked with a Russian Michigan MBA who was currently doing his internship in NY and he admitted that he had a hard time interviewing for the internship. For one thing, in January of the first year non-native speakers sometimes are not fluent enough. For another, it is worth knowing the rules of the interview game, for which foreigners are often poorly prepared. It makes MBA prep very important.



**Chicago**

What comes to mind about the University of Chicago is that it is quite big. Perhaps, because of its large size, yet maybe due to hot weather, they provided tours around the campus in a mini-van. It was very hot, and the grass was yellowish. The campus, as well as the city, did not

**See A PICTURE, Page 7**

## **JOURNEY** **continued from Page 1**

experiences were fundamental in the decision to apply to graduate or B-school in the first place. You will be confronted by such questions as: “Describe the way in which your background, schooling, academic achievements and performance influenced your decision to apply for and M.A/PhD, MBA, etc.” You will also be asked to evaluate your past in terms of how certain factors (academics, work) have developed:

- leadership skills
- ability to be a team player
- motivational skills
- initiative
- creativity
- the extent to be a self- starter
- ethics, honesty and integrity
- ability to take and give constructive criticism

Too many applicants make the mistake of leaving this process until they face the application essays. The result is canned answers that impress no-one.

The function of self-critique, when done without being defensive or apologetic, is very important in showing the admission committees that you are a whole person, with flaws but willing to learn and to share your experiences with your colleagues. They do not want you to have pre-fabricated answers to their questions. You can imagine what it must be like to interview as many people as they do, or read as many essays and keep hearing the same types of answers again and again. The idea is to demonstrate that you “fit” into the type of community or “culture” that they have (or think they have) but that you also have a strong enough character to go beyond that **continues . . .**

	<b>Pericles ALE Project</b> American Business and Legal Education
<b>GMAT GRE TOEFL &amp; SAT Preparation</b>	
<i>We also prepare students for the AIBEC entrance exam</i>	
Tverskaya Ul. 10, Suite 319 (095) 692-51-88, 692-64-63 <a href="http://www.pericles.ru">www.pericles.ru</a> <a href="mailto:info@pericles.ru">info@pericles.ru</a>	



**Pericles ABE Project**  
American Business and Legal Education

**Attention students!**

**Pericles is launching a brand new SAT I Preparation Program in Moscow.**

This test is required for anyone planning to enter Bachelors' Degree programs in the US

*Apply now to be ready for the December SAT exam!*

- ✓ After-school Program
- ✓ Taught Entirely in English
- ✓ Qualified Western Professors

Tverskaya Ulitsa, D. 10, Suite 319  
692-6463/692-5188  
www.pericles.ru/able info@pericles.ru



## JOURNEY continued from Page 3

culture and take it in new directions. They want to have that balance between the *conformist* and the *“transformist;”* the person who can fit in with the program and can get along with his/her colleagues, be multicultural, politically correct and reinforce the status quo, and, at the same time, can change the system for the better and go beyond it so that it does not stagnate and die under the weight of its own success.

Remember that your test scores are just marks on paper, and many people have good marks and high GPAs. You need to become an individual to those evaluating you, to distinguish yourself from the others.

### 2) Coping with the Present: Psyching Yourself Up

There is no doubt that, with all the difficulties that confront the grad school or B-school candidate, none can be so great as learning to accept yourself with all that it entails, convince yourself that you deserve to be happy and successful, and develop the positive self image that makes for a successful applicant. If you go into the process with negative views of yourself, your situation or the outcome, those things will undoubtedly come forth and make themselves manifest at various “moments of truth,” like when you are taking the GMAT exam or in the middle of an important interview.

The only way that things can work is if every thought in your mind is clear of negativity, if you tackle and defeat any dark thoughts that keep you from fulfilling your potential. Even when going through practice tests for the entrance exams, you should always spend as much time on what

was done correctly as on the mistakes. Only in this way can you experience the mind set required to answer a question correctly, and the momentum to repeat that positive approach until it becomes automatic. The same thing can be said with regard to answering questions about your education, your former boss or experiences from the past: try not to focus on the negative things, try to always find the silver lining in your clouds and to make those evaluating you see you as someone who has taken the lemons and made lemonade.

And so, onto the highlights of our countdown, with little tidbits of advice along the way:

### Second Steps: October 2005 to February 2007 – the Initial Months of Your Journey

#### 1) Test Preparation

##### \*TOEFL Exam:

The CBT TOEFL, an assessment tool which allows admissions committees to evaluate the candidate’s English-language proficiency, will be changing its format in the months to come. The new TOEFL IBT (or Next Generation) will be launched in the first three months of 2006 in Russia. What are some of the changes that one can expect? The major one is that the next generation TOEFL includes a speaking section with six tasks, from expressing an opinion on a topic to speaking based on what you read and hear. The new test requires the test taker to wear headphones and speak into a microphone. Your audience will be a computer that digitally records your responses and then passes them on to an online network where they are rated by human scorers.

The grammar section per se will be eliminated and the reading and writing sections expanded to have integrated tasks

All this can be much scarier, as you will be speaking into a microphone, facing a “no feedback” situation which can be simulated by talking to someone in English with your back to them. It will make the current CBT TOEFL seem easy by comparison.

We recommend of course that students take the CBT exam while it is still possible to do so in Moscow, so bank on preparing for this in fall 2005 and taking with a target test date of January/February 2006.

##### \*GMAT/GRE Exams:

We recommend that students start taking preparatory courses for the GMAT (Graduate Management Admissions Test) or GRE (Graduate Record Examination) during this time, repeating the courses after New Year break if needed and then taking a crack at the exams sometime in the spring or summer of 2006. Remember that the exams can only be taken once during the course of a calendar month and five times maximum during one year, so please do not take the plunge until you feel that you are ready to. We recommend preparing for the GMAT exam for 6 weeks straight, with two hours per day minimum of work.

Here are some things to remember as you study:

*a) Less is More:* The process of studying two hours per day for the GMAT does not mean doing every exam ever written until you collapse and become totally burnt out on it. The idea is to slowly and methodically build momentum so that the test resembles something akin to a track race...first you build stamina and physical strength, then you fine tune every movement to build speed. And continually,

**continues . . .**

**Pericles ABE Project**

**TOEFL, GMAT, GRE  
and SAT Preparation**

**Complete  
advising service for  
MBA and Graduate  
School applicants**

Tverskaya Ulitsa, D. 10, Suite 319  
692-64-63/692-51-88  
www.pericles.ru/able info@pericles.ru

you evaluate your performance to see where you can improve. Likewise, in test preparation, you learn the techniques—building your mind—then build up speed. Before you go from one practice test to another, you should review every question and seek patterns in the way questions are asked so that you can anticipate how to answer them in the future. It is a waste of your time to repeat the same test-taking maneuvers without APPLYING what you learned from previous mistakes. So, don't just study, study smart.

**b) Putting yourself in control:**

Whatever type of question you are answering, it will help you to try to envision or formulate what the answer will be BEFORE looking at the answer choices. One's formulation will probably be in sync with one of the answers on the exam, and this is a good indication that it is correct. At least, this will give you the impetus to eliminate answers that are far from what you consider to be the right one.

An example of this on both the GMAT and GRE is the Reading Comprehension section. There one has about 10 minutes to read a complex passage and answer questions. After previewing the passage (reading the opening sentences and the concluding sentence), the test taker's first goal should be to formulate the main idea in his or her head. Only then should you look at the possible answers.

We strongly discourage students from reading the answers first. This is due to a very common trick called *justification*, or the power of the human mind to see a suggested choice and subconsciously reflect that as a logical choice. In fact, you may simply be "reading" things into the text which are not there and falling for cleverly disguised flaws in logic.

Don't be caught in the "this test is about what I know" trick—it's an illusion—this test is about your ability to cope with tasks under pressure. In order to succeed, you must disengage a little bit from what you know and be able to better anticipate what the test makers know, and how they use what they know to force you to make mistakes, to trick you, make you nervous and challenge you to keep your cool. Time pressure changes everything and testing is about your ability to keep yourself together and collected, to understand what they are really asking you to do, to see the ways in which they set their traps. The people at ETS who write these exams are very experienced, and you can never take anything for granted. As with many things in life, if an answer looks too good to be true,

it probably is.

**2) Know thyself/know thy school:**

**a) Beware of ratings game victimization:**

The more you know about what you are looking for in a school and the extent to which the school you are picking fulfills your vision or expectations, the better off you will be. In choosing a school you are buying a product, or brand, if you will. B-school "brands" are rated every two years in several major publications. Graduate schools are not, but students usually bank on the fact that Ivy League schools will always have the best departments no matter what.

Depending on ratings or reputation for your choice may not be the best idea. More and more, specialists are realizing the damage being done to the actual quality of B-schools in the U.S. because of the ratings game. This game creates a dangerous emphasis on the "short term" ratings at the expense of long-term educational investments in the MBA. This skewed viewpoint leads to reallocation of funds from research and development to ratings-driven courses. While that may not be all bad, it might not be best for what you want to get from your education. While explaining the rankings criticisms is beyond the scope of this article, here is how you can avoid being caught in the ratings trap:

1) Do a very thorough web search, including the following:

- a) Size of the school;
- b) Location;
- c) Ranking (Business Week, Forbes, US News);
- d) Emphasis (finance, marketing, management);
- e) Strong majors (languages, sciences);
- f) Percent of international students;
- g) Special programs;
- h) Top 5 Employers;
- i) Average graduate salary

2) Contact alumni and get feedback about which majors and courses are most recommended, which professors give the best lectures, etc. – get as much 'insider' information as you can

3) When you short-list B-schools, pay attention to those that you may not know much about but which have moved up in the ratings. Find out more about them. For example, the Darden School, University of Virginia, has one of the biggest moves up in the ratings, so may be a better pick than one of the top rated schools that isn't

moving. Thunderbird, which has a rating in the 20s but is number one for International Business, is a key pick if you want that major. Keep these "diamond in the rough" schools in mind. It's like picking a stock whose price is set to go up.

4) If you are looking for a graduate school, about which ratings are scarcer, one good idea may be to look in the most popular journals and see who the authors of published articles are, what topics they are writing about and what schools they teach in. This will enlighten you about the various types of "hot issues" in your major and allow you to start a "Who is Who" of publishing authors who might be potential advisors.

**b) Put together a checklist of requirements and admission information:**

Here are some of the criteria that you should keep in mind. Make an Excel spreadsheet and fill in the information as you find it out so that it is always on hand:

- 1) Admissions address:
- 2) Admissions e-mail:
- 3) Admissions telephone:
- 4) Contact person:
- 5) Application fee:
- 6) Date that application is due:
- 7) Financial Aid deadline:
- 8) Where to send transcripts:
- 9) TOEFL minimum score:
- 10) GRE/GMAT average score;
- 11) Average GPA:
- 12) How should the GPA be calculated?
- 13) Essay Requirements:
- 14) Reference Letter Requirements:
- 15) Resume (CV) Requirements:
- 16) Work Experience Requirements:
- 17) Date Application sent:
- 18) Acceptance letter date:
- 19) Accept or decline date:
- 20) Financial Aid info:
- 21) Scholarships info:
- 22) Foreign Student employment info:
- 23) Financial office e-mail:
- 24) Financial office telephone:

This standard information will give you requirements/important information/test scores at your fingertips and may prove very useful when making your final decision where to apply.

**3) Know thy budget:**

Of course, unfortunately, for most of us a key criterion in our applications is the cost. You might make a budget spread sheet too. Here is some of the information on your budget checklist to keep in mind.

**continues . . .**

## JOURNEY continued from Page 5)

- a) Yearly tuition (for non-residents):
- b) Application fees:
- c) Test preparation fees:
- d) Test registration fees:
- e) Sending application packages to schools:
- f) Translating and notarizing transcripts;
- g) Books/supplies;
- h) Room and board:
- i) Transportation (including campus visit if you choose this option):
- j) Medical insurance:
- k) Personal funds;
- l) Emergency funds;
- m) Estimated total of above.

Here are some useful web sites to check out when researching for graduate school or business school loans, scholarships, or just seeking sound advice on how to proceed with short-listing school choices:

- 1) <http://www.princetonreview.com/newsletter.asp>
- 2) [http://www.wiredscholar.com/financing/content/f\\_alt\\_mba.jsp](http://www.wiredscholar.com/financing/content/f_alt_mba.jsp)
- 3) <http://www.mba.com>
- 4) <http://studentloan.citibank.com>
- 5) <http://www.educaid.com>
- 6) <http://www.InternationalStudent.com/fulbright/>
- 7) <http://www.gradview.com>
- 8) <http://www.mba.org.uk>
- 9) <http://www.petersons.com/finaid/fa-graduate.asp>
- 10) <http://www.gradloans.com>
- 11) <http://www.usia.gov>
- 12) <http://www.cimo.ri/English/grants/html>
- 13) <http://info.irex.org>
- 14) <http://www.foregnmba.com>
- 15) <http://www.mbaaplaza.com;>  
and of course, our favorite
- 16) [http://www.pericles.ru/able/Graduate\\_Adviser\\_Newsletter.html](http://www.pericles.ru/able/Graduate_Adviser_Newsletter.html)

### 4) *Beefing up your resume – knowing what will put you in the best light:*

The year before graduate or B-school is the time to start really working on your CV—don't wait till the last minute here!

It is very important to have activities in your resume demonstrating that you are a multi-faceted person willing to go that extra mile to help your community and those less fortunate than yourself. This does not necessarily mean working in a soup kitchen or cleaning up bed pans in hospitals if that type of activity doesn't appeal. There are

ways to use those leadership, organizational, language, analytical skills that you have to make someone else's life better—you can become a mentor, teach orphans how to speak English, improve their Russian or do better in math so that they can have a better chance of getting in to a good university; you can use your leadership skills to bring people together and teach them to help themselves; you can use accounting skills to help an NGO gain knowledge of spreadsheets or file their taxes. In short, it just takes imagination and you can use your skills to better society and better your chances of admission.

All of these things should be thought about now and planned. The greatest gift is giving, and, when you are applying to graduate or B-school, this can be your greatest application asset as well.

In terms of graduate school, you should also think about finding a way to publish something in journals. Try volunteering to go to various conferences and writing up your impressions. Nobody needs to give you permission to write an article—just put something together on a topic of interest to you, try to get an expert in the field either co-author it or proofread it and give you advice. If a grad school sees that you have published and traveled, put together reviews of conferences or seminars and made some good suggestions about future ones, this right away puts you above the crowd. Anything that has been written should be translated and transmitted to the school of your choice.

In addition, the more you have attended professional events and written, the more you narrow down your choice of graduate school specialties, the more you know about the main players within that specialization, and the more you look like an insider and not just someone with half-baked plans.

Graduate school applicants should also look into various grants and scholarships available. What areas are receiving the most money (“hot topics” that get funded nowadays). Perhaps you can even take a course on grant-writing. You will probably need grants and scholarships to be able to travel and write those publications which you will need to receive more grant-money and fellowships. Being able to write a good grant is an invaluable skill in a world where the competition is growing for an ever dwindling pile of research funds.

Well, this is it for the first six months....that should keep you very busy....stay tuned for the next six month installment in the next JOURNEY continuing saga.



## 1L, continued from Page 8

suddenly stopped her lecture in mid-sentence, turned to look on the class, and with a condemning look in her eye we'd never seen before, asked, “Whose cell phone is that?” Nobody answered. The cell phone rang three more times and then when silent. Slowly she turned away and resumed her lecture. About 10 seconds later the same cell phone rang again. This time she was very angry. She turned and looked at the student who sits directly behind me. “Augustine. Is that *your* cell phone?” “Me! No. It really wasn't mine,” Augustine exclaimed frantically waving his hands. Since I sat right in front of him I knew he was telling the truth. The ring came from further back in the classroom. “Well, you have a very guilty look about you. If you want to be a lawyer, you will need to work on that,” she said.

The whole class laughed, and she moved on with her lecture without any more investigation. But I think that to this day she still wants to know who that student was who not only disrespected her, but then didn't have the courage to admit their guilt.

### A Couple Advantages Russian Students May Have at an American Law School

So you may now be thinking: Boy, that sounds pretty difficult. But fear not. Russian students may have a couple of advantages in adjusting to certain aspects of law school.

#### 1. Ambiguity of the Law

Many Americans enter law school with the hope of learning to use and exploit the clear, concrete rules that govern our society. They are often shocked and confused to find that the law is really a combination of a few concrete rules and many, many exceptions. They often feel lost in a sea of ambiguity. By simple virtue of living in Russia in the 1990s, many of you may have developed an intuitive understanding of the law as an ever changing, man-made, and

**continues . . .**

(very) imperfect thing, which will help you to understand some of the difficult aspects and sometimes conflicting nature of the law.

## 2. Math and Science Skills

It is a bit of an exaggeration to say that American law students are all the smart kids who couldn't do math and science well enough to go to medical school. But there is a lot of truth to the stereotype that many law students are not very good with numbers. Russian students, even those who don't feel they were especially good at math or science, can have an advantage in this area by virtue of the Russian education system's focus on these fields throughout school and university, and that knowledge can be valuable for such areas of law as Intellectual Property, Bioethics, and Health Care law.

## 3. Demanding Nature of Law Professors

For those who have studied at an American undergraduate institution, the demanding nature of most law professors comes as quite a shock. Most undergraduate professors are very reluctant to force students to speak in class, embarrass students, or to tell a student directly that he or she is wrong. Law school professors are different. They call on you to answer a question whether you are ready and willing or not, and will occasionally ridicule you if you don't know the answer or are unprepared. They are also not shy about telling students in a very direct manner when they are wrong on an issue. Russian students more accustomed to authoritarian teachers may be more comfortable in this classroom environment and more adapted to such a teaching style than their American counterparts.

Overall, I have really liked my experience at law school so far, and so have a couple of Russian students whom I have met here at GW Law. To borrow a phrase from a certain law school survival guide, the study of law, especially the first year, is "intellectual dynamite." It is a great challenge and can be very rewarding as long as you stay disciplined and get involved in and outside of class. So if you have a strong interest in expanding your horizons with training in Anglo-American law and are ready to put yourself to the test, contact Pericles to learn about how you can apply to study at a U.S. law school or take classes in American law in Moscow.



## A PICTURE continued from Page 3

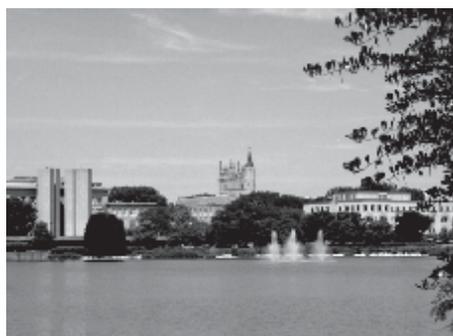
appear very clean, and my wife said that it is the last place she would like me to study. Unfortunately, for some reason, I do not have any pictures of the campus. The only picture that I have is a sight of the famous Chicago skyline from the beach. My wife got sad from Chicago's image and was not happy with that beach. As a result, she did not go swimming in lake Michigan, whereas I enjoyed it.

Chicago GSB has a spacious, glass building, which was recently raised and thus has modern equipment. What impressed me about the school is that they allegedly choose their students carefully to make sure that they are outstandingly intelligent and the education is based on four perspectives – psychology, sociology, economics, and statistics. When I was preparing for my visit to Chicago, I sent letters to three clubs at the school. There was something wrong with communication, because only one club replied and they were too late. Let's give it the benefit of the doubt, and think that the school was not in session and on top of that it was too hot.

### Northwestern Kellogg

At first, Kellogg's location appeared to contrast with Chicago. In fact, Evanston, a town 20 miles north of Chicago, is quite a rich place. People water lawns and trees to keep them green in the hot summer. The fact that the campus is right on the lake makes the place especially gorgeous. How green and colorful are all these plants! The small lake, which is connected to Michigan lake, makes the beauty of the campus.

After a meeting with an admissions representative, I understood that they thought that they were mistakenly perceived as a school good in only marketing and general management. They believe that they are well rounded. Actually, I had some doubts that they were



Northwestern Kellogg sits on a lake. . .



. . .but don't plan on swimming.

very strong in finance. However, I talked with two current MBA students, both Americans. They were in a one-year program, and they chose Kellogg because it provided a one year program. Interestingly, they both happened to be in finance, and one of them is interested in entrepreneurship as well. They just started their studies and, so far, they liked everything. One thing upon which one of them frowned – there are not enough rooms in the school. When the academic year starts in September, finding a room for teamwork might be a problem – he said, in comparison with Chicago GSB.

Of course, after our visit to Kellogg, we decided to go swimming, and our desire was doomed to disappointment. After a 20 minutes walk from campus, we got to the coast, and decided to walk along it. We came across a place apparently designed for sports activities at leisure time – jogging, tennis, and rowing. Then when we found a beach, but we found that visitors had to pay \$7 each no matter how long they planned to go swimming. Of course, we do not mind paying for any comfort, but not for zero. There weren't any deck-chairs, sun umbrellas, or bars. Well, it was hot and having decided to part with our 14 bucks we found that those guys could not able to let us in because the ticket office was already closed and there was no any other way but have their f\*\*\*ing tokens. It was frustrating. They did not even have any restaurants or bars there, so we finally had to go back to the center of town. When we were going along the water, we constantly saw plaques saying swimming is forbidden and violators will be fined. We ended up with a feeling that Evanston was not a place for visitors – which was very opposite to our initial very favorable impression.

I am happy to have gone through all those experiences and seen the real US. If you have any questions, comments, or say, ideas to share with me, please do not hesitate to contact me. You can get my contact information through the Pericles office.



## Notes from the Underground: Advice from our students: A Letter from an a Russified American Turn “1L”

*In this issue we reprint comments from Aaron Wredberg, former Muskie Fellowship director for the Russia and now Law student at GWU. Thank you Aaron for your great advice!*

My name is Aaron Wredberg, and after living and working for 5 years in Russia, I have recently returned to the United States to begin my legal education at George Washington University Law School (GW Law) in Washington, DC. Last spring, with the hope of getting a taste of what law school would be like, I audited Contracts at Pericles. The course on Contracts was a great introduction to the study of law, and gave me a “sneak peek” at the type of study that would later come to consume nearly every waking second of my life.

The first year of law school is a mythical, mysterious, and intimidating experience in the minds of many Americans. Through movies, books, and simple word of mouth, most American college graduates know that law school, especially the first year during which the students are called “1Ls,” is a grueling test of intellect, work ethic, organizational skills, and discipline.

Now, with a couple weeks of law school experience, Pericles has asked me to share some of my thoughts and experiences of the past few weeks and some advice for Russian students considering entering an American LL.M. or J.D. program.

### Some Advice for Russians Planning to Study at an American Law School

Don't fall behind in your reading assignments

If your previous study habits involved waiting until the last few weeks before the exam before beginning serious study, you will have to change them. Many of the Russians I knew while living in Moscow and Novosibirsk had developed an amazing talent for procrastinating until the last possible minute, and just when it seemed impossible to complete the task, putting in a superhuman effort to finish the project on time (or almost on time).

That technique will not work at an American law school. Reading is assigned for every class. Even when it seems short (10-15 pages), the fact that the material is very dense means it takes a very long time to read. If you fall behind, even if you read English very well, you will have great difficulty catching up again. Besides, that superhuman effort will be required before finals even if you have diligently kept up with the reading.

You are not the only one who doesn't know what all those words mean

Don't think that just because you don't understand every 10<sup>th</sup> word in legal textbooks that it is due to poor English reading comprehension! Many Americans also struggle with the legal vocabulary which includes unfamiliar words, foreign words, or familiar words used in unfamiliar ways. Often phrases in the text written in *italics* are not even in English, but Latin. For this reason you must carry a pocket-sized legal dictionary with you at all times to look up all those unfamiliar words.

Take advantage of extra-curricular activities

There is no excuse to ever be bored at law school. Besides the class work, there are literally dozens of student organizations you can join that cater to a wide range of interests. These groups often organized special events and activities focused on one area of law, such as international, environmental or corporate law. Other groups organize activities not related to law such as hiking trips to a nearby national park, white-water rafting, political campaigns, or religious outreach. Here at GW Law, there is even a group that calls themselves, with no apparent sense of irony, the Legal Anarchists! And don't think that these groups are all play and no practical purpose. Putting on your resume that you actively participated in one student association or another may be the thing that distinguishes you from the other talented applicants and intrigues an employer enough to offer you a job... that said the Legal Anarchists Association would probably not be the best career choice for a aspiring corporate lawyer.

Keep in mind that American law is less formal and literal

This is not to say there are no rules at all, but you will notice that legal transactions, especially in the commercial sphere, do not require the rigid formality that Russian law does. Official seals,

expensive company letterhead, and strict formulistic language or official form for legal documents has long ago disappeared from American law. Even when such formalities are used or the text of a law is clear, the courts will find ways to undermine the formalities or even the letter of the law if the court feels an injustice will follow.

Make sure your cell phone is set to vibrate or turned off while in class

American professors are often pretty forgiving. But should your cell phone unexpectedly ring in class, even the gentlest, friendliest professor will become highly irritated.

A quick story on this point: A week ago a cell phone began ringing in the middle of a lecture in Torts. The professor, an warm, open, and friendly woman who invited us all (80+ students) to her house for lunch and often talks about her kids in class,

See 1L, Page 5

### Pericles ABLE Project



American Business and Legal Education

## LL.M. (Master of Laws)

in American Business Law offered in Moscow  
All courses in English from Western Professors

COURSES EXPECTED THIS SPRING

- \* Mergers & Acquisitions
- \* Business Organizations
- \* Securities Regulation
- \* Real Property Law
- \* Legal Writing II
- \* Legal Writing I
- \* Legal English

Call: 692-51-88 / 692-64-63  
Website: <http://www.pericles.ru/able/>  
E-mail: [info@pericles.ru](mailto:info@pericles.ru)  
Tverskaya Ulitsa 10, Suite 319, Moscow, 125009 Russia

*For free copies of other  
Graduate Advisor issues please  
email [info@pericles.ru](mailto:info@pericles.ru) or call  
(095) 692-6463*