

Students explore human trafficking, trauma recovery

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Kara Van de Carr, a 1998 Tulane law graduate who founded Eden House, a two-year residential program for women who have survived commercial and sexual exploitation, teaches a course on human trafficking law. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Tulane Law School's new interdisciplinary course on human trafficking law immerses students in the many dimensions of a daunting international dilemma: dealing with policymakers, understanding law enforcement aspects, assisting traumatized victims.

Medical and counseling professionals are training the students in the complexities and sensitivities involved in interviewing victims.

“The class isn’t just focused on the legal aspects of human trafficking,” says former U.S. diplomat Kara Van de Carr, a 1998 Tulane law graduate who teaches the course. “Human trafficking is so complex that, in order to understand your client and to be a good advocate, you need to understand much more than the applicable law.”

Van de Carr has international and domestic experience dealing with the problem. As vice consul at the U.S. Embassy in Kingston, Jamaica, she wrote the [Trafficking in Persons Report](#). In New Orleans, she founded and serves as board president of [Eden House](#), a two-year residential program for women who have survived commercial and sexual exploitation.

The course offers “an in-depth look at a topic that isn’t taught in most law schools,” second-year law student Rachel Richardson says. “Kara Van de Carr is an expert in the field and has brought several guest speakers (also experts in human trafficking) to class, including people from the FBI, Homeland Security and a wonderful trauma psychiatrist.”

The course is an outgrowth of Tulane Law School’s well-established relationship with Eden House, where students volunteer, lending their skills to the organization’s efforts to shape human trafficking policy and rehabilitate survivors.

“It’s always been my hope to use my law degree outside of a courtroom ? to perform community outreach and education for indigent and underserved populations,” says third-year student Christina Autin, an Eden House extern. “My work with Eden House has been valuable because it’s taught me how to present dense legal information to a non-legal audience.”

Ali Mansfield is Tulane Law School’s communications and marketing coordinator.

“It’s not like any law school class they’ve ever had. It’s a totally new and different experience in that it’s much more practical than theoretical.” —Kara Van de Carr, founder of Eden House