

P6. Educating for the Rule of Law: Challenges and Opportunities for Law Faculties in the Asian Century

22nd ASLI Conference 2025

Panel Category	:	Legal Education
Panel Title	:	Educating for the Rule of Law: Challenges and Opportunities for Law Faculties in the Asian Century
Panel Abstract	:	

Abstract

(This is a discussion style panel)

There is widespread agreement that respect for the rule of law is a fundamental requirement for prosperous, peaceful and just societies. There is also widespread agreement about what the rule of law entails: at a minimum, that all persons and institutions are accountable to laws that are publicly promulgated, equally enforced, and independently adjudicated. Given the importance of the rule of law, and the critical role of lawyers as guardians of the rule of law, one might assume that the rule of law would be among the first things that a law student learns, and that dedication to the rule of law is nurtured and developed throughout a law student's time at university.

But is this the case? There are suggestions that in many law faculties across the world, it is not. Some law students graduate from their degrees with the view that the law is a tool to advance the interests of their clients, or their own favoured causes and interests. Other law students graduate with the idea that the rule of law is not the foundation for peace and prosperity, but the foundation for institutionalized advantage for some and disadvantage for others.

This panel will consider the challenges that law schools in the Asia Pacific face in educating students who understand, and who are committed to, the rule of law. The panel will discuss the extent to which education about the rule of law cuts across jurisdictional differences, the responsibility of Law Deans to instil respect for this most fundamental of principles, and what law schools already do and can do better, to develop the rule of law in their teaching, curriculum, and law programs.

The panel will involve a discussion among the panellists rather than the presentation of formal 'papers'. We are hoping to publish a joint article after the conference, which will highlight comparative approaches to education and the rule of law, and further highlight the ASLI conference as a source of collaboration and engagement.

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Name of Convenor	:	1) Catherine Renshaw, Western Sydney University
Name of Panellists	:	1) Wu Qiaofang, East China University of Political Science and Law 2) Ritu Gupta, National Law University Delhi, India 3) Kumarlingam Amirthalingam, National University of Singapore

Brief Biography of Convenor and Panellists

Panel Convenor: Professor Catherine Renshaw, Dean of Law, Western Sydney University

Catherine Renshaw is the Dean of Law at Western Sydney University. She teaches and researches in the field of international law. She is Co-Chair of the International Human Rights Law chapter of the Australian and New Zealand Society of International Law, Deputy Chair of the International Law Section of the Law Council of Australia, a member of the Executive Council of the Asian Society of International Law, a Committee member of the Parramatta and District Regional Law Society of New South Wales, and a member of the Advisory Committee of Rights of Older Persons Australia (ROPA). Before the coup d'état in Myanmar in 2021, Catherine worked with a consortium of universities across the Asia Pacific, and with civil society groups inside Myanmar, on constitutional reform and the rule of law.

Catherine's teaching focuses on the critical early-year learning of law students, and on the pedagogical practices that deepen authentic learning and the ethical orientation of law students.

Panellists

Professor Wu Qiaofang, Dean of International School at East China University of Political Science and Law

Wu Qiaofang is the Dean of International School at East China University of Political Science and Law. She teaches and researches in the field of international economic law. She is a Council member of the Introducing Foreign Intelligence Section of the Chinese Society of Higher Education, a Council member of the Law Translation Research Section of the Shanghai Law Society, a Council member and Researcher of the Shanghai Overseas Chinese-Related Rule of Law Research Centre. Qiaofang's teaching focuses on the 'knowledge deficit' of law students in the practice of foreign-related laws and affairs.

Professor Ritu Gupta, National Law University Delhi, India

Ritu Gupta is a Professor of Law at National Law University Delhi, India. She is Research Director of Centre for Business and Financial Laws (CBFL) at NLUD. She has got a teaching experience of about 22 years. Prof Gupta has recently featured in BW Legal World's list of '100 Influential Women Driving Change in Indian Legal Ecosystem' in the category of top 5 academicians consecutively for last two years. Prof. Gupta specializes in Commercial and Business Laws like Law of Contract, Banking Law, Property and Competition Law. Her areas of interests include Legal Education and Research, Judicial Process, Interpretation of Statutes and Gender Justice. She has written two books one on 'Sexual Harassment at Workplace' and the other on 'Law of Contract' including the Specific Relief Act, 1963, both published by LexisNexis. She has been an ASLI Fellow in March 2025.

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Professor Kumarlingam Amirthalingam, National University of Singapore

Kumaralingam Amirthalingam is a Professor at the National University of Singapore Law School. He obtained his LLB and PhD (in the field of Criminal Law) from the Australian National University. He researches in the areas of Criminal Law (specializing in public prosecutions) and Tort Law (specializing in medical negligence and economic loss). Kumar has served as Vice Dean of the Law School, Director of the Asian Law Institute, and Chair of the NUS Teaching Academy. He is on the International Advisory Board of Medical Law International and the Editorial Advisory Board of Medical Law Review. He was seconded to the Attorney-General's Chambers for two years as Senior Director (Research & Policy) and Deputy Public Prosecutor for two years. Kumar has served as Amicus Curiae in the Court of Appeal in two drug trafficking cases; was a member of the Penal Code Reform Committee that introduced major amendments in 2020; and was the consultant to the Ministry of Law advising it on the establishment of the Public Defender's Office, which was launched in 2022.