

# How well is legal education serving law firms?

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## Order of play:

- Legal education in the Netherlands in a nutshell
- Utrecht School of Law & Utrecht Law College (ULC)
- Now & in the future: what students want & expect?
- Are we teaching the relevant skills?
- Are we asking too much?
- The future: is all of this good enough?



# Legal education in the Netherlands in a nutshell

- Back then...: big (900+) & smaller classes, 4 contact hours a week per course, student = number, exams can be re-done endlessly
- Now: still big (700-800) & smaller classes, 4 hours a week, but in Utrecht each student gets a chance to be/become an individual, not a number, exam cannot be done again
- Now: the possibilities to be excellent and show it, are provided: ULC (see next slide) + EMT
- The future: ULC+...
  - 400 students in total in 4 or 5 Law Colleges



## Utrecht School of Law & Utrecht Law College (ULC)

- What is ULC? How does it work in practice?
- Objectives of the ULC initiative?
- Which specifics make it work?
- What does it mean for the students?
- Do we get better results?
- Do we get better lawyers?
  
- PS: for Master students, there is the EMT honours training in Law



## Now & in the future: what students want & expect?

- What makes a (Utrecht) Law student in 2012 tick and how does he or she see his/her professional and personal future;
  - Taking the right form of education towards a career of his/her liking
- What does a (Utrecht) law student in 2012 expect from the Law Faculty
  - Emotionally= Good reputation, being part of something exclusive, amongst peers, being at home, work hard & play hard, role models
  - Functionally = high level content, good teachers, networking opportunities, experienced people, links to practice, clear structures, international environment, good living & study conditions



## Are we teaching the relevant skills?

- The state of the art in law? In depth enough?
- Research skills?
- Presentation skills?
- Negotiation?
- Ethics?
- Commercial skills?
- Soft skills?
- Business development?
- Networking?





## Are we asking too much?

- The program is full!
- Teaching ones national legal system is a hand full
- Opportunities for doing a minor (in history, economy, psychology, mediation, etc)
- Opportunities to go abroad
- Links to practice are needed and highly useful (pleading sessions, internships)
- But some form of training in other sciences (Law & ...) is also needed (for practice): thus multidisciplinary angle (statistics, social and cognitive psychology, economics, political science, etc) should be taught as well
- Plus: We are not only training for law firms

## Is all of this good enough?

- In fact: not for me to say, as law teacher, but for you (law firms) to decide, but also for: the judiciary, corporate lawyers, (lower and higher) part of government, politicians, etc
- In sum: the law school's problem is that it teaches not only for law firms...
- Thus: specific law schools to train specifically for law firms?
- Or should law schools in fact stop serving law firms?
  - Or leave it to the market, handing firms as many as possible bright young people with the skills to learn fast on the job?

