About the Interamerican Court of Human Rights

In November 1969 the Inter-American Specialized Conference on Human Rights was held in San José, Costa Rica in which the delegates of the member States of the Organization of the American States adopted the American Convention on Human Rights, which entered into force on July 18, 1978, when a member State deposited the eleventh ratified document.

This regional treaty is binding to those States that ratify or adhere to it and represents the culmination of a process that began at the end of World War II, when the American nations gathered in Mexico and decided to compose a declaration on human rights, in order to eventually adopt it as a convention. This declaration, the American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of the person, was approved by the member States of the OAS in Bogotá, Colombia in May 1948.

On September 10, 1981, the Government of Costa Rica and the Court signed the Headquarters Agreement approved by the Law No. 6889 of September 9, 1983 setting forth the privileges and immunities of the Court, for its judges, its staff and those persons who appear before it. This Headquarters Agreement is meant to facilitate the normal flow of the activities of the Court, especially regarding the protection given to every person who intervenes in the process. As part of the agreement contracted by the Government of Costa Rica in November 1993, it donated to the Court the house where it is located today. For more information: http://www.corteidh.or.cr/index.php/en/about-us/historia-de-la-corteidh

Legal Intern Position

The Internship and Visiting Professionals Program at the Inter-American Court of Human Rights offers students and professionals in the areas of law, international relations, political science, linguistics and translations an opportunity to gain a practical experience in the Inter-American System for the Protection of Human Rights.

The internship allows you to work directly with the Court attorneys in the drafting of legal opinions and several other Court functions. During my time I helped draft the legal opinion of a case, which included conducting various legal research assignments, a detailed review of the parties’ briefs, and even assisting in the administrative preparations for the hearing. Dress code at the Court is business casual, although during the hearing sessions more formal business attire is required. The workload of an intern is also heavily dependent on their supervising attorney. Different Court attorneys work very differently, assigning their interns varying degrees of responsibilities and work. It is important for an intern to be ready to deal with this unpredictability and be able to effectively communicate with their supervisor for the internship to be a successful one.
Given the large number of applications, the process is very competitive. To be selected as an intern or visiting professional provides one with the opportunity to be a part of high-level international judicial work and acquire particular knowledge about the Court's case law and international human rights. Seattle University School of Law students have an important advantage in this seleccion process, as we do not participate in the world-wide selection process.

**Relevant Coursework**
An aspiring intern should have taken international human rights and if possible, participated in the international human rights clinic before going to the Court. Although the Court attorneys are very flexible in regards to the coursework that an intern has taken, in order to be more effective and fully take advantage of the internship, these courses are essential for the understanding of the Interamerican system and a more effective performance. Any other course in international law is also useful, such as public international law, international criminal law, international humanitarian law, immigration law, and administrative law.

**Relevant Preparations**
Although not strictly required for the internship, a working knowledge of Spanish is incredibly useful. All Court documents are drafted in Spanish and Portuguese, therefore the ability to write in these languages is very important. I would also recommend for any potential intern to do some background research in the political context of Latin America. The international human rights movement has at its roots a very important political vein. It is very important, especially for a United States citizen, to be aware of the historical context of the region, especially the relationship that has developed between the United States and several countries in the region. Being culturally sensitive is also essential to work successfully in an environment where you will work with people from many countries and cultures. During my time there were interns and visiting professionals (licensed attorneys) from all throughout Latin America, Canada, and Western Europe. In order to take a full advantage of the experience, an intern must be ready to leave their comfort zone both professionally and personally and be ready to interact with this multicultural workplace.

**Checklist:**
- Paperwork from law school and the university
- Visa, if you need one and other travel documents
- Notice the embassy of your travel and stay
- Obtain necessary medications and examines from the university medical clinic.
- Travel insurance, if you want one
- Adaptor(s)
- Some cash

**Logistics**
The public transportation system in San Jose can be challenging at times, I would recommend living within a walking distance of the Court. However, I would also say that interns should not hesitate to explore the areas outside of San Jose. Costa Rica has a wealth of natural resources, with beaches, volcanoes, etc. I would recommend that an intern reach out to their fellow interns and organize
weekend outings to some of these beautiful places. Future applicants and interns are always welcome to contact me if they have questions about the position and experience. My email is brafaelcruz@gmail.com