EDNA OBIRI
Fred S. Bailey Fellow
J.S.D. Candidate | Lecturer | Environmental Law Scholar
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EDUCATION

University of Illinois College of Law, Champaign, IL
Doctor of the Science of Law (J.S.D.), *In Progress*
Dissertation: *Fisheries Governance and Artisanal Rights in Ghana: Toward an Equitable Regulatory Framework*

- ⇨ Advisor: Heidi M. Hurd
- ⇨ Committee Members: Kenworthy Bilz, Patrick J. Keenan, Elizabeth DeSombre, Samuel J. Barkin

University of Illinois College of Law, Champaign, IL
Master of Laws (LL.M.), Regulations, Sustainability & Compliance, May 2022
Wisconsin International University College, Ghana
Bachelor of Laws (LL.B.), November 2020
Wisconsin International University College, Ghana
MBA (Finance), December 2015
University of Professional Studies, Accra, Ghana
B.A. Business Administration, August 2008

HONORS & FELLOWSHIPS

- ⇨ **Fred S. Bailey Fellowship**, University of Illinois College of Law (2026-2027)

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois College of Law, Champaign, Illinois
Teaching Assistant, Ethics, Law, and the Environment, August 2026 to Present

- ⇨ Support course instruction, class activities, and student engagement throughout the semester.
- ⇨ Hold weekly office hours to discuss course materials and provide academic support to students.
- ⇨ Prepare and deliver a guest lecture on Ghana's fisheries governance, stakeholder conflicts, and the challenges facing artisanal fishing communities.

University of Illinois College of Law, Champaign, Illinois
Teaching Assistant, Legal Writing and Research, August-December, 2025

- ⇨ Assisted faculty with delivering an intensive introductory course for incoming LLM students.
- ⇨ Led practical learning activities, including client-interview simulations and Bluebook citation exercises.
- ⇨ Reviewed and graded client letters, providing feedback on legal analysis, organization, professional tone, and citation.
- ⇨ Held office hours and provided individualized academic support to students.

University of Professional Studies Law School, Accra, Ghana
Lecturer, September 2022 – Present

- ⇨ Teach LLM Students Global Legal Framework for Resource Development
- ⇨ Teach contract law, commercial law, environmental law, and the legal environment of business.
- ⇨ Design and deliver course content integrating legal doctrine with real-world regulatory challenges.
- ⇨ Supervise student research and mentor emerging scholars in environmental and commercial law.
- ⇨ Foster critical engagement with climate governance, sustainability, and legal reform.

LEGAL & PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

RELX Inc. (LexisNexis)
LexisNexis Associate, November 2025 – Present

- ⇨ Serve as a campus ambassador for LexisNexis at the University of Illinois College of Law.
- ⇨ Engage with law students and promote awareness of LexisNexis research tools, resources, and training opportunities.
- ⇨ Organize and staff informational tables during campus events, answering questions and distributing relevant materials.
- ⇨ Provide basic peer guidance on accessing and using LexisNexis platforms effectively.

MacCarthy and Associates Law Firm, Accra, Ghana
Legal Research Assistant, July 2020 – May 2021

- ⇨ Researched and analyzed legal precedents to assess litigation strategies and probable outcomes
- ⇨ Reviewed deeds of trust and legal documents to verify transactional accuracy
- ⇨ Supported case preparation through document organization and legal analysis
- ⇨ Communicated case updates and coordinated client interactions

Apex Events Limited, Accra, Ghana
Executive Director, July 2017 – June 2021

- ⇨ Led organizational strategy and operations, supervising a team of 15 staff
- ⇨ Increased company profitability by 35% through operational restructuring
- ⇨ Designed and implemented business development strategies to expand market reach
- ⇨ Managed stakeholder relationships and oversaw high-value projects

United Pensions Trustees, Accra, Ghana
Compliance Officer, March 2012 – June 2017

- ⇨ Established and managed the organization's compliance department
- ⇨ Developed compliance strategies aligned with Ghana's National Pensions Act
- ⇨ Conducted regulatory training and prepared compliance reports for executive decision-making

- ⇨ Liaised with regulatory authorities on compliance and reporting matters

Nationwide Mutual Healthcare, Accra, Ghana
Claims Manager, January 2004 – February 2012

- ⇨ Managed claims processing systems and departmental operations
- ⇨ Oversaw compliance with healthcare billing regulations and standards
- ⇨ Coordinated with external stakeholders and improved operational efficiency

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

University of Illinois College of Law, Champaign, IL
Pro-bono Legal Researcher – Renewable Energy Permitting Project, 2025

- ⇨ Analyzed permitting frameworks for large-scale renewable energy projects in Maryland and Pennsylvania
- ⇨ Evaluated CPCN requirements, zoning authority, and environmental regulatory processes
- ⇨ Assessed legal and institutional barriers to renewable energy deployment
- ⇨ Produced a policy-oriented report linking permitting systems to climate governance outcomes

RESEARCH AGENDA

My research lies at the intersection of environmental law, fisheries governance, and environmental justice, with a particular focus on how legal and institutional frameworks distribute access to natural resources, regulatory benefits and burdens, and decision-making power in the Global South. I examine how ecological decline, climate variability, industrial resource use, and regulatory design interact to produce unequal outcomes among communities and economic sectors.

My current doctoral research, titled "Fisheries Governance and Artisanal Rights in Ghana: Toward an Equitable Regulatory Framework," examines Ghana's fisheries crisis as both an ecological problem and a question of governance, justice, and rights. The collapse of small-pelagic fish stocks, pressure from industrial fishing, illegal practices such as saiko, weak enforcement, and political and economic imbalances have left artisanal fishing communities increasingly vulnerable. My research argues that fisheries regulation must be evaluated not only by whether it conserves fish stocks but also by how it distributes access, benefits, conservation costs, and meaningful participation.

The dissertation develops the Fisheries Inequities Governance Framework (FIGF), a qualitative, normative, and diagnostic framework organized around four interconnected criteria: Sustainability, Equity, Adaptive Capacity, and Procedural Legitimacy. The framework evaluates whether fisheries governance protects ecological systems, distributes regulatory benefits and burdens fairly, responds effectively to changing environmental and social conditions, and provides affected communities with meaningful opportunities to participate in decisions. It moves equity from the margins of fisheries regulation and treats it as a central measure of effective and legitimate governance. A central part of this research concerns the substantive and

procedural rights of artisanal fishers. Drawing on fisheries law, environmental justice, rights theory, and socio-legal scholarship, I examine whether interests connected to livelihood, food security, resource access, cultural continuity, and participation can ground stronger legal protections for artisanal communities. Although ecological sustainability remains a binding constraint on all fishing claims, my work argues that artisanal communities' dependence and vulnerability give their interests greater normative weight than purely commercial extraction claims. More broadly, my scholarship examines the relationship between regulatory design and environmental justice, particularly where legal rules drawn from global models are implemented within distinct local political, economic, and institutional conditions. This concern also informs my applied and public-facing scholarship on extractive industries, critical minerals, the energy transition, water governance, the blue economy, and sustainable business practices. Across these areas, I explore how regulatory gaps, institutional delays, and weak participation can prevent natural-resource development from producing equitable outcomes.

My future research will proceed along three related strands. First, I will continue developing the theoretical and legal foundations of equitable fisheries governance by refining the FIGF and examining the relationship among sustainability, equity, adaptive capacity, and procedural legitimacy. Second, I will undertake comparative research on fisheries and natural-resource governance systems to identify when legal and institutional models can be successfully adapted across different social and regulatory contexts. Third, I will expand my work on regulatory design in climate and development transitions, including renewable energy, critical minerals, and sustainable business, with particular attention to participation, benefit-sharing, and the protection of vulnerable communities. Across these strands, my research seeks to contribute to both academic scholarship and policy reform by developing governance frameworks that are environmentally sustainable, socially equitable, responsive to change, and institutionally legitimate.

PUBLICATIONS

Peer-Reviewed Scholarship

- Edna Obiri, *'When Stability Becomes Risk: Reframing Stabilization Clauses for Adoptive Regulation'* (2026) 31 Illinois Business Law Journal.
- Obiri, Edna, *Consumerism as a Contributory Factor to Climate Change: The Case of Ghana*. (2023) IJNRD, Vol. 8, Issue 2.

Selected Commentary and Op-Eds

- Edna Obiri, *'Africa's Green Minerals Boom: Who Really Pays for the Energy Transition?'* (African Illinois International Review, May 2026).

Policy, Public, and Applied Scholarship (Selected)

- Obiri, Edna. *Your Environmental Spotlight with Edna Obiri* (Columnist), **Business & Financial Times** (2022–Present).

Selected Articles:

- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "The Beach Has a Job: And It's About to Walk Out on It." *Business & Financial Times* (2026).
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "From Earth Day to Every Day: Why Sustainability Must Move from CSR to Being a Core Business Strategy." *Business & Financial Times* (2026).
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "Ewoyaa's Lithium Delay: Ghana's Regulatory Gate Problem." *Business & Financial Times* (2026).
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "Ghana's Blue Economy Promise: Growth Without Justice Is Not Development." *Business & Financial Times* (2026).
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "The Untapped Potential of Ghana's Peatlands: A Path to Climate Resilience and Economic Growth." *Business & Financial Times* (2025).
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "Mountains Under Siege: The Quiet Threat of Climate Change to Fragile Ecosystems." *Business & Financial Times* (2025).
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "From Scarcity to Sustainability: Addressing the Global Water Crisis." *Business & Financial Times (2025).*
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "Environmental Justice: Bridging the Gap Between Activism and Equity." *Business & Financial Times (2025).*
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "Are Electric Cars Truly Green, or Just the Lesser Evil?" *Business & Financial Times* (2025).
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "Carbon Markets: Exciting News for Carbon Emitters at Last." *Business & Financial Times* (2023).
- ⇨ Obiri, Edna. "Plastics and the Environment: Why Do We Litter? (II)." *Business & Financial Times* (2023).

Other Publications

Obiri, Edna. Children's fiction: *Princess Sophia and the Little Mermaid* (2022).

PRESENTATIONS

- ⇨ Poster presentation, Global Policy Forum, Center for Global Studies – UIUC; April 14, 2026
- ⇨ Virtual presentation, Graduate Colloquium – Maurer School of Law; March 4; 2026
- ⇨ WashU JSD Colloquium Presentation, "Between Borrowed Law and Local Realities: Legal Transplants, Societal Context, and the Crisis of Fisheries Governance in Ghana," Washington University School of Law, October 2025
- ⇨ Poster Presentation, Research Gala
  Society of Black Engineers, UIUC Grainger College of Engineering, November 2025
- ⇨ Moderator, Center for the Study of Global and Gender Equity
  University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, September 2025
- ⇨ Presenter, Research Dialogue Series
  UPSA Law School, November 2023
- ⇨ Speaker, West African Mentorship Program
  October 2023

- ⇨ Moderator, Climate Transition Series Webinar
  Center for Climate, Law, and Policy, February 2023

LEADERSHIP & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Illinois Business Law Journal (IBLJ) – University of Illinois College of Law

Editor-in-Chief, August 2026 to date

- ⇨ Provide strategic and editorial leadership for the journal, coordinating board activities, publication priorities, and student outreach.
- ⇨ Oversee the selection, development, and editing of student-authored scholarship on contemporary business law issues.

African Illinois International Review (AIIR)

Editor-in-Chief, August 2026 to date

- ⇨ Lead the editorial and institutional development of an emerging interdisciplinary journal focused on African and international legal and policy issues.
- ⇨ Oversee editorial planning, manuscript development, and coordination among editors, writers, and contributors.

ClimateConserve LBG, Accra, Ghana

Co-Founder, 2023-Present

- ⇨ Lead initiatives focused on climate action, sustainability, and environmental justice.
- ⇨ Oversee program development, partnerships, and community engagement strategies.

Graduate Students' Association of Ghana (GRASAG-USA)

Chief Justice, September 2024 – 2025

- ⇨ Interpret constitutional provisions and oversee governance processes.
- ⇨ Preside over disputes, elections, and institutional accountability mechanisms.

African Students Organization (ASO), UIUC

Chair, Constitutional Review Committee, 2025

Social Chair, 2024-2025

Treasurer, 2021-2022

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

- ⇨ Member, American Society of International Law (ASIL)
- ⇨ Member, Center for Climate, Law, and Policy (CCLAP)
- ⇨ Planning Committee Member, Ghana Climate Change and Green Economy Week

VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE

The Vineyard Church of Urbana – Hope Center, Urbana, IL

Volunteer, 2025-Present

- ⇨ Support food distribution and community outreach initiatives.

UPSA Law School Legal Clinic, Accra, Ghana
Coordinator and Supervisor

- ⇨ Supervised student volunteers and supported legal aid services

SKILLS

- ⇨ Legal Research and Writing
- ⇨ Environmental Law and Policy Analysis
- ⇨ Teaching and Curriculum Development
- ⇨ Public Speaking and Academic Presentation
- ⇨ Digital Tools: Microsoft Office, Canva, Canvas, Moodle