After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in chemical engineering, Elaine Seasly immediately started working as an engineer in the defense industry. Her technical expertise focused on contamination control engineering of sensitive missile optical systems. Through this work she was introduced to the patent process and was an inventor on three issued patents. Working alongside patent attorneys, she became more interested in working with patents. In 2013, she started her own consulting business, advising small businesses on obtaining funding to develop technologies and work through federal requirements.

After being away from academia for 14 years, Seasly decided to pursue her newfound interest and enrolled in Notre Dame’s Master of Science in Patent Law program (MSPL). “Intellectual property and patents are key to small businesses, and to better advise my clients I wanted to learn more about patent law. While searching, I found Notre Dame’s brand new patent law program. The curriculum sounded exciting and really interesting. So I emailed Prof. Deak, discussed the program with her over the phone, and before I knew it, I was filling out applications and taking entrance exams,” she said.

Confident in her decision to enroll in the program, Seasly said, “All professors that teach patent law courses are currently practicing or have practiced patent law. Being able to learn from experienced professionals was extremely helpful and a real pleasure. Additionally, the year-long capstone project of drafting an entire patent application for an actual Notre Dame invention was an amazing experience. With the help of my professors, advisers, and mentors, I created a piece of work of which I am really proud. Also, the guest lectures and networking events that Prof. Deak offers provide awesome professional development opportunities for students.”

Being able to use a technical background and understand patent law is a key strength when working with innovative, developing technologies. Now prepared for many more career opportunities, Seasly plans to move her business to Washington, D.C., and work for the federal government.