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A National Jurist publication

UNT Dallas gets ABA approval; Pace diversifies environmental law; South Texas, Vermont add part-time hybrid programs; HBCU law schools thrive

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Preparing students for practice is becoming a signature goal of more and more schools. Even during the height of the pandemic, schools continued this mission, one that many students and legal education experts applaud.

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LSAC expands LawHub services

BY MIKE STETZ

The Law School Admission Council (LSAC) has been known mostly for one thing, and that's administering the Law School Admission Test (LSAT).

The organization appeared to relish tradition. After all, until 2019 the test was taken using paper and pencil.

But LSAC is evolving — and quickly.

Recently, LSAC acquired two organizations to bolster its relatively new service, LawHub, which offers tools for prelaw students, law students and attorneys. Now under LawHub's umbrella are the Institute for the Future of Law Practice (IFLP) and Law School Transparency (LST).

The LST acquisition made considerable news. The nonprofit legal education watchdog has serious bite and has spurred much change since its founding more than a decade ago. It successfully pushed for more transparency when it came to graduate employment outcomes as well as the toughening of bar-passage-rate thresholds for schools.

LSAC says the acquisitions fit squarely with its expanded mission of assisting a larger pool of people in all phases of the law, be it attending law school or working in the field.

"Our goal is to provide an end-to-end experience that can be found nowhere else," said Annmarie Levins, LSAC's executive vice president and chief strategy officer.

Thus the acquisition of IFLP, which creates curriculum designed to augment law school offerings. One of its focuses is on educating attorneys about technological advances in the legal field, such as data analytics.

And Law School Transparency? It boasts a comprehensive website that offers key data regarding individual law school costs, admission trends, LSAT scores, bar passage success and graduates' employment success. This information will now be available through LSAC.

"Law School Transparency has always done a terrific job," Levins said. "It's very data driven and is an excellent addition for us."

Much of LawHub's content is free, but there is a \$99 yearly subscription charge for its Official LSAT Prep Plus, which offers additional LSAT practice tests and other benefits.

LSAC's recent acquisitions will help ensure that it continues its mission of opening the legal field to more people, particularly minorities and first-generation law students, Levins said.



Already, LawHub has 180,000 active users.

As part of the acquisitions, LSAC hired the leaders of both groups. Kevin Colangelo, IFLP's executive director, and Kyle McEntee, LST's executive director, are now senior directors at LawHub.

McEntee, who co-founded LST when he was a law student, is an aggressive, media-savvy proponent of law school reform. In the past, *The National Jurist* magazine compiled an annual list called the Most Powerful People in Legal Education. McEntee made the list often, usually as the only honoree who wasn't a law school employee.

He said joining LSAC was not a difficult decision for him. Not only did the missions of the two groups align but also LSAC has a preeminent role in legal education, which will allow LST to broaden its influence.

"We'll reach a lot more people," he said.

McEntee was developing a platform for prelaw students and prelaw advisors to help them navigate the admissions process when

he learned that LSAC had a vision for a similar concept. He approached the organization, and it was agreed that joining forces would make great sense.

No money changed hands. LSAC is simply absorbing LST. LST had no full-time employees other than McEntee, who now has a job that doesn't require fundraising and grant-seeking.

"It's not easy running a startup," he said.

LSAC's membership consists of law schools in the U.S., Canada and Australia. Of late, LSAC has been reinventing itself and becoming more student-centric, McEntee said. That's primarily because of new leadership, starting with President and CEO Kellye Testy, he said.

McEntee said he hopes to expand LSAC's services with podcasts and improved employment salary tools.

Given LST's aggressive role in the field, it should not be a shock that LST and LSAC once bumped heads. In 2015, LST released a study identifying schools whose students were at heightened risk of not passing the bar. Low LSAT scores were used as part of the determining formula.

LSAC took offense, stressing that the LSAT is designed to determine law school success, not bar passage success. The two organizations exchanged barbs in the press.

The late Daniel O. Bernstine, then president of LSAC, wrote: "In addition to the fact that the recommendations in the LST report run counter to LSAC's test use guidelines, we are concerned about the methodological errors upon which the report is based, and the misleading media coverage that this flawed report has generated."

LST fired back: "LST understands that LSAC is speaking on behalf of many of its customers, which include the scores of law schools identified by LST as high risk, very high risk and extreme risk schools. LST understands that many of these law schools are very unhappy being called out for their reprehensible admissions practices."

Ouch!

But the spat was never mentioned during the acquisition negotiations, McEntee said.

UNT Dallas receives full ABA approval

University of North Texas at Dallas College of Law has been fully approved by the American Bar Association (ABA). The law school admitted its first class in 2014 and had been operating under provisional accreditation since 2017.

It's a huge achievement for the downtown Dallas law school, which prides itself on diversity and affordability. It is the first law school in three years to receive full approval.

The association approves law schools only after a rigorous, multiyear accreditation process to ensure a national level of uniformity in legal education.

The ABA has also approved part-time, hybrid J.D. programs to be offered by South Texas College of Law Houston and Vermont Law School.

UNT Dallas College of Law is housed in a historical building that was once Dallas

City Hall. In addition to a traditional three-year program, the public law school offers a part-time evening program for working students — the only one of its kind in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex.

"This (ABA approval) will allow us to continue our mission of providing a high quality, affordable legal education to our students," said Dean Felecia Epps. "I am especially proud of our College of Law faculty, staff and students in working to achieve full approval."

The school is noted for its diverse student body and its focus on experiential learning. It was No. 1 in preLaw magazine's Most Diverse Law Schools ranking in the Winter 2021 issue. More than half of the law school's students are minorities, with more than 16% identifying as Black. Also, 29% of the faculty are people of color.

The Mission of UNT Dallas College of



University of North Texas at Dallas
College of Law

Law has always been to make legal education available to a wide variety of individuals. Its admissions officers consider the total package of an applicant, not just grades. They are not driven by law school rankings, Epps told preLaw in December 2020.

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mission of diversifying the legal profession in all aspects,” she said. “Because (rankings) isn’t part of it, it helps us remain focused on attracting the students we need to accomplish (our mission).”

Of course, the law school gives significant weight to GPAs and LSAT scores, but its broad admissions process also looks at the applicant’s background and leadership roles. Anything that shows “grit,” Epps has said, is an important indicator of how an applicant will succeed in law school.

She said the school’s low tuition also attracts diverse applicants, many of whom are first generation law students.

South Texas, Vermont approved for part-time hybrid programs

South Texas College of Law Houston and Vermont Law School have joined the list of U.S. law schools offering hybrid programs in which students take most classes online and visit campus on a limited basis.

William Mitchell College of Law was the first to offer an ABA-approved hybrid degree, beginning in 2013. Two years later, the school merged with Hamline University School of Law to form Mitchell Hamline School of Law in Minnesota.

St. Mary’s University School of Law in San Antonio is the only school with a fully online ABA-accredited J.D. program, which was approved last fall.

South Texas College of Law Houston will launch its program this fall. The school already has a part-time program for working professionals who attend classes on campus four nights a week. The hybrid program offers a more flexible option, with students taking classes on campus two nights a week and completing the rest of their coursework online.

Vermont Law’s part-time online hybrid J.D. program is accepting applications. The program is mostly online, and students will be able to concentrate on one of four areas of specialization: environmental law, food and agriculture law, energy law or restorative justice.

Western New England back in compliance

The ABA also announced that Western New England University School of Law in Springfield, Mass., is once again meeting compliance standards, with 75% of the school’s graduates passing the bar within two years. The ABA had found the school to be out of compliance in November 2021.

Western New England’s two-year pass rate for 2018 graduates was 64.8%, failing to meet the Standard 316 requirement of 75%, which was instituted in 2019.

At the time, supporters praised the ABA’s action, saying schools were failing students if they couldn’t meet the 75% threshold. Critics were worried about the effect the rule would have on diverse schools.



Western New England School of Law

Initially 10 schools were out of compliance. Since then, most have reached the 75% mark.

Two new law schools announced

For the first time in eight years, a new law school will open, and another has been announced.

Jacksonville University College of Law will be Florida’s first new law school in more than 20 years when it opens this fall. It is the first new law school to seek ABA accreditation since University of North Texas at Dallas College of Law opened in 2014 and only the second new law school in the past 10 years.

High Point University in North Carolina also announced plans to open a law school in the fall of 2024.

Jacksonville University’s new law program will be funded partly by the city of Jacksonville, which has pledged \$5 million to get the school off the ground. It hopes to enroll between 20 and 30 students the first year and grow enrollment to 150 in two years’ time. University officials said tuition will be \$36,000 annually with merit scholarships available. Applications are currently being accepted. The law school will be housed away from the main campus in a downtown office building, according to Reuters.

The announcement comes as the city’s only current law school, Florida Coastal School of Law, is in the process of closing. Florida Coastal, a for-profit law school, was founded in 1996 but ran into



Jacksonville University in Jacksonville, Fla.

problems with the U.S. Department of Education and lost the ability for students to get federal loans. Jacksonville would have become one of only three metropolitan regions in the U.S. with 1.5 million or more residents without an ABA-approved law school. Another region is Charlotte, N.C.

High Point University is just outside the Charlotte metropolitan region and is near Wake Forest University School of Law and Elon University School of Law. High Point plans to build an 80,000-square-foot law building and has hired a dean. It is a private university affiliated with the United Methodist Church.

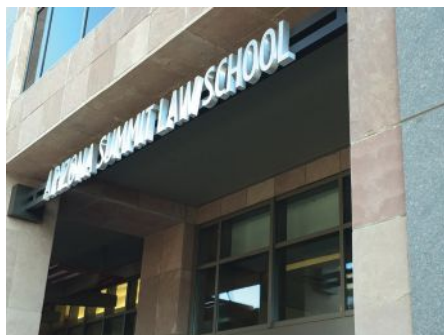
What happened to for-profit law schools?

The impending closure of Florida Coastal School of Law will add to the dwindling number of for-profit law schools.

From 1996 until 2011, seven for-profit law schools received accreditation. Three of them owned by one company — InfiLaw System.

At their height in 2011, ABA-approved for-profit law schools enrolled more than 5,000 students. But the schools started running into problems in 2012 when the number of law school applicants in the country started falling. The for-profit schools, not being the most sought after, saw applications drop at a greater pace than nonprofit schools.

Some of the for-profit schools chose to accept less qualified students, and that led to poor bar passage rates and sagging graduate employment numbers.



Arizona Summit Law School

Then the federal government stepped in and started pulling loan funding. That led to InfiLaw closing Charlotte School of Law in 2017 and Arizona Summit in 2020. Florida Coastal is the last of the InfiLaw schools.

In May 2021, the Department of Education's Office of Federal Student Aid announced that Florida Coastal's application to get federal student aid reinstated had been denied. Under a teach-out plan approved by the ABA, Florida Coastal students are transferring to other law schools to complete their degrees.

Meanwhile, Charleston School of Law is close to achieving its goal of transitioning to nonprofit status. The South Carolina school was founded by a group of local attorneys and judges in 2004. It earned ABA accreditation in 2011 but quickly fell into financial trouble when

applications dropped the next year. Ed Bell, a local attorney, acquired the school in 2015 and announced he would take it to nonprofit status.

"We need nonprofit status to make the school truly work," Bell said in 2017. "The idea of taking a profit or putting money back into the school is a real conflict, and we need to take that conflict out of the equation."

The school hopes to achieve nonprofit status when it raises enough money.

That leaves Atlanta's John Marshall Law School, which was founded in 1933 and recently moved into a new building in downtown Atlanta, and Western State College of Law in Irvine, Calif. Western State was founded in 1966 and has weathered two ownership changes in the past five years.

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Around the nation



■ **SEATTLE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW** received a gift of \$5 million from the Moccasin Lake Foundation to help domestic violence survivors and members of underserved communities across the state. The gift will enable the school to render legal aid and provide greater access to family law services. The gift will help establish an endowed chair in family law, more scholarship support for students and educational campaigns to increase awareness of domestic violence. To date, students have helped more than 500 people — many of whom are low-income and lack the resources to hire attorneys — to complete court-required online legal forms.



■ **LEWIS & CLARK LAW SCHOOL** has received a three-year, \$300,000 grant from the IRS to support the school's Low Income Taxpayer Clinic. The clinic has been receiving grant money for this project for more than 20 years. The clinic offers assistance to low-income taxpayers and taxpayers who speak English as a second language.

■ SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR COLLEGE OF LAW AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

is launching a Center for Constitutional Design. The goal of the center is to promote dialogue concerning the design and interpretation of the Constitution. Backed by funding from ASU alumnus Jerry Hirsch, the center aims to inform the public about how the Constitution applies to recent events in our society and how the constitutional system could be improved.



Hirsch

■ CREIGHTON UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW and UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA COLLEGE OF LAW

are part of a newly launched Nebraska Legal Diversity Council. Also participating are 16 law firms and businesses and the Nebraska State Bar Association. The council will work to create a more diverse and inclusive legal community in the state. It will also work with grade school and middle school students by providing speakers and shadowing opportunities, especially for children of color, giving them the opportunity to see lawyers and judges of color in action.



■ DRAKE UNIVERSITY LAW SCHOOL

students in the Entrepreneurial and Transactional Law Clinic stepped up to help homeless families in the greater Des Moines, Iowa, area. Two agencies that provide assistance to homeless individuals and families requested help from the clinic in regard to a charitable donation and employment agreements. Clinic students also helped the agencies obtain federal assistance to keep their programs up and running during the pandemic.

■ MARQUETTE UNIVERSITY

LAW SCHOOL has established the Andrew Center for Restorative Justice,

thanks to a \$5 million donation. The center will serve as a central hub for educating and training students in how to use restorative justice approaches at the local, national and international levels. The center will also support faculty research and enhance the teaching of restorative justice in the broader community.



Louie and Suzanne Andrew



■ PENNSYLVANIA STATE UNIVERSITY, PENN STATE LAW

is piloting a new course that examines the intersection of law and inequity. Each week, a different professor based at or affiliated with Penn State Law is leading a lecture and discussion in their field of expertise. Topics include the current state of K-12 desegregation, immigrant exclusion, inequity in military and veterans law, legal technology and access to justice, and racial justice in the criminal justice system.



■ NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW'S

NuLawLab launched the Colorado Virtual Courthouse Tour in January. The tour is a web-based interactive simulation that teaches people how to navigate a courthouse, courtrooms and court personnel in real time. The project is a collaboration between NuLawLab, Colorado Legal Services and HELM (Hands-on Education, Law & Media) Social Design Studio. NuLawLab will study the effectiveness of the project during the coming year and explore ways to expand its reach across the country.

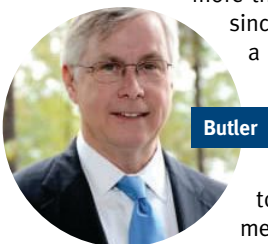
■ UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA SCHOOL OF LAW

has started the Roadmap Scholars Initiative, which introduces students to the legal profession as well as offering financial and counseling support. It launched with \$200,000 in funding from UVA Alumni Association donors.



■ UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA SCHOOL OF LAW

has received a major gift from renowned Georgia trial lawyer James Butler Jr. to expand the capabilities of its Veterans Legal Clinic. The clinic has helped 370 veterans and their families to obtain more than \$1 million in benefits since 2018. The clinic will offer a virtual outreach program for Georgia veterans, psychological and medical evaluations, and self-advocacy webinars to help former military members as they work with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies.



Butler



■ DUKE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW

received a \$2.5 million commitment from the Barton Family Foundation to start a Criminal Defense Clinic. The clinic will give students hands-on learning and course experience in criminal representation and train them to help end mass incarceration and racial injustice. The clinic works with existing programs at Duke Law such as the Wilson Center for Science and Justice and the Wrongful Convictions Clinic.

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Legal education's pink ghetto

Law schools have been accused of placing women in less lucrative teaching roles — what has been called the pink ghetto. Critics say women's tenure and pay are not on par with that of male professors. **BY MIKE STETZ**

At first glance, it would seem that women have made considerable gains when it comes to landing teaching jobs at law schools.

In 1980, just 14% of law teachers were women. By 2020, that number had grown to 47%.

And look who the deans are at Yale, Stanford and Columbia law schools: They're women. You would think that law schools would be littered with shards of glass from all the ceilings being shattered.

But a closer look shows that many of the gains made by women are in limited areas, particularly in clinical and legal writing positions. And that trend is only accelerating, according to a recent analysis by Robert Kuehn, associate dean for clinical education at Washington University School of Law in St. Louis.

It's a significant finding because many of those jobs pay less and don't offer the same tenure track opportunities as, say, teaching traditional doctrinal courses, Kuehn said. It's been argued that those positions are more vital because of the scholarly work those professors perform, which can help a school's standing. But that mindset has created a two-tiered system at many law schools.

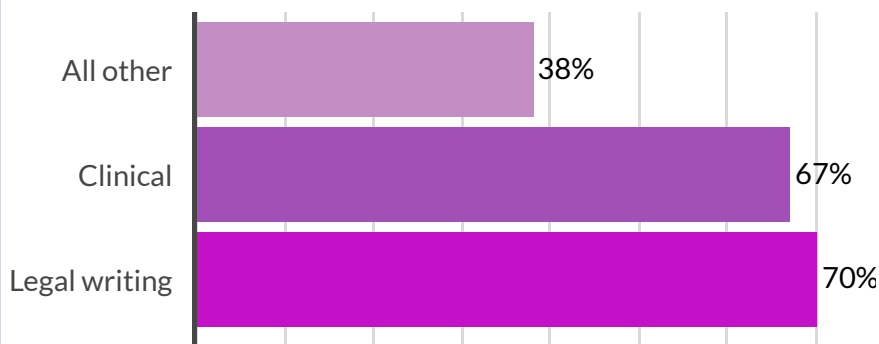
"Even though schools are hiring increasingly more female faculty, women continue to be disproportionately hired into traditionally lower status, lower paying clinical and legal writing positions," Kuehn writes in his analysis, *Clinical Legal Education by the Numbers*.

Sixty-seven percent of clinical faculty are women. For legal writing, it is 70%. Indeed, if you remove clinical and legal writing jobs from the calculation, the percentage of female faculty members is below 40%.

Kuehn notes that new clinical hires are trending female at an even higher rate, which is compounding the prob-



Percentage of female law faculty



Source: Robert Kuehn, Washington University School of Law

lem. Nearly three-quarters of those who have been teaching three years or less are women.

The imbalance is even greater among those who teach field placement courses. More than 80% are women. And they too are often non-tenured instructors who are paid less and have less job security, research shows.

So why should prospective students care about this? Does a gender imbalance affect a school's ability to offer a robust legal education?

Kuehn and others argue that it does. For one, the quality of faculty may suffer under such a system.

"The lower status and pay of clini-

cal teachers make it harder to attract and retain the very best clinical teachers," Kuehn said.

And that's pretty important, given that law schools have been criticized in the past for not producing practice-ready graduates.

And if clinical faculty members are not tenured, they don't have a say in how the law school operates. It's only natural that the so-called podium professors, who are likely to have tenure and hence more say in law school operations, would favor an emphasis on their teaching methods rather than on clinical work, Kuehn said.

He said he believes that's one reason so little clinical work is required. While the ABA requires a minimum of 83 credit

hours for graduation, only six of those need to be clinical work.

“So by diminishing or marginalizing the voices and ideas of clinical teachers, and thereby minimizing their influence over the content of a student’s training and education, students are denied the real-world training they need to succeed upon graduation,” Kuehn said.

The imbalance can also lead to an unhappy work environment, which students pick up on, he added.

“How could such a caste system not hurt the moral?” he asked.

Kuehn is not alone in criticizing the current system. Several female professors wrote about the trend in 2019 in a paper called, The “Pink Ghetto” Pipeline.

In the abstract, they note “in legal education, tenured and higher-ranked positions are held primarily by men, while women often enter legal education through non-tenured and non-faculty skills-based teaching pipelines. In a number of these posi-

tions, women experience challenges like poor pay, heavy workloads, and lower status such as by contract, non-tenure, or at will.”

Surprisingly, this is happening at a time when women make up the majority of law students, the authors point out.

Caitlin Barry is a clinic director at Villanova University Charles Widger School of Law near Philadelphia and co-president of the Clinical Legal Education Association. She puts the situation this way: “If we are going to teach students that race and gender equity matter, we have a responsibility to model that equity in our own institutions.”

She pointed out that this is not only a gender issue but also a racial one. Only 7% of tenured law faculty are women of color.

The lack of female professors also may



“If we are going to teach students that race and gender equity matter, we have a responsibility to model that equity in our own institutions.”

—Caitlin Barry, clinic director,
Villanova University Charles Widger
School of Law

hurt female student performance in the male-dominated doctrinal courses.

Barry noted one study in particular: Stereotype Threat, Role Models, and Demographic Mismatch in an Elite Professional School Setting. One of its authors, writing on a Brookings Institution blog, said the study “found student-instructor demographic mismatch has statistically significant, substantively large effects on students’ course grades and on subsequent grades in the same subject.”

Darby Dickerson, dean of Southwestern School of Law in Los Angeles, also has tack-



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led this subject. When she was president of the Association of American Law Schools, she wrote a President's Message called *Abolish the Academic Caste System*.

"Those in the pink ghetto typically also make less than tenure-line faculty, yet they do just as much if not more work in terms of teaching and service," she said in

response to questions from preLaw magazine.

In her paper, she noted that non-tenure-track professors normally develop the closest connections with students because they work with them more closely. Their efforts free up tenured professors to do research, work that does not necessarily lead to student-faculty bonding.

The division isn't just one of pay or workload, she said. There can even be physical separation.

"Some schools still tend to segregate legal writing, clinical and academic support professionals physically," she said. "They can be jammed in the least desirable parts of campus."

This caste system can also hamper students in pursuing their career goals, Dickerson said.

"Faculty turnover means less experience in the subject matter and makes it more difficult for students to build long-term relationships that can lead to externships, clerkships, jobs and other professional opportunities," she said.

Some schools have eradicated the practice. In 2021, the faculty and board of trustees of California Western School of Law in San Diego voted to adopt a unitary tenure track, creating the same pathway to tenure for all its faculty.

"This is a momentous occasion for the California Western School of Law," Dean Sean Scott said at the time. "Moving toward a unitary tenure track reflects our desire to dismantle the traditional hierarchies within faculty ranks, which is part of the larger goal of addressing structural inequalities within legal education."

Other schools have also acknowledged the importance of treating all faculty equally, particularly to keep signature programs from slipping. The William S. Boyd School of Law at University of Nevada, Las Vegas has a stellar legal writing program. And that's not by accident.

"At UNLV, all full-time legal writing and clinical faculty are tenured or pre-tenured members of our faculty with all the same compensation, benefits and responsibilities as other members of our faculty," said Sara Gordon, interim dean of the law school. "This practice enables us to attract extremely well qualified professors, and the law school boasts the U.S. News (& World Report) No. 1-rated legal writing program in the country."



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Can you afford law school?

The average graduate debt at some law schools is nearing \$200,000, making students think seriously about how to manage costs.

BY MIKE STETZ

John D. Rockefeller contributed \$200,000 to help build the University of Chicago Law School, which opened in 1902. Some students today are racking up that much in debt. The average loan disbursement at University of Chicago is \$191,117, which leads the nation for law schools.

So, yes, about a century ago, you could have built a law school for that amount...

This is not to single out University of Chicago. The cost of a legal education can land many students into serious debt. The school just happened to come in first in a recent study by Hennessey Digital, a legal industry marketing company.

Hennessey Digital also looked at first-year earnings of law school grads.

University of Chicago? The median first-year income is \$173,847. That's likely why its students don't have all that much sticker shock.

"Education at The University of Chicago Law School is an investment in a student's future," said Gerald McSwiggan, associate director for public affairs. "Students at UChicago Law receive an education defined by intellectual challenge and rigorous inquiry, which prepares them for success in their careers and lives."

That level of earning is not the story everywhere, of course. Most graduates don't make that kind of money right out of law school. According to Law School Transparency, there are only seven schools in the nation whose graduates earn a median first-year income similar to that of University of Chicago grads.

Most schools — 69 — have grads making between \$50,000 and \$60,000. That's why keeping debt low can be critical. But it's not necessarily low. The average debt among graduates is \$160,000, according to Education Data Initiative.

Meanwhile, there's concern that law school could become even more expensive.



Enrollment is up — 12% for this year's class. That means there are more students vying for scholarship dollars. Many students seek scholarships to lighten their debt loads, and some make enrollment decisions based on that.

When it comes to keeping debt low, here is some sage advice from Austen Parrish, dean of Indiana University Maurer School of Law - Bloomington:

"In law school, you don't want to live like a lawyer; you want to live like a law student."

Nice car? It can wait. Fancy apartment. Don't sign that lease. Shopping? Think off-the-rack.

He should know. He's a graduate of Columbia University in New York, which was third on Hennessey's list of student debt, at \$190,141.

Parrish attended the school in the mid-1990s, and he estimates that he graduated with about \$120,000 in debt. In today's dollars, that's about \$220,000.

But he lived frugally, he said, and it was manageable.

He said today's students have much more information available to them regarding costs. Many students put considerable thought into what's the best route for them. Everyone is different and has different philosophies about their futures.

"One will seek prestige only, while another will shop around," Parrish said. "Students are more sophisticated today."

On Reddit, there are a numerous posts that deal with law school costs: Choosing Law School: Prestige vs. Cost; Prestige vs. Money; Prestige vs. \$\$\$\$...

Students are not in a vacuum, most certainly. At Indiana Law, the median debt for graduates is about \$96,000 according to 2021 data from U.S. News & World Report. However, not everyone takes on debt, Parrish noted. That's one of the problems he sees with some of the debt-related data that's promoted. At his school, 69% of students take on debt. Nearly one-third

do not.

Of the school's 534 students, 98% get grants or scholarships. This includes 74 students who get more than full tuition.

At University of Chicago, 61% have debt, while many others do not. A full 80% get scholarship aid, with 20 students receiving full rides each year.

There are other ways to get financial help besides scholarships, Parrish said. Many schools offer loan assistance programs for graduates who go into lower-paying public interest work.

While it's true that not all U.S. law students graduate with debt, most do, said Kyle McEntee, executive director of Law School Transparency. Law School Transparency was acquired by the Law School Admission Council after this interview.

As many as 25% don't get any scholarship help at all, so they're paying full freight. At University of Chicago, nearly 18% of students are on the hook for the full price, for instance.

One significant problem is that scholarships most often are merit-based, so the less successful students are subsidizing the more successful ones. Those receiving scholarships are also more likely to be white and male, which hurts diversity, McEntee said.

And why is law school so expensive in the first place? A law school's biggest expense is staff and faculty salaries and law



	School	Type	State	Average Graduate Loan Disbursement	Median First-Year Earnings
1	University of Chicago	Private	IL	\$191,117	\$173,847
2	Southwestern Law School	Private	CA	\$190,184	\$62,192
3	Columbia University	Private	NY	\$190,141	\$185,760
4	New York University	Private	NY	\$174,780	\$177,207
5	Santa Clara Law	Private	CA	\$174,020	\$79,561
6	Harvard Law School	Private	MA	\$170,866	\$172,423
7	University of Virginia	Public	VA	\$165,911	\$175,653
8	California Western School of Law	Private	CA	\$164,918	\$60,643
9	Georgetown University	Private	DC	\$163,977	\$145,898
10	University of Pennsylvania	Private	PA	\$163,383	\$179,672

The study, conducted by Hennessey Digital, collected data on 183 law schools across America and how much 2020 graduates had to borrow. The data was then compared to how much they were expected to earn in their first year of working after graduating.

schools have significantly increased the number of faculty and staff during the past 30 years.

Law faculty salaries have also been competitive, as schools vie for the best professors. And faculty, of course, have tenure protections, so they tend to stick around for a long time, he said. The more seniority they get, the more money they get. Additionally, their classroom requirements

can be reduced, forcing law schools to hire additional staff, McEntee said.

But all of that is baked in and difficult to change, he said. He said he wants to see schools focus on cutting costs now and in the future.

McEntee was not pleased that enrollment went up. That could lead to higher law school costs and fewer employment options in the near future.

As McEntee noted, though, that's today's reality. How students navigate that reality is the big question. But there is help.

The nonprofit AccessLex Institute, for instance, offers the MAX program, which is designed to educate prospective and current students about law school finances. The free program offers online and in-person financial advice. Students can even get access to a financial consultant — again for free.

MAX helps students make smart consumer decisions, said Jen Schott, AccessLex's managing director of education services. Students also learn to create budgets, set financial goals and better their credit scores.

Also, the more the students participate, the better chance they have of winning a MAX scholarship. The top one — \$40,000 — is given to three students annually.

MAX was launched in 2017 and is now offered at 179 law schools. More than 30,000 students currently use the program.

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Urban law schools have much to offer

Location, diversity and alumni support are three main reasons that big city law schools attract students. **BY MICHELLE WEYENBERG**

A big city comes with more of everything — people, opportunities, competition and resources. Most big cities also offer greater diversity.

New York City, Boston, Philadelphia, Washington, D.C., Chicago and San Francisco all boast several law schools that include these benefits.

Location is key to flourishing in law school, so it's important to think about whether a prospective school is in a place you like and may want to stay after graduation, law school officials say. Being in a location where you'll be happy is as important as being academically secure.

preLaw assessed the population density of each law school's location to come up with a list of the most urban law schools. We capped the people-per-square-mile figure at 15,000, with 23 schools making the list.

Suffolk University Law School is in the heart of downtown Boston, across the street from Boston Common and the Freedom Trail, two blocks from the State House and a short walk from the financial district.

"Different cities speak to different people," said Gabe Teninbaum, assistant dean for innovation, strategic initiatives and distance education at Suffolk Law. "Not all cities are made the same, so you have to go and experience it — not just the school, but around that area."

Urban law schools also can offer an array of internships at nearby law firms, city agencies and government offices. There are also more legal service providers in urban areas, such as Greater Boston Legal Services, which is just a few blocks from Suffolk Law.

These opportunities give students a chance to do diverse things in law school, Teninbaum said.

"There's this theory about where good ideas come from — being together in one place to bounce ideas off each other," he said. "An urban setting allows you to do

Loyola University Chicago



Most Urban Law Schools

1	Fordham Law School	13	Boston University
2	Cardozo School of Law	14	University of Kentucky
3	New York University	15	New England Law Boston
4	Columbia Law School	16	Suffolk University
5	University of Pittsburgh	17	Chicago-Kent College of Law
6	New York Law School	18	University of San Francisco
7	George Washington University	19	Georgetown University
8	UC Hastings	20	Drexel University Kline
9	Northeastern University	21	University of Pennsylvania
10	Brooklyn Law School	22	Temple University
11	Northwestern Law	23	Golden Gate University
12	Loyola University Chicago		

that more broadly."

Urban environments also offer a large concentration of young people, energy and ideas, as well as legal job opportunities that suit their needs and desires.

Carey Bertolet Grand, dean of career

services at Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law at Yeshiva University, said many law students are surprised by which practice areas or industries inspire them.

"In a big city, you'll find all manner of lawyer represented, so as law students

change their focus, big cities offer them the resources to pivot and adjust their interests,” Bertolet Grand said. “For a law student wanting the flexibility to change their mind or their goals, big cities give them access to a wide range of options to consider post-graduate.”

Cardozo School of Law is in the heart of New York City. Students come from more than 135 undergraduate institutions across the U.S. and around the world,

Suffolk University



MICHAEL J. CLARKE/COURTESY OF SUFFOLK UNIVERSITY





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including China, Colombia, Germany, South Africa, Canada and South Korea.

The Cardozo Data Law Initiative, one of the school's newer programs, prepares students for careers in the fields of information governance, e-discovery, data privacy and cybersecurity. It offers students a certificate if they meet the requisite number of relevant courses and externship credits.

A large base of diverse alumni support also attracts students to urban schools.

Loyola University Chicago School of Law has more than 12,000 alumni who practice throughout the U.S. in government offices, public interest organizations, law firms, corporations, consulting firms, nonprofits and the judiciary. Many alumni live and work in the Chicago area and help mentor law students.

Learning the law doesn't end at the classroom door, the school says.

Golden Gate University School of Law, in downtown San Francisco, has been recognized by preLaw magazine as one of the best law schools for diversity. The school is steps away from a global hub of the legal, business and technology industries. Students have direct access to courts, law firms, advocacy organizations, government agencies and expanding tech companies.

The flexibility of programs at big city law schools is also a draw.

Suffolk Law added a hybrid J.D. program last fall. The flexibility of the hybrid program allows students to balance a legal education in Boston with other important aspects of their lives. They can benefit from a big city law school while living closer to their jobs and families, possibly in an area with a lower cost of living, said Dean Andrew Perlman.

“Modern law students deserve flexibility, both in terms of time and geography,” he said.

HBCU law schools: An ongoing mission

The nation's six law schools at historically Black universities have evolved, but their mission remains to serve underserved communities.

BY SHERRY KARABIN

When Durham, N.C., native Chazle' Woodley decided to finish law school after taking time off to get her MBA and work as a human resources manager in Chicago, she had a number of options.

She could return to the historically Black public university where she started her legal education, or she could choose from one of several law schools in Chicago that had accepted her.

For Woodley, the advantages she experienced during her brief time at North Carolina Central University School of Law in Durham made the decision to return there an easy one.

"Attending NCCU School of Law is like being part of a supportive family where students and faculty work together to make sure everyone succeeds," said Woodley, now a third-year and president of the Student Bar Association. "We have a lot of first-generation students, including some white students, and everyone brings a different point of view to the class discussions, which often examine the history of today's laws and their impact on Black and brown communities."

She said she thinks this type of environment provides a more well-rounded view of the law, which will ultimately make everyone better lawyers.

Historically Black colleges and universities such as North Carolina Central were born out of a need to provide higher education for Black students who at the time were denied access to existing institutions because of their skin color. While many HBCUs were founded in the 1800s, the majority of HBCU law schools didn't open until after 1938, when the Supreme Court required states to offer Black individuals the same educational opportunities as their white counterparts.

While segregated education is no longer allowed in this country, HBCU law schools still provide a racially comfortable environ-



CHAZLE' WOODLEY is a third-year and president of the Student Bar Association at North Carolina Central University School of Law.

ment, said James M. Douglas, professor of law at Texas Southern University Thurgood Marshall School of Law, which is also a historically Black school.

"While African American students are the majority, these schools now offer diverse classrooms that are more reflective of today's society," Douglas said. "This is beneficial to everyone, especially African Americans, who can relax and feel free to participate in discussions without having to represent their entire race or deal with a racist environment within the academy. Unlike my experience, where I found myself as the only African American in a class of 130."

NCCU School of Law was founded in 1939 and accepted its first class in 1940. Initially known as North Carolina College for Negroes Law School, it was the only option available in North Carolina

for African Americans who wanted a law degree.

"Our school was created as a direct result of the 1938 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Missouri ex rel. Gaines v. Canada*, in which the court held states that provided a legal education to white law students had to offer an in-state education to Blacks as well," said Malik Edwards, associate dean for faculty affairs & scholarly enrichment. "States could meet this requirement by admitting African American students or building a separate law school, as was done in North Carolina."

Thurgood Marshall School of Law in Houston was founded in 1947 and traces its roots back to *Sweatt v. Painter*, a lawsuit brought by a Black man who was denied access to University of Texas School of Law.

Southern University Law Center in

Baton Rouge, La., began operating the same year. It's now one of two public law schools in the state, and its mission is to provide "access and opportunity to a diverse group of students from underrepresented racial, ethnic and socioeconomic groups."

Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University College of Law's history has taken a number of turns through the years. First established by the state Board of Control in 1949, it later closed but then reopened in 2006 in Orlando.

While each of the HBCU law schools have evolved, they all remain true to serving underserved communities.

"We take students whose GPA and LSAT scores would prohibit them from being accepted anywhere else," said Edwards of NCCU.

The school boasts a faculty that is more than 60% minority.

"Having African Americans serve as professors is very important, since many of these students have not had a Black male teacher until college," Edwards said. "North Carolina has a number of counties that are what we call legal deserts, meaning no lawyers live in those communities. Many of our graduates help fill those voids."

The two other HBCU law schools are University of the District of Columbia David A. Clarke School of Law and Howard University School of Law. Located



"We encourage our students to speak their mind while being respectful to others in the room. And because we are an HBCU, we provide a safe place for them to do so, since for many it will be the first time they are not in the minority in a classroom."

—Reggie McGahee, associate dean of student affairs and admissions at Howard University School of Law

in the nation's capital, they both offer a home court advantage for those interested in government-related legal positions.

As the oldest HBCU law school, Howard University hasn't wavered from its original mission of providing a high-quality legal education, said Reggie McGahee, associate dean of student affairs and admissions.

"We believe social justice pervades every aspect of the law," McGahee said. "Everything we teach at the law school is designed to help our students make positive changes in society. We have been admitting students from other backgrounds since 1885."

At least 50% of the entering class are awarded scholarships each year. Tuition and fees include funding for bar prep, and graduates often land at top law firms or secure highly selective public interest positions across the country.

"We encourage our students to speak

their mind while being respectful to others in the room," McGahee said. "And because we are an HBCU, we provide a safe place for them to do so, since for many it will be the first time they are not in the minority in a classroom. As a result, many of our students who have been accepted to other schools, including Ivy League institutions, intentionally choose the Howard experience."

University of the District of Columbia has the only public law school in the nation's capital. It evolved from two previous schools, Antioch School of Law and District of Columbia School of Law.

David O'Brien, director of career and professional development, said UDC Law's mission is to provide access to a comprehensive practical legal education while offering critical legal services to low-income D.C. residents.

The school places special emphasis on recruiting and training students from groups underrepresented in the law profession, O'Brien said.

"Over 70% of our students identify as minority students, and they are diverse in so many other ways as well, including socioeconomic background, cultural identity, life experiences, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and age," O'Brien said.

He said students help the community through clinics and internships but also help each other, regularly assisting one another with studies and life challenges outside the classroom.

"The faculty teach the law in a way that recognizes not only the good that can be achieved through the law but also the ways in which the law has sometimes been used as a tool to support systemic racism and other problems," O'Brien said.

He said he believes this helps students become better lawyers and advocates for their clients.

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Law students of the year

We honor 10 students who have made outstanding contributions to their law schools and their communities in the past year.

BY MICHELLE WEYENBERG

Law school can be so time consuming that it's sometimes hard to find time for a social life, let alone time to help others. But law students who make time to serve their schools or their communities often report having a deeper and richer educational experience.

For the seventh year, we recognize 10 law students who have made outstanding contributions to their schools or communities. These standouts were involved in everything from youth rights to activism, often while juggling other responsibilities such as family. One of our honorees even cared for COVID-19 patients at night and attended law school classes on Zoom during the day.

To determine the Law Students of the Year, we asked each law school to nominate one student. We then whittled the list down to 10, which was not an easy task.

Drum roll please...

Aubrie Souza

**Suffolk University Law School
Class of 2022**

Since the summer of her first year of law school, Souza has been working on mobile-friendly “smartforms” for state courts and other related projects. Little by little, she's been learning Python, YAML and other coding languages.

During that time, Suffolk University's Legal Innovation & Technology Lab's free TurboTax-style tool has been used by pro se litigants to create 16,000 court documents via phones and the internet. The tool formats the documents properly, and then users can email them to the court.

Souza said the system achieves some goals that lawyers can't achieve on their own: massive scale, for example.

“Pro bono and legal aid attorneys will be the first to tell you that they don't have enough hours in a day to help people who are desperate for assistance,” she said. “With

Suffolk University Law School student Aubrie Souza has been working on mobile-friendly “smartforms” for litigators since her first year of law school.



the smartforms, judges receive filings that contain the topics they actually need to make a decision, without as much extraneous information. And litigants can fill them out on a phone anytime, night or day, right in the moment when help is most needed.”

Katherine Hanson

**Chicago-Kent College of Law
at Illinois Institute of Technology
Class of 2022**



By her own account, Hanson has been managing a landslide of good news lately.

Her recent accolades include a scholarship from the Women's Bar Foundation of Illinois to recognize her

work helping women in the legal community. She plans to donate a portion of her \$10,000 prize to a nonprofit she co-founded called JD & Family. It offers network-

ing and financial support to law students nationwide who are juggling law school and family responsibilities.

Hanson's path to law school — and her focus on labor and employment law — was paved with her own experiences as an employee and business owner. She was a hairstylist, a hair product educator and sales manager, and eventually a hair salon owner for a decade before pursuing her law degree.

She was motivated by the stories she heard from hair salon clients again and again. They often hid their roles as parents from their employers to avoid discrimination. Women in executive roles were getting paid less than those they supervised. And working parents were often pushed to gig jobs for their flexible schedules, at a time in their lives when they could really use employment benefits.

Hanson, a single mother herself, recalled: “All of that made me think, ‘I need to go to law school. I need to know how the system works. Are there protections or are

there not?”

At Chicago-Kent, Hanson started a student organization called Parents and Caregivers. It now has dozens of members, including students caring for grandparents and parents raising young children. The organization recently ran a clothing, toy and feminine product drive for The Women's Treatment Center, a Chicago-based social service organization.

Nearly 15% of Chicago-Kent's student body are part-time evening students, many of them working parents.

"I see there are places where parenting students need more resources," Hanson said.

Hanson, who is a first-generation college graduate, will graduate this spring.

"The biggest driving force behind what I do, especially during the pandemic, is I really want more parents to have visibility," she said. "I can produce and be a parent. If you want to become an attorney and you have the drive, you'll find a way."

Sydney Martin

*University of California,
Irvine School of Law
Class of 2022*



Martin is a first-generation college graduate from the Los Angeles area. She decided she wanted to be a lawyer while watching "Judge Judy" with her grandmother.

As the Student Bar Association's director of academic affairs during the 2020-21 school year, she helped faculty establish a race and the law requirement. She also served as a student representative on the Teaching & Learning Committee to voice student concerns related to online learning. Her experience on these committees led to her being appointed to the Dean Search Committee, making her the only student to help choose the law school's future dean.

Last fall, she clerked for the National Center for Youth Law in Washington, D.C.. After graduating from UCI Law with an emphasis in Law, Society and Culture, Martin plans to clerk for Judge Cathy Bencivengo of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of California. Following that experience, she plans to be an advocate for students and parents in education disputes, working on impact litigation cases and policy to make education access and equity a priority for federal, state and local governments.

Eric Williams II

*South Texas College of Law Houston
Class of 2022*

Williams had a highly successful corporate sales career before starting law school, but he was searching for more purpose and meaning in his life.



In 2020-21, the first-generation college graduate was a member of the executive board and academic chair for the Black Law Students Association and organizer of the group's voter registration drive.

He spoke at a My Brother's Keeper event hosted by 100 Black Men of America. It focused on helping to keep young Black men out of the prison pipeline by mentoring them on how to avoid troublesome situations and how to interact with law enforcement. More than 50 middle school and high school students were in attendance.

A certified mediator, Williams has also served as a debate coach for fifth and sixth grade students through Jack & Jill of America.

He is currently an intern for Judge Jennifer Walker Elrod of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. And after graduation, he will join the law firm of Foley & Lardner as a litigation associate in its Houston office.

"I believe it is extremely important for the lawyers who serve these diverse communities to reflect that diversity as well," Williams said.

Mana Shim

*University of Hawai'i at Manoa -
William S. Richardson School of Law
Class of 2022*

Shim may be best known as a former professional soccer player. However, she is also an activist, speaking out against sexual misconduct in the National Women's Soccer League and working toward policy changes.



Along with other former pro players, Shim has used her voice to help win significant institutional anti-harassment policies designed to ensure a safer environment for athletes. She has been advocating for change within the league nationally as well as locally in Hawaii while a full-time law student.

She is also committed to mental health

and has been an active member of the school's Mental Health Committee. She has spoken on LGBTQ and mental health issues and continues to work toward change and awareness.

"Her integrity and bravery are carving a better path for those in similar situations and those seeking to effect transformative justice-seeking change in myriad spaces and places," said Camille Nelson, dean of the law school.

Caleb Alexander-McKinzie

*University of Arkansas at Little Rock
William H. Bowen School of Law
Class of 2022*

It was Alexander-McKinzie's experience volunteering with The Van, a nonprofit that serves the unsheltered community of Little Rock, Ark., that led him to law school. He found a common thread running through many of the people he met at The Van: Bad experiences with the legal system had led to their homelessness.

During the past year, he has helped found Arkansans for Stronger Communities, a nonprofit organization that advocates for and helps craft legislation to change landlord-tenant laws in Arkansas. The group was influential in a piece of legislation that serves as a foundation for change in such laws.

Last fall, Alexander-McKinzie completed a public policy externship with the Arkansas office of the ACLU. He's still involved with The Van, driving to the unsheltered communities most weekends, taking them clothing, hygiene items and camping supplies.



Nicole van Lierop

*Mitchell Hamline School of Law
Class of 2022*

van Lierop first thought about law school during her final year of nursing school.



By the time the pandemic hit, she was already a law student but continued nursing. Her unit at the VA hospital in Minneapolis was converted to caring for veterans with COVID-19.

For a year and a half, van Lierop would work in the hospital at night and attend law school classes on Zoom during the day.

"A lot of people have asked how I managed it," she said. "I really don't have an

answer, other than one day at a time.”

van Lierop left her nursing job last fall to focus on law school. She plans to use her experience as a nurse to enhance a career as a health law attorney.

Barbara Colombo, director of Mitchell Hamline’s Health Law Institute, said nurses make very caring, people-focused attorneys.

“It’s in your DNA to have empathy,” she said. You carry that from your nursing career into your law career in representing clients and even developing policies. It’s all about people.”

van Lierop said her time as a frontline nurse during the pandemic left her not wanting to waste time.

“I saw a lot of people die alone,” she said.

Brooke Gledhill Wood

*Brigham Young University -
J. Reuben Clark Law School
Class of 2022*

Wood was selected as one of six Law & Leadership fellows for the 2021–22 school year and currently serves as president of BYU Women in Law. Last September, she became involved with The Policy Project, a nonprofit organization focused on advancing health policy at a local and national level. One of their programs, The Utah Period Project, got her attention. The campaign is aimed at promoting menstrual equity in the state of Utah by — among other things — doing away with sales tax on feminine hygiene products.

The group is also campaigning for the Utah Legislature to increase access to free, safe, good quality menstrual products in female and all-gender bathrooms in public and charter schools throughout the state.

“This is an issue that is fixable but that we are just not paying attention to,” Wood said. “That’s why I’m so excited to be involved.”

Brandon Marshall Miller

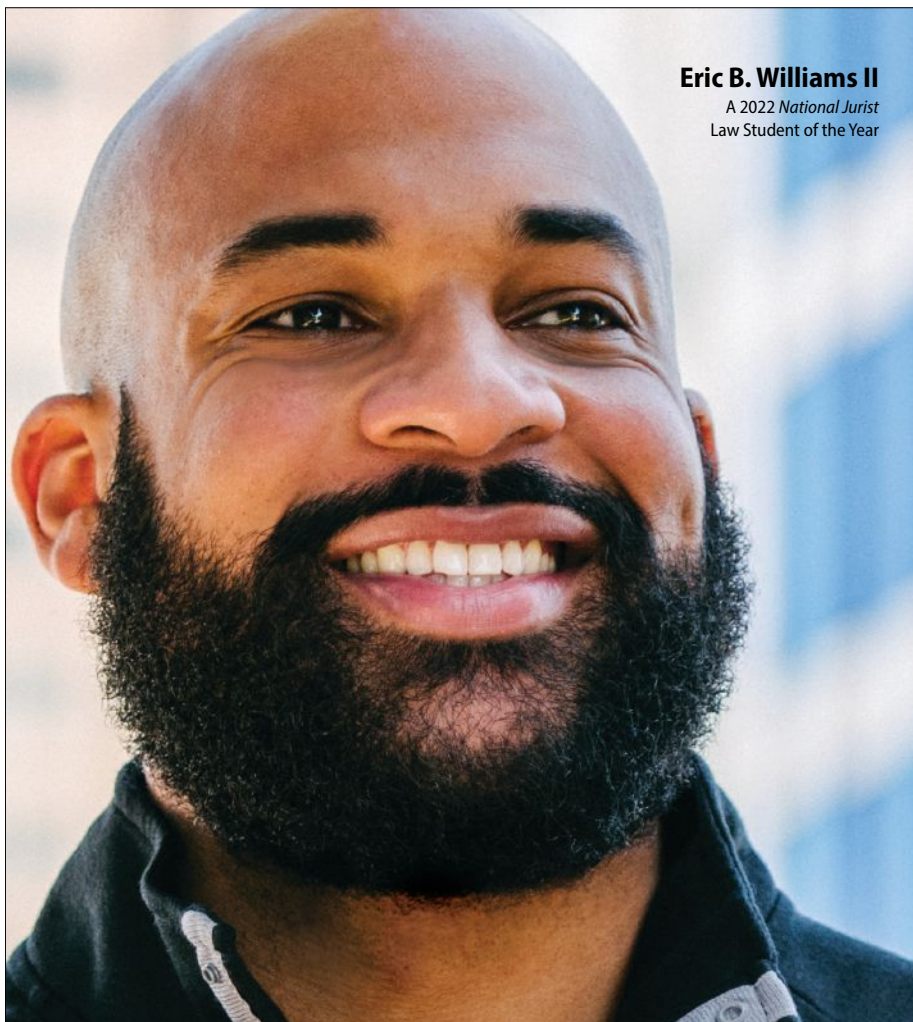
*Temple University –
James E. Beasley
School of Law
Class of 2023*

Miller has worked full-time as a teacher while pursuing his master’s, his doctorate and now his law degree. His



Eric B. Williams II

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desire to attend law school was fueled by his experiences in the classroom, where he saw first-hand how youths were affected by policy and laws, including those involving family court issues, social services and the juvenile criminal court system.

He is focused on juvenile justice and education reform, and is responsible for curriculum development, lesson planning, student instruction, assessments, test preparation and post-secondary guidance to approximately 60 high school students annually.

He is currently interning with Judge Theodore McKee of the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Agnes Kolbeck

New England Law / Boston

Class of 2022

Kolbeck grew up surrounded by polarities. She was raised in Belize and the South Side of Chicago, but attended private school in the suburbs.



"I witnessed the struggles of those from my communities as they tried to make the best of their lives,

despite being surrounded by gang violence, teen pregnancy and poverty," she said.

Seeing these injustices led her to become a person who advocates for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

Kolbeck holds leadership roles in multiple student organizations, including the Black Law Student Association and the First Generation Students Program. She has lent her voice to the Student Bar Association's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee and Mental Health and Wellness Committee. She has also completed extensive research with the Center for International Law and Policy, tracking reparations and transitional justice initiatives around the country in response to the murder of George Floyd.

This past summer, Kolbeck interned for the Federal Tax Clinic at Harvard University, where she advocated on behalf of low-income taxpayers.

After graduation, she plans to clerk for Associate Justice Mary Thomas Sullivan of the Massachusetts Appeals Court.

—Jennifer McEntee
contributed to this story.

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SARAH MURTADA, a member of the **Community Justice Project** at top-ranked **University of St. Thomas**.

BEST SCHOOLS FOR Practical Training

Preparing students for practice is becoming a signature goal of more and more schools. Even during the height of the pandemic, schools continued this mission, one that many students and legal education experts applaud.

By Mike Stetz

Sarah Murtada had been lobbying for an end to no-knock police warrants for more than a year. A student at University of St. Thomas School of Law in Minneapolis, she believed such warrants were dangerous to all parties involved, including police.

Then in February, her concerns hit close to home . . . her home, actually.

A man in the apartment building where she lives was shot and killed by a Minneapolis SWAT team executing a no-knock warrant. According to reports and body cam footage, Amir Locke, 22, was asleep and startled awake by the commotion. He was holding a handgun, which he owned legally. He had no criminal record. He was Black.

Murtada was saddened but not shocked.

"It was just a matter of time," she said.

Murtada is a member of her school's Community Justice Project, which seeks to remedy social injustices through policy

changes. Students such as Murtada are key to its success. Not only does the project bring change but it also gives students practical training experience. Murtada said joining the program and getting involved in high-stakes social issues was "by far the best decision I made in law school."

Many students feel the same way. Classroom learning is imperative, but it doesn't offer real-life, get-your-hands-dirty experience. Practical training does, which is why preLaw magazine annually honors those schools that do it best.

In the past, there has been considerable criticism of law schools for not producing practice-ready attorneys. That has compelled many schools to put greater emphasis on such training.

At St. Thomas Law, practical training has always been a priority, and it shows. Routinely finishing among the leaders in our analysis of



#5 CASE WESTERN

ANNIE O'NEILL PHOTOGRAPHY



#6 UNIVERSITY OF DENVER



#7 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

PHOTO BY TONY NELSON

	Law School	Grade	Clinic	Pro bono requirement	Field placement	Simulation
1	University of St. Thomas - Mn.	A+	30.2%	✓	177.6%	83.2%
2	Northeastern University	A+	55.7%		133.3%	70.5%
3	Baylor University	A+	20.8%		22.1%	391.3%
4	UC - Irvine	A+	59.2%		29.2%	111.8%
5	Case Western Reserve U.	A+	22.7%	✓	58.3%	140.7%
6	University of Denver	A+	15.7%	✓	66.5%	64.3%
7	University of Minnesota	A+	64.5%		40.0%	104.9%
8	Brigham Young University	A+	40.8%		57.8%	52.9%
9	University of Montana	A+	50.4%		50.0%	181.4%
10	Washington and Lee University	A+	20.0%		20.3%	117.6%
11	Drexel University Kline	A+	36.5%	✓	36.5%	80.5%
12	Arizona State University	A+	20.7%		56.7%	66.4%
13	Southwestern Law School	A+	14.2%		89.9%	110.3%
14	Brooklyn Law School	A+	35.3%		41.4%	134.9%
15	Chapman Fowler School of Law	A+	17.3%		52.6%	153.7%
16	LMU Loyola Law School	A+	43.9%	✓	20.5%	135.2%
17	CUNY School of Law	A+	30.6%	✓	6.8%	120.1%
18	Pepperdine Caruso School of Law	A+	20.1%		38.0%	138.4%
19	University of Arizona	A	50.1%		26.8%	165.6%
20	Quinnipiac University	A	27.9%		25.5%	96.5%
21	University of San Diego	A	30.1%		30.2%	203.0%
22	University of Georgia	A	30.6%		51.0%	119.3%
23	Elon University	A	11.9%		39.8%	99.5%
24	Albany Law School	A	20.7%	✓	33.4%	59.0%
25	Penn State - Dickinson Law	A	17.3%		67.1%	60.9%
26	West Virginia University	A	46.9%		10.4%	84.4%
27	University of San Francisco	A	31.6%		23.9%	95.5%
28	William & Mary Law School	A	25.8%		30.0%	82.7%
29	University of Akron	A	13.3%	✓	38.6%	178.5%

best schools for practical training, it tops the list this year.

In addition to its Community Justice Project, the school boasts nine other clinics in which students, under the supervision of faculty, provide key legal services.

It also offers students the chance to take part in externships, working with judges, attorneys, government agencies, businesses and legal aid agencies.

preLaw looks at such offerings and other practical training opportunities when it comes to determining the top schools. (See methodology at right.)

After having been ranked No. 1 for the past seven years, Northeastern University School of Law in Boston came in second this year.

Practical training can be heady, heavy stuff. Students protect battered spouses. They help veterans get benefits. At times,

Practical Training Methodology

We graded schools on a number of data points, focusing on key practical training offerings such as clinics, externships, simulation courses, pro bono hours and moot trial participation.

We gave the largest weight — 32% — to clinics. We asked schools for the number of students who completed a clinic in 2019-20. If a student was enrolled in two semesters, that counted as two. Extra credit was given to schools at which clinic work is guaranteed or required.

Externships were weighted at 25%, and we asked schools how many stu-

dents completed one in 2019-20. Again, if a student had two externships, that counted as two.

Simulation courses accounted for 20% of the score. We asked for the total enrollment in such courses.

Moot court and pro bono hours accounted for 10%. If a school required pro bono hours, it got extra credit. Finally, we gave 10% to additional practical training offerings, such as required legal writing. We asked schools to provide us with such information as they saw fit.

If schools did not reply, we relied on ABA data.



#3 BAYLOR UNIVERSITY

endured unemployment, evictions, hunger and other problems brought on by the pandemic.

Want an example of the power of practical training? Look who turned to it: U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland. In August, he asked the legal profession — including law schools and their students — to help avert a possible housing crisis as local and federal moratoriums on evictions were expiring. It would not be an easy task. More than 6 million people were behind on their rent.

In his call to action, Garland wrote: “Because evictions are subject to state laws and local regulations, there is no national ‘one size fits all’ solution. But no matter where you live, lawyers and law students like you can apply your legal training and skills to help your community.”

Ninety-nine law schools stepped up. A January statement from the White House explained: “Clinics partnered with courts



#8 BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY

against amazing odds, they help free the innocent.

And during the pandemic, they have had to do all this under challenging conditions. Many of their clients are low-income and don’t have computers or internet access, so they had to find other ways to keep in contact. Their clients

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to create eviction diversion programs, eviction defense walk-in clinics and 'lawyer and law student of the day' pro-

grams. In communities across the country, law students hosted pop-up clinics, help-a-thons, ERA (Emergency Rental

Assistance) application workshops, and canvassed in high risk communities to ensure tenants had access to justice and increased housing stability."

Indeed, according to a survey by Georgetown University Law Center and New York University School of Law, more than 2,100 students dedicated more than 81,000 hours and served more than 10,000 households.

It worked. Eviction filings were significantly below the 3.7 million seen in a typical year.

A number of the schools taking part made our list, including Georgetown Law, which was one of the first schools to commit to helping. Home to 19 clinics — the largest number in the nation — it earned an A- in our analysis.

Building a strong foundation

It's been quite a time recently. There was COVID-19. And then there was massive social unrest ignited by deadly police actions against Black individuals. Minneapolis was ground zero because that's where George Floyd was killed. It caught the world's attention. Murtada was just finishing her first year at St. Thomas Law, and she remembers how the killing sapped the community.

"A lot of trust was broken," she said. "And a lot needs to happen to rebuild that trust. It's just a sad city."

In her second year of law school, Murtada was eligible to work for a clinic, and she was itching to get involved. She wanted to focus on social justice, a cause that she's been interested in for years. The daughter of an Arab father, she says her upbringing made her more aware of social justice issues.

Murtada zeroed in on the Community Justice Project and was accepted. She learned of an effort to ban no-knock warrants, which had been started the previous semester by a student named Jon Troe. He was motivated by the death of Breonna Taylor, who was killed during a no-knock raid in Louisville, Ky. She was an EMT with no criminal record.

Initially, St. Thomas students had a hard time getting much traction for the issue locally, but that changed dramatically with Locke's death in Minneapolis. Outrage over no-knock warrants was suddenly front and center, and Murtada took



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Law School	Grade	Clinic	Pro bono requirement	Field placement	Simulation
Campbell Law School	A-	33.2%		24.5%	172.3%
University of District of Columbia	A-	41.5%	✓	7.2%	32.3%
University of Kansas	A-	14.8%		33.9%	76.1%
University of Wyoming	A-	11.3%	✓	24.5%	56.1%
Georgetown University	A-	30.3%		27.0%	79.5%
Capital University	A-	25.1%		30.8%	200.8%
Indiana U Bloomington	A-	26.4%		28.0%	112.9%
Seattle University	A-	20.5%		29.7%	53.3%
University of Tennessee	A-	25.5%		11.9%	113.9%
University of Wisconsin	A-	49.3%		26.1%	51.3%
University of Missouri - KC	A-	22.4%		28.7%	28.7%
DePaul University	A-	32.7%		18.9%	77.7%
University of Hawai'i	A-	61.1%	✓	20.4%	17.5%
University of Maryland	A-	41.6%	✓	21.2%	91.4%
Texas A&M Law	A-	38.9%	✓	20.4%	74.7%
University of Chicago	A-	74.0%		1.6%	102.9%
Emory University	A-	9.5%		47.7%	164.2%
Drake University	A-	28.8%		23.1%	91.7%

a major role in publicly advocating for reform in an effort called Knock First Minnesota.

Everybody on the team has his or her strengths, she said, and one of hers is public speaking. She's not intimidated. She's not nervous. She's emboldened. She has testified before state legislators and city officials, using compelling data mined by the student team that shows no-knock warrants are unsafe, target mostly people of color and are handed out by judges like candy. She's routinely interviewed on TV and radio.

"I thrive on it," she said.

Normally, students spend six months with the Community Justice Project, but some stay longer. Murtada has spent one and half years with it.

She hopes to continue such work after graduation, either working in a public defender's office or an agency such as the American Civil Liberties Union.

She'll have a strong foundation, no





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SARAH MURTADA AND PROFESSOR CARL WARREN



MARK BROWN/UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS (MINNESOTA)

question.

"It's such a great part of law school," Murtada said of her practical training experience.

Carl Warren, faculty director of the project, said he is continually amazed by the passion and tenacity of his students, noting that it's been a particularly difficult time in Minneapolis these past few years.

He said he remembers when Barack Obama was elected president and how

some people thought that watershed moment meant we were living in a post-racial society.

Then came tragedy after tragedy.

"Very clearly we are not (living in a post-racial society)," he said.

Warren said Floyd's killing offered a stark realization of what African Americans, particularly men, are up against.

The Community Justice Project works with community groups and leaders to

target issues that need addressing, he said. Students are welcome to suggest attacking injustices they identify as well. It's very collaborative.

Students are currently questioning the legitimacy of "excited delirium," a term police use regarding suspects who exhibit superior strength when being restrained. An officer at the scene of Floyd's death said he thought Floyd exhibited that.

However, it's not a condition recognized by most medical organizations, including the American Medical Association. Some argue it's merely an excuse to justify excessive police force.

Practical training work is vitally important on many fronts, including the real-life experience students gain, Warren said.

"I do believe that is the best teacher," he said.

Not only do students learn to use skills but they also gain confidence. That might be the biggest benefit, Warren said.

"There's this aha moment, when they realize they can actually do it," he said. "They realize they have the power, even as students, to achieve change."

He paused. "I'm awed and humbled by them."

Producing practice-ready attorneys

Some schools have a significant responsibility to produce practice-ready attorneys. Take Alexander Blewett III School of Law at University of Montana. It's the only law school in the state. Nearly all of its graduates stay in Montana.

That means the local legal infrastructure is dependent upon the school to graduate lawyers who are up to the task. And the school takes its role very seriously. As a result, University of Montana earned an A+ in our ranking.

Look at the school's alumni. They include past Montana governors and current and past Montana Supreme Court justices and Montana U.S. District Court judges.

"Practical training has always been a real focus," said Hillary Wandler, director of the school's Veterans Advocacy Clinic, noting that University of Montana was one of the first to require students to take part in a clinic or field placement.

Having students who are fully pre-

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pared is also important because many graduates go to small firms or even start solo practices, she said. Montana doesn't have as many medium-size or large firms as most states.

"So students don't have the same type of support system as you see in larger firms," Wandler said.

Also, the school plays a significant role in access to justice. Without the school, many of the under-served who can't afford lawyers would have to turn elsewhere or go without legal help. It's not just the school's three in-house clinics that help. All of the field placements are with nonprofits or government entities that are public-service oriented.

And it's not as if you have to twist a student's arm to take part, Wandler said. Students crave the opportunity. The practical training requirement comes in the third year, when students are chomping at the bit to put what they've learned into practice.

"They're highly motivated," she said. "They're tired of reading books. They're ready."

Clinical opportunities are a game changer

Hannah Snow, a third-year at Quinnipiac University School of Law, was ready from day one.

Indeed, she had a bit of a problem adjusting to law school, given that the first year focuses on classroom study. That didn't exactly energize her. She ditched the idea of getting a Ph.D. in criminal justice because she didn't want to be involved in "thinking about it and shaping it," she said. She wanted to help people.

And one of the reasons she chose the North Haven, Conn., school was its Civil Justice Clinic. It tackles the kinds of battles she's most interested in, such as helping incarcerated people and those who have been through the criminal justice system. She's always had empathy for the underdog, she said.

"I'm drawn to people who overcome the odds," Snow said. "But not everyone can overcome the odds without help."

In her second year, she joined the clinic. That changed everything.

"I'm not sure I would have made it through law school if not for the clinic,"

	Law School	Grade	Clinic	Pro bono requirement	Field placement	Simulation
	Touro Law Center	B+	29.5%	✓	18.8%	56.6%
	Temple University	B+	26.6%		38.9%	95.7%
	Villanova Law	B+	18.8%		54.7%	108.6%
	Lewis & Clark Law School	B+	21.3%		48.6%	45.6%
	McGeorge School of Law	B+	20.3%		35.3%	131.2%
	Columbia Law School	B+	23.9%	✓	61.3%	46.9%
	University of Colorado	B+	23.6%		30.7%	125.4%
	George Mason University	B+	25.9%		39.0%	120.8%
	Gonzaga University	B+	31.9%		38.5%	31.9%
	Cardozo School of Law	B+	27.6%		40.0%	120.3%
	University of Houston	B+	24.3%		17.8%	57.5%
	Chicago-Kent College of Law	B+	27.1%		21.2%	130.7%
	Northwestern Law	B+	39.9%		27.7%	82.1%
	Loyola University Chicago	B+	29.6%		10.3%	101.1%
	University of Utah	B+	11.1%		45.8%	118.8%
	University at Buffalo School of Law	B+	29.6%		19.6%	57.9%
	University of Massachusetts	B+	19.3%	✓	16.0%	152.8%
	Yale Law School	B+	77.6%		5.9%	17.6%
	University of North Dakota	B+	1.4%		55.5%	66.4%
	Liberty University	B+	8.3%		19.9%	184.5%
	Cornell Law School	B+	59.4%		11.1%	82.1%
	University of Detroit Mercy	B+	29.9%	✓	14.0%	35.8%
	University of Illinois	B+	13.9%		52.6%	59.1%

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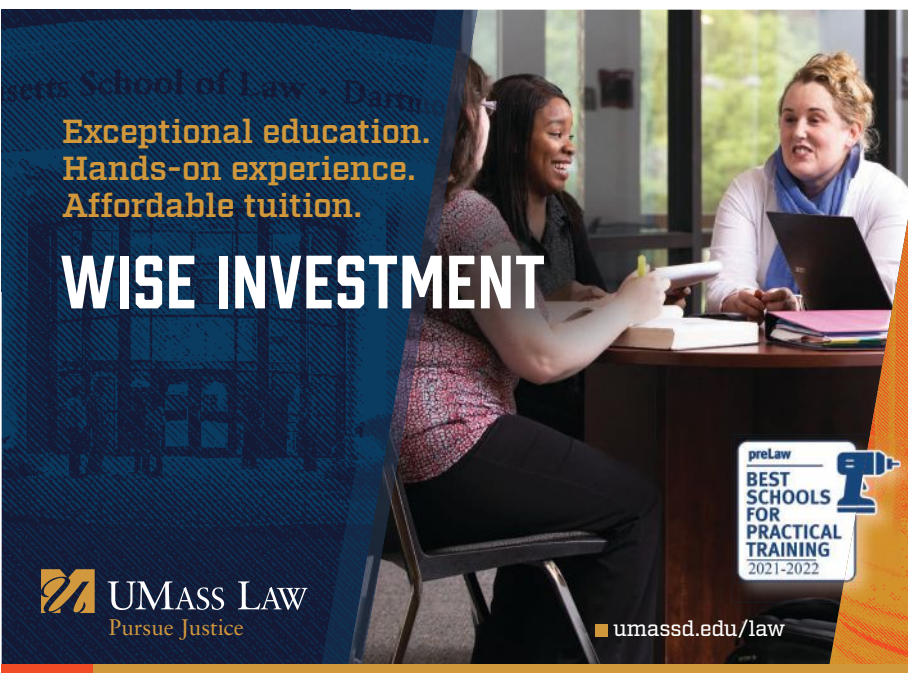
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she said.

More than two years later, Snow is still a part of the clinic.

“We do important work,” she said. “I’ll be sad to leave it.”

Indeed, the work involves high stakes. It’s life and death sometimes.

Snow was part of an effort to get medically vulnerable prisoners out of the Federal Correctional Institution at Danbury, Conn., during the pandemic. The clinic, working in collaboration with Yale Law School and a law firm, filed a class action lawsuit against the Federal Bureau of Prisons, charging it was not following directives to transfer prisoners to home confinement if they qualified.

Many coronavirus outbreaks happened in prisons because of the close quarters. At one point, one out of 10 prisoners at Danbury who were tested for COVID-19 tested positive.

Snow came onboard after the suit was settled, but much work remained. Students were responsible for identifying prisoners who were eligible for home confinement and seeking their release. They also looked into cases of prisoners who were denied transfers to see if the decisions were legitimate. The students communicated at length with clients via email.

This all was happening when Snow was sheltering in place in her apartment because of COVID-19, mind you. She could not see her family or friends. She was isolated.

“I could empathize with what prisoners always face,” she said. “It allowed me to see the importance of the work.”

Many of the prisoners were in a panic. They feared for their lives.

“They were facing the pandemic in a very dangerous way,” she said. “There was a heightened sense of urgency. We were fighting for the chance for them to go home and be safe.”

It was a bit surreal to say the least. She would be in her living room, arguing over the phone with U.S. Justice Department lawyers on behalf of her clients. She was just a second year law student at the time, and it took guts to match them.

“They were definitely tough,” she said. “It was very intense.”

Having students take on such roles is very much a part of the mission of



“They were facing the pandemic in a very dangerous way. There was a heightened sense of urgency. We were fighting for the chance for them to go home and be safe.”

Hannah Snow, 3L, Quinnipiac University School of Law

Quinnipiac Law, which guarantees a clinic opportunity or externship to every student, said Dean Jennifer Gerarda Brown. Her school earned an A in our analysis.

Brown noted that there is a difference in recent law students. In the past, some people opted for law school because they really didn’t know what they wanted to do with their lives. They thought law school might be a good path because of the status and money a legal job could potentially bring.

But that changed when the legal job market tanked soon after the Great Recession. Those on the fence didn’t bother applying.

“That brought in students with real fire in their bellies for justice,” Brown said. “It only makes sense that they would be attracted to clinics.”

The uptick in practical training among the nation’s law schools is relatively new, she said. When she went to law school in the mid-1980s, her school didn’t even

have a clinic. Decades ago, schools were judged on the scholarly impact that they produced.

“That’s changing,” she said.

Clinics and externships are seen as vital extension of classroom learning.

“They complement each other,” Brown said. “Practical training allows students to contextualize what they have learned.”

For Snow, the clinic opportunity has

been a game-changer. Not all students know which area of law they want to go into. By doing a clinic, they can explore whether the kind of legal work it offers is the kind of work they will enjoy professionally.

Snow strongly sensed that she wanted to do this kind of lawyering. Now, having done it, she’s sure.

“I’m also ready to hit the ground running,” she said.



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BEST LAW SCHOOL BUILDINGS

We honor law school buildings that give off special vibes, both in appearance and in functionality. There's a lot to applaud this year, especially because the buildings are again full of life after being closed by the pandemic.

By Mike Stetz



Many students may appreciate their law school buildings more these days.

Not long ago, they were shut out of them. Law students were taking classes online from their apartments, their homes or their parents' places as the worst of the pandemic swept the nation.

That makes preLaw's latest analysis of the nation's Best Law School Buildings — last done in early 2020 B.C. (Before COVID) — even more celebratory. It's easy to take things for granted, such as a quiet, cozy place to study or a modern classroom chock-full of tech advances, until they are gone.

These structures — from sleek, modern designs to ivy-covered classics — are the centerpieces of law school life, but that only applies when they are open.

They are now.

"It's so great to be back; we are so grateful," said Mary Davis, dean of University of Kentucky J. David Rosenberg College of Law in Lexington.

UK Law boasts a new building, which earned an A+ in this year's ranking, a first for the school.

Little wonder. The new building, which cost \$56 million, is a gem both in appearance and in functionality. It opened in the fall of 2019, and a gala ribbon-cutting ceremony was held in November of that year. Everyone was thrilled. A host of dignitaries, including former Kentucky Gov. Steve Beshear, took part.

Less than six months later, though, students had to vacate it because of the pandemic. It wasn't until this past fall that the full student body returned.

Now, the law school building is teeming with activity — just as planned. It boasts a modern courtroom that seats 185, two terraces and a second-floor common area that, like the rest of the building, is awash in natural light. It's 26% larger than its predecessor, which was knocked to its nubs to make way for the new building. It took two

years to complete.

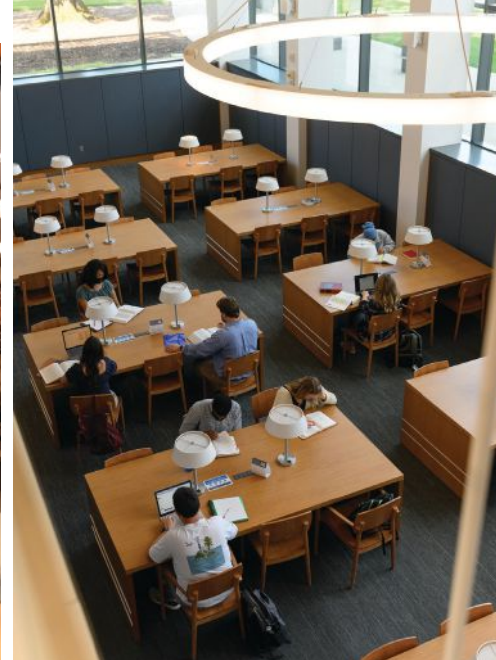
UK Law was one of only three schools in our ranking to earn top scores for aesthetics, which was a significant part of our analysis, comprising 50% of the final score. Other factors taken into consideration were: square footage per student (10%); library hours and number of library seats per student (15%); amenities, including dining, fitness and lockers (15%); and parking, sustainability and other factors (10%).

"The new building offers the kind of space that a 21st century legal education requires," said Davis, who served as chair of the building committee.

Student collaboration has become more important, she noted, and the new building has 20 spaces for such interaction.

And one of the biggest perks? A coffee shop — an amenity the students requested.

The only complaint? There was no water fountain in the library. The school fixed that.



#12

University of Kentucky J. David Rosenberg College of Law in Lexington opened its new building in the fall of 2019. It includes a modern courtroom, two terraces and a second-floor common area.



A+		Est. Sq. ft. per student	Library hours per week
1	University of Memphis	403	168
2	University of Utah	515	90
3	Georgia State University	267	103
4	Quinnipiac University	388	168
5	Marquette University	337	104
6	Stetson University	302	168
7	University of Connecticut	502	92
8	Southwestern Law School	442	102
9	Catholic University	410	103
10	University of Richmond	285	105
11	University of Cincinnati	296	168
12	University of Kentucky	331	85
13	Duke Law School	370	161
A		Est. Sq. ft. per student	Library hours per week
14	University of Florida	349	168
15	Villanova Law	258	168
16	Penn State - Dickinson Law	500	168
17	University of Colorado	336	107
18	Stanford Law School	481	105
19	Chapman Fowler School of Law	278	106
20	Arizona State University	159	168
21	American University	214	105
22	University of Virginia	411	112
23	Baylor University	250	108
24	Yale Law School	375	104
25	Lewis & Clark Law School	195	89

Back in session

It's a good time to have classes back in session, given that at many schools, enrollment is up. Indeed, the fall of 2020 saw the largest entering class in years after students applied to law school in droves. That could have driven down some buildings' scores in the ranking, given that square footage per student is a factor in the analysis.

The pandemic was one of the reasons given for the enrollment surge. In uncertain economic times, higher education can be an attractive option.

Reopened buildings were welcoming sites for students, apparently. Many thought the online experience was lacking, according to a survey by AccessLex and Gallup, which showed that only 48% of students rated their online learning experience as "good" or "excellent."

Some students even sued their schools, claiming that their costs should have been reduced and that the online experience was sub par. Law student Abraham Barkhordar



AUSTIN DIAMOND PHOTOGRAPHY

#2

University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law opened its **\$65 million structure** in Salt Lake City in 2015.

sued Harvard Law School over the matter.

"A lot of law school revolves around a lively in-class debate — whether it's a heated argument or funny banter," he told *The Harvard Crimson*. "It's just not the same over Zoom."

The suit, was dismissed, as were many others.

One other reason students may have felt disappointed by the lockouts, which in many cases were the result of government stay-at-home orders, is that a good number of law schools have invested significantly in upgrades and renovations in recent years. Forget dingy and dusty. Think iconic and cool. More and more law schools offer all sorts of in-demand amenities, such as trendy eateries and gyms.

While a number of law schools have been honored repeatedly in our past rankings, no school has dominated like The University of Memphis - Cecil C. Humphreys School of Law. A compelling blend of old and new, its building has finished first four times. It's a former U.S. Custom House/Courthouse/Post Office, which the law school moved into in 2010 after a \$42 million renovation.

The school has not rested on its laurels. After it captured the title for the third time, Dean Katharine Schaffzin noted that Memphis Law added an in-house cafe, and it continues to upgrade its tech offerings.

Many of the top honorees this year are schools that sport relatively new buildings, such as University of Utah S.J. Quinney College of Law, which opened its \$65 million structure in Salt Lake City in 2015.

Georgia State University College of Law is another example. It christened a new building in downtown Atlanta in 2015, one that cost \$82.5 million.

Law schools note that new structures not only help better educate future lawyers but also bolster their communities. Some are located in urban cores and help with revitalization. Many also increase community engagement, by offering public speaker events for instance.

But it's not just newer buildings that our analysis rewards. Many law schools have iconic structures that date back many decades. Yale Law School's Sterling Hall, which opened in 1931, earned an "A" in our analysis.

It also does Yale justice, so to speak...

Shiny and new

Do buildings really matter to students? After all, a robust law school education has many key components, such as a strong faculty, practical training offerings, bar prep, career services and networking opportunities.

So big whoop if classrooms have warm tones and directional lighting.

Actually, it does matter to many students, including Corey Samples, president of the Student Bar Association at University of Kentucky. She went to undergrad at University of Kentucky and remembers how drab the former law building was. She said the new building was a contributing factor to her choosing UK Law. It was

hardly the main reason, but looking back, the facility did strike her.

"It's gorgeous," she said.

The building opened on the last day of her orientation.

"It was all shiny and new," she said, noting that it even smelled good, like a new car does.

Then, of course, came the pandemic, which changed everything. Samples took online classes from her Lexington home but did not enjoy the experience. The change was jarring.

"I wanted to be immersed in the law school community," she said.

A-	Est. Sq. ft. per student	Library hours per week
Georgetown University	350	107
Penn State Law	218	168
Syracuse University	283	106
University of South Carolina	296	99
Faulkner Law	658	168
New York Law School	287	93
University of Baltimore	255	96
University of St. Thomas - Mn.	284	67
Cornell Law School	330	168
Seattle University	246	119
University of Denver	187	108
Chicago-Kent College of Law	348	83
Notre Dame Law School	185	168
Saint Louis University	430	100
Fordham Law School	189	126
University of Tulsa	296	104



#11

University of Cincinnati College of Law will soon move into its new building, which includes an outdoor terrace.

As soon as the building reopened — first on a small scale to allow for social distancing — Samples was there. She would find a safe, isolated corner and take her Zoom classes from there.

The building is much more than just architecturally striking, she said. It also functions beautifully. For one, every room allows natural light to pour in. Secondly, it's designed for student engagement. Students have free access to just about every area, except, of course, the professors' offices.

As a first year, before the pandemic, Samples and her study group would gather in one of the larger classrooms. They would use the projector to display a practice exam so all could see. Then they would use the giant white board to do an outline.

Having such a facility to call home is important because a law school building is kind of a home. Students may spend more time there than at their actual homes. As a first-year, Samples would arrive at school at 7 a.m. and not leave until 6 p.m.

"There's no reason to leave," she said.

A space to increase engagement

James Gravely can't wait to enjoy the same experience. His school, University of Cincinnati College of Law, is about to move into new digs. It will take over a former campus business school that's undergoing a \$45 million renovation.

The current law building?

"The biggest complaint is that it's dark," Gravely said. "It's pretty old."

The new building, which is nearing completion, earned an A+ in our analysis. Like University of Kentucky's new building, it will also feature an abundance of natural light.

"There's a lot of excitement about the new building," Gravely said. "It's going to

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B+

	Est. Sq. ft. per student	Library hours per week
Suffolk University	184	103
SMU Dedman School of Law	269	104
University of Michigan	184	112
Louisiana State University	318	102
CUNY School of Law	309	168
Washington University	68	168
Boston University	189	100
Barry Law School	176	108
California Western School of Law	255	110
University of Arizona	52	168
Creighton University	294	106
Gonzaga University	245	90
Touro Law Center	317	112
Indiana U Bloomington	273	115
UC Davis School of Law	228	168
Campbell Law School	208	102
Seton Hall University	168	91
Indiana McKinney	278	104
Santa Clara Law	132	98
University of Mississippi	232	111
Albany Law School	247	102
University of Wisconsin	190	104



#7

University of Connecticut School of Law's five Collegiate Gothic buildings, which date back to the 1920s, are on the National Register of Historic Places.

be like night and day.”

Gravely, a second-year, has had an interesting law school experience thus far. In his first year, because of the pandemic, he took all of his classes online. This year, he's in the old building. Next year, he'll be in the new one.

After coming back to campus last fall, he quickly realized the advantages of in-person learning.

“We lost a lot of community, the opportunity to get to know each other,” he said. “It's just a better general feeling. I'm happy to be around other people.”

The new building will increase socialization, he believes, because it's designed to encourage student engagement.

“It's not just being back in class that's important,” he said. “It's just hanging out. That's crucial. The new building will definitely help with that.”

Increased engagement — between students and between students and professors — is one of the many goals of the new building, said Dean Verna Williams. One of the drawbacks of the current building, she said, is there's no place to relax and socialize. So students don't have any reason to stay beyond classes.

That's going to change. Students have

will numerous places to sit comfortably and engage. An outdoor terrace is being added.

Williams said having such a facility is important.

“It's a tangible manifestation of your mission,” she said. “It says who you are.”

This new building is also expected to have a dynamic feel, which is important, given that law school is about energizing students to make change, to right wrongs, to fight for justice. The building's atmosphere can be a driver of such actions, Brown said.

“This is a different type of space,” she said. “Student success is the center of the design.”

Landmark structures

You can't say law schools aren't creative when it comes to offering some pretty spectacular venues.

We have, well, too much evidence.

Some schools have done the amazing with buildings that originally had nothing to do with challenging students via the Socratic method. Take Southwestern Law School in Los Angeles, for example. It's a former department store.

The landmark Art Deco structure, dating back to 1929, was purchased by the school in 1994 and converted to one of the more unusual law schools in the nation. Routinely honored by our analysts, this year it earned an A+.

Stetson University College of Law in Gulfport, Fla., used to be a fancy hotel

called the Rolyat, which opened in 1926. How fancy? Well, on the day it opened, the main fountain was filled with champagne, according to the school's website, which also noted that the law school buildings are a “re-creation of a Spanish walled settlement of the feudal ages.”

In 1954, the buildings were converted to a law school, which earned an A+ in this year's ranking.

Then there is University of Connecticut School of Law, which also routinely finishes high on our list. This year, it too earned an A+. The law school is comprised of five Collegiate Gothic buildings that once housed a seminary. The buildings, which date back to the 1920s, are on the National Register of Historic Places.

The law school took over the 17-acre campus in 1984 and added a fifth building, the Thomas J. Meskill Law Library, in 1996. It's nearly impossible to tell that the building only dates back a few decades. It's designed in the same Collegiate Gothic style as the original buildings, and the stone came from the same quarry.

The campus looks like a place that Harry Potter and his wizard buddies could call home. The students have even referred to it as “Hogwarts.”

“It's easy to see why our students love our beautiful campus,” said Dean Eboni Nelson. “It not only elevates their spirits; it reminds them that the law is a noble pursuit and informs them that they all belong in this tranquil and dignified setting.”

We bet it's also a great place for a spirited game of Quidditch.

Diversifying environmental law

Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University is reconceptualizing the future of environmental law in a movement that is expanding to include diversity, economic welfare and social justice. **BY MICHELLE WEYENBERG**

Located just north of bustling New York City, Elisabeth Haub School of Law at Pace University in White Plains is perfectly situated for access to surrounding cities, suburbs and nature. The school has long been a leader in environmental law.

Pace University boasts the largest environmental law faculty in the country, offering more than 40 environmental law courses, along with eight centers and clinics, including the Global Center for Environmental Legal Studies, the Energy and Climate Center, the Land Use Law Center, the Environmental Litigation Clinic, the Food and Beverage Law Clinic and the newly launched Sustainable Business Law Hub.

Jason Czarnecki, associate dean and executive director of environmental law programs, said he is seeing a broader range of students who are interested in environmental law. This includes diversity in terms of ethnicity as well as in undergraduate fields of study.

There's been an evolution in the type of students studying environmental law, he said. This has led to reconceptualizing the future of environmental law.

Historically, the school's program was built on litigation and pollution control law. Diversified faculty resulted in diversified curriculum, he said. There are now social justice components in the mix.

"It's not only about environmental health," Czarnecki said. "All the things are about sustainability. The program is now much more reflective of a movement that cares about diversity, inclusion, economic welfare and social justice."

One example of this is how society views the water crisis in Flint, Mich., which began in 2014 when the city began taking water from the Flint River without treating it properly, leaving it contaminated with lead.

Czarnecki said the lens we look through for events like this is now better. It's a social



JORG MEYER PHOTOGRAPHY/PACE UNIVERSITY

ELISABETH HAUB SCHOOL OF LAW AT PACE UNIVERSITY has been a longtime leader in environmental law with several opportunities for students to gain practical experience.

justice problem. It's not just about pollution but about how the economic environment is structured.

The Sustainable Business Law Hub will help incorporate the three pillars of sustainability — economic, social and environmental welfare — into global business practices. It will serve as an incubator, student training program, research endeavor and think tank devoted to addressing global sustainability challenges. Working hand in hand with faculty experts, students will receive practical training and experience in using the law to foster sustainable business practices.

"Our innovative and future-thinking curriculum is what continues to differentiate us from other law schools," Czarnecki said. "We have been teaching our students the importance of sustainability for many years through our courses and our clinics."

Second-year law student Bailey Andree is getting an advanced certificate in envi-

ronmental law with a concentration in real estate and land use. She said her involvement in the Land Use Law Center has given her some incredible opportunities.

"All the advice I got about this before law school was right. Network, network, network," Andree said.

Gina Hervey, also a second-year, came to Pace to study food law and policy.

The Food and Beverage Law Clinic, launched in 2017, represented 24 clients this past year, including a nonprofit farm working to fight food insecurity, a startup food delivery service for meal kits and a regional land trust advancing land access for farmers of color.

"If you are passionate about a specific field, don't be afraid to commit to it," Hervey said. "Talking with those who have jobs you might like, learning about their challenges and successes, will be incredibly helpful."

Leaders in
environmental law

The law intersects with a wide range of efforts to protect the environment. Issues include energy, climate, land use, national and state policies, pollution control and even animal law.

If you're interested in this area of law, look for a school with a wide variety of well-developed courses and a certificate program that will strengthen your resume while broadening your horizons.

■ **Georgetown University Law Center's** professors and students prepared for Supreme Court arguments on greenhouse gas regulations early this year. The U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear a quartet of environmental law cases, consolidated under *West Virginia v. Environmental Protection Agency*. In January, Georgetown



CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF LAW has expanded its environmental law offerings thanks to a \$10 million endowment to launch the Burke Center for Environmental Law, led by professor Jonathan Adler (pictured above with students). The school was able to add new externships, conferences and scholarships.

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Golden Gate University	
Lewis & Clark Law School	
Pace University	
Tulane University	
UC Berkeley	
UCLA Law	
University of Arizona	
University of Minnesota	
University of Montana	
University of New Mexico	
University of Oregon	
University of Utah	
Vermont Law School	
A	
Case Western Reserve U.	
Chicago-Kent College of Law	
Emory University	
Indiana U Bloomington	
Loyola University New Orleans	
Touro Law Center	
UC Hastings	
University of Connecticut	
University of Denver	
University of Hawai'i	
University of Maryland	
University of San Diego	

Continued on page 40

Law's Environmental Law & Justice Clinic filed an amicus brief in support of the Environmental Protection Agency on behalf of the nation's leading physician-member medical organizations and deans and directors of public health schools. Georgetown Law's Supreme Court Institute held two moot court sessions on *West Virginia v. EPA* with lawyers who would be arguing the case before the real Supreme Court test-driving their presentations before panels of professors and lawyers. The Supreme Court started hearing oral arguments in late February.

■ **Widener University Delaware Law School's** Environmental and Natural Resources Law Clinic tried and won an appeal that clarified Pennsylvania law governing riparian forest buffer requirements for new developments. The clinic also litigated a challenge under Delaware's Coastal



UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO SCHOOL OF LAW students went on an "Environmental Justice Bus Tour," visiting a hazardous waste site (a former uranium mine) on tribal land. The Natural Resources & Environmental Law Clinic represented two tribal governments in a Clean Water Act case against federal agencies.

Zone Act, and it is working on 10 additional challenges to permits and regulatory

decisions in Delaware and Pennsylvania. Also, in conjunction with the Inland Bays

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Foundation of Delaware, the clinic published “A Citizen’s Guide to Environmental Advocacy in Delaware” to help citizens advocate on their own.

■ The Environmental and Natural Resources Law Center at **University of Oregon School of Law** has a new funded research project on climate change that

involves both faculty and students. The project aims to develop new strategies to force climate recovery. The goal is to create a framework for atmospheric recovery plans for forests in the Northwest, putting nature’s most powerful carbon sponges to use. Oregon’s agricultural areas, mangroves, wetlands and grazing lands offer rich opportunities to draw down and sequester atmo-

spheric carbon. Professor Mary Christina Wood is leading the project.

■ **Loyola University New Orleans College of Law** students spent two weeks last May in the Florida Keys learning about environmental law through real world experiences. The course they were taking provides an overview of the environmental laws, policies and decision-making processes specifically related to coastal and marine resources in the United States, using the Florida Keys ecosystem as a micro study. The course includes visits to a sea turtle hospital, the National Key Deer Refuge and the Florida Keys National Marine Sanctuary. Students also have opportunities to meet and speak with conservation and fishing advocates, government representatives and journalists.



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Environmental Law (continued from page 38)

A
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West Virginia University
Widener Law Commonwealth
A-
Barry Law School
Columbia Law School
Duke Law School
Louisiana State University
University Buffalo School of Law
University of Colorado
University of Florida
University of Louisville
University of Michigan
University of Pittsburgh
University of Virginia
University of Wyoming
B+
American University
Arizona State University
CUNY School of Law
Florida State University
Marquette University
New York Law School
Stanford Law School
UC Davis School of Law
University of Miami
University of Tennessee
Wake Forest University
Widener Delaware Law School
Yale Law School

Leaders in alternative dispute resolution

From time to time, problems can arise between businesses and their customers, suppliers, partners or employees. Alternative dispute resolution is the area of study that includes both litigation-based training and skills training that focuses on resolving conflict. Trial skills are a very important component of legal advocacy, as are mediation, arbitration and negotiation.

■ **University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law's** Ronna K. Jablow Mediation Fellowship is celebrating its fifth year. The purpose of the fellowship is to continue Jablow's legacy in advancing the cause of alternative dispute resolution and supporting conflict resolution in the community. Each student



PHOTO BY PHIL CHANNING FOR THE USC GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, GOULD SCHOOL OF LAW'S Family Law Mediation Clinic, led by professor Lisa Klerman (pictured with students), celebrated its fifth anniversary in 2020 and faced the challenge of courthouse closures during the pandemic that threatened case delays and caused frustration for already struggling clients. The clinic served more than 600 clients on a virtual basis in 2021 and found advantages to the virtual setting that may be incorporated in the future.

See yourself here...



Freda Li, J.D. '21
Associate Attorney, Fletcher Yoder, P.C.

Scholarship Recipient, Intellectual Property Law Section - Dallas Bar Association
Student Attorney, Patent Clinic & Community Development Clinic
Alternative Dispute Resolution Client Counseling Competition
Community Outreach Chair, Women of Color Collective

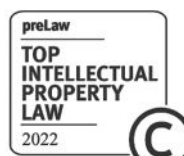
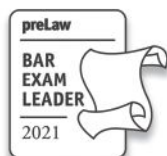
“As an engineer and aspiring patent lawyer, I chose Texas A&M Law for its reputation in Intellectual Property Law. The curriculum and practical training opportunities provided the foundation I desired. Hours spent practicing with the Alternative Dispute Resolution team, serving the Fort Worth community through Legal Clinics, and organizing empowering events with the Women of Color Collective allowed me to form meaningful relationships and develop as a professional.”



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TOP LAW SCHOOLS

Alternative Dispute Resolution

fellow receives a stipend of approximately \$5,500 to work 400 hours during the summer for which the grant is awarded. Fellows will work with Community Mediation Maryland to support its coalition of 16 grassroots programs that provide free mediation services for neighborhood, family, business, school and personal conflicts.

■ **Fordham University School of Law** students are participating in a community service project with The Bronx School of Young Leaders this semester. Fordham Law's Dispute Resolution Society partnered with The Bronx School of Young Leaders to develop a comprehensive and progressive lesson plan to teach negotiation skills to eighth-graders. Society members have been Zooming into classrooms on the last Monday of every month to prepare students for a nego-

Alternative Dispute Law

A+

Cardozo School of Law

A

Arizona State University
Fordham Law School
Hofstra University (Deane)
Mitchell Hamline School of Law
New York Law School
Ohio State University
Quinnipiac University
UC Hastings
University of Maryland
University of Miami
University of Oregon

A-

Capital University
Chapman Fowler School of Law
Chicago-Kent College of Law
Columbia Law School
Marquette University
North Carolina Central Univ.

University of Houston
University of San Francisco
University of Washington
USC Gould School of Law

B+

Albany Law School
Drexel University Kline
Michigan State University
Notre Dame Law School
Penn State - Dickinson Law
Penn State Law
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SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR COLLEGE OF LAW AT ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY professor Art Hinshaw (far left) leads orientation for the Lodestar Mediation Clinic at a Maricopa County Justice Court. Following intensive training, students act as mediators in real civil cases before the Maricopa County Justice Courts and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission.

tiation that they will conduct with each other at the end of April.

■ **New York Law School's** Alternative Dispute Resolution Skills Program hosted its annual symposium in January. It addressed strategies to increase diversity in the ADR field. The event, which was held virtually this year, generated thoughtful discussion about why the practice of arbitration and mediation has been persistently homogeneous and how to change that going forward. Keynote speakers included former New York Gov. David Paterson and Deborah Enix-Ross, president-elect of the American Bar Association.

■ Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution at **Pepperdine Caruso School of Law** partnered with Special Education Local Plan Area Administrators of California to offer training in alternative dispute resolution for special education professionals across the state of California. Straus

Institute's faculty designed and implemented training geared toward participants in a variety of roles in the education field. The interactive training will continue through 2022. Participants will learn foundations of the mediation process, negotiation styles and how to facilitate problem-solving in education-related disputes. The partnership was made possible through a grant from the state.

■ **Pennsylvania State University, Penn State Law's** Black Law Students Association mock trial team won the Mid-Atlantic Region Constance Baker Motley Mock Trial Competition. The team was one of 18 in the country that advanced to the national competition held in March. The team includes Daijah Blackburn, Leilani Brown, Michelle Miles and Taylor Washington. They were coached by Penn State Law alums Kelsi Robinson (Class of 2021), Tyla Swinton (Class of 2021) and Amber Bynum (Class of 2020).

Leaders in intellectual property law

The range of protectable intellectual property is remarkably broad, and this field continues to grow as technology plays an ever-increasing role in the global economy. Intellectual property lawyers represent creative and innovative people in many fields, from inventors needing patent protection to artists needing copyright protection to companies, big and small, that need to protect their trademarks and trade secrets.

■ **University of San Francisco School of Law**, with its Internet & Intellectual Property Justice Clinic, recently became the first American Bar Association-accredited Northern California law school to be certified for patent work with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. Students temporarily become registered agents, allowing them to practice both trademark law and patent law (under faculty supervision) before the patent office and to file trademark applications, defend trademark oppositions or cancellations, and file patents.

■ **Case Western Reserve University School of Law** established its First Amendment Clinic, thanks to a \$900,000 gift from The Stanton Foundation. The First Amendment Clinic will focus on cases involving free speech and freedom of the press, including cases involving the internet. It will offer pro bono legal services to students, journalists, protesters, government employees, researchers, artists and other storytellers who rely on the First Amendment to collect and publish information.

■ **Northeastern University School of Law's** The Ned Project is aiming to right historical wrongs by recognizing Black inventors and their ingenuity. Faculty and students are working to posthumously recognize an inventor named Ned, who was enslaved in antebellum Mississippi, and many other slaves for their intellectual property and inventions. An article in the Summer

TOP LAW SCHOOLS

Intellectual Property



INDIANA UNIVERSITY ROBERT H. MCKINNEY SCHOOL OF LAW intellectual property students perform legal services under the supervision of a licensed faculty supervisor. The school's Intellectual Property Law Clinic is certified by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. From left, Director Pervin Taleyarkhan with students Ross Brown, Helga Davila, Luke Peterson, Fariraishe Muzondo, Jeff Johnson, Ming Yang, Christian Mercho, Chitra Ram and Brooks Pearce.



Intellectual Property Law

A+

American University
Arizona State University
Cardozo School of Law
Case Western Reserve U.
Chicago-Kent College of Law
DePaul University
Fordham Law School
George Washington University
Indiana U Bloomington
Mitchell Hamline School of Law
Northeastern University
Santa Clara Law
SMU Dedman School of Law
Southwestern Law School
UC Berkeley
University of Illinois Chicago
University of Maryland
University of New Hampshire
University of Washington

A

Brooklyn Law School
California Western School of Law
Emory University
Indiana McKinney
Lewis & Clark Law School
LMU Loyola Law School
Michigan State University
New York Law School
Suffolk University
UCLA Law
University of Houston
University of Minnesota
University of Richmond
University of San Diego
University of San Francisco

A-

Baylor University
Boston University
Loyola University New Orleans
Thomas Jefferson School of Law
University of Akron
University of Arizona
University of Connecticut
University of Idaho
University of Miami
University of Missouri - KC
Vanderbilt Law School
Villanova Law
Wake Forest University

Intellectual Property Law *(continued)*

B+

Albany Law School
Boston College
George Mason University
Georgetown University
Notre Dame Law School
Seattle University
South Texas Houston
Stanford Law School
Texas A&M Law
University of Colorado
University of Dayton
University of Illinois
University of Michigan
University of Pennsylvania
University of Utah
University of Virginia
Washington University
Wayne State University
West Virginia University

2021 issue of *Northeastern Law* magazine noted that Ned's accomplishment and a legal opinion involving his plow and scraper have been kept alive by African American activist, yet his contributions are little known in legal circles, even among patent attorneys. Launched last fall, The Ned Project is working to uncover the story of Ned's life and get him a posthumous patent. The restorative justice project is led by professor Kara Swanson.

■ **Brooklyn Law School's** Incubator & Policy Clinic has been a key collaborator in the launch of the LIFT NY Family Law Navigator, a free app that provides information on New York State family law to families and community members who might not be able to afford a lawyer. Designed in collaboration with Legal Information for Families Today, a Brooklyn-based legal services organization, and Neota Logic, a soft-

ware development company, the tool uses a familiar question-and-answer interface to gather information from the user anonymously and provides a report with relevant legal information tailored to the user's situation in less than five minutes.

■ The Patent Hub at **Chicago-Kent College of Law** at Illinois Institute of Technology has had another strong year assisting under-resourced inventors. It matched 43 eligible inventors with volunteer patent professionals. The inventors, who received pro bono legal assistance, identified as follows: 35% African American/Black; 21% white; 19% multi-racial; 11.6% Hispanic, Latinx or Spanish origin; and 4.7% Asian, Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian. African American/Black women made up the largest group based on gender and race, at 23.3%.



93%

OF THE CLASS OF 2020 WERE EMPLOYED
10 MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION

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10 websites you need to check out before applying to law school

BY HILLARY MANTIS

There is so much misinformation out there about law school admissions. It is sometimes shocking what my students tell me they have read on the internet or have heard from well-intentioned friends or other lawyers.

I have conversations that reflect this every week.

“My friend told me that law schools don’t like it when you take a year off before applying,” a student said during our recent meeting.

“What?” I responded. “So many applicants take a professional development year these days and are ultimately very successful with law school admissions. It is really an individual decision.

“Where did they get that information, anyway?”

When you are planning to apply to law school, it makes sense to stick to dependable resources.

Here are 10 websites relating to law school that might help you:

Law School Admission Council

lsac.org

LSAC is the primary site for information about applying to law school. You will register for the LSAT and actually apply to law schools through this site. It has a wealth of information about law school and the whole application process.

American Bar Association

americanbar.org/topics/legaled

The ABA is the official association of the legal profession. Its website has a section on legal education, which lists all ABA accredited law schools, along with much valuable information relating to the legal profession.

National Association for Law Placement

nalp.org

NALP is a great resource for all things related to legal employment and the legal job market. They have salary surveys and very up-to-date information about legal hiring.

Khan Academy

khanacademy.org/prep/lsat

Khan Academy has free online LSAT prep — a very helpful resource for those looking for guidance as they prep for the LSAT.

AccessLex Institute

accesslex.org

AccessLex has tremendous resources, including information on the cost of law school, paying for law school and scholarships.

LSAC Official Guide to ABA Approved Law Schools

officialguide.lsac.org/release/OfficialGuide_Default.aspx

The data included is official data from law schools, which can be very helpful. You can plug in your GPA and LSAT score to assess your chances of admission.

The Wilson-Stern Book of Law School Lists

bu.edu/caspreprofessional/files/2020/02/The-2019-2020-Book-of-Law-School-Lists.pdf

The book from Kaplan Test Prep has extremely detailed information about law schools, including specialty programs and dual degree programs.

ABA Standard 509 Employment Reports

abarequireddisclosures.org/employmentoutcomes.aspx

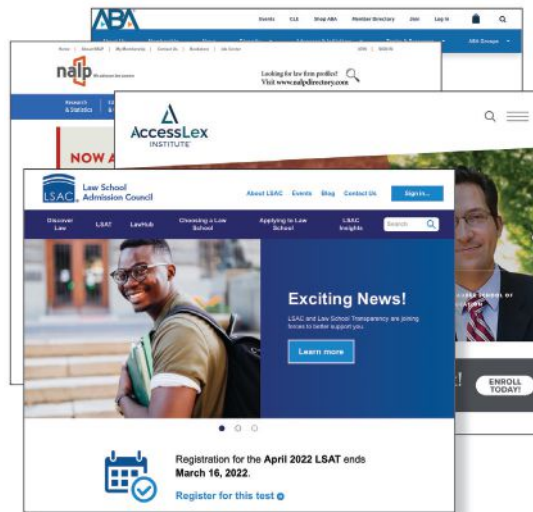
These reports give a picture of each school’s recent graduate employment status, including the employment rate and the top three states in which recent graduates are employed.

Your School’s Pre-law Website

Each college typically has its own pre-law webpage, where you can find out about individual programs at your school and connect with your pre-law advisers.

Each Law School’s Admissions Website

Check the website of each law school you are applying to for more detailed information about that school’s deadlines, policies, updates and links to possible scholarships. Don’t be afraid to reach out to them directly.



HILLARY MANTIS works with pre-law students, law students and lawyers. She is assistant dean for pre-law advising at Fordham University and author of legal career books. You can reach her at altcareer@aol.com.



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