

Law & Sustainability

Program Overview

Since the dawn of the Industrial Age, rapid advancements in technology have dramatically improved daily life for billions of people across the world. Unfortunately, many modern conveniences also deplete or harm the planet's natural resources in unsustainable ways. Transitioning cities, nations, and the world toward more environmentally sustainable activities has thus emerged as one of humankind's greatest 21st century challenges, and innovative lawmaking has a crucial role to play in this effort. The Program on Law & Sustainability at the Sandra Day O'Connor College of Law at Arizona State University provides world-class instruction and meaningful research experiences that equip students with the knowledge and skills necessary to become influential leaders in the global sustainability movement. The program's renowned faculty research and teach in every major area of sustainability policy, including climate change, water, energy, and environmental protection. Students within the program have access to a range of externships, research opportunities, moot court experiences, and mentorships available in few other law schools across the globe.

Faculty Expertise

The Program on Law & Sustainability features a highly accomplished collection of faculty and fellows, setting it apart as one of the strongest sustainability-focused environmental law programs in the country. Program faculty members also collaborate with the Center for Law & Global Affairs, Center for Law, Science & Innovation, Indian Legal Program, Global Institute of Sustainability, and Kyl Center for Water Policy at the Morrison Institute for Public Policy.

Core program faculty include:

- **Troy Rule**, *Faculty Director* - Renewable Energy Law
- **Kenneth Abbott** - International Environmental Law
- **Dan Bodansky** - International Environmental Law
- **Karen Bradshaw** - Environmental and Natural Resources Law
- **Rhett Larson** - Water Law
- **Myles V. Lynk** - Environmental Justice

Mentorship Initiative

The Mentorship Initiative for Sustainability Law links experienced attorneys with law students studying within the Program on Law & Sustainability at ASU Law. It creates opportunities for lawyers to provide one-on-one professional guidance and to share practical knowledge and skills with second- and third-year law students to aid them in the critical transition from law student to legal practitioner. The Mentorship Initiative for Sustainability Law pairs local practitioners who currently work in the fields of environmental, water, energy, and land use law with ASU Law student mentees. Attorney mentors and student mentees then meet in person throughout the course of the academic year to discuss career-related issues and engage in other mentoring activities. These meetings are intended to assist students in legal skills development, provide them additional advisors and role models, and expand their professional networks. The Mentorship Initiative for Sustainability Law also hosts a kickoff lunch and wrap-up reception that create valuable networking opportunities for students interested in sustainability-related areas.

Annual Conference of Legal Educators

Since 2015, the Program on Law & Sustainability has hosted the annual Sustainability Conference of American Legal Educators at ASU Law. This unique event is the largest and most comprehensive gathering of law professors from throughout North America who research in areas related to environmental sustainability. Each year, more than 50 scholars present and discuss their research. Panels and presentations address a wide range of contemporary topics such as climate change policy, agricultural and food regulation, disaster law, and sustainable land use. The event supports the program's goal of bridging the gap between the world's rapid advancements in sustainability-related technologies and the policy innovations necessary to support them. For top legal scholars in the field, the conference serves as a valuable opportunity to come together to share ideas.



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Student Opportunities

All students at ASU Law have access to a diverse array of environmental and sustainability-related course offerings including water, energy, natural resources, utilities, land use, and international environmental law that enhance any area of practice. In addition, students can take advantage of numerous opportunities to further specialize and to gain sustainability-related experience outside the classroom.

- The Certificate in Law, Science & Technology includes the option to specialize in Environmental & Sustainability Law, demonstrating competency and expertise to employers.
- An Advanced Sustainability Seminar, along with other research opportunities, allows students to work closely with faculty on legal scholarship, and has led many students to the rare accomplishment of publishing articles in environmental law journals.
- The Environmental Law Society brings together students interested in the relationship between law, the legal profession, and environmental and sustainability issues by organizing lectures, service projects, group hikes, and other events.
- Externship placements have given students real-world experience with environmental issues in practice through groups such as the Attorney General's Environmental Enforcement Section, the Arizona Department of Water Resources, and the Arizona State Land Department.
- Moot court competition teams from ASU Law regularly travel to compete in national environmental law competitions, strengthening students' oral and written advocacy skills and applying them to sustainability law and policy issues.
- Students can pursue a customized LLM with an emphasis in Law & Sustainability or supplement existing training through an MLS in Sustainability, with an option to concurrently earn a Master's degree in Sustainability Solutions in partnership with ASU's School of Sustainability.
- Partnerships with ASU's Global Institute of Sustainability and School of Sustainability offer law students unique access to diverse educational resources, interdisciplinary research, and networking opportunities beyond the law school.

Testimonials

"ASU has provided me with many opportunities to explore my interest in environmental and sustainability law. Through the Environmental Law Society, I have met other students who are interested in environmental law as well as local practicing attorneys. I look forward to taking courses like Energy Law and Water Law, and to participating in a sustainability research group. My peers have told me that the environmental law professors are enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and I am excited to take their classes as I pursue a certificate in Environmental and Sustainability Law through the Center for Law, Science, and Innovation."

– **Lindsay Breslau, JD '17**

"You will see hands raised in the courses that are part of the program on Law and Sustainability. With topics like energy and water law, which are gaining attention in the wake of natural disasters and droughts, students are keen to participate and learn more. Additionally, classes on science and technology keep students up to date on pressing concerns in the law. The program offers students the ability to delve into areas of the law with issues that are emerging and uncertain. Critical to any successful career, the networking opportunities provided by the Environmental Law Society led to my fall externship in the Attorney General's Environmental Enforcement Section. Furthermore, the Society's speakers and panels have allowed me to engage in thoughtful discussions about environmental issues and the role that law plays."

– **Kelly Kennedy, JD '16**

"The professors (at ASU) and their belief in my ability to succeed have opened a lot of doors for me; all of them are at the top of their field, passionate about their specialty, and willing to go above and beyond for their students. I had no idea what area of the law I wanted to pursue when I started law school and took a wide variety of classes looking for my niche. I know that even though I've moved on to the next stage of my professional career, I can still call on my mentors for advice or with questions, and they will be more than willing to help."

– **Allison Lowry, JD '15**