

Appalachian School of Law

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■ Introduction

The Appalachian School of Law (ASL) opened its doors in 1997 and received provisional approval from the ABA in 2001. ASL's location, nestled in the mountains of southwestern Virginia, provides a peaceful and scenic setting for the study of law. The small size assures an individualized education and creates the opportunity for students to make their own contributions to building a new institution. ASL's commitment to community service is a special and important feature that reinforces and gives context to the academic program.

The following statement of purpose was written by representatives of the students, faculty, staff, and administration of ASL: *The Appalachian School of Law exists to provide opportunity for people from Appalachia and beyond to realize their dreams of practicing law and bettering their communities. We attract a qualified, diverse, and dedicated student body, many of whom will remain in the region after graduation and serve as legal counselors, advocates, judges, mediators, community leaders, and public officials. We offer a nationally recruited, diverse, and well-qualified faculty; a rigorous program for the professional preparation of lawyers; and a comprehensive law library. The program emphasizes professional responsibility, dispute resolution, and practice skills. The ASL community is an exciting, student-centered environment that emphasizes honesty, integrity, fairness, and respect for others. We also emphasize community service and staff and faculty development. At the same time, we are a full participant in our community, serving as a resource for the people, the bar, and other institutions of the region.*

■ Curriculum

The curriculum at ASL is structured to give students the skills and knowledge to succeed. Students receive intensive instruction in legal research, writing, analysis, and other skills essential to the practice of law through ASL's Legal Process program and required upper-level skills courses. During the summer, between the first and second years each student will serve an externship with a judge, prosecutor, or other government lawyer, or legal services organization. Recent placements have included externships in the chambers of justices of the supreme courts in North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia, and with the United States Department of Justice and Environmental Protection Agency. The second-year curriculum provides required courses in the subject areas that law students are typically expected to master and lawyers are universally expected to understand well. The third-year curriculum will provide additional required courses in critical subject areas mixed with skill courses in a wide array of subjects. Alternative dispute resolution and professional responsibility are infused throughout the curriculum.

ASL also offers an Academic Success program, designed to assist students with the development and refinement of the skills necessary to make a successful transition to the study of law.

■ Community Service

ASL's vision is to educate community leaders. We emphasize community service as a central aspect of professional

responsibility and provide a variety of service opportunities to our students. To demonstrate the commitment of the legal profession to public service, as well as to enhance the program of legal education at ASL, students at ASL are required to complete 25 hours of community service each semester in a project of their choosing.

Although students are able to structure their community service to meet their own individual preferences and schedules, ASL assists students in making time for these projects by scheduling one afternoon each week that students may devote to community service projects. Projects sponsored by ASL in recent years include a conflict resolution program taught by our students in public elementary schools; a county mapping project in which our students engage in property research and mapping; work with Buchanan Neighbors United, a group that provides housing repairs to improve substandard housing; a community recycling project; and a gender-bias study of the Virginia state court system. Students also are invited to develop alternative projects to satisfy their service obligations.

■ Faculty

ASL's expanding faculty currently consists of 20 full-time professors and a talented group of adjunct professors drawn from the region's bench and bar. The full-time faculty offers an unusual depth of private and governmental practice experience, as well as experience teaching at other law schools. The ranks of the faculty include former law clerks to federal and state court judges, government officials, and partners in small and large private law firms. In addition to being dedicated classroom professors, the ASL faculty also has published a variety of scholarly works in areas ranging from constitutional law to legal ethics to business and commercial matters.

■ Students and Student Organizations

ASL enjoys the support and enthusiasm of a dedicated student body. The entering class usually numbers around 145. Students come to Grundy not only from the immediate region but from across the country and abroad.

The student body elects a Student Bar Association. Students may participate in numerous student organizations, in the *Appalachian Journal of Law*, and on moot court, trial advocacy, and ADR competition teams. ASL has a Family Resource Network for the spouses, partners, and families of law students. ASL also has a speaker series that brings a number of distinguished speakers to campus.

■ Facilities

ASL is housed in two buildings on a 3.5-acre campus located near the town center of Grundy. The classroom and office building was extensively renovated for the law school in 1997 into a state-of-the-art law school facility and has won an award from the American Institute of Architects. The classroom building is constructed around an open quadrangle that serves as an informal gathering place for the ASL community. The library was extensively renovated during 1998. The building

provides a modern, well-organized, and technologically advanced library.

Students have access to the Internet through connections to the ASL network that are available in most of ASL's classrooms and at all tables and carrels in the library.

■ Admission and Financial Aid

ASL accepts for admission those students who will benefit from a challenging curriculum in a caring environment. Admission decisions are not based on a single criterion, but rather each item will be considered in relation to the applicant's total qualifications. Besides the usual undergraduate transcripts and LSAT score, other considerations include an applicant's graduate work, character, work history, professional promise, personal commitment, recommendations, life experience, and other nonacademic achievements. Students can apply online at ASL's website. We are happy to discuss our admission process and criteria with potential applicants at any time.

ASL also offers a Pre-Admission Summer Opportunity (PASO) program for students who may have the potential to succeed as law students and lawyers, but whose skills and talents may not be reflected fully by the traditional measures of the LSAT and undergraduate performance. PASO is a four-week program that provides participants an opportunity to experience law school coursework and gives an opportunity for the faculty to evaluate the students' performance to assess their ability to succeed in law school. Participants who fail to demonstrate potential to successfully complete ASL's three-year legal education program will not be offered admission. In 2005, about 25 percent of PASO participants were offered admission to the fall entering class.

While most students will depend on federal student loans to finance a legal education, ASL does offer both merit- and need-based scholarships. Merit-based scholarships are based on entering LSAT and GPA credentials; the application for admission serves as the application for a merit scholarship.

Applicant Profile

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LSAT Score	GPA							
	3.75 +	3.50 - 3.74	3.25 - 3.49	3.00 - 3.24	2.75 - 2.99	2.50 - 2.74	2.25 - 2.49	2.00 - 2.24
175-180								
170-174								
165-169								
160-164								
155-159								
150-154								
145-149								
140-144								
135-139								
130-134								
125-129								

Very Likely
 Possible
 Unlikely

This grid represents data for 100% of the applicant pool for fall 2004 admission. It does not reflect the possibility of invitation to participate in the Pre-Admission Summer Opportunity Program. This chart is to be used as a general guide only. Nonnumerical factors are strongly considered for all applicants.