

University of Virginia School of Law

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■ Introduction

Founded in 1819, the University of Virginia School of Law is a world-renowned training ground for distinguished lawyers and public servants. As identified by *American Lawyer* magazine, Virginia is one of only two law schools in the country with graduates practicing in each of the nation's top 100 law firms. But the law school also is dedicated to upholding Thomas Jefferson's conviction that lawyers must serve the public interest and provides special career counseling and placement assistance, operates pro bono programs, and administers a loan assistance and forgiveness program.

At Virginia, law in its origins, impact, and implications is analyzed and debated in classes, workshops, lecture programs, student organizations, and faculty-student informal exchanges. Students are challenged to determine how and why the law developed in a certain way, whether it accomplishes its purpose, and how changes might affect social behavior. Faculty are fully committed to teaching, scholarship, and public service. They meet with and mentor students, explore ideas, and foster understanding. A third of the faculty hold advanced degrees in fields such as psychology, economics, philosophy, and history.

■ Curriculum and Degrees

Intellectual rigor, dynamic teaching, and rich diversity distinguish the Virginia curriculum. Each first-year student takes a first-semester class in a small section of 30 students. Other first-year classes range from 60 to 90 students. During the second semester, students choose five to seven hours of electives. In addition, the law school offers annually nearly 200 different courses and seminars beyond the first-year curriculum.

The law school has strength in corporate and commercial law rooted in exceptional faculty and enhanced by close relationships with the Darden Graduate Business School. The Law and Business program uniquely integrates business and legal analysis throughout a range of courses. Virginia's prominence in international law is built on a long tradition, with notable faculty in areas of immigration, human rights, environment, and constitutional law in other countries, as well as private and commercial law in a global community. Its reputation in legal and constitutional history stems from highly visible and influential faculty, many of whom hold doctorates in history. Environmental endeavors draw strength from the Center for Environmental Studies, the *Virginia Environmental Law Journal*, and opportunities for joint study and practice with others within and outside the university.

Students may enroll in several joint-degree programs. The JD-MBA program is a four-year program in conjunction with the Darden Graduate Business School. Other combined degree programs include a JD-MA in bioethics, economics, English, government and foreign affairs, history, philosophy, or sociology; a JD-MS in accounting; a JD-MP in planning; and a JD-MPH in public health. In addition, students may combine a law degree from Virginia with the MPA from Princeton, MALD from the Fletcher School at Tufts, or an MA in International Relations and International Economics from Johns Hopkins.

■ Facilities

The Law Grounds, a complex of integrated buildings, offers an expansive and attractive setting reflecting Jefferson's position that an intellectual community in a beautiful environment fosters learning and personal growth. The library, with more than 882,000 volumes, is one of the largest law libraries in the country. But, more than a repository of books, the library is the law school's central research facility. Professional librarians provide research support for faculty and assistance and training for students. The library is committed to a dynamic concept of information in which the traditional printed text is merely one of many learning tools. It is fully computerized and offers full LAN access, both wired and wireless, throughout the facility.

■ Admission

The Admission Committee believes that absolute standards based on a combination of LSAT score and GPA cannot be the only criteria for selection. Recognizing that the real meaning of GPA will vary with such factors as quality of the institution attended, rigor of courses selected, and degree of grade inflation, the committee considers an array of elements in addition to the essential LSAT and GPA, with a view toward assembling a diverse class while arriving at a fair appraisal of the individual applicant.

While the LSAT and GPA remain the primary determinants for admission, the committee takes other elements into account, including the maturing effect of some years away from formal education, trends in academic performance, employment history, significant personal achievement or unusual prior training, background, or ethnicity, which promises a contribution to the law school community. Successfully overcoming economic, social, or educational obstacles is viewed favorably.

The law school seeks to maintain a diverse student body in which the free exchange of ideas and viewpoints can flourish, creating a rich learning experience for all law school students. Therefore, the active recruitment of minority students is important to our admission process.

While individual interviews are not a part of the admission process, prospective students are encouraged to visit the School of Law. When classes are in session, student-led tours are available and classes are open to visitors. On most Friday afternoons throughout the summer and during the fall semester, the School of Law holds admission information sessions. Check our website at www.law.virginia.edu/admissions for details.

■ Financial Aid

The University of Virginia School of Law assists its students in financing their legal education through a variety of resources, including scholarship assistance; Title IV federally sponsored programs such as Stafford Student Loans, Perkins Loans, and College Work-study funding; and private sector educational loans. Most scholarship assistance is awarded on a combined basis of academic merit and financial need. Some scholarships are awarded solely on merit. The Financial Aid Office works

individually with students to develop realistic budgets that meet the costs of obtaining a legal education and to identify sources of financial support that will enable students to achieve their educational and professional goals.

Students who choose less financially lucrative positions in the public sector can benefit from a variety of financial assistance programs offered by Virginia. Summer fellowships are available for students who accept unpaid or low-paid summer internships with public sector employers. The Mortimer Caplin and Linda Fairstein Public Service Fellowships provide tuition assistance for the third year of law school as well as a living stipend for the first two years of a graduate's public sector legal practice. The Powell Fellowship in Legal Services awards \$35,000 to a graduating student or judicial clerk to enable him or her to work under the sponsorship of a public interest organization to enhance the delivery of civil legal services to the poor. The law school also has a generous Loan Forgiveness Program available to graduates who choose qualifying employment.

■ Career Services

The law school boasts one of the most successful career services programs in legal education. An online job-search system gives students 24-hour, web-based access to

employment opportunities and employer information and provides the vehicle for interview sign-up and scheduling. Over 900 public and private sector law offices, from every region of the United States, annually conduct over 9,000 interviews with second- and third-year students. University of Virginia School of Law graduates are employed in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and many foreign countries. In the 2005 graduating class, 54 students accepted a judicial clerkship with federal or state courts, and three Virginia graduates are currently clerking for the Supreme Court of the United States.

■ Student Life

The law school is continually enriched and diversified by student organizations, extracurricular activities, and community spirit. Intellectual challenges are complemented by cooperation and camaraderie, all integrated under Virginia's 160-year-old, student-run honor system. The array of opportunity includes nine academic journals, 40 interest-centered organizations, student governance, and social and athletic activities. The university and local community are large enough to offer something to meet anyone's interests and small enough to make active participation compatible with the rigors of an academic schedule.

Applicant Profile

The University of Virginia School of Law has elected not to provide an admission profile based only on GPA and LSAT, as these numbers cannot be the sole criteria for selecting an entering class. Each applicant is assessed as an individual, taking into account not only LSAT scores and undergraduate grades, but also the strength of an applicant's undergraduate or

graduate curriculum, trends in grades, the maturing effect of experiences since college, the nature and quality of any work experience, significant achievement in extracurricular activities, service in the military, contributions to campus or community through service and leadership, and personal qualities displayed.