

# THE LAW SCHOOL

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Students thinking of law study soon discover that the programs of most law schools have a great deal in common. The choice of one school over another is not easily made on the basis of catalog descriptions of the teaching methods, course offerings, and formal requirements. The similarity is natural, since most American law schools share the aim of educating lawyers for careers that may take many paths and that will not be limited to any particular state or region. Although many lawyers eventually find themselves practicing within some special branch of the law, American legal education is still fundamentally an education for generalists. It emphasizes the acquisition of broad and basic knowledge of law, an understanding of the functioning of the legal system and, perhaps even more important, the development of analytical abilities of a high order. This common emphasis reflects the conviction that such an education is the best kind of preparation for the diverse roles that law school graduates occupy in American life and for the changing nature of the problems any individual lawyer is likely to encounter over a long career.

Within this tradition, which it shares, the University of Chicago Law School has been influenced by a special interest, imparted at its inception, in the relationships between law and other social studies and in the interaction of law with its social and human context. Important themes in the Law School's history and outlook can be suggested by a word about the beginnings of the University and of the Law School.

The University of Chicago, one of the youngest of the major American universities, was granted its charter in 1890 and opened its doors for classes in October 1892. The generosity of its founding donors, led by John D. Rockefeller, enabled the first president of the University, William Rainey Harper, to realize his bold ideas and extraordinary standards in the creation of a new university. Harper insisted that the new institution must be a true university, with a strong emphasis on advanced training and research as well as undergraduate instruction. The University was launched with a program of ambitious dimensions and with a faculty of remarkable distinction. It became at once one of the leading universities of the world. The character of the University from the start was stamped by a spirit of innovation, devotion to intellectual inquiry, and a strong sense of mission. As one study of American higher education has said, "No episode was more important in shaping the outlook and expectations of American higher education during those years than the founding of the University of Chicago, one of those events in American history that brought into focus the spirit of an age."

The Law School, part of Harper's original plan but delayed in its fulfillment until 1902, was a product of the same innovative spirit and concern for the common aims of a university. The objective, in the view of Harper and faculty members associated with him in the project, was to create a new kind of law school, professional in its purpose but with a broader outlook than was then prevalent in the leading American law schools. The aspirations of the new school were set by Harper's conception of legal education in a university setting: education in law "implies a scientific knowledge of law and of legal and juristic methods. These are

the crystallization of ages of human progress. They cannot be understood in their entirety without a clear comprehension of the historic forces of which they are the product, and of the social environment with which they are in living contact. A scientific study of law involves the related sciences of history, economics, philosophy—the whole field of man as social being.” The effects of this philosophy were seen in a number of developments in which the Law School had a leading role during its first half-century, including the growth of administrative law, legislation, and comparative law as recognized fields of law school study, the introduction of economics into the curriculum, the extension of the field of legal research from concern with the rules of law to empirically oriented investigations of the legal system, and the appointment of regular faculty members from disciplines outside the law. In addition, the Law School from the beginning established close relationships with the faculties in other departments of the University, a number of whom each year participate in the teaching of courses and seminars in the Law School.

The present program of the Law School seeks to combine a rigorous professional emphasis with the search for knowledge about law viewed as a social science. The Law School has long been noted for its pioneering work in the field of law and economics, and it is now also especially rich in resources for the study of international law, as well as law and government. Other special emphases have brought the development of a leading Center for Studies in Criminal Justice and a highly professional program of clinical education. The strong orientation of the faculty toward research provides students with unusually good opportunities for independent research and writing and for employment as research assistants to members of the faculty. The School is the home of four faculty-edited journals—*The Supreme Court Review*, *The Journal of Law & Economics*, *The Journal of Legal Studies*, and *Crime and Justice: An Annual Review of Research*. These are in addition to three student-edited law journals.

The program for the professional degree (the J.D. degree) begins with a common program for all students in the first year, covering the basic common-law fields and emphasizing training in legal reasoning, legal research techniques, and exercises in writing various forms of legal documents, as well as an introduction to the art of appellate advocacy. In all first-year courses, the class is divided into sections. Students also meet in small sections for legal-writing work under the supervision of the Bigelow Teaching Fellows, an important feature of the Law School’s first-year program. The first-year program also includes an elective course in the Spring Quarter chosen from a set of courses representing special perspectives toward law such as history, social science, economics, and legal philosophy.

Save for one required course in professional responsibility, the work of the upper-class years is entirely elective and permits a high degree of flexibility to the individual student in planning a program. The expectation is that all students will take work that gives them a strong foundation in the major subject areas, and will do substantial research and writing by taking advantage of the opportunity to cultivate special interests in seminars and independent study. A number of courses and seminars, considered especially appropriate for the third year, stress the solution of complex problems or transactions in the form in which they come to the lawyer in practice, drawing on the theoretical knowledge previously acquired and calling for the application of that knowledge to real situations. Acquaintance with

the techniques of litigation is stressed, through trial practice courses. In one course, students carry out the steps in the preparation and trial of a lawsuit under the supervision of trial practitioners and judges. In another trial practice course, students receive clinical training in advocacy by participating in trials on behalf of real clients in the courts of Illinois (pursuant to the student practice rule). The Law School's Mandel Legal Aid Clinic provides eighty or more law students each year with the supervised opportunity to participate in the representation of indigent clients.

An important part of the educational experience for many students is participation in at least one intensive extracurricular activity. There is an active moot-court program providing intensive training in the writing of briefs and practice in oral argument before appellate benches. Approximately thirty second- and third-year students are members of *The University of Chicago Law Review*, one of the country's leading general purpose legal periodicals. Another thirty students are members of *The University of Chicago Legal Forum*, which each year publishes papers from a symposium on a different topic of current legal interest, as well as student commentary. Another thirty students are members of *The University of Chicago Law School Roundtable*, which focuses on the publication of interdisciplinary scholarship. Membership on these journals is based in part on an open writing competition held during the summer between the students' first and second years.

The Law School places a special value on ease of access to the faculty and informal exchange with the faculty as part of the educational process. The building is designed to encourage this atmosphere. Offices are arranged around the working floors of the D'Angelo Law Library; these offices are used by both students and faculty. The custom is for students to drop in on faculty members at any time and without going through secretaries or other staff. The Harold J. Green Law Lounge, in which students and faculty gather between classes and for coffee breaks, occupies a central place on the main floor of the Law School.

The Law School is housed in the Laird Bell Quadrangle, a set of buildings of noted architectural distinction, designed by the late Eero Saarinen and finished in 1959. The Laird Bell Quadrangle includes a courtroom complex, the Weymouth Kirkland Courtroom; the Glen A. Lloyd Auditorium, which, with a seating capacity of approximately five hundred, is frequently used for lectures and similar University functions; the Benjamin Z. Gould Administration Building houses the Dean, the Dean of the J.D. and Graduate Programs, the Dean of Students, and the Registrar, as well as the other administrative offices; and the D'Angelo Law Library. In the spring of 1997 ground was broken for the Arthur Kane Center for Clinical Legal Education which will house the Mandel Legal Aid Clinic. The addition is expected to be completed in late 1998.

The student body of the Law School, a truly "national" institution, has always been drawn from many colleges and parts of the United States. The alumni, numbering over 7,000, are widely dispersed throughout the country, with strong concentrations in New York, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Boston, and Seattle, as well as in Chicago. An active alumni program and a well-established Office of Career Services help assure students a broad range of employment opportunities on graduation and during the summers between academic years.