

Ave Maria School of Law

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■ Introduction

Ave Maria School of Law offers students a distinctive legal education that focuses on professional excellence, the moral foundations of the law, and the harmony of faith and reason. As a national Catholic law school, Ave Maria is committed to producing highly competent graduates who are able to reflect critically on the law, the principles that undergird it, and their role within the legal system.

With a student-faculty ratio of approximately 16 to 1, Ave Maria students benefit from ready access to experienced faculty members who prepare students to practice at the highest level and to succeed on bar exams throughout the country. The quality of Ave Maria's academic program is recognized by judges across the country who have hired graduates as judicial clerks—with 44 clerkships secured by members of the 2003–2007 graduating classes.

In the summer 2009, Ave Maria School of Law will relocate from its present location in Michigan to southwest Florida, some 30 miles inland of the Gulf Coast. The new location will enhance the school's ability to fulfill its distinctive mission as a Catholic law school dedicated to professional excellence. In the new location, students will have employment and externship opportunities with courts and law firms in nearby Naples and Fort Myers, while the law school's clinical programs will be able to serve the indigent population in the largely agricultural town of Immokalee. Law students will also benefit from an array of services and facilities provided by Ave Maria University and the family-friendly town of Ave Maria. With no other law school serving this rapidly developing region, which is expected to double its population in the next two decades, the School of Law will be both a catalyst and a beneficiary of the area's dynamic growth.

Ave Maria encourages applications from students of all faiths who seek a distinctive legal education enriched by the Catholic faith and the Catholic intellectual tradition.

■ Curriculum

Ave Maria School of Law awards the Juris Doctor degree after three years (90 credits) of full-time residential study. The required curriculum ensures that all students develop those skills that are fundamental to the effective practice of law—analysis, reasoning, problem solving, research, writing, oral advocacy, and others. Through elective courses, students have the opportunity to focus on specific subject areas of interest, such as commercial law, employment law, international law, and intellectual property law. A central tenet of the educational philosophy at Ave Maria is that law and morality are inherently intertwined.

■ Faculty

At the core of the Ave Maria School of Law education is the faculty who teach and mentor students. Faculty members bring to the classroom experiences as attorneys in private practice, judicial clerks, and teachers and administrators at other law schools. In hiring faculty, the law school administration has sought individuals who will be able to translate the mission of the School of Law in the classroom, in their scholarship, and in

their service. Ave Maria faculty members actively contribute to the profession through their legal research, writing, and involvement in professional and civic organizations. Our faculty includes 21 full-time professors, six legal writing lecturers, and two clinicians. Select upper-level courses are taught by adjunct faculty members drawn from area law firms, corporations, and the judiciary.

■ Enrollment/Student Body

While many of Ave Maria's students come to the School of Law directly from their undergraduate institutions, others have earned postgraduate degrees and have work experience in fields including business, medicine, engineering, military, and education. More than 200 different undergraduate colleges are represented at the School of Law, including Boston College, Brigham Young University, Christendom College, Cornell University, Franciscan University, Hillsdale College, University of Notre Dame, Princeton University, Thomas Aquinas College, the University of Michigan, the University of Pennsylvania, and many other fine schools.

■ Career Services/Placement

Ave Maria School of Law graduates accept employment with an array of employers in all regions of the country, including national and regional law firms, such as Sidley Austin, Butzel Long, Roetzel and Andress, Skadden Arps, and Holland and Hart. Other graduates have been successful in obtaining employment with state and federal governmental agencies, including the US Departments of Justice and Defense.

The Career Services Office uses a proactive and individualized approach to assist students during each stage of the career-search process—exploration, counseling, strategizing, résumé and cover letter preparation, interviewing, and consideration of employment offers. The full-time staff of three, two of whom are attorneys, is dedicated to expanding employment opportunities for students through the cultivation of relationships with legal employers throughout the region and the nation.

■ Library/Physical Facilities

The Ave Maria Law Library is the intellectual heart of the law school, offering students and faculty access to a rich and varied collection of materials and online resources in an environment that is conducive to study and research. The library's collection is both broad and deep. The collection is composed of book, electronic, and microform formats and is especially strong in US Supreme Court materials and natural law, canon law, legal history, and legal ethics. Contemporary titles in political science, economics, history, and philosophy augment the collection. The library provides a comfortable, inviting, and technologically advanced environment for study and research. All study spaces, including carrels, table- and soft-seating, and a suite of group-study rooms, have data and electrical outlets for accessing online resources.

■ Admission

Ave Maria enrolls talented individuals from diverse backgrounds who seek a rigorous and distinctive legal education. To this end, Ave Maria evaluates applicants from a whole-person perspective and considers many factors, including work experience, activities, background, obstacles overcome, accomplishments, undergraduate and graduate school records, Law School Admission Test (LSAT) scores, letters of reference, and the applicant's personal statement. Ave Maria recognizes that a diverse student body, drawn from throughout the United States and internationally, enriches the educational experience.

■ Student Activities

By providing opportunities for interaction among students, faculty, and the legal community, Ave Maria ensures a vibrant, professional atmosphere and a constructive law school experience. A five-day Orientation Program, a Distinguished Speaker Series, conferences, and the Ave Maria Mentor Program, together with a challenging and comprehensive curriculum, provide Ave Maria students with an exceptional

law school experience. A multitude of student organizations offer students the opportunity to pursue their specific areas of interest and augment their law school education.

■ Housing

The law school is within walking distance of apartments, condominiums, and single-family homes. The law school Admissions Office staff provides assistance to students during their search for housing and, if applicable, roommates.

■ Expenses/Financial Aid

Ave Maria offers a generous scholarship program that annually provides as many as 50 full- and three-quarter tuition scholarships to members of the entering class. Additionally, the School of Law annually awards as many as 15 scholarships to entering students who have a record of service and leadership in select areas. Ave Maria School of Law is among a select group of professional schools that has adopted a "tuition pledge," whereby tuition does not increase for the student's second or third years of law school. Tuition for members of the fall 2007 entering class is \$31,862.

Applicant Profile

When reviewing an application, the Admissions Committee evaluates each applicant from a whole-person perspective. In the course of the application-review process, the committee gives attention to an array of factors, including personal and professional accomplishments and goals, community activities and service, obstacles overcome, undergraduate and graduate

school records, the Law School Admission Test (LSAT) score, work experience, other indicators of academic ability, motivation, and an appreciation of the qualities associated with being a member of the legal profession. As the committee relies upon a multifaceted review process, the decision has been made to not publish a grid that reflects only the UGPA and LSAT.