

Inter American University School of Law

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■ Introduction

The Inter American University School of Law is one of the 11 units of the Inter American University of Puerto Rico, a private nonprofit educational corporation accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools, the Puerto Rico Council of Higher Education, and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico Department of Education. The School of Law is approved by the ABA and is located in San Juan, the capital city of Puerto Rico. Since its founding, the School of Law has succeeded in meeting the needs of the legal profession, in particular, and Puerto Rico's society in general.

■ Enrollment/Student Body

The incoming class for academic year 2008–2009 was composed of 263 students. The student body comes mainly from Puerto Rico, although applicants from the mainland are encouraged to apply.

■ Library and Physical Facilities

The law school has developed its library into a center of access to traditional library services as well as computerized legal-research services.

The school was relocated to a new building in 1993, which includes seven classrooms equipped with air-conditioning, accessibility for students with disabilities, state-of-the-art audiovisual equipment, seminar rooms, library, legal clinic, faculty offices, conference room, lounge, Continuing Legal Education Program office, *Law Review* offices, student organization offices, administrative offices, chapel, student center, cafeteria, bookstore, auditorium with a seating capacity of 310, parking, and more. The site has been landscaped to achieve a sense of serenity and beauty compatible with the building's functions.

In January 1990, the library signed a collaboration agreement to establish a consortium with the law school library of the Catholic University of Puerto Rico and the library of the Supreme Court of Puerto Rico, with the purpose of coordinating collection development and sharing its resources through an automated bibliographic network, interlibrary loans, and telecommunication services.

■ Curriculum

The JD program covers three years in the day division and four years in the evening division. Candidates must complete a minimum of 92 credit hours with a GPA of not less than 2.5 to qualify for graduation.

Inter American University School of Law offers a three-week preparation course to be taken during the summer on a compulsory basis by students admitted to the school. Students who enter law school must be willing to make a heavy commitment.

For its part, Inter American University is willing to provide the best possible professional educational experience through the careful recruitment of a first-rate faculty, the development of a progressive curriculum, and a willingness to create new and exciting programs of clinical studies and research.

■ Admission

Proficiency in Spanish is essential in the program. Applicants must have a minimum grade-point average of 2.5, a medical certificate for students 21 years old or younger, a police department certificate of good conduct, and appear for a personal interview, if required.

Candidates are required to take the Examen de Admisión a Estudios de Posgrado (EXADEP), the Aptitude Test for Graduate Education, and the Law School Admission Test (LSAT). Students should attain a 575 minimum score on the EXADEP and a minimum score of 130 on the LSAT.

Application forms and other relevant information concerning the EXADEP may be obtained from Educational Testing Service, American International Plaza, 250 Muñoz Rivera Avenue, Suite 315, Hato Rey, PR 00918.

■ Housing

The university does not provide housing for law students. However, the areas surrounding the School of Law contain many private houses, apartments, and condominiums for rent.

■ Student Activities

Student organizations include the student council, an organization that represents the student body and participates in matters of administrative policy related to students' interests. Council representatives serve on various faculty committees as well as the university senate and the board of trustees.

Other student organizations are the Law Student Division of the American Bar Association, Phi Alpha Delta legal fraternity (composed not only of law students but also of distinguished honorary members who are supreme court justices, federal district court judges, and prominent attorneys), the National Association of Law Students, Women Law Students Association, United Students Forging an Environmental Consciousness, Law Student Division of the Inter-American Federation of Lawyers, the Association of Trial Lawyers of America, the Hispanic National Bar Association, the Federal Bar Association, Student's Cooperative Bookstore, and the Hispanic Notarial Bar Association.

The *Inter American School of Law Review* is the official publication of the School of Law. Its members work under the supervision of an editorial board of four students chosen on the basis of merit and dedication to the *Review* and an academic advisor who is a faculty member appointed by the dean.

■ Clinical Programs

The faculty's Legal Aid Clinical Program is integrated with the Community Law Office through a combined effort of the US Legal Services Corporation and Inter American University. Law students are provided with the opportunity to learn skills such as interviewing, negotiation, counseling, fact gathering and analysis, legal research and drafting, decision making about alternative strategies, and preparation for trial and field practice. They also represent clients before administrative agencies and courts with the close supervision of the program's staff attorney-professors, pursuant to rules of the

Supreme Court of Puerto Rico. Students also gain practical experience by serving with Puerto Rico Legal Services, Inc.; San Juan Community Law Office, Inc.; Legal Aid Society of Puerto Rico; the district attorney's offices; and the Environmental Quality Board.

■ Career Services

The mission of the Career Placement Office is to prepare students and alumni for the legal job market by encouraging them to conduct self-assessment in an effort to focus their job search and to educate them on their legal and nonlegal options in today's competitive legal market. This is accomplished through a variety of services including, but not limited to, individual counseling, group seminars, self-assessment materials, interviewing programs, a career resource library, and the alumni network.

■ Continuing Legal Education Program

The Continuing Legal Education Program offers advanced courses and seminars concerning different fields of the law of interest to practicing lawyers as well as to the community in general.

The CLE Program enjoys a good reputation and has been able to develop a consistent course offering, primarily in the

following categories: courses designed for specialists; refresher courses for experienced lawyers; courses designed to provide information in nontraditional areas or stimulated by recent legislation, decisions, or agency rulings; and courses designed to develop lawyering skills.

■ Cost and Financial Aid

As of the date this report was published, the cost per credit is \$425. Once admitted, the student pays \$125 to reserve a place in the class and \$400 for the preparatory course that takes place in July.

There is a deferred-payment plan, and financial aid options that include the Federal Guaranteed Loan Program, Stafford Loans, the Commonwealth Education Fund, the Students Incentive Grant Program, the Institutional College Work-Study Program, Alternative Loans for Regular Academic Program, and for Bar Study (Alternative Bar Loans). The university also has an Honor Scholarship program for law students based on academic accomplishment and financial need.

Applicant Profile Not Available