

University of the District of Columbia—David A. Clarke School of Law

4200 Connecticut Avenue NW

Washington, DC 20008

Phone: 202.274.7341; Fax: 202.274.5583

E-mail: lawadmission@udc.edu; Website: www.law.udc.edu

■ Introduction

In 1986, the District of Columbia Council authorized the establishment of the District of Columbia School of Law. The council created a dual mission for the School of Law and charged its Board of Governors with a mandate to recruit and enroll, to the degree feasible, students from ethnic, racial, or other population groups that in the past had been underrepresented among persons admitted to the bar. It also charged the board with representing the legal needs of low-income persons, particularly those who reside in the District of Columbia.

The DC School of Law, the only publicly funded law school in Washington, DC, merged with the University of the District of Columbia (UDC) in 1996 and became the University of the District of Columbia School of Law. In April 1998, the UDC School of Law was named the UDC David A. Clarke School of Law (UDC-DCSL). The law school operates a full-time day program.

■ Library and Physical Facilities

The School of Law is located on the University of the District of Columbia's Van Ness campus in the upper northwest section of Washington, DC, a neighborhood known for its harmonious blend of residences, businesses, embassies, and the Rock Creek Park.

The law library is a teaching-, research-, and practice-oriented library. It contains more than 250,000 volumes and volume equivalents. The law library expands its collection on an ongoing basis, with an emphasis on reference and scholarly materials that support legal education and the clinical programs. The library's online catalog is available at <http://catalog.law.udc.edu/search>.

The Charles N. and Hilda H. M. Mason Law Library is a beautiful and modern facility that provides the traditional and high-tech resources required for today's study of the law. In addition, the Internet and law library resources are accessible via the law library's wireless LAN throughout the law library and the School of Law.

The university and law school campus are conveniently located on the Metro's Red Line at the UDC/Van Ness subway stop.

■ Curriculum

Consistent with UDC School of Law's mission, the basic program is designed to provide a well-rounded theoretical and practical legal education that will enable students to be effective and ethical advocates, and to represent the legal needs of low-income residents through the school's legal clinics.

First-year students participate in a two-week orientation program that introduces them to the study of law and the School of Law community. During orientation, students take Law and Justice, a course which introduces legal, political, social, and philosophical aspects of poverty and inequality in American society. They also take Lawyering Process I. Students participate in the Dean's Reception and in other events planned by student organizations and the Dean of Students.

In the first year, students must complete 40 hours of community service and take a prescribed program consisting

of required courses and one elective course. After the first year, students must also take courses in Evidence, Constitutional Law I and II, Professional Responsibility, and Moot Court. Each UDC-DCSL student is required to produce significant pieces of writing each of the three years of study. The School of Law offers a limited number of summer courses and clinics, including an internship program; however, it does not allow early graduation.

While the emphasis of the school is on public interest law, the overall curriculum—clinic and classroom—provides the skills necessary to pursue any field of law.

■ Clinical Program

Students must complete two, seven-credit clinics during their second and third years. The clinics offered in the 2008–2009 academic year were Housing and Consumer, HIV/AIDS, Juvenile and Special Education, Legislation, Government Accountability Project, Community Development and Small Business Law Center, and Low-income Taxpayer. Students may do an internship or work-study in the school's Immigration Law Center.

■ Academic Support and Summer Program

UDC-DCSL considers academic support to be an integral part of its course of study. Students in academic difficulty at the end of their first semester may apply to the enhanced program, which may involve adjusting course loads, taking a legal reasoning course, counseling, and group and individual tutoring. In addition, faculty members hold extra review sessions during the semester in required courses and provide sample examination questions with model answers.

The School of Law offers the Mason Enhancement Program for Academic Success, a four-week conditional-admission summer program, to selected entering students.

■ Internship Program

Students in the second and third year may elect to do a 4- or 10-credit internship, where they may work in federal or local government agencies; judicial, legislative, or congressional offices; or in public interest legal organizations. Students are required to attend a weekly internship seminar at the school. The School of Law emphasizes the importance of supervision, educational merit, and public service in each internship.

■ Admission

Admission is based upon academic and nonacademic achievements and professional promise. UDC-DCSL considers the applicant's LSAT score and GPA in tandem with other criteria that it believes may provide a more accurate measure of a candidate's determination, commitment, and potential for success in the study of law. The Admission Committee also considers all submitted application materials, such as the personal statement and essays, recommendations, community service, and employment experience. Applicants are encouraged to contact the Admission Office or to visit www.law.udc.edu for information about visiting the School of

Law, sitting in on a class, and attending one of the Law Day-Open House programs.

■ Financial Assistance and Scholarships

The financial aid policy provides students with financial assistance to support full-time study for three years. This is usually accomplished through a combination of scholarships, grants, and loans. These include merit- and need-based scholarships, the Federal Stafford and GradPLUS loan programs, and federal and other work-study employment. About 70 percent of UDC-DCSL students receive scholarship assistance, and 96 percent receive some form of financial aid. Detailed information about financial aid application policies and procedures is available on the School of Law's website.

■ Student Activities

The first issue of the annual *District of Columbia Law Review* was published in 1992. Active student groups include the

Student Bar Association, Black Law Students Association, International Law Students Association, Voces Juridicas, OutLaw, Women's Law Society, Sports and Entertainment Student Lawyers Association, Phi Alpha Delta, Innocence Project, and the National Lawyers Guild.

■ Career Services

The Career Services Office provides employment information, individual career counseling, and résumé assistance to the School of Law's student body and graduates. The office maintains listings of permanent job openings, fellowships, summer clerkships, and part-time opportunities. The office also coordinates potential internship sites and invites employers to conduct on-campus interviews. The office provides resources for career planning, counseling sessions to assist students in developing their career goals, résumé workshops, and other relevant seminars.

Applicant Profile

The David A. Clarke School of Law prides itself on its admission philosophy, comprehensive and competitive admission process, and student diversity. While the applicant profile grids can be helpful to students, they may also discourage some students whose numerical profiles are slightly below the school's LSAT and GPA medians, but whose life experiences, for example, may be compelling. Numbers do not always provide an accurate picture of an applicant's potential for law study or motivation to succeed. The School of Law, therefore, does not provide an applicant profile grid, but rather a brief description of its student body. The student body is a diverse and accomplished group. The age range of

students is 20 to 62 years. The average age is 28 years. People of color comprise about half of the student body. Women comprise more than half of the students. More than 30 states and over 85 undergraduate schools are represented in the student body. About 100 students are admitted each year. Smaller class sizes provide students with an ideal student-to-faculty ratio and a rich theoretical and practical learning environment. The LSAT mean for the fall 2008 entering class was 152, and the 25th and 75th LSAT percentiles were 149 and 155, respectively. The GPA median and mean were both about 3.00. The student body represents strong competency and contribution potential for the study of law.