



University of Colorado School of Law, Boulder, CO

[By Jen Woods]

Students interested in Native American law have unique opportunities at the University of Colorado School of Law because it is located in the “Hub of Indian Country.”

Colorado is home to two Native American tribes, the Southern Ute Tribe and the Ute Mountain Tribe, and more than 30,000 Native Americans live within a 30-mile radius of the university campus. Therefore, students enrolled in the school’s American Indian Law Program have numerous educational and experiential opportunities.

For instance, students who participate in the American Indian Law Clinic have chances to represent low-income Native Americans with specific Native American law-related problems. Students typically handle issues such as tribal sovereignty, preservation of tribal identity, discrimination, preservation of native lands, and religious freedom.

Since the Denver metro area is the national headquarters of many major Native American organizations, students have access to a multitude of Native American law externships. Students have served as externs with the Native American Rights Fund, the Tribal Program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Intertribal Council on Utility Policy, and the Southern Ute Tribal Court.

In addition, three private law firms in Boulder also specialize in Native American law and offer externships, summer associate positions, and career opportunities.

The university’s nationally acclaimed academic programs attract students interested in all fields of law. The law school, founded in 1892, has consistently been ranked among the top 50 law schools in the country. This year, the school was ranked 43rd among the top 100 law schools in the United States according to the 2007 *U.S. News & World Report* rankings.

Admissions into this top-notch law school are competitive, and it may be particularly difficult for non-residents to gain entrance.

Out of more than 3,000 applicants each year, only about 700 are offered admission, and an average of 165 applicants enroll as first-year students. Out of these 165 students, at least 55% must be residents of Colorado.

The university heavily bases its admissions decisions on LSAT scores and undergraduate GPAs. Last year, the average LSAT score of entering students was 162, and the average GPA was 3.62. While the school’s emphasis on scores may be slightly stronger than average, other factors are taken into consideration, including background, experience, and interests. In order to increase cultural and ethnic diversity, the university abides by a policy of affirmative action. Therefore, even though the school is small, the student body is comprised of a diverse group of individuals.

With a student-to-faculty ratio of 13:1, the school is known for its strong network of relationships among students and faculty members. Class sizes range from 5 to 85, and every first-year student is guaranteed to have at least one class consisting of 30 or fewer students.

The university offers graduate interdisciplinary environmental policy certificates, tax emphasis certificates, and Juris Doctor degrees. Five joint degrees are also available, which include a Juris Doctor/Master of Business Administration, Juris Doctor/Master of Public Affairs, Juris Doctor/Master of Science in Telecommunications, Juris Doctor/Master of Science in Environmental Studies, and Juris Doctor/Doctor of Philosophy in Environmental Studies.

The university also has a unique Lend-A-Law-Student Program, which makes law students available to help pro-

bono Colorado attorneys and nonprofit organizations. Students volunteer their time to do research, conduct investigations, and perform other related tasks. Involvement in the legal community encourages students to build relationships within Boulder and provides them with hands-on experience.

The university has an exceptionally high graduation rate. For instance, the graduating class of 2005 had an initial enrollment of 165 students. Of those initially enrolled, 90% graduated in three years and 96% had graduated by their fourth years.

Statistics show that most students are able to find jobs soon after graduation. More than 92% of students in the 2004 graduating class were able to find jobs within six months of receiving their diplomas. Most students about 51% joined legal firms, while a small number of students about 2% accepted positions in the military.

The university stands apart from its competitors particularly because of its pristine location. Boulder is located at the base of the Rocky Mountains. Many students take advantage of the mountainous area to hike, bike, or backpack during the warmer seasons and ski or snowboard during the snowy winters.

ON THE NET

University of Colorado School of Law
www.colorado.edu/law

U.S. News & World Report
www.usnews.com/usnews/home.htm

City of Boulder, Colorado
www.ci.boulder.co.us