

UCLA School of Law

[by Zamzam Syed]

Boasting one of the most intriguing locations among top law schools in Westwood, CA, UCLA annually turns out lawyers equipped with a superior education, and a tan.

UCLA's reputation as a unique public institution needs little introduction. As the only university among the top 10 research institutions formed within the 20th century, UCLA is deemed an academic success story worldwide. The law school is no different. Welcoming its first class in 1949, the law school is several years younger than its nationally ranked counterparts. However, in this short time span, UCLA School of Law has become an indispensable part of the legal community, providing top-notch graduates to the biggest national and local firms, government agencies and judicial departments, and cutting edge research and scholarship in innovative fields like Critical Race Theory, Law and Religion, and American Indian Law. In addition to the J.D., the LL.M and the numerous joint degrees and concentration certificates offered, UCLA also provides the opportunity to earn an S.J.D., a highly selective doctorate degree for accomplished legal scholars and academics.

Given UCLA's variable degree offerings and a faculty that collectively boasts over 50 specialties -- including such innovative fields as Law and Psychiatry and Legal Access -- the law school could have excelled among the ranks of the top law schools even without its stellar location. However, those fortunate enough to attend this top school enjoy a virtual urban oasis, a large full service campus with several research libraries, lush green glades and architecture inspired by some of the most famous landmarks from around the world. As if that wasn't enough, UCLA is five miles from some of the most picturesque beaches on the Pacific Ocean, a cornucopia

of cultural activities including theatre, arts and, of course, the movies. Students here often find their campus covered with snow to depict various locations in motion pictures and occasionally even adorned by a sign for a campus far away. Westwood village, UCLA's location, is also home to the historic Fox Theatre, which routinely hosts premieres for some of Hollywood's biggest blockbusters. Its proximity to Hollywood allows students to actually live the movies at the famous Sunset Strip, with such infamous clubs as the Viper Room and the Whiskey just 15 to 20 minutes away from campus.

With such a veritable paradise for both intellectual and career advancement and general enjoyment of life, it is no wonder that UCLA is one of the most difficult law schools to gain admittance to. Even though UCLA School of Law ranks at number 16 on the US News and World Report annual rankings of law schools, it is number 7 in the nation among the most difficult schools to gain admission to, with only Boalt Law in front of it among public schools. Each year UCLA Law attracts a lively, talented, diverse, and well-rounded student population, eager to begin its law school experience. While the entering class size of 305 is somewhat large, the student-faculty ratio of 14:1 is quite reasonable. Students mingle at many school-sponsored events and are said to be quite helpful to each other, yet students know that the need to be highly competitive on exams still remains quite real, since UCLA Law's grading system is an anomaly among top tier schools, and fosters little to no grade inflation.

Aside from the usual fare that legal education offers, UCLA students can specialize in several certificate programs, acquire joint degrees and write for one of the twelve law review-caliber publications. The UCLA Law Review is the most prestigious and sought after publication of the bunch, with extensive circulation rolls nationwide.

UCLA Law boasts an impressive employment rate of 95% for its graduates. However, such numbers are to be expected from a top rated school. What is truly impressive is the rate at which UCLA graduates enter all aspects of the legal community, including public life. Among the 110 appointments to the Superior Court bench made by Gov. Gray Davis in 2001 and 2002, more than 10 percent were UCLA Law alumni (including the first Vietnamese-American and Korean-American women appointed to the state bench). In addition, the governor elevated two other Bruins to seats on the state Court of Appeals and one was confirmed for the U.S. District Court. More than 12,000 UCLA Law alumni, work in coveted positions in the greater Los Angeles area and around the world as attorneys in public and private practice, business executives, writers, journalists, professors and academic administrators.

UCLA Law truly offers a unique and rewarding experience for its students, which is as exciting and eclectic as Los Angeles itself. With a diverse student body and a faculty that is hand picked from the cream of the legal field, this law school provides an extremely distinguished alumni base. A group of individuals who have not only excelled in



undergraduate work to gain admittance to law school, but continued to prove themselves in law school through fierce competition among formidable peers. In addition, UCLA School of Law, in keeping with the spirit of UCLA as a premier research institution, provides some of the most cutting edge legal scholarship in the field.