



## University of Virginia School of Law

[By Devon Pryor]

The University of Virginia School of Law was founded in 1819 by none other than Thomas Jefferson. The scenic grounds of the school feature beautiful gardens and tree-lined lawns, in keeping with Jefferson's conviction that an intellectual community can better further learning and personal growth when located within a beautiful environment. Nestled at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Charlottesville, VA, the University of Virginia School of Law has no shortage of scenic surroundings. Located about two hours southwest of Washington, DC, the school's hometown of Charlottesville is a picturesque metropolis with a relaxed small-town feel.

According to the school's website, University of Virginia School of Law is famous for its collegial environment, and it boasts one of the highest levels of student satisfaction among American law schools. *The American Lawyer* magazine identified University of Virginia School of Law as one of only two law schools in the country with graduates working in all of the country's Top 100 law firms. The school's goal is to instill a commitment to leadership, integrity, and community service in each of its students. The school is proud to uphold the oldest student-run honor system in the country, wherein students learn together, read each other's work, and share course materials, while maintaining high standards regarding academic ethics.

To make students feel at home during their enrollment at University of Virginia School of Law, the school's academic communications department publishes a welcome guide called "Home Sweet C'ville." This publication is a guide to life as a law school student and resident of Charlottesville. It includes information on the community, getting oriented and settled in Charlottesville, getting a job, things to do, places to eat and drink, healthcare, family activities in the area, and a wealth of other relevant details. In addition to this welcoming gesture on the part of the law school, the program website features welcome notes from the school's Dean, John C. Jeffries, Jr., and Student Bar Association President, Adam Wolk.

The curriculum at the University of Virginia School of Law is designed to allow students to learn skills, develop creative scholarship, and understand the dynamic role that law plays in modern society. Students are encouraged to think about law in historical, sociological, and economic contexts, which means they need to consider issues relating to how law has become

what it is today, whether the law achieves the functions it is meant to, and how social behavior is affected by changing laws. Required first-year courses include civil procedure, contracts, criminal law, torts, constitutional law and property, and two semesters of legal writing. These courses, along with two student-chosen electives, provide a foundation for advanced legal education in any area.

Special programs are also included in the general curriculum. The Trial Advocacy Institute, for example, is a nine-day event for 3Ls that offers an intensive practice program in which students enroll alongside participants from the best litigation units in the country. Students can also participate in Virginia Law's Principles and Practice Program, in which a team of law professors, judges, and practitioners introduce students to insightful information about the legal profession and provide them with opportunities to apply what theoretical education they have gained to real-life situations. The Seminar in Ethical Values helps students to understand and implement moral practices by exposing them to a range of ethically influential material, such as philosophy, film, poetry, and prose.

Upon completion of their general education requirements, students can focus on a wide variety of academic concentrations. There are 18 concentrations in all, each with its unique course list and content. There are also a number of joint degree programs available at the University of Virginia School of Law. A student can get a J.D./M.A. in bioethics, economics, English, government, history, philosophy, or sociology. Other joint degrees offered include a J.D./Master of Business Administration, a J.D./Master of Urban and Environmental Planning, a J.D./Master of Public Health, and a J.D./M.S.

in Accounting. External joint degrees offered in public international law include a J.D./Master of Public Affairs, a J.D./Master of Law and Diplomacy, and a J.D./M.A. in International Relations and International Economics.

Under the supervision of attorneys, students can perform legal functions in actual cases through clinic programs. Clinics are offered in advocacy for the elderly, capital post-conviction, employment law, environmental law and conservation, immigrant law, international tribunals, Iraqi tribunals, and many other areas. Profiles of students and faculty involved in these clinics can be viewed on the law school's website.

Students can also study law abroad by participating in study programs at the Bucerius Law School in Hamburg, Germany, Melbourne Law School in Australia, the University of Nottingham in the United Kingdom, and the University of Auckland in New Zealand. Each of these programs earns students a full semester of credits and one semester of residency toward graduation. Another unique study abroad program is offered as a joint degree program through the University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne Law School and *Sciences Po Paris*. This program earns students a whopping 27 transfer credits, two semesters of residency, a French law degree, and a J.D. from the University of Virginia School of Law.

### ON THE NET

University of Virginia School of Law  
[www.law.virginia.edu/html/about/about.htm](http://www.law.virginia.edu/html/about/about.htm)

"Home Sweet C'ville"  
[www.law.virginia.edu/html/insider/intro.htm](http://www.law.virginia.edu/html/insider/intro.htm)

Clinic programs at Virginia Law  
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