

Pepperdine University School of Law

[by Marty Schultz-Akerson]

Offering a Malibu campus that trumps even those of other Southern California schools, Pepperdine provides students with an attractive setting to go along with its cutting-edge legal programs.

Nestled in between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Malibu coastline, the Pepperdine University School of Law offers an attractive setting to go along with its cutting-edge legal programs. Boasting innovative approaches to dispute resolution, intellectual property, and law and religion, Pepperdine fosters a particularly diverse and stimulating environment that challenges its law students not only to learn the law but also to gain a strong sense of ethics and professional responsibility.

With the recent appointment of Kenneth Starr as the new dean, the leadership will be in place to continue the noteworthy services and programs of this institution.

It was the creation of the School of Law in 1971 that brought Pepperdine College, established in 1937, its university status. Becoming ABA accredited just one year later, the Pepperdine School of Law has enjoyed a strong academic reputation for over thirty years and continues to bring leadership in legal education. Pepperdine is proud of its founder's commitment to Christian values and strives to educate in a manner respectful of that history. However, it maintains a nonsectarian relationship with the Christian community and attracts students from a diverse range of religious backgrounds.

The rich legal education afforded students of Pepperdine is demonstrated in the school's various institutes and degree programs. In addition to the standard Juris Doctor program, Pepperdine students can pursue joint degrees such as the JD/MBA, the JD/Master

of Public Policy, or the JD/Master of Dispute Resolution. The renowned Straus Institute for Dispute Resolution also offers certificate and LL.M. degrees and has implemented night and summer classes to cater to busy professionals looking to hone crucial skills. Other impressive resources available to Pepperdine law students are the Institute on Law, Religion and Ethics, the Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology, the Judicial Clerkship Institute, and the London Program.

The Straus Institute's Master of Dispute Resolution embodies the innovative approach to legal education of Pepperdine's School of Law. Ranked 2nd by U.S. New and World Report in 2004, the program, which was started in 1986, has attracted the best experts in the field and has led the way in clinical training and courses offered. Law students and professionals interested in dispute resolution have considerable flexibility when scheduling courses and often can fulfill most requirements in intensive winter or summer sessions. In this way, JD/Master of Dispute Resolution candidates often earn both degrees in three years of full-time study.

Pepperdine's other institutes and programs are also leaders in their respective fields. The Institute for Law, Religion and Ethics recognizes the complex and varied opinions about the relationship between law and religion and strives to create a forum where serious discussion can take place.

The Center for Entrepreneurship and Technology was created in fall of 2000 in response to the growing need for technol-

ogy-savvy lawyers. Second-year students gain important hands-on experience in the newest technological issues and focus their coursework on topics such as entertainment law and intellectual property.

The Judicial Clerkship and the London program make available cutting-edge training for traditional legal needs: experienced clerks and internationally minded lawyers. In the former, students have the opportunity to get early starts on clerking skills in classes often designed and taught by judges. In the latter program, students actively respond to the demand for lawyers well-versed in international law by studying with both Pepperdine and adjunct professors in London.

In addition to these programs and institutes, another Pepperdine advantage is the dedication of its faculty and administrators to act as mentors and guides. Modeling their relationship after the responsibility a lawyer has for his clients, law professors at Pepperdine think of themselves as "counselors" who teach their students not only about legal theories and doctrine, but how to responsibly and ethically advocate for their own clients. With a solid 17:1 student-to-faculty ratio, Pepperdine students enjoy an "open door" teacher-student policy, a rare feature in many law schools.

The tuition at Pepperdine is \$29,640 for the standard academic year. An impressive number of scholarships and grants are available for students, such as the Dean's Scholarship, for which all candidates with an undergraduate GPA above 3.4 and LSAT scores in



the 86th percentile are considered, and the Diversity Scholarship, which seeks to continue the institution's tradition of a diverse student body. Approximately 60% of the 650-student body receive some form of grant support.

Pepperdine offers a tremendous amount of resources and extracurricular activities for a school of its size, including a law library, career services, student ministries, several law reviews and journals, clinics and moot court --not to mention a large dose of breathtaking views.

So as we have seen, students at Pepperdine benefit from a rich educational, geographical, and social environment. The tranquility and beauty of the Malibu coastline reflects the mature perspective of this legal community. Dedicated to providing the most competitive of legal educations, Pepperdine balances a traditional curriculum with new ways of approaching legal issues.