

School of Law: *Driven to Innovate in the Face of Challenge*

During exceptional times, we at Duquesne Law push harder and go further. We work together with singular focus to succeed and take care of one another. When the stakes are highest, we come through with true Duquesne determination and resilience. Our faith in God leads us to a higher purpose and we move forward with mercy and grace.

As the only Catholic and Spiritan Law School in the United States, we are truly special. We serve God by serving our students, who, in turn, go on to serve our society in meaningful and impactful ways. Our Mission unites us during challenging times and we are driven to act with responsibility and respect. We are grounded in our common bond of humanity and honor the dignity of others through our words and actions.

We have achieved much in the 2019-2020 academic year while remaining grounded in our Catholic and Spiritan Mission. We had to be creative and nimble while remaining committed to excellence. We have worked with resolve to create a stronger and more inclusive community where all students can flourish. We remain driven to innovate in the face of unprecedented challenge.

Below we share our vision for our future—a vision that requires us to stretch and challenge ourselves to articulate a path and the pillars that will guide that journey. We are humbled that our generous benefactors have contributed to these opportunities to make an impact by strengthening our existing programs while providing the opportunity to grow and achieve even greater results.

We invite you to consider these vital priorities:

The Vision Fund

The Vision Fund encompasses three pillars that are essential to keeping Duquesne Law School on the forefront of legal education:

Developing Collaborative Learning Opportunities: Today, lawyers must know more than the law. They must understand the confluence of disciplines that influence their work and society. To prepare our students to practice law in this changing world, our approach to legal education also must change. We must provide interprofessional and multidisciplinary experiences—focused on teaching **financial literacy, business acumen, and emerging technologies.**

With your support, **we have already begun to create collaborative opportunities** for our students. In **January of 2021** we will offer a **Financial Toolkit for Lawyers**, a **week-long intensive course** to be designed to give Duquesne Law students a **practical introduction to finance as applied to law.** Law students will be exposed to accounting concepts, financial statements, balance sheets, income statements, and time-value of money exercises. Ultimately, we envision creating a **mini-MBA micro-credential** for our JD students, that will serve as a differentiator for our graduates and set them up for success in all areas of practice.

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DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY

Jeanine DeBor, Director, Law Alumni Relations and Development
 201 Hanley Hall • 600 Forbes Avenue • Pittsburgh, PA 15282
 412.396.5215 • www.duq.edu/law



Teaching Principles of Leadership: Duquesne Law is uniquely positioned to draw from our Spiritan ethos in guiding a mindset that emphasizes servant leadership and value-centered leadership. We have committed ourselves to educating students who understand the importance of inclusive leadership and who develop their self-awareness, cultural awareness, and global awareness as conscientious world citizens.

Last year we **launched our inaugural Leadership Fellows Program** and have built upon our success and expanded the program this year. Our Leadership Fellows Program allows our student leaders to come together to **focus on their own leadership development**. Students reflect on qualities of great leadership, grow their leadership skills, and articulate their own core values to inform their value-centered leadership style. They also engage in behavior assessment workshops to better understand their own behavior styles and the styles of others, and learn that a leadership mindset sets them up for success no matter what position they hold in an organization or enterprise.

In addition, we have reframed our required course in Professional Responsibility and Legal Ethics. While still teaching the all-important **Rules of Professional Responsibility**, we teach with **inspiration and guidance from the Preamble of the Rules and set the standard for excellence as we aim to inspire lawyer-leaders**. At Duquesne Law, we set our sights much higher than the Rules, which serve as the floor of professional conduct. We believe that law school can **vastly accelerate leadership and character development by creating an awareness that our graduates take with them into practice** as they continue their leadership journey.

Fostering Student Well-Being: Our first priority under this pillar is ensuring that the Law School is a welcoming and **supportive environment for all**. As an academic community grounded in the Catholic intellectual and spiritual tradition, we teach that truth is one, that faith and reason are complementary, and that all persons are equal in dignity irrespective of their attributes and accomplishments.

In accordance with our Spiritan Mission, we seek to energize minds, hearts and spirits to overcome the affliction of discrimination and racial inequality. In 2019, the **Dean's Diversity Action Council** was formed with the goal of creating a culture of inclusion and belonging so that our students of color and other historically underrepresented students flourish. Among other initiatives, the Law School faculty unanimously adopted a **Promise Statement on Race & Justice** as an affirmative statement against racism and a commitment to lead positive change. We also remain committed to **actively promoting civil discourse**, as we believe that through rigorous pursuit of knowledge and respectful dialogue, we can find truth.

In addition, to amplifying our efforts in our classrooms, we developed a **yearlong Speaker Series on Race, Poverty and Democracy** to provide an opportunity for the wider legal community to engage in vital discussions.

Finally, we are focused on making student and attorney well-being a top priority. Not only are we here for our students in time of need and crisis by working together with Lawyers Concerned for Lawyers of PA and our Campus Counseling and Health Services, we are also focused on integrating **sustainable life habits** and creating a **culture around healthy and fulfilled living**. Our Docket newsletter begins each week with well-being tips around healthy eating, mindfulness, sleep, and self-care. We have had to be more creative than ever during the pandemic to create community opportunities to keep us vibrant and connected, such as our **virtual Katie Westbrook 5K**.

COVID-19 Student Emergency Fund

The COVID-19 pandemic has created serious hardships for our law students. Now more than ever, there is a **great need to support students in these challenging times**. Students lost jobs and have been taking care of sick family members while continuing their studies. Through the generosity and wisdom of our alumni and friends, we have created a **COVID-19 Student Emergency Fund** to provide emergency financial assistance to currently enrolled Law School students who experience unexpected hardship due to the pandemic. A gift today, in any amount to this fund, will make an immediate and direct impact. To date, we have assisted nearly 70 students in serious need, giving them living stipends to help cover costs of rent and other essentials.

Bar Preparation

Our graduates achieved an 87.88% first-time pass rate on the July 2019 Pennsylvania Bar exam, far exceeding the statewide average of 80.6%. Our 2018 ultimate bar pass rate is 93.3%, placing us in the **top third of all ABA Approved Law Schools nationally**. Duquesne Law is committed to assisting graduates achieve first-time bar passage by providing comprehensive training. Our bar studies program of individualized student support begins during new student orientation, continues throughout our program of legal education, includes specific bar exam training, and continues after graduation.

Keeping this program at the cutting edge requires continual investment. Through your generous support, the Law School will continue to ensure all students are thoroughly prepared for the practice of law.

Strengthening Our Programs for Working Professionals

Our Law School began as an evening program so that working people could pursue a legal education. Women and underrepresented populations were welcome early on. The legacy of our evening division is truly extraordinary—it is part of who we are and should always be a part of who we are.

In addition to our evening division, we are developing **innovative ways for students who work full time to obtain their law degree with new hybrid and hyflex course offerings** that allow students more flexibility to earn their degrees. With your support, we will not only strengthen our existing evening division, we will create better opportunities for working professionals to obtain their law degrees.