Shepherd Loan Repayment Assistance Program

A strong loan repayment assistance program, embodying our commitment to public service and the public interest, is vital to the recruitment of the very best law students and increasingly integral to maintaining the School of Law’s reputation as one of the nation’s top law schools.

Our efforts to assist our alumni working in the public interest began in 1997 with the Edmund D. Campbell Public Interest Fund. With the assistance of Nancy and Tom Shepherd ’52 we established the Shepherd Loan Repayment Assistance Program incorporating all funds in support of public interest work, including the Campbell Fund, into one program. In honor of Edmund Campbell, we name a Campbell recipient each year.

The combined fund is now valued at more than $1,000,000. Our goal is to reach at least $2 million so we can provide approximately $100,000 a year to Washington and Lee Law alumni who choose careers in the public interest. The Shepherd LRAP is effectively a back-end scholarship that helps these alumni repay student loans.

In order to qualify for loan forgiveness, a recipient must remain in qualifying employment for three consecutive years and be engaged in qualifying employment at the time of the award. If renewal awards are issued in years two and/or three, those loans are also forgiven after the third consecutive year of qualifying employment. After the first three consecutive years of qualifying employment, subsequent award loans will be forgiven after 12 additional consecutive months of qualifying employment from the award date.

Shepherd LRAP Facts:
- Awarded since inception $348,741
- Number of Law alumni assisted: 63
- Loans forgiven: $137,641
- Number of 2011 applicants: 16
- Range of debt for 2011 applicants: $66,000 - $178,000
- Total debt for 2011 applicants: $1,507,600

“Without a free lawyer these clients and the other thirty five I represent would, in most cases, suffer a bad outcome. And their bad outcome is not like that of people with a safety net. For them one bad event can cascade into disaster. Homelessness, loss of children, hunger, untreated illness…”

Shawna Cheney 05L, Blue Ridge Legal Services, Lexington, VA