BEYOND ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

As the 18th most selective law school in the country based on LSAT scores, Washington and Lee University School of Law is a leader in academic excellence. But we go beyond academic excellence to teach students practical skills through

- daily contact with faculty: through small upper level classes (average size of 25), an intensive writing program taught by full time faculty, and our “open door” policy, W&L Law students become comfortable debating with, and defending their positions to, faculty — in much the same way junior lawyers would interact with senior lawyers.
- clinical experience: many of our students participate in one of our clinics or externship programs, gaining the “on your feet” experience not taught in a classroom. From representing the local low-income population on matters ranging from domestic relations to elder law, to assisting in the defense of Lee Boyd Malvo, students learn to establish a rapport with clients, make effective oral arguments, and write compelling briefs.
- professional development programming: we provide formal and informal training, beginning in a student’s first year, in the practical skills that students will need to succeed as lawyers, such as responsiveness and communication, organization and time management, and building relationships and networking. In particular, our “Preparation for Practice” series prepares first and second year students for their summer internships, and third year students for their permanent positions.

BRILLIANCE IS JUST THE BUY-IN

W&L Law is the smart choice of a select few.  Three quarters of our students scored among the top 15 percent of all LSAT test-takers. And with a median LSAT of 166 and entering GPA of 3.52, each of our students is worthy of consideration by any employer — regardless of his or her place in the class.

DIVERSITY

Ours is a truly national constituency — there are 394 students on campus representing 43 states plus the District of Columbia and 14 foreign countries.

- Minority students make up about 20 percent of our student body, and come to W&L Law from some of the nation’s best undergraduate schools, including Cornell, Harvard, and Chicago.
- Many of our students bring more than just book smarts to the classrooms in Lewis Hall. Among the students in the Class of 2009, over half spent one or more years in the working world before coming to law school.

HONOR

W&L’s Honor System has been in place for more than 100 years. The code is based on the fundamental principle that a spirit of trust makes Washington and Lee a unique educational institution. Honor provides the common thread woven through the many aspects of the institution and creates a community of trust and respect affecting the relationships of its members. The Honor System is the moral cornerstone of the community.

CLINICS IN THE SCHOOL OF LAW

One of the most significant opportunities afforded by an education at W&L Law is its legal clinics and externships. Second- and third-year students help to meet the need for legal assistance in the region and, at the same time, develop client contact and advocacy skills.

- Black Lung Benefits Clinic: representing West Virginia coal miners in claims for benefits
- Community Legal Practice Center: serving the community by representing victims of domestic violence and senior citizens
- Legal Aid: externships with local legal aid societies
- Public Prosecutors Program: externships with the U.S. Attorney’s Office and Offices of the Commonwealth’s Attorney
- Tax Clinic: assisting low-income clients with tax controversies
- Virginia Capital Case Clearinghouse: assisting in the defense of those charged with capital offenses
- General Externship Program: externships in the public interest
- Judicial Externship Program: state and federal placements

NEW THIRD YEAR AT A GLANCE

W&L Law is committed to producing well-rounded future lawyers who have the practical and professional skills, as well as the academic foundation, necessary to quickly become productive members of your organization.

We teach students to act like lawyers in addition to thinking like lawyers. Through clinical experience, close and critical contact with faculty, professional development programming, and teaching by example, W&L Law students will graduate with more than just book smarts — they will be prepared to practice.

- The new third-year curriculum will be entirely experiential, comprised of simulations, real-client experiences, and the development of professional and practice skills.
- Each semester will include a two-week immersion course in practice skills; one focusing on office skills and transactional practice and the other on litigation and conflict resolution.
- All students will participate in a year-long professionalism program that will involve practicing lawyers and judges and will promote the development of professionalism in all aspects, including client management and the economics of law practice.
- The rigorous third year, presented entirely through a mix of legal clinics and experiential courses, will build upon the lessons and law of the first- and second-year curriculum and will serve as a true capstone of the three-year legal education.
- The third-year courses will be taught by members of the permanent law faculty, adjunct faculty, and visiting “professors of practice” drawn from the bench and bar.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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