Your First Week of Law School

This handout is designed to answer many of the questions you may have as you begin law school. If you have questions that are not answered here, your Kirgis Fellows are always available to help!

**Law School Resource List:**

**Kirgis Fellows:**

Mentors and guides throughout the first year. We hope you will feel comfortable coming to us with any questions, problems or concerns throughout your first year and beyond.

**Burk Scholars:**

Third-year law students who assist in teaching the fundamentals of legal research and legal citation.

**Director of Student Affairs:**

The Director of Student Affairs oversees student life at the law school and is your point person for anything law student-related that is not academic in nature. The Director of Student Affairs reports to Paul Rollins, Associate Dean of Administration and Student Affairs. The Director of Student Affairs position is vacant at this time. Please see Associate Dean Paul Rollins for anything law student-related that is not academic in nature until the position is filled.

Your primary resource for student-related information at the law school is Law Notices, periodic class-wide emails, and the Law Students webpage:

[law.wlu.edu/students](http://law.wlu.edu/students)

**Dean Sam Calhoun**

Your point person for any question or concern you may have related to your classes or your academic experience at the law school.

**Professor Mary Natkin:** Director of Academic Success

Talk with Professor Natkin about anything academic related (briefing, outlining, class preparation, etc.).

Academic Success meetings will start on September 9 at 4:00 pm.
Office of Career Strategy: “OCS”

Dean Jarrett, Andrea Hilton, Betsy Key, Suzanne Wade, and Jane McDonald are your key resources when it comes to your job search. 1Ls are allowed to consult with OCS for one-on-one counseling sessions about the job search starting October 15. More in-depth career information and resources will be provided during 1L Orientation.

We will do a Kirgis session on the 1L job search in October. Keep an eye out for an email from your Kirgis Fellows.

law.wlu.edu/career

Law Records

Linda Johnson in the Law Records Office is your destination for anything related to your student file, including transcripts, rankings, course listings, course registration, proof of enrollment or any other question you may have related to your school information.

http://law.wlu.edu/students/page.asp?pageid=95

Student Health Center:

The SHC is located in the basement level of Davis Hall, with entrance on the alley that runs from Lee Avenue to Washington Street, behind Early-Fielding, Evans Dining Hall and Baker-Davis. Patient parking is available in the Gaines parking lot. You will need your ID card to enter.

Starting on Monday, August 17, 2015, the SHC will be open 9 AM – 5 PM, no overnight care. Counseling Center open 9 AM-5 PM for clinical services (see below for additional information).

A registered nurse is available around-the-clock (24/7) at the Student Health Center during the academic year. Physician/Physician Assistant appointments are available weekdays by calling 540.458.8401.


University Counseling:

The University offers counseling resources for all students. To schedule an appointment, you can call 540.458.8590.
In addition, University Counseling has “walk-in” hours for students who may have a more pressing need to see a counselor:


Fitness Center

Located in Doremus gymnasium. FYI: You can take a tour of the facility on Friday, August 21 – See your Orientation schedule for additional details.

Use of the Fitness Center is FREE for all current students as well as those students’ spouse/domestic partner. (Your spouse or domestic partner must obtain a privilege card from the main athletics office in order to use the fitness center and athletic facilities.)

There are also group exercise classes - However, unlike the Fitness Center, there is a small fee associated with the exercise classes. For students, the cost is $10 for a single class, $100 per term or $200 for the entire academic year. You can pay with cash or check or student ID. You also can register online at : http://www.generalssports.com.

The Fitness Center is currently on Summer hours. Extended hours will start Monday August 31 and run through Sunday, September 13. Regular hours start Monday, September 14.

Monday – Friday – 6:00 am – 8:00 pm
Saturday – 9:00 am – 3:00 pm
Sunday – 1:00 – 7:00 pm

http://www2.wlu.edu/x31544.xml

Law Tech:

Law Tech is Ben Hartless, Andy Briggs and Dori Hamilton. Located at the Circulation Desk – Law Tech offers FREE tech help for any computer issue you may be experiencing (i.e., they fix laptops).

Mr. Hartless is located on the 4th floor of the law school in Room 522.

http://law.wlu.edu/technology/

Law Library:

The Law Library offers many great resources for first-year students. Key Law Library
personnel for students include Dean Osborne, Andrew Christensen and John Eller:

http://law.wlu.edu/library/

Law Media:

If you have to miss class (job interview, illness, emergency, etc.), get permission from your professor and then email Law Media (lawmedia@wlu.edu) requesting that the class be recorded.

You can view the recording later online via the Law Media website:

http://law.wlu.edu/lawmedia/page.asp?pageid=688

Brief Stop:

This is a café at the law school. Located across from the Student Bar Association Office, the Brief Stop offers sandwiches, salads, soups, smoothies, baked goods, a variety of snack options, sodas, coffee and espresso drinks, and more.

The Brief Stop accepts general debit, flex dollars, cash and credit cards. Law school meal plans may be used during lunch.

Beginning August 17, the Brief Stop hours are as follows:

Monday – Friday – 7:45 am – 3:00 pm
Saturday & Sunday – Closed

The Brief Stop is also closed during all law school breaks.

There are also other on-campus dining options located a short walk from the law school. All of these options are a 5-10 minute walk from the law building:

The Marketplace (the University’s Dining Hall – Located on the Woods Creek level of Elrod Commons)

Café 77 – Located on the main floor of Elrod Commons

E Café – Located in the Hillel House, on Washington Street, directly across from Sweet Things and Healthy Foods Co-Op

http://www.wlu.edu/dining-services/campus-dining-facilities
Frequently Asked Questions

Below, please find the answers to a number of law school-related questions students typically have during their first couple of weeks in Lexington. Your Kirgis Fellows are also available to answer any additional questions you might have as you adjust to life in law school!

1. **Do people actually go to law school-sponsored events?**

   Yes! In undergrad people may have skipped school-sponsored events, but at our law school, they are very popular. These events are planned and funded by our Student Bar Association (SBA), and the SBA does its best to make sure that we are entertained. People are welcome to bring spouses, significant others, friends, whomever to SBA-sponsored events - the whole law school community is welcome. The first SBA event of the year will be a cookout on Thursday, August 20. And don’t miss the following activities: Service Day on August 21 from 1:00 pm – 4:00 p.m., and on August 28, the Activities Fair, the Law School Football League, and the Patio Party.

2. **How do I get involved? What social opportunities are there?**

   The easiest thing to do is check your email - Law Notices (the law school’s daily electronic news/announcements circular) always has a listing of events and club meetings. As mentioned above, the Student Activities fair is the first Friday of the semester (August 28) and it’s a great way to get a quick overview of all the clubs and available activities. Every organization will have a sign-up sheet for interested students, and you can leave your email address if you are interested in more information. You also are welcome to get involved with activities on the undergraduate campus, so be sure to check Campus Notices for activities, announcements and additional listings!

3. **If I don’t get involved now, will there be opportunities later?**

   Of course! Some activities, like journals, happen much later in the year, and Moot Court is a 2L and 3L activity. Many clubs have elections and initiations during the first semester, although if you would rather wait and get involved after you’re settled and have a better sense of academic course load, that’s okay too! There are typically additional meetings and other opportunities for students to get involved during the Spring Semester. Once again, check your email and watch Law Notices for information.

4. **What do people wear to law school classes?**

   There’s a wide range of acceptable attire for law school classes. Don’t feel pressured to wear business attire every day but keep in mind that you are in a professional environment; we typically have employers and guest speakers in the building and we want to represent the W&L community well. Jeans are completely acceptable but most students stay away from
sweatpants and other more informal wear. Some professors may have their own specific rules; hats are typically a no-no.

5. Where do I buy my textbooks?

Most 1Ls end up buying them at the University Store (located on the Main Level of Elrod Commons, the University’s Student Center), at least their first semester. Law School is different from undergrad where you could typically wait a few days before getting your books. You will have reading assignments for your first day of classes, so getting your books at the University Store ensures you will have them in plenty of time to complete your first assignments.

When purchasing new or used books from the University Store, you can charge your books to your student account with your student ID card and pay for them later when your loans disburse. Renting is always an option (but you have to be more mindful about markings). Amazon, Chegg, and half.com are all online options, but be careful! Law school books are sometimes harder to find, and mail can take a little longer to get to Lexington, so check the delivery date carefully (again, you will NEED them before your first class).

6. When will I get the assignments for my first class?

Your course assignments will be made available to you on Thursday, August 20, at 6:00 p.m. The assignments will be posted online, and you will receive an email from Linda Johnson, the Director of Law Records, instructing you on how access your assignments. We wait to provide you with your assignments so you can focus fully on Orientation without worrying about any reading or preparation you might have for your first class meetings.

7. How much work per day will I have? How much time will reading assignments take?

It depends. (Get used to that answer 😊). In the beginning, assignments may take longer as you adjust to the reading and the workload of law school. The general rule is that you should spend two to three hours preparing outside of class for every class credit hour. Consequently, for a four-credit hour class, you will generally have 8-12 hours of work outside of class, or expressed another way, about 12-16 hours of work, including class time.

It may help for you to think of law school as a full-time job; in a given week, you will have 50-60 hours of work (including class). You may find that, in these first weeks, as you adjust to law school, you are spending more than 50-60 hours a week on your work. This is okay! You are learning a lot of new skills and being challenged in new and different ways. This is all part of the law school adjustment process. Be patient with yourself and develop a schedule so you can be sure you are using your time efficiently. We will work with you on various
scheduling strategies during your first Kirgis session during the week of August 31. Keep an eye out for an email from your Kirgis Fellows about this session in the coming weeks.

8. What is “cold-calling”? 

Different professors handle cold-calling differently, but generally speaking, cold-calling is when a professor calls on you, either randomly or alphabetically, with no prior notice, to have you answer questions about the reading you prepared for class. Generally, this involves the professor walking you through a series of questions designed to help the class extract important takeaways from a case (or assigned reading).

The cold-call is not meant to embarrass you! Cold-calling is part of the Socratic method, so it is meant to be a dialogue. It generally takes most law students a little while to get used to being called on in class. Be patient with yourself and relax. Make your best effort and remember, many of the questions your professor will ask do not have a “right” answer – they are intended to generate conversation and reflection about a rule or a legal principle.

9. What is a “small section”? 

A small section is a randomly selected course that is the smallest of your classes. You will have the majority of your classes with this group, including Legal Writing, Burks, and Kirgis Fellow sessions.

10. What is an outline? 

An outline is a resource, created by YOU, that is a roadmap of the course, including legal rules, principles and examples you have extracted from cases and class discussion. It is NOT a case summary. You can organize an outline however works best for you. However, outlining is only one way to organize the information in a course, and you should find an organizational method that works best for your learning style and preference. For some students this might be a flowchart. For other students, it might be a mind-map. In addition, some courses, due to their structure or the nature of the information covered, may suggest other organizational approaches beyond outlining.

Students begin their outlines at different times but the general rule of thumb is to start your outline when you get to a natural stopping point in the course (this usually occurs 2-3 weeks into the semester). Professor Natkin will be hosting a session on how to organize your course materials so keep an eye out for an announcement. It will be on a Wednesday from 4:00 to 5:00 pm, just as with all the other Academic Success programming.
11. How do grades work?

There is a forced mean but not a curve. This means, in 1L courses, the average in the course is 3.3 (+/- .05). Your final grade will come from your final exam; some professors use participation/attendance when calculating final grades. In some classes you will have a midterm exam which may count towards your grade.

12. What do people do on the weekends?

Everyone divides their time differently; some people use one weekend day for their schoolwork, allowing them to take an entire day off to relax and have fun. Others do a little bit of work each day. Either way, everyone finds time to put the books away and enjoy some activities outside of the law school.

If there is not an SBA event that weekend, many students can be found playing with their dogs on the Law School Lawn, fishing/ kayaking/tubing at Goshen, hiking House Mountain or one of the many trails/hikes in the area), driving out to view the beautiful Foamhenge in Natural Bridge, enjoying the scenery along the Blue Ridge Parkway, or even driving to Charlottesville, Staunton, Waynesboro or Roanoke for a diversion. Many students enjoy going to either Macados, Salerno’s, or Southern Inn to unwind at the end of a week. These places are popular gathering spots for students. Students also enjoy going over to each other’s houses just to relax, talk, or cookout.

Lexington is a small town for sure, but there is no shortage of things to do or great people to do them with. Keep an eye on your e-mail, the Law Notices, and the Campus Notices for upcoming local events, festivals, and other entertainment! Breaks are important to your wellness and success in law school. Be sure to make time for those activities and interests that were important to you before law school.

13. What is the dog policy in the building?

The Law School has established a dog policy (a) to ensure a safe, healthy, and pleasant environment for all members of the Law School community; (b) to clarify the obligations of dog owners who bring dogs to school; and (c) to strike a reasonable balance between the interests of dog owners and the interests of others.

No student may bring his/her dog into any part of the law school building between the hours of 8:00 am and 6:00 pm EST, Monday through Friday.

Dogs may not be in the Main Reading Room, classrooms or any space used for class meetings, the Brief Stop or any of the dining areas contiguous to the Brief Stop at any time. Dog owners are responsible for promptly cleaning up after their dogs and for the cost of repairing any damages caused by their dogs.
For the complete dog policy, click on this link:
http://law.wlu.edu/deptimages/student%20services/Dog%20Policy%20Updated%20October%202013.pdf

14. Where can I park?

Student parking is available in the rear of the law school in the lower student lot as well as the upper, “piney woods” lot. No student parking is allowed on the building side of Denny Circle. To review the parking policy, please click here: http://go.wlu.edu/parking-and-vehicle-registration.

15. What are Sakai and WebAdvisor?

Sakai is a set of software tools designed to help instructors, researchers and students create websites for collaboration: https://sakai.wlu.edu/. You will use Sakai for everything from submitting exams to voting in SBA elections.

WebAdvisor allows students online access to a variety of information including grade reports by term, academic course history, degree audit (shows students the number of credits required for graduation, the number of credits completed, cumulative GPA, required courses, etc.), course registration and billing: https://go.wlu.edu/webadvisor.

16. What is MyVI?

MyVI provides a convenient way for students, faculty and staff to access a Windows desktop environment, including Windows software and W&L network storage, from any location with Internet access. MyVI supports access to computer resources from anywhere, from a wide variety of devices, including Macintosh and Windows computers, iPads and a variety of smartphones. Click here for additional information: https://myvi.wlu.edu/vpn/myVI.html.
**Alphabet Soup!**

There are a ton of acronyms at the law school. You will naturally learn them as you get acclimated to W&L. In the meantime, hopefully this will help you feel a bit more familiar with the lingo!

**Classes/Academic-Related:**

APLP: American Public Law Process

Civ Pro: Civil Procedure

Crim: Criminal Law

PR: Professional Responsibility

Trans: Transnational Law

E&E: Examples and Explanations. This is a line of supplements.

Hypo: Hypothetical situation. Your professors will often use these to test and show the limits of legal principles.

**Offices:**

ITS: Information and Technology Services

OCS: Office of Career Strategy

**Organizations/Extracurricular Activities:**

ACS: American Constitution Society

APALSA: Asian Pacific American Law Students Association

BLSA: Black Law Students Association

CJC: Criminal Justice Clinic
CLPC: Community Legal Practice Center

CLS: Christian Legal Society

E-Board: Executive board, typically the principal leaders of a student organization.

EC: Executive Committee (Student government for the entire University)

FedSoc: Federalist Society

GLJ: German Law Journal

JCRSJ: Journal of Civil Rights and Social Justice

JECE: Journal of Energy, Climate and Environment

LALSA: Latin American Law Students Association

LSFL: Law School Football League

PAD: Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity

PILSA: Public Interest Law Students Association

SBA: Student Bar Association

SJC: Student Judicial Committee

VC3: Virginia Capital Case Clearinghouse

WLSO: Women Law Student Organization