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According to the Law School Admission Council, 53,548 people had submitted fall 2015 law school applications as of early August, down 1.8 percent from 2014 and down from more than 100,000 applicants in 2004. 2013 saw the lowest point for first-year law school enrollment in 36 years. And, according to a recent analysis by University of St. Thomas School of Law professor Jerry Organ, from 2010 to 2013, the population of entering students with the lowest LSAT scores grew to more than 20 percent of total matriculates, while those with the best scores made up only 16 percent. Whether one believes that such tests are an indicator of academic success or not, the fact remains that bar exam passage rates in a number of states—including Texas—took dives in 2014.

Debt loads for law students are as staggering as they've ever been, with a 2013 national in-state tuition average of \$23,879 for public law schools and \$41,985 for private schools. American Bar Association statistics show that the average 2012 graduate of a public law school borrowed \$84,600, while the average 2012 graduate of a private law school borrowed \$122,158. As the application numbers reflect, more and more would-be law students are questioning the wisdom of making such an investment in an environment of dismal job prospects. Last year, 10 law schools were unable to find permanent, bar passage-required jobs for more than 30 percent of their graduates.

Even the latest glimmer of good news came with a few caveats. The National Association for Law Placement recently announced that the employment rate for graduates of the Class of 2014 was 86.7 percent, a 2.2 percent increase from the previous year. But the Class of 2014 was substantially smaller than the one that preceded it—by nearly 3,000 graduates, in fact.

So how are Texas law schools confronting these changes in legal education?

To find out, we posed the following question to the deans of our state's law schools:

Legal education in the United States is facing a daunting set of challenges at the current time, from demands for curricular reform and making graduates more "practice ready" to diminished applicant pools, a discouraging job market, and mounting student debt brought on by rising tuition. In 600 words or less, please describe your law school's responses to or plans for responding to these challenges. Please try to highlight efforts or programs unique to your law school; in other words—what distinguishes what your law school is doing in response to the problems impacting modern legal education?

On the following pages, you'll discover what our educators are doing to prepare the next generation of legal professionals for a challenging—and evolving—job market.

—John Browning, chair, *Texas Bar Journal* Board of Editors

Photographs courtesy of participating law schools

Baylor Law School

Brad Toben, dean



Baylor Law is conceived of as a professional school dedicated to developing skilled and ethical lawyers. By design, we are the smallest law school in Texas and one of the smallest in the nation. Students therefore have ample opportunity for interaction with instructors and classmates.

Our program is a virtual poster child for the curricular, cultural, and programmatic directions urged by the MacCrate Report (1992), the Carnegie Report (2007), and the American Bar Association Task Force on the Future of Legal Education (2014) regarding preparation of students for the actual practice of law. Baylor relies upon a highly required and sequenced curriculum that reflects emerging practice realities while adhering to our emphasis on rigor, service, and ethical practice. We have enjoyed much success by our graduates on the bar exam. *The National Jurist* magazine recently awarded Baylor Law another A+ on its 2015 list of “best law schools for practical training.”

Baylor Law is known for advocacy education and training, but it also excels in several transactional areas of law and practice. We offer concentrations in business transactions, estate planning, real estate and natural resources, health care, intellectual property, and administrative law. Each of these programs reflect areas of faculty strength and commitment.

Our required writing program recently has been expanded to include the second year as well as the first and third years, emphasizing one-on-one feedback and successive drafts of writing assignments. We have five joint degree programs, and we have collaborated with the university’s Hankamer School of Business to develop innovative, cross-disciplinary teams of students to work with enterprises in China and at the Baylor Research and Innovation Collaborative.

A defining experience for all Baylor lawyers continues to be our rigorous third-year simulation experience, known as the Practice Court Program. Continually modified to address developments in the practice, this 15 credit-hour program creates a controlled environment for students to practice lawyering skills, strengthen analytical skills, and advance a professional identity. Under significant time

FOUNDED
1857

ENROLLMENT
397

ANNUAL TUITION
\$52,836

ANNUAL FEES
\$2,710

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2000**
149

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2015**
116

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WHO HAD JOBS BY
MARCH 2015**
86 percent

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-
REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE
JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED
BY THE LAW SCHOOL**
Less than 1 percent

**AVERAGE DEBT LOAD
OF A 2014 GRADUATE**
\$117,386, an increase
from 2013



pressure intended to mimic a particularly stressful period in practice, students are challenged to think critically and pragmatically about complex litigation and trial problems while confidently advocating for clients and drafting documents.

Baylor Law recently implemented a new professional development requirement for students: They must participate in 15 hours of professional development programming prior to graduation. Students have the flexibility to tailor the program to their own needs and to the kind of practice or endeavor that they seek. Students attend professional development programs on topics such as law office organization and management, legal technology, client relations, legal ethics, and leadership.

In August, our Pro Bono and Public Service Program received the ABA’s Pro Bono Publico Award. Baylor is only the third law school to receive this recognition in the 31 years that it has been given. In the past handful of years, we have received four other ABA, State Bar of Texas, and Texas Access to Justice Commission awards for our pro bono programs.

Baylor Law has one of the best gross and per capita endowments in legal education, ranking in the top 12th percentile based upon the latest available ABA data. We therefore can provide our students with substantial scholarship assistance. The *National Jurist* has ranked Baylor No. 2 among 118 private law schools on its “Best Value” list, taking into account bar exam pass rate, placement rate, tuition, student debt levels, and cost of living.

Finally, our law center is an extraordinary facility in character and setting and recently was ranked (with a grade of A+) by the *National Jurist* as the fourth best law school facility in the nation.



BRAD TOBEN

graduated from the University of Missouri-St. Louis and holds law degrees from Baylor Law School and Harvard Law School. In 1983, Toben joined the Baylor Law School faculty and was named dean of the school in 1991. He currently is the second-longest tenured law school dean in the nation. He is an elected member of the American Law Institute and has served by appointment of the governor of Texas as a commissioner to the National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws.

St. Mary's University School of Law

Stephen M. Sheppard, dean

Law schools have been heavily criticized since the 2008 economic downturn. Some criticism was misguided, but some is well deserved. Law schools should always have prepared students for the bar exam and for practice. The St. Mary's University School of Law has pursued these goals since its founding nearly a century ago, but it can do more. We cannot ignore our duty to strive to provide the best education possible. Thus, we must prepare each of our students not only to practice but also to be an ethical leader of the bar.

More broadly, St. Mary's is confronting the charge that legal education is no longer relevant in America. The notion, despite its absurdity, that lawyers are somehow less relevant caught hold on the Internet. Yet law school is not a luxury for the United States—or for Texas. It is an imperative. Lawyers created the structure of our nation's democracy. Today's lawyers are its protectors; tomorrow's lawyers will be its hope for preservation against ever-present threats.

The St. Mary's commitment to a unique style of education emanates from our very bedrock—as a Marianist institution, as the oldest Catholic university in the Southwest, and as the law school of San Antonio. Our mission commits us to provide a quality education to every student and an experience that encourages peace and social justice, prepares students for change and the future, respects each person, and encourages each in his or her own journey toward faith. So we must prepare law students for service to the poor as well as to the wealthy, with a sense of ethical leadership. And by preparing our students for a changing future, they are ready for an economy and a society that will change with increasing speed.

We support students of all kinds who demonstrate these values. St. Mary's Law alumni and friends have established more than 100 scholarships to assist J.D. students in their educational commitment.

In the past year, the school of law instituted new approaches to cultivate these ideals before our students set foot in their first law class. During orientation, each student must publicly take a matriculation pledge vowing to



FOUNDED
1927

ENROLLMENT
784

ANNUAL TUITION
\$33,900

ANNUAL FEES
\$740

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2000**
242

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2015**
216

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WHO HAD JOBS BY
APRIL 2015**
80.3 percent

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-
REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE
JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED
BY THE LAW SCHOOL**
0 percent

**AVERAGE DEBT LOAD
OF A 2014 GRADUATE**
\$110,000, an increase
from 2013

uphold the values of professionalism, honor, collaboration, and scholarship. The new St. Mary's Law Success Program challenges students to gain competencies essential to both school and law practice. The program analyzes students' strengths and weaknesses before their first semester, providing tailored instruction and testing in the skills and values required in law school, on the bar examination, and in legal practice. These efforts have generated rapid results.

Our emphases on mission and professionalism have reached the greater St. Mary's Law community and have been noticed by at least two groups—incoming students and alumni, who continue to bring pride to their alma mater.

As a result, the value of donations to the school of law nearly doubled in the past year. The number of alumni providing financial contributions increased significantly, as did alumni engagement with the school and their willingness to volunteer for efforts to propel St. Mary's Law forward. The renewed emphasis on our mission has a clear resonance with incoming students as well. The number of J.D. applications for St. Mary's Law increased nearly 10 percent from last year, showing that these students have given a robust vote of confidence in St. Mary's Law as the best fit for their legal education.



STEPHEN M. SHEPPARD, whose expertise lies in legal philosophy, constitutional law, international law, and legal history, began his tenure as dean of St. Mary's University School of Law in June 2014. He previously was the associate dean for research and faculty development at the University of Arkansas School of Law.

South Texas College of Law

Donald J. Guter, dean



Experiential, practice-oriented, student-focused. While many law schools are only now adopting this model to address changes in the legal profession, it has been the foundation South Texas College of Law has provided to students for more than 90 years. New this year, students benefit from the Pathways to Practice program, which focuses on different career options within a variety of legal fields. Pathways also helps students plan an individualized curriculum designed to prepare them to enter their chosen area of practice upon graduation. It guides students through the substantive law courses they need and through experiential, hands-on legal skills classes, enabling them to be productive immediately for their employers and clients.

The law school's Skills Institutes and Programs support the curriculum, immersing students in emerging areas of legal practice. The newest of these is the Harry L. Reed Oil & Gas Law Institute. South Texas has partnered with oil and gas firms for decades, and this institute equips students to become strong contributors to the industry.

The Advocacy Program has trained student teams earning mock trial national championships for more than 30 years, a history unmatched by any other institution, with a winning record of 120 national championships.

Growing from five to 15 practice areas since 2009, the law school's Randall O. Sorrels Legal Clinics help students learn valuable skills while providing approximately 3,500 hours of pro bono legal representation to underserved Houston residents each year.

The Legal Research and Writing Program is a leader in the nation, apparent in the unprecedented number of Brief-Writing Awards received from Scribes, the prestigious American Society of Legal Writers. No other law school has won more than one best student-written brief award; South Texas has won five. In 2012, South Texas teams took first, second, and third place in the Scribes awards, marking the first and only sweep by a single law school. South Texas is one of only 21 law schools to have an all tenured/tenure-track faculty focused on this program.

The Frank Evans Center for Conflict Resolution hones students' skills in negotiation,

FOUNDED	1923
ENROLLMENT	1,032
ANNUAL TUITION	\$28,890
ANNUAL FEES	\$300/semester seat deposit
NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 2000	336
NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 2015	309
PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES WHO HAD JOBS BY APRIL 2015	85.6 percent
PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED BY THE LAW SCHOOL	0 percent
AVERAGE DEBT LOAD OF A 2014 GRADUATE	\$113,700, a decrease from 2013



mediation, and arbitration. The law school has achieved recognition by winning a number of national and international dispute resolution competitions.

Through the Transactional Practice Center, students experience an intensive curriculum preparing them to become business transactional lawyers. The Certificate Program is a multi-course sequencing of curriculum designed to equip students with the skills to negotiate, structure, and document business deals. The certificate acknowledges this earned competency.

South Texas has worked hard to keep student debt down by keeping tuition affordable. Of the 118 private law schools in the United States, South Texas tuition is the fourth lowest. Moreover, even parking in the costly downtown Houston area is offered to students at no cost.

The reduction of institutional debt and thoughtful financial planning has placed South Texas in a strong financial position. The law school's philosophy of containing costs has benefited students. We provide affordable tuition to a diverse student population, focusing on delivering an outstanding legal education. Named a "Best Value" private law school by the *National Jurist*, as well as receiving high rankings for diversity, the law school plans to continue this mission.

Since its founding, South Texas has focused on providing an exceptional legal education, preparing graduates to serve their community and the profession with distinction. This mission is apparent in graduates' high bar exam passage rates, employment rates, and a curriculum that unites theory and practice, preparing new graduates to make an immediate contribution to the profession. This is the future of South Texas College of Law.



DONALD J. GUTER

is the president and dean of South Texas College of Law. He served in the U.S. Navy for 32 years, retiring in 2002 as a rear admiral of the Judge Advocate General's Corps. He has since served as CEO for the Vinson Hall Corp. and as executive director of the Navy Marine Coast Guard Residence Foundation. He is an outside director of the board of TYCO Corp. Guter frequently appears in the media to discuss matters of national security and military law.

Southern Methodist University Dedman School of Law

Jennifer M. Collins, dean

The challenges facing legal education and the legal profession, while significant and sobering, also offer law schools a real moment of opportunity. Market shifts spur creative change, and SMU Dedman School of Law is partnering with legal innovators and forward-thinking alums to provide our students with the work experience, leadership skills, and professional network necessary to respond to a rapidly changing economy.

Expanding opportunities. We are increasing experiential learning opportunities by turning the Dallas-Fort Worth area into a living laboratory for our students. One example is our thriving Corporate Counsel Externship Program, which allows students to blend coursework with a semester-long externship in a corporate legal department. Fifty students will go in-house this fall to participate in a unique capstone learning experience. As 2014 grad Emily Stutts wrote, “The Corporate Counsel Externship Program was a unique opportunity to get an inside look at the life and work of in-house attorneys and the legal issues faced by many companies. For most law students, in-house jobs seem out of reach and a little mysterious. Law schools are replete with opportunities to work for law firms, judges, and in the public sector, but it is rare that a school helps a law student step into a company’s legal department. During my time in the Corporate Counsel Externship, I worked at Baylor Scott & White Health. I drafted and reviewed multiple contracts, drafted and revised hospital procedures, and observed depositions. My experience helped me better understand the legal issues that large corporations face and prepared me for my current job in consulting with such corporations. The experience continues to prove invaluable.”

We are also expanding the size of our already robust clinical program from eight to 10 clinics. Our students will be assisting victims of domestic violence and human trafficking,



FOUNDED
1925

ENROLLMENT
764

ANNUAL TUITION
\$44,542

ANNUAL FEES
\$5,420

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2000**
237

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2015**
212

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WHO HAD JOBS BY
MARCH 2015**
93 percent

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-
REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE
JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED
BY THE LAW SCHOOL**
0 percent

**AVERAGE DEBT LOAD
OF A 2014 GRADUATE**
\$124,617, an increase
from 2013

helping low-income residents with family law matters, working to free prisoners who have been wrongly convicted, and solving problems for entrepreneurs on patent and trademark issues. A commitment to serving our community through our pro bono work is at the very heart of SMU’s mission, and we are honored to continue that in new ways.

Creating community. We have revamped our orientation and our first-year experience to provide students with integrated, innovative academic support and career development. We are delighted to introduce our Inns of Court program, sponsored by Haynes and Boone. Each first-year student is part of an inn—a small group of approximately 30 students, with dedicated faculty and attorney mentors. Inns will offer comprehensive academic support, career development programming, networking events, and service projects. This program will also enable law students to form valuable connections with our faculty and attorneys throughout Dallas, all of whom are deeply committed to their academic and professional success.

Engaging our network. We are taking full advantage of our location in one of the nation’s most vibrant and economically robust cities. Our new and innovative “flash mentorship” program, the Mustang Exchange, leverages SMU’s unparalleled connections to our thriving legal community and dedicated alums. We believe this is one of the first of its kind at a law school—pairing students with multiple mentors throughout the year in one-on-one conversations that could include career advice, mock interviews, and job shadowing experiences. Effective mentoring has been proven to lead to greater academic achievement, improved professional identity, greater professional competence, decreased job stress, and individuals who are more likely to mentor others. We are continually striving to enhance students’ experiences at SMU and their preparation for the 21st-century marketplace, and we welcome your feedback about and participation in our new programs.



JENNIFER M. COLLINS

is the Judge James Noel dean and professor of law at SMU Dedman School of Law. She received her B.A. cum laude from Yale University in 1987 and her J.D. magna cum laude in 1991 from Harvard University, where she also served as an editor for the *Harvard Law Review*. She was previously a member of the law faculty at Wake Forest University, clerked for the Hon. Dorothy W. Nelson of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit, and worked in private practice in Washington, D.C., before joining the U.S. Department of Justice Office of Legal Counsel as an attorney-adviser in 1993. She then served as assistant United States attorney in the U.S. Attorney’s Office for the District of Columbia from 1994 to 2002. She is the co-author of *Privilege or Punish: Criminal Justice and the Challenge of Family Ties*.

Texas A&M University School of Law

Andrew P. Morriss, dean

As a public, land-grant university, an interdisciplinary approach to legal education is part of our institutional ethos. As an Association of American Universities member, this is a vital part of our contribution to an educated, well-informed society. The strengths of Texas A&M as a global university further this mission—our students are already entrenched in areas where law is critical. To deliver legal education that meets the immediate and future needs of Texas, we're investing in our program. Here are just three examples.

Build on university strengths. We're part of one of the world's leading universities, which excels in science, engineering, and technology. Building on our innovative Center for Law and Intellectual Property and providing depth in an area where jobs are growing, we added five new IP faculty members: Irene Calboli, Glynn S. Lunney Jr., Srividhya Ragavan, Saurabh Vishnubhakat, and Peter K. Yu. To develop even more collaboration beyond our existing minicourses and law clinics in College Station, Professor Lunney (TAMU '84) has a joint appointment with our Dwight Look College of Engineering. This year, we're working with our College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service to hire faculty to build collaboration, and we've launched a joint project with the Bush School of Government and Public Service, in which students collaborate to report on barriers to trade.

Focus on the profession. Our mission is to create lawyers who make Texas, the nation, and the world a better place. At the heart of everything we do are Texas A&M's core values: excellence, integrity, leadership, loyalty, respect, and selfless service. Embodying those values, we have reduced the size of our entering class. This allows us to more effectively educate our students (many of whom are first-generation), aid students in developing skills to succeed, and engage the profession in determining our future direction. We start with our



FOUNDED	2013
ENROLLMENT	583
ANNUAL TUITION AND FEES	\$33,092
NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 2000	0
NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 2015	227
PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES WHO HAD JOBS BY MARCH 2015	79.3 percent
PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED BY THE LAW SCHOOL	0.86 percent
AVERAGE DEBT LOAD OF A 2014 GRADUATE	\$103,500, an increase from 2013

new Professionalism & Leadership Program, which offers broad training in areas like communication, business skills, networking, professional identity, and nonprofit board service. In cooperation with the State Bar of Texas and with support from the Access Group, Milan Markovic launched a multi-year study of the Texas legal profession. We hope the results will help the legal profession in Texas and provide valuable guidance to future law students everywhere. We lured Susan Saab Fortney back to Texas from New York, bringing along her expertise with global trends in legal ethics. We hired John T. "Jack" Manhire from the U.S. Department of the Treasury to provide our students and Texas employers with an innovative "Breaking Bias" workshop to create diversity leaders for the legal profession. And we've more than doubled the size of our career services office staff to spread the word about our extraordinary students.

Take a global approach. All lawyers need an appreciation for international and comparative law, particularly in Texas where trade and immigration are integral parts of the economy. We're building that emphasis into our curriculum and faculty. This past year we hired new professors with significant international expertise: William H. Byrnes (Foreign Account Tax Compliance Act/international tax), Nuno Garoupa (comparative law), William H. Henning (international commercial law), Charlotte Ku (public international law), and Angela D. Morrison (immigration). Three of our new IP faculty also have an international focus: Calboli, Ragavan, and Yu. Texas A&M's new president, Michael K. Young, is a leading international law expert and a member of our faculty. They join our 10 faculty members with international experience from water to energy to national security. With Texas A&M campuses and centers in Costa Rica, Italy, Mexico, and Qatar, we're providing our students with expanded opportunities to study and work outside the United States, reflecting our commitment to creating Texas lawyers and leaders for tomorrow's global marketplace.



ANDREW P. MORRIS

is the dean of Texas A&M University School of Law and the Anthony G. Buzbee Dean's Endowed chair. Previously, he served as the D. Paul Jones Jr. and Charlene A. Jones chair in law at the University of Alabama. He has taught in Greece, Guatemala, and Hong Kong and lectured in Cambodia, the Cayman Islands, China, Myanmar, and Nepal. A senior fellow of the Property and Environment Research Center and the Reason Foundation, Morriss earned his A.B. from Princeton University, his J.D. and Masters in Public Affairs from the University of Texas at Austin, and a Ph.D. in economics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Texas Tech University School of Law

Darby Dickerson, dean

Texas Tech University School of Law prepares students to meet the challenges they will face not just upon graduation but for their entire careers. In addition to a rigorous required curriculum and many traditional opportunities—such as live-client clinics, externships, journals, and advocacy competitions—



Texas Tech Law has added innovative programming to help students become creative problem solvers and leaders who can excel in whatever field they choose to enter. Three unique programs are the Strategic Memory Advanced Reasoning Training program, the Academy for Leadership in the Legal Profession, and the Caprock Regional Public Defender Office.

SMART Brain Training. This year, Texas Tech Law partnered with the Brain Performance Institute at the University of Texas at Dallas to offer SMART to students during orientation.

Based on more than 30 years of scientific study, SMART uses cognitive strategies to improve brain efficiency. BPI developed for Texas Tech Law a version of its program used for Navy SEALs and corporate executives. During orientation, students were introduced to pivotal brain processes to help them think about issues strategically, deeply, and creatively. As one example, students engaged in exercises to improve strategic attention. It is harder to sift through information than block what is irrelevant. With the SMART program, students learned how to focus on the tasks and decisions that matter, better understand root issues, and separate relevant and extraneous information—all crucial skills for successful lawyers. BPI will continue working with students during the fall semester.

Academy for Leadership in the Legal Profession. ALLP prepares students to become effective leaders in the profession and community through various programs and activities. At least once each month, students can attend a lecture on a leadership topic presented by an individual who has excelled in his or her chosen field. Past speakers have included Texas Supreme Court Justice Eva Guzman, legal writing expert Bryan A. Garner, and D. Casey Flaherty, former assistant general counsel to Kia Motors America Inc.

Upper-level students participate in interac-

tive workshops that cover topics such as ethical and effective use of social media, financial planning, and how to run effective meetings. Students also read an assigned book each semester and then network with local alumni during an evening discussion group. Judge Les Hatch of Lubbock County's 237th District Court hosted an event in March to discuss *Managing Up: How to Forge an Effective Relationship with Those Above You*, by Rosanne Badowski, the long-time assistant to General Electric Chairman and CEO Jack Welch.

Students who advance to the final phase of the program design and implement leadership projects, which have included establishing the Dallas Volunteer Attorney Program Angel Tree, planning a CLE program on Ebola, and establishing a student organization to provide pro bono service in the Rio Grande Valley.

Caprock Regional Public Defender Office. Since 2010, Texas Tech Law has operated the Caprock Regional Public Defender Office with funding from the Texas Indigent Defense Commission. Dickens County has played an active role in creating and operating the program, which provides indigent-defense representation in areas where individuals often lack access to local attorneys willing to accept court appointments. With new legislative authority to serve all counties in the South Plains, Texas Tech is the only law school in the country to house an actual defender's office.

Supervised by Chief Public Defender Donnie Yandell, clinic students represent indigent clients from the start of criminal cases through trial. Recently, they have also been appointed to handle an appeal before the 11th Court of Appeals in Eastland.

The program has achieved a dismissal rate that well exceeds 50 percent and helps ensure that low-income Texas citizens accused of crimes have access to counsel and can exercise their constitutional rights. In addition, students receive significant criminal defense training that they can continue to use for the public good after graduation.

FOUNDED	1967
ENROLLMENT	577
ANNUAL TUITION AND FEES	\$22,992
NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 2000	181
NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 2015	189
PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES WHO HAD JOBS BY APRIL 2015	81.7 percent
PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED BY THE LAW SCHOOL	0 percent
AVERAGE DEBT LOAD OF A 2014 GRADUATE	\$82,165, an increase from 2013



DARBY DICKERSON

became dean at Texas Tech University School of Law in July 2011. She also holds the W. Frank Newton Endowed Professorship. She previously served as interim dean and dean from 2003 to 2011 at Stetson University College of Law in Florida. Dickerson serves on the Executive Committee of the Association of American Law Schools and is a past chair of the Section on Institutional Advancement. Dickerson received her B.A. and M.A. from the College of William and Mary and her J.D. from Vanderbilt Law School. In 2013, she was the inaugural recipient of the Darby Dickerson Award for Revolutionary Change in Legal Writing.

Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University

Dannye Holley, dean



Thurgood Marshall School of Law is well positioned to effectively respond to the challenges faced today by the legal academy given the law school's rich history, strong base of support, and added emphasis on experiential learning and students' development of key lawyering skills.

The school's historical and current niche in the legal academy and market and its significant contributions to legal education are captured in the 2014-2019 Strategic Plan, which was crafted and approved by our dedicated faculty in collaboration with our students, alumni, and friends. It highlights the law school's position as the most diverse in the country and our proud legacy as a historically black university. In recent years, the law school graduated its 1,000th Hispanic student, and over a recent five-year period, it has graduated more than 40 percent of all newly licensed African-American attorneys in the state (among those who graduated from Texas law schools).

There are eight goals identified in the strategic plan, most of which are specifically focused on enhancing student learning outcomes, including the quality and quantity of experiential learning opportunities. To strengthen its offerings, the law school hired its first director of experiential learning, who is a tenure-track faculty member. Additional experiential learning placement sites have been established with multiple courts—both federal and state—as well as with prosecutor and other government offices. Summer externship placements have been established with judges and other government offices in various cities throughout Texas;

FOUNDED	1947
ENROLLMENT	510
ANNUAL TUITION AND FEES	\$19,971
NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 2000	155
NUMBER OF GRADUATES IN 2015	150
PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES WHO HAD JOBS BY FEBRUARY 2015	60 percent
PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED BY THE LAW SCHOOL	0 percent
AVERAGE DEBT LOAD OF A 2014 GRADUATE	\$106,500, no increase from 2013

more than 50 externship sites for our students are now in place. This new and improved experiential learning program is supported by detailed guidelines for placements, the roles and responsibilities of site supervisors, and uniform student learning outcomes.

These significant developments in our experiential learning program complement our continuing commitment to students' participation in Texas Sen. Rodney Ellis's Texas Legislative Internship Program. TLIP provides an opportunity for many of our second-year students to spend a semester in residence in Austin, earning academic credit while serving as legal assistants to legislators, judges, and public officials. Through our participation in TLIP, the law school has produced outstanding public servants.

Goal two of the strategic plan includes action focused on enhancing our students' sense of professional identity. The law school has appointed an ad hoc committee, consisting of faculty, alumni, professionals from across a broad spectrum of legal work, and community leaders, to further the development of its students' professional identities.

To enhance a robust sense of professional identity, our students have significantly increased their engagement with multiple bar associations, participating in projects and activities of the American Bar Association, the Houston Bar Association, the Houston Lawyers Association, the Mexican American Bar Association, and the State Bar of Texas. Additionally, our students have been appointed or elected to integral leadership positions in some of these professional associations. To support our students in their many endeavors, the law school continues to play an active role in bar association activities. This past February, for example, it accepted an invitation to host a judicial panel on increasing diversity in the judiciary at the ABA's national midyear convention in Houston. The law school also co-sponsored and provided speakers for the ABA's CLE program on indigent criminal defense.

TMSL believes that its commitment to increasing student opportunities for experiential learning, as well as their development of an in-depth sense of professional identity, is a core element in producing competitive, civil, and empowered graduates.



DANNYE HOLLEY

has served as the dean of Thurgood Marshall School of Law at Texas Southern University since 2009. He received his B.A. and J.D. from the State University of New York at Buffalo and his LL.M. from the University of California, Berkeley. This is his 43rd year of law school service, research, and scholarship. He has served as a faculty member for each of the first three Texas Center for the Judiciary's Evidence Summits for sitting Texas judges. His most recent publication focuses on the confrontation clause and the impact of the *Crawford* decision on state supreme courts, academics, and the practicing bar.

The University of Houston Law Center

Leonard M. Baynes, dean

The University of Houston Law Center represents the power of legal education. Our renowned faculty teach students to think like lawyers so that they can seek and deliver justice for their clients. At the Law Center, we provide our students with an excellent education and affordable tuition. The Law Center is often recognized as a “best value” in legal education. The Law Center addresses the needs of the legal profession and educates students in a manner that reflects those needs in four ways. The Law Center has: (1) a broad-based curriculum, (2) skills training, (3) funded summer public interest fellowships, and (4) pipeline programs to expand the pool of law school students.

Curriculum. The Law Center’s curriculum is among the broadest of Texas law schools. It offers a wide range of upper-level courses, such as “ObamaCare,” Diplomacy for Oil and Gas, and Corporate Compliance—to name a few. Except for the required Professional Responsibility and advanced writing courses, the entire upper-level curriculum is elective.

Skills Training. The Law Center has many clinical and skills training opportunities for students to become practice-ready while they are in law school. Students work on actual cases under the supervision of faculty experts.

The Civil Practice Clinic specializes in bankruptcy, collection, landlord-tenant, divorce, domestic violence, administrative appeals, adoption, will drafting, guardianships, name changes, and probate issues. More information can be found at law.uh.edu/clinic/civil.asp.

The Consumer Law Clinic works on cases including claims under the Deceptive Trade Practices-Consumer Protection Act, as well as credit- and debt-collection problems and landlord-tenant complaints. More information can be found at law.uh.edu/clinic/consumerlaw.asp.

The Immigration Clinic specializes in applications for asylum on behalf of victims of torture and persecution; representing immigrants who have been the victims of domestic violence, human trafficking, and crime; and children and those fleeing civil war, genocide, or political repression. More information can be found at law.uh.edu/clinic/immi.asp.

The Mediation Clinic provides trained student-mediators to the justice courts in Harris County. Students mediate consumer issues, landlord-tenant disputes, and breach of contract cases while developing their mediation and communication skills. More information can be found at law.uh.edu/clinic/mediate.asp.

The Transactional Clinic assists small businesses and nonprofit organizations with legal representation, including negotiating lease agreements, selecting a proper organizational structure, developing employment policies, and the buying and selling of businesses. More information can be found at law.uh.edu/clinic/transactional.asp.

FOUNDED
1947

ENROLLMENT
859

ANNUAL TUITION AND FEES
\$29,784

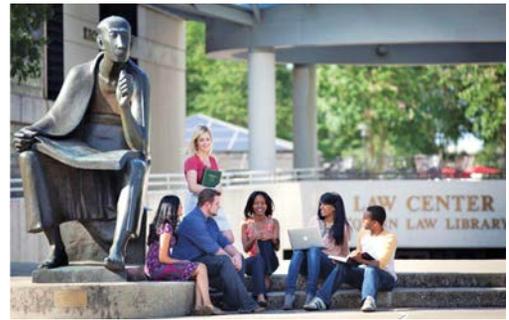
**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2000**
276

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2015**
234

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WHO HAD JOBS BY
MARCH 2015**
90.6 percent

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-
REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE
JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED
BY THE LAW SCHOOL**
2.15 percent

**AVERAGE DEBT LOAD
OF A 2014 GRADUATE**
\$88,664, a decline
from 2013



The Texas Innocence Network provides students with opportunities to work with death-sentenced inmates in habeas appeals. Students conduct the exhaustive investigations necessary to develop the claims raised in these proceedings. More information can be found at law.uh.edu/TIN/.

Through the Blakely Advocacy Institute, students learn advocacy skills by participating in moot court, mock trial, negotiation, and mediation competitions. More information can be found at law.uh.edu/blakely/.

Funded Summer Public Interest Fellowships. During summer 2015, 31 Law Center students were awarded funding for fellowships to work at nonprofit, public interest agencies, and government offices. Nine students spent the summer abroad as “global fellows,” working for similar agencies in Canada, India, and Mexico. With this financial support, students gain robust legal experience, while serving the global and national community.

Pipeline Program. The UHLC Pre-Law Pipeline Program is designed to provide early legal exposure to undergraduate students who are first generation, low income, or members of groups historically underrepresented in the legal profession and who are interested in pursuing a career in law. The program prepares students for the Law School Admission Test, the law school application process, and their law school careers.

In sum, the curriculum, the clinics, and the fellowships provide students with the opportunity to have the best and broadest legal education possible to support their career opportunities and placement upon graduation, while the Pipeline Program opens the door into the legal profession that may have otherwise been closed.



LEONARD M. BAYNES

brings a national reputation as a communications law scholar with specializations in business, media, and diversity issues. Baynes previously served as the inaugural director of the Ronald H. Brown Center for Civil Rights and Economic Development at St. John’s University School of Law. During Baynes’s first year at UHLC, he started the UHLC Pre-Law Pipeline Program, the First Year Law Center Orientation Community Service Day, and the funded Global Fellowship Program, and he met with more than 1,000 alumni and friends of the Law Center at events in Denver, New York City, the District of Columbia, and cities across Texas.

UNT Dallas College of Law

Royal Furgeson, dean



The Great Recession laid an egg at our doorstep as we prepared to open the UNT Dallas College of Law in August 2014. It was the worst of times in legal education. Business as usual was no longer in the cards. In light of escalating student debt, rising tuition costs, and uncertain job prospects, we chose to create something different.

For a new law school, institutional costs and processes are not a roadblock to change. We structured our costs with the new reality in mind and prioritized affordable tuition. Our 2015 entering class of 139 law students pays yearly tuition of \$14,565, compared to the 2013 national average of \$23,879 for resident students in public law schools and \$41,985 for private law schools. We charge every student the same tuition at the same rate for their entire course of study, whether full time or part time.

Affordable tuition is not only about debt. It is also about access to legal education for underserved populations and working people. Minorities represent around 50 percent of our students. About 40 percent of our students are enrolled in our part-time program. The average age of our students is over 30 years.

We consciously admit students on a holistic basis. While we give due regard to LSAT scores and GPA, we also consider interviews, life experiences, written statements, and recommendations. Using this approach, we have admitted many nontraditional students, some of whom have been out of higher education for more than a couple of years. Our students come from every walk of life and display the distinguishing qualities necessary to be good lawyers.

For more than a decade, thoughtful educators

FOUNDED
2014

ENROLLMENT
273

ANNUAL TUITION
\$14,565

ANNUAL FEES
\$506

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2000**
N/A

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2015**
N/A

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WHO HAD JOBS BY
APRIL 2015**
N/A

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-
REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE
JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED
BY THE LAW SCHOOL**
N/A

**AVERAGE DEBT LOAD
OF A 2014 GRADUATE**
N/A

have recommended changes to the law school instructional model. Since we started from scratch, we wrote on a blank slate, allowing us to consider the full array of recommendations and to implement the ones most applicable to us. While some are limited in scope, others are far-reaching. Space allows me to highlight only one.

From time immemorial, law schools have administered a single test—at the end of the semester—for each course. Here, we administer tests on a regular basis. In any given course, our law students can expect to take several low-stakes quizzes, a midterm, and a final exam.

Current research shows that this approach strengthens learning and retention. It also increases studying before and attentiveness during class, enables students to better calibrate what they know, and helps reduce test anxiety among students because no single exam is a make-or-break event. Most importantly, this kind of testing enables instructors to identify gaps in students' understanding and adapt accordingly—before it is too late. Our goal is to provide an excellent legal education geared to practice-related competencies with a teaching-focused faculty. Since preparation for the bar exam is an important part of this, we offer a limited number of electives. In addition, every member of our full-time faculty has practiced law for at least four years and most for much longer, allowing us to provide our students with a wide range of instruction in both doctrine and the applied arts. Our learning environment is robust and rigorous.

Finally, we encourage our students to consider the path less traveled. Retired Texas Supreme Court Chief Justice Wallace Jefferson and Chief Justice Nathan Hecht have both spoken eloquently about the “justice gap” in our society, where our middle class and small businesses struggle to find legal representation. Addressing this gap is one of the great challenges of our profession. We strive to enlighten our students about these issues and to open their eyes to the life-changing opportunities that often accompany them.

We are a work in progress at UNT Dallas College of Law. We realize the solemn responsibility that we have been given, and we approach our task with humility, dedication, and diligence.



ROYAL FURGESON

is the founding dean of the UNT Dallas College of Law, located in downtown Dallas. He graduated from law school in 1967, served in the U.S. Army from 1967 to 1969, clerked for U.S. District Judge Halbert O. Woodward from 1969 to 1970, practiced trial law in El Paso from 1970 to 1994, and served as a U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Texas and then for the Northern District of Texas from 1994 to 2013.

University of Texas School of Law

Ward Farnsworth, dean

Our goal at Texas—and as a dean, my passion—is to set up our students for great careers in the law. The market for traditional legal jobs has become tighter in recent years, and nontraditional paths are becoming less predictable. In response, we’re focused on helping our students in three ways: preparation, mentoring, and economics.

Preparation. We take pride in turning out sophisticated graduates who have high-level analytical skills. We also want to produce students who can deliver value to their employers as soon as they hit the ground. We spend a lot of time talking to those employers—firms, judges, public-interest organizations, government agencies—about how we can make our students ready to excel on arrival.

One theme we hear emphasized is the value of practical experience. We work hard on that. Our school has one of the largest clinical programs in the country: 16 clinics in which our students help real clients with real problems under the supervision of talented professors. Most students take part in at least one of those clinics. They usually say it was one of the best opportunities they had in law school.

We have also found increasing demand for lawyers with financial and business literacy. To help advance that cause, we’ve partnered with faculty at the McCombs School of Business at UT and are developing offerings of our own—innovative classes that prepare our students to understand their clients and their clients’ problems.

Mentoring. I’m big on mentoring. As our students enter a changing profession, what I think they need more than anything is guidance from the veteran professionals in our alumni community. There is no substitute for their experience. I’ve therefore hired a director of mentoring programs to make sure those connections are available to every one of our newcomers. My vision is that when you come to UT, you aren’t just joining a community of students—you’re joining a huge and accomplished community of former students. When you need help navigating the profession, 25,000 prior graduates have your back. (If you’re an alum who wants to help in this way, please write to me.)

Economics. The idea of the UT Law School has always been to provide a top-tier education and top-tier credential without putting our



FOUNDED
1883

ENROLLMENT
975

ANNUAL TUITION AND FEES
\$33,162

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2000**
444

**NUMBER OF GRADUATES
IN 2015**
335

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WHO HAD JOBS BY
MARCH 2015**
91 percent

**PERCENTAGE OF 2014 GRADUATES
WITH FULL-TIME, J.D.-
REQUIRED/J.D.-ADVANTAGE
JOBS THAT WERE SUBSIDIZED
BY THE LAW SCHOOL**
7.6 percent

**AVERAGE DEBT LOAD
OF A 2014 GRADUATE**
\$74,429, an increase
from 2013



students into top-tier debt. It’s more important than ever in a world where few lawyers end in the same role they had when their careers started. We want our graduates to have flexibility, and flexibility is hard to maintain if you come out of school with six-figure loans to pay back.

I’m happy to say that our in-state tuition is still lower, by a lot, than every other school in the top 15, and it has stayed the same for many years now. (And many of our out-of-state students are granted in-state tuition.) But it’s much higher than it used to be (currently about \$33,000). The state now provides a very small share of our budget.

So my highest priority is raising scholarship funds for our students. I’m asking every one of our graduates to consider the return on investment they obtained by coming to this school. For most, the return has been tremendous. And I’m asking them—here and now—to do what they can, whether a lot or a little, to keep that tradition alive by helping with our scholarship fund: the Endowment for Excellence. So far the response to this campaign has been great. Our graduates are a loyal bunch.

I’ll end where I started: we specialize in listening to employers. Let me hear from you! **TBJ**



WARD FARNSWORTH

taught for 15 years at the Boston University School of Law, where he also served as associate dean for academic affairs, before becoming dean at the University of Texas School of Law. He teaches courses on torts, contracts, civil procedure, admiralty, and rhetoric and currently is the reporter for the American Law Institute’s *Restatement (Third) Torts: Liability for Economic Harm*. Farnsworth graduated with high honors from the University of Chicago Law School in 1994 and afterward served as a law clerk to Anthony M. Kennedy, associate justice of the United States Supreme Court, and as a law clerk to Richard A. Posner, chief judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the 7th Circuit. He has also served as legal adviser to the Iran-United States Claims Tribunal in the Hague.