The Catholic University of America
Columbus School of Law

INSTITUTIONAL INFORMATION
Public/private: Private
Affiliation: Roman Catholic
Student-faculty ratio: 12:1
% faculty part-time: 85
% faculty female: 35
% faculty underrepresented minority: 10
Total faculty: 225

SURVEY SAYS...
Diverse experiences accepted for classrooms. Great research resources. Great library staff. Beautiful campus.

STUDENTS
Enrollment of law school: 768
% female: 47.93
% part-time: 34
% underrepresented minority: 23
% international: 3
% of countries represented: 22
Average age of entering class: 26

ACADEMICS
Academic Experience Rating: 81
Profs interesting rating: 81
Profs accessible rating: 75
Hours of study per day: 4.24

Academic Specialization
Securities Law, International Law, Communications Law, and Public Policy, Intellectual Property, Jurisprudence

Advanced Degrees Offered
JD, three years (full-time), or four years part-time, LL.M

Combined Degrees Offered
JD/MBA programs in accounting, canon law, history, philosophy, political, library science, economics, and social work, 3-4 years.

Academics
Catholic University of America’s Columbus School of Law combines the professional opportunities and legal resources of Washington, D.C. with the intimate, student-friendly atmosphere of a private law school. Drawing from the surrounding city’s large legal community, many CUA professors are “full-time practicing attorneys” with a “deep understanding of their particular field.” Here, professors come from “engaging and diverse legal backdrops,” including “younger faculty already making names for themselves in areas like civil procedure, Free Amendment conscience protection, and protecting children from sexual abuse.” While the school attracts top-notch names, the atmosphere is “warm” and accommodating, with professors described as “intelligent, sympathetic, approachable, and caring.” While the JD program is not overly easy, “the emphasis is on creating successful students,” with ample support services to promote that goal. For instance, “there is a program for individuals in the lower 15 percent of the class with additional lectures, and study technique assistance—they don’t let people slip through the cracks.” The accommodating culture extends to the administrative offices and staff, too. From financial aid to the program dean, “the administration is very helpful and will address student concerns promptly.”

Legal education extends beyond the classroom at CUA, and the administration puts a lot of “emphasis on the school’s moot court, arbitrat, and trial teams, as well as journal and clinics.” Plus, “All of the professors are more than willing and able to help connect students with internships, clerkships, and eventual jobs.” Research is also a major component of the academic program, and “the research librarians bend over backwards to help any student who asks.” If they cannot find what they need at CUA, the school provides “access to all major research databases as well as catalogs from most major libraries in Washington, D.C. through the interlibrary loan program.” When it comes to the job hunt, many would love to see CUA’s Career Services department significantly enhanced. “While the people working there currently do a very good job, that office needs more funding and larger staff so they can help students learn about and apply for jobs.” However, “the connections to government and legislative opportunities” are strong at CUA, and the “very active alumni network” helps students make inroads in D.C.’s legal community. On that note, students point out that the school “focuses primarily on D.C. and government jobs, so if you’re a student looking to work elsewhere after graduation, Catholic may not be the best option.”

Catholic University of America’s religious affiliations are more than just in name alone, and, depending on their own background, students either praise or denigrate the Catholic influence on their law school education. Prospective students should be aware that, even in strict legal discussion, “you don’t get away from that Catholic perspective” at CUA. For example, “the school’s connection to the Catholic church prevents student groups from participating in certain activities, and makes some journal-writing topics off limits.” Others explain that because of the school’s stringent standards, “there can sometimes be trouble in getting outside speakers approved in a timely manner.” Excluding religious affiliations, most students are happy to note that the school’s Catholic values are wonderfully demonstrated in its “commitment to public service and pro bono” work.

Financial Facts

Annual tuition: $41,830
Tuition and fees: $3,500
Room & Board: $11,000

Financial aid application deadline: Rolling

Average first-year students receiving some sort of aid: 95
Average all students receiving some sort of aid: 90
Average all that is need-based: 13
Average receiving scholarships: 47
Average grant: $11,804
Average loan: $48,900
Average total aid package: $46,546
Average debt: $71,050

Admissions

Admissionsugeot Rating: 81
# applications received: 3,023
% applications accepted: 32
Median LSAT: 157
LSAT Range: 151-160
Median undergraduate GPA: 3.28
Application fee: $55
Regular application deadline: 11/1
Early application deadline: 10/1
Transfer students accepted: Yes
Evening division offered: Yes
Part-time accepted: Yes
CAR accepted: Yes

LIFE

Described as “a great place to learn and study,” CUA offers a comfortable campus environment, which also affords access to the many events, venues, and recreational opportunities in greater Washington, D.C. Within the law school, “the facilities are phenomenal,” offering classrooms that are “large, technologically current, and well-lit.” For the school’s information, “Every student has a laptop,” and there is “wireless internet and power outlets at each desk.” When students need a quiet place to concentrate, the “vast and beautiful” law library “is well-lit and expansive,” and it has a great view of the Catholic University campus.”

Taking a cue from the school’s friendly teaching staff, “Students tend to be much more collegial at Catholic compared with the more cutthroat competition you find at other area schools.” This student body is a convivial crew who are mindful of the knowledge that “the people in our classes are going to be our colleagues when we are done with school, so everyone is working to work together if someone needs help.” When they are not concentrating for study groups, CUA students also get together for clubs, association meetings, and social events. Among other happenings, “the school provides the opportunity for a vast number of happy hours both on and off campus.”

Getting In

When evaluating candidates at CUA Law, a prospective student’s academic record and performance on the LSAT are the two most important factors in any admissions decision; however, the admissions committee will also consider other elements of an applicant’s history, such as previous leadership or professional experience, letters of recommendation, and one’s personal statement. Recent students who enrolled had an LSAT range (in the 25th-75th percentile) of 151-160. Incoming students join the program from more than 30 U.S. states and internationally as well.

Clinical program required: No
Legal writing: Yes
Legal research: Yes
Legal research: No
Most course requirement: No
Honors course requirement: No
Public interest: Law requirement: No

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