William S. Richardson School of Law

Administration
2555 Dole Street
Honolulu, HI 96822
Tel: (808) 956-7966
(808) 956-3000 (Application Request Line)
Fax: (808) 956-3813
Web: www.law.hawaii.edu
Dean: Aviam Soifer
Associate Dean for Student Services: Ronette M. Kawakami
Associate Dean for Academic Affairs: Denise Antolini

General Information
Since admitting its first class of students in 1973, the William S. Richardson School of Law has graduated more than 2,000 attorneys, most of whom continue to serve in the state of Hawai‘i. Richardson graduates have risen to prominent positions, including governor of Hawai‘i; lieutenant governor; president of a Hawai‘i university; a federal magistrate; Hawai‘i Supreme Court, intermediate court of appeals, circuit, district, family, and per diem court judges; partners in major law firms; and members of the state Legislature and Honolulu City Council. In addition, graduates of the school are found in significant numbers at the attorney general, public defender, and prosecuting attorney offices.

The law school offers a three-year, post-baccalaureate program culminating in the juris doctor (JD) degree, also known as the first professional degree in law. A JD degree prepares students for the bar examination, admission to the bar, and a satisfying career in legal and related fields. The school also offers an LL.M. for international students.

Student Body
Many of the over 300 students in the law school either were born in Hawai‘i or have other ties to the state or region. We also welcome students from the continental U.S., Asia, and the Pacific. Many students from out-of-state express an interest in the school’s exceptional Pacific-Asian or environmental areas of emphasis. Each entering class (approximately 90 in number) typically reflects the ethnic diversity of Hawai‘i and includes individuals of African American, Caucasian, Chinese, Filipino, Hawaiian, Japanese, Korean, and Pacific Island ancestry. Currently enrolled students from the Asia Pacific region represent China, Guam, Japan, the Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa.

Approximately half of the students are female, and about 20 percent have completed other graduate degrees before enrolling in the law school.

Mission
The mission of the William S. Richardson School of Law is to provide formal legal education, encourage and support scholarly legal research, and promote justice in our society and professional responsibility and public service within our profession. We share the goals of the State of Hawai‘i and UH Mānoa to provide educational opportunities for the people of this state and to be leaders in environmental law, Pacific and Asian legal studies, and the law of the sea.

In carrying out this mission, the school’s graduates fill a demand for qualified attorneys who are sensitive to Hawai‘i’s special needs and who will serve government and the public interest as well as private entities.

Students are encouraged to study law and legal institutions as integral parts of larger social, political, economic, and ecological systems. A number of law students concurrently seek graduate degrees at UH Mānoa while undertaking the JD program.

Accreditations
The accreditation process of the American Bar Association (ABA) is designed to ensure that approved law schools have adequate facilities and adhere to sound educational policies. The School of Law has been fully approved by the ABA; this enables its graduates to present a JD degree acceptable to the bar examiners in every state.

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In 1989, the School of Law was admitted to full membership in the Association of American Law Schools (AALS). 

**Degrees Offered:** juris doctor (JD), LL.M.

**Advising**

Students have access to academic, personal, and career counseling at any time during the program. Academic counseling is intended to assist the student in defining a program that will satisfy both personal interests and professional development.

Career counseling and information on job opportunities are provided to students for part-time, clerkship, and entry-level positions. About 40 Honolulu legal employers representing the private, public, and public-interest sectors participate in the on-campus interview program for law students. The law school also presents informational programs on career choices and alternatives and preparation for the job search.

**Admission Requirements**

Admission to the law school is a highly competitive process, which is based on an applicant's academic achievement, aptitude for the study of law, and professional promise. Included among the specific factors evaluated are undergraduate grade point average, results of the Law School Admission Test (LSAT), academic work beyond the bachelor’s degree, academic rigor, writing ability, work experience, and volunteer and civic activities. The admission committee also takes into consideration the diversity of the class and unusual accomplishments or achievements. Residency in Hawai‘i or special experience relevant to Hawai‘i, the Asia Pacific region, or the law school’s programs is also a significant admission criterion.

All applicants must have earned, by the entrance date, a baccalaureate degree from an accredited institution of higher learning in the U.S. or a foreign degree that is fully equivalent. Other requirements include the LSAT results, submission of transcripts to the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS), two letters of recommendation, and a completed law school application.

**Application Deadlines**

Applications for admission must be filed with the School of Law and must be submitted on the current year’s forms. Contact the law school for up-to-date deadlines and applications. Late or incomplete applications are not considered. Applicants are notified of the admission decision in late March/early April for August entry.

**Ulu Lehua Scholars Program**

The initiative, now known as the Ulu Lehua Scholars Program, was established in 1974, the year after the school’s founding. The program selects students from legally underserved communities who have overcome adversity and demonstrated academic potential, leadership ability, and commitment to social justice and provides an opportunity for them to obtain a legal education. Ulu Lehua Scholars are fully matriculated into the JD Program, but they also benefit from participation in a small, supportive learning community within the law school, and from course load flexibility during their first year. In their first semester, Ulu Lehua Scholars, like all first year (1L) law students, take Contracts, Civil Procedure, and Legal Practice. In place of Criminal Justice, which they take in their second year, however, Ulu Lehua 1Ls take American Legal Systems. In addition to providing participants with structured and individualized instruction in legal reasoning, legal writing, law school study techniques, and other foundational legal skills, this course introduces Lehua students to critical legal theory and to other interdisciplinary perspectives on the relationship between law and social change. Ulu Lehua 1Ls and first semester 2Ls also benefit from a structured program of tutoring in civil procedure, contracts, torts, real property, and constitutional law, led by upper division Lehua students who excelled in those courses. Ulu Lehua Scholars participate fully in the life of the law school, assuming leadership roles in such organizations as the Hawai‘i Law Review, the ‘Alahui o Hawai‘i, the Asia-Pacific Law and Policy Journal, and the school’s award-winning moot court teams. Upon graduation, they become part of a large and influential Lehua alumni community, which includes many current judges, government leaders, social justice advocates, business administrators, and prominent attorneys. The Ulu Lehua Program extends the mission of its predecessor, the Pre-Admissions Program, founded to address the underrepresentation of disadvantaged communities.

It seeks candidates who will contribute to fulfilling the goals of the program, including: (1) addressing the legal and related needs of communities under-served by the legal profession in Hawai‘i and the South Pacific; (2) representing communities that are presently underrepresented in the law school and the Hawai‘i Bar; (3) serving as role models for and mentors to others who are striving to overcome adversity and to reach their full potential as community leaders in Hawai‘i and the South Pacific; and (4) bringing distinctive viewpoints and life experiences to the law school community, enriching the understanding of all who work and study here.

**Program Requirements**

**Full-Time Program**

The JD program is a three-year, full-time course of study that begins in August with a 3-day orientation for new students. The JD degree is awarded upon completion of the satisfactory completion of 89 credit hours, including a selection of required courses. Completion of the program must be attained within seven years of the date of first registration. Full-time study is defined as registration for a minimum of 12 credit hours per semester plus regular and punctual attendance at scheduled class meetings. In addition, all law students must complete 60 hours of pro bono legal service in order to graduate. Contact the law school for a detailed description of the degree requirements.

The first-year curriculum is entirely prescribed and offers a conventional format of substantive courses and intensive small group seminars in legal writing, research, and advocacy. The program for the second and third years is primarily elective and includes writing and research seminars, clinical workshops (some of which involve students in actual litigation under the Supreme Court’s Student Practice Rule), and a variety of courses in both traditional and new areas of law.

**Part-Time Program**

In the fall of 2008, the law school launched a part-time evening program, leading to a JD degree. Part-time students share the same competitive qualities of the full-time student body and graduation requirements are the same for both programs.
A student in the part-time program typically takes between 8-11 course credits over 3-4 evenings per week. The first two years of the part-time program are structured to allow students to complete most of the required courses. Making steady part-time progress, including summers, a student should be able to graduate in four to five years. There is no separate application for admission; applicants may indicate on their application a desire to be considered for the part-time program. Students admitted to the part-time program may continue to hold a full-time job.

**Additional Information**

For complete information on school policies and programs, request a *School of Law Catalog* from the Office of Admissions at 2555 Dole Street, Honolulu, HI 96822 or online at www.law.hawaii.edu.

**Special Programs**

**The Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law**

The Center for Excellence in Native Hawaiian Law was established in 2005 at the law school through a grant under the Native Hawaiian Education Act. The center focuses on education, research, community outreach, and the preservation of invaluable Hawaiian historical and legal materials. It also offers new courses and supports law students as they pursue legal careers and leadership roles in the Native Hawaiian community. Center faculty have expertise in many aspects of Native Hawaiian rights, water law, Federal Indian law, and traditional and customary rights issues. With assistance from the Office of Hawaiian Affairs (OHA) and other generous community supporters, the center recently began a Post-JD Research Fellowship program; awarded Summer Fellowships allowing law students to work for Native Hawaiian organizations over the summer in 2006; awarded four student scholarships; and produced a guide to Native Hawaiian legal resources. Through a recent initiative, students are now able to receive a Pacific-Asian Legal Studies Certificate with a specialty in Native Hawaiian Law.

**Dual Degree and Graduate Certificate Programs**

Law students may integrate their law school work with graduate work in other schools and colleges at UH Mānoa and receive both the JD degree and a graduate degree. The most popular dual degree programs have been the JD–MBA, the JD–master of urban and regional planning, and the JD–MA in Asian studies, although other dual degrees may be approved in consultation with the law school. Students may also pursue graduate certificate programs including ocean policy, resource management, or gerontology.

Students interested in dual degree or certificate programs must apply separately and be admitted to both the School of Law and the graduate or certificate program. Admission to one program does not guarantee admission to the other.

**Elder Law Program**

The UH Elder Law Program (UHELP) consists of two components: the Elder Law course and the Elder Law legal services project. The course is part of the law school’s educational program for training law students in the rapidly expanding field of elder law. The Elder Law legal services project provides direct delivery of limited civil legal services to older persons who are socially and economically needy. It also provides education, training and advice to older persons, their families and caregivers regarding the oftentimes complex legal aspects of caregiving. This direct legal services project is an important source of cases assigned to law students in the Elder Law Clinic. UHELP also houses the Pro Bono Program.

**Pro Bono Program**

The Pro Bono Program at the William S. Richardson School of Law was one of the first law school pro bono programs and is thought to be the first student-initiated mandatory program in the nation. Students are required to locate and to provide law-related pro bono work under the supervision of an attorney, law school faculty or dean, or other supervisor, as approved by the law school Pro Bono Program director. The definition of law-related pro bono work is construed liberally and includes law related work in the public interest with private practice and non-profit attorneys as well as any international, federal, state, or local government agency, court, or legislature. Law students are encouraged to provide a portion of their pro bono service for indigent clients. The pro bono requirement began with the entering class of August 1992 and successful completion of the pro bono service requirement is a condition for graduation.

**Environmental Law Program**

Recognizing the challenges that Hawai’i faces in developing an environmentally sustainable economy, the law school has developed a vibrant, diverse Environmental Law Program (ELP). The ELP offers a significant number of exciting and varied courses in environment law and related fields. The centerpiece of the ELP is the Certificate in Environmental Law. The certificate program recognizes the increased student interest in this area, the expertise of a substantial number of our faculty, and opportunities in the field. Students interested in the certificate might also want to consider pursuing a Graduate Ocean Policy Certificate, which is offered at UH Mānoa and is part of our dual degree program. The certificate is available only to UH law students. For more information on the law school’s ELP, visit our website at www.law.hawaii.edu/elp.

**LL.M. Program for International Students**

The LL.M. program is a one-year course of study open to foreign legal professionals and law graduates who wish to gain a broader understanding of U.S. and international legal issues.
The program begins in August; no students will be admitted mid-year. To graduate, students must complete at least twenty-four credit hours. Students are free to design their own course of study in consultation with the LL.M. director and may select a range of courses and seminars in areas such as business and commercial law, environmental law, and international and comparative law. Their program may (but need not) include first-year courses, which serve as an introduction to U.S. law and methods of study. With the consent of the instructor and the LL.M. director, LL.M. students also may enroll in courses offered by schools or departments outside the School of Law or participate in legal externships.

The Introduction to American Law course is required and restricted to LL.M. students, but LL.M. students will take all other classes with American J.D. students and will have ample opportunity to interact with them. The small size of the LL.M. program and of most School of Law classes promotes close interaction, and LL.M. students are encouraged to participate in all aspects of law school life.

For more information on the LL.M. program, visit our website at www.law.hawaii.edu or contact the LL.M. director at lawllm@hawaii.edu.

**Pacific-Asian Legal Studies**

In keeping with Hawai‘i’s location, culture, and history, the Law School has long emphasized Pacific-Asian Legal Studies Program (PALS). We now offer an exceptional range of courses on Pacific and Asian law: students may take general Asian and comparative law courses or choose from specialized courses on China, Japan, Korea, and the Pacific. Our PALS faculty members are actively engaged in current Asian-Pacific issues and bring an unusual depth of expertise to their courses. They are recognized nationally and internationally for their scholarship, which they combine with extensive real-world experience. Each year we also invite distinguished visitors from Asia and the Pacific to visit the law school and teach short-term specialized courses to supplement the regular curriculum. To recognize students who concentrate in Pacific-Asian law, we award certificates of achievement. We actively support student participation in externships in Asia and the Pacific as part of their law school program, which will also count toward certificate credit. Students may also benefit from some of the many exchange relationships the law school maintains with law schools throughout the Asia-Pacific. For more information, visit our website at www.law.hawaii.edu/pals.

**Advanced JD Program for Foreign Law Graduates**

The advanced JD allows graduates of foreign law schools to complete their U.S. law studies and earn a JD degree in as little as two years. Under this program, qualified foreign law graduates may be admitted with advanced standing and awarded up to 29 credits for their previous law study. The decision on the number of credits to be granted will be made when your application is considered, and successful applicants will be notified at the time of admission how many credits they will receive for their foreign study.

Most students admitted to this program will complete the first-year required JD curriculum in their first year of study, then take their choice of elective courses in the second year of study. We work with all students to design an individual program suited to their background and interests, including participation in our programs in environmental, international, and business law.

Our two-year JD program provides foreign law graduates with the best preparation for bar admission and for the successful practice of law. Advanced JD students are full members of our law school community. Students admitted to the accelerated JD program receive the same degree as other JD students and are eligible to take the bar examination in all U.S. jurisdictions, if they meet the other requirements for admission. For more information, email kimuraspa@hawaii.edu.

**Hawai‘i Innocence Project**

The Hawai‘i Innocence Project (HIP) fills a deep need in seeking justice for the wrongly convicted, which is essential for any system of justice. The HIP examines the process for investigating a claim of actual innocence, common errors or problems that produce wrongful conviction, state and federal post conviction procedures, and the nature and uses of DNA and other scientific evidence in connection with actual post-conviction cases.

**Student Organizations**

The current list of student organizations are:

- ‘Ahahui o Hawai‘i
- Advocates for Public Interest Law
- American Bar Association-Law Student Division
- American Constitution Society
- Asia Pacific Law & Policy Journal
- Black Law Students Association
- Business Executive Legal Society
- Christian Legal Society
- Delta Theta Phi
- Dive Club
- Environmental Law Society
- Ete Bowl
- Federalist Society
- Filipino Law Student Association
- Film and Entertainment Law Organization
- Hawai‘i Women Lawyers
- La Alianza
- LAMBDA Law Student Organization
- Law Review
- National Lawyers Guild-Richardson Chapter
- Pacific Asian Law Student Organization
- Phi Delta Phi
- Public Health Law Organization
- Student Animal Legal Defense Fund
- Student Bar Association
- Surf Club