

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the school's mission?

The mission of the law school is to provide an outstanding legal education for a nationally-based, diverse student body in a collegial and supportive environment with attention to newly emerging areas of law, particularly those related to technological development, globalization and the quest for social justice.

What is the school's academic focus?

The school's student-centered academic program is engaging and interactive, and offers a balanced, comprehensive curriculum that will prepare graduates for practice in any field, whether it is law, government, business or social service.

How is the curriculum structured?

The curriculum is one of the school's greatest strengths and ensures that they graduate with a broad legal education while specializing in distinct programs of study. The diverse array of elective courses fits almost all legal career aspirations.

Does Thomas Jefferson Law have a strong financial aid program?

The school offers Federal Direct Loans to eligible students in the JD program and unlike the complex process of applying for aid at the undergraduate level, the application can be done in a few easy steps in an hour or less. The goal is to provide personal financial assistance and counseling to fit the needs of students so they can focus on their law school education.

In addition, Thomas Jefferson Law offers guaranteed merit scholarships for first-time entering students. Based on the student's highest LSAT score and undergraduate grade point average, the scholarships are available for full-time and part-time students.

How does the school help its graduates find jobs?

Planning for a career goes hand-in-hand with taking the courses that will get the student there. The Career Services center is a one-stop shop for advice, guidance, networking events, externships, and community opportunities. The professional team in the office works with students as they explore their options.

The team is adept at career counseling, coaching, networking opportunities and applying for internships and clerkships. The Career Services center hosts career fairs. The counselors have all been working lawyers and have the knowledge and experience to help students build a successful career.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why does Thomas Jefferson have a diverse student body?

Thomas Jefferson Law is committed to helping diversify the profession through its admission practices and in the creation of an environment for faculty, staff and students that is inclusive and supportive of a diverse community.

We live in an increasingly diverse world. So Thomas Jefferson Law believes it is important that its law students be exposed to the diversity they will encounter in practice. The school's diversity provides opportunities to be exposed to different views, life experiences and cultures. A diverse student body promotes an understanding of others and their culture.

Diversity is the lifeblood of our law school. It isn't an option; it's an on-going commitment that comes from our core values. We are ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* in 2011 as the 33rd most diverse law school in the nation, and ranked 15th by the *National Jurist* for diversity in 2014.

What is experiential learning?

Hands-on legal experience is invaluable for law students. Experiential learning strengthens a student's knowledge of the law and its practical application. This type of learning builds professional skills, confidence, networking contacts and experiences that look great on a resume. Thomas Jefferson Law encourages its students to take advantage of the many opportunities available for gaining real world practical experience through its large number of Field Placements. Thomas Jefferson Law also offers many Pro Bono opportunities where students can earn Pro Bono Honors through Clinical and Mediation programs.

After graduation, alums can hone their skills while opening their own practice as part of our Center for Solo Practitioners.

Why did the school choose to be called Thomas Jefferson School of Law?

Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence and was the third president of the United States. Prior to being one of the founding fathers of the United States of America, Jefferson practiced law. As a young country lawyer, he traveled throughout the state of Virginia specializing in estate, land and title law. In Jefferson's autobiography, he was most proud of his work on three specific law reforms: the drafting of a bill to establish religious freedom; creation of a system where land ownership was available to anyone; and the establishment of widespread public education.

Thomas Jefferson was America's voice for half a century. He believed that the study of the law qualified a person to be useful to themselves, their neighbors and the public. He died on the fiftieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration of Independence.





What are other career options for a JD degree other than practicing law?

While Thomas Jefferson Law will forever be expert in training students to become practicing lawyers, law students have unlimited opportunity in the 21st century to employ their JD degree. Top executives espouse the benefits of a law degree, even if they decided to skip the bar exam and, instead, start their own business. The skills developed at Thomas Jefferson Law reach far beyond the courtroom.

Many large corporations have increased their demand for lawyers in a variety of settings, such as real-estate, financial and insurance firms, consulting firms, and healthcare providers.

What Thomas Jefferson programs provide career paths outside of practicing law?

The school offers elective courses, four Centers for Academic Excellence and experiential learning opportunities that prepare our students for the 21st century. The Center for Sports Law and Policy prepares its students for employment in the growing sports industry. With its emphasis on professional, amateur and international sports law and policy, and its location in San Diego, the Center is ideally suited to become a major force in dealing with sports law and policy issues. Students graduate with the knowledge base to succeed in the sports industry.

What steps have been implemented to improve the bar pass ratios?

The first professional hurdle in becoming a practicing attorney is successfully passing the bar exam. For many the bar exam is a key measurement of a graduate's aptitude to practice law. Thomas Jefferson Law does everything it can to support students in passing the California Bar Exam on the *first* attempt.

The school has several bar preparation faculty whose sole responsibility is to prepare our students for the bar exam. These bar faculty spend hours each week reviewing, grading and commenting on practice exams to help students succeed on the bar exam. Thomas Jefferson Law offers pre-graduation, for-credit bar preparation courses, Legal Synthesis I and II, to be taken in the last semester of law school. These courses provide students with an intensive review of the critical subject areas tested on the California bar exam.

How did you address the financing restructure?

The school had approximately \$127 million in bonds outstanding from a \$130 million debt incurred in 2008 to build its new building. As part of the transaction, the bonds were cancelled. In exchange for cancelling, the bondholders became owners of the building and have leased it back to the school for up to 10 years with an annual rent of \$5 million.

The lender has also issue \$40 million in new notes at an interest rate of 2 percent. Interest rates on the previous outstanding taxable bonds were over 11 percent.

The agreement reduced the school's debt by almost \$87 million, from \$127 million to \$40 million, and resulted in a significant improvement in cash flow. Previously, the school was paying about \$12 million a year in principal and interest on its debt. Under the restructuring, the school pays \$5 million in annual rent and about \$1 million a year in interest, improving annual cash flow by a total of \$6 million.

School operations continue unchanged under the new agreement. The bondholders continue to express support for the school and its future plans.

Do you have a new focus for helping graduates secure jobs?

At Thomas Jefferson Law the focus has always been to help its graduates find fulfilling careers. The school understands that the measure of their accomplishments comes not only from receiving the degree, but also by what they do with that quality legal education.

The Career Services team works with students and alumni to explore professional development, training and opportunities. These professionals offer advice, guidance, networking, career fairs, externships and community engagement. The team is adept at career counseling, coaching, networking opportunities and assisting students in pursuing internships and clerkships. The counselors have first hand experience as attorneys and can help our students build a successful career.

