

# USD Law Academic Advising Guide 2014

*Beyond the first year...*

For students entering law  
school in Fall 2013.

Provided by the Office for Law Student Affairs—Warren Hall Room 218

## CONTACTS

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Location: Warren Hall 218

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- ◆ Alumni & Development/External Relations  
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- ◆ Career and Professional Development  
Warren Hall 113; (619) 260-4529; lawcareers@sandiego.edu
- ◆ Graduate Programs & International Programs (LLM and Study Abroad)  
Warren Hall 207; (619) 260-4596; llminfo@sandiego.edu
- ◆ Registrar  
Warren Hall 202; (619) 260-4526; lawreg@sandiego.edu

### **Additional Contact Information**

- ◆ USD Public Safety: Hughes Center 151; publicsafety@sandiego.edu  
Emergency: (619) 260-2222 or just 2222 from any on-campus phone  
Non-Emergency: (619) 260-7777 or just 7777 from any on-campus phone
- ◆ USD Counseling Center: Serra Hall 300  
To make an appointment: (619) 260-4655  
24-Hour Crisis Hotline: (800) 479-3339
- ◆ Graduate Student Life: Student Life Pavilion 401; (619) 260-2227
- ◆ Graduate Student Council: gsc@sandiego.edu
- ◆ Student Bar Association (SBA) Office: Warren Hall 114F; 619-260-2392;  
usdlawpres@gmail.com
- ◆ University Ministry: Student Life Pavilion 401; 619-260-2265; markp@sandiego.edu

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## ACADEMIC ADVISING

This academic advising guide is designed to be a starting point for your journey at USD beyond your first year. Why just a starting point? Because invariably there will be something, some question you have that is unique to you or a situation that arises that these pages do not address. Definitely start here with this guidebook. But don't let your quest for information end here. The **Office for Law Student Affairs** (Warren Hall 218) is ready and waiting to assist you in creating your academic plan. **THIS GUIDE IS FOR STUDENTS WHO ENTERED USD IN THE FALL OF 2013.**

## GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS

### ✓QUICK CHECK

- 86 total credits
- Residency requirement (6 semesters full-time or 8 semesters part-time)
- Required courses (after the first year, Tax I and Professional Responsibility)
- Writing Requirement
- Professional Skills Class
- Minimum GPA of 2.00

### 1. You need 86 credits to graduate.

- ◆ For at least 70 of these 86 credits students must earn a grade on the A/B/C/D/F grade scale. That means that only 16 credits may be earned on either the H/P/L/F or P/F scale.
- ◆ 80 of the 86 credits must be taken at USD School of Law, unless a request to visit or exchange for a semester at another law school has been approved.
- ◆ Students must complete these units within 72 months (6 years) of starting law school. Typically it will take three or four years depending on the division (full or part-time).

### 2. You must "reside" at USD Law School for 6 full-time semesters or 8 part-time semesters. (See exceptions).

- ◆ **Full-time students** must attempt and pay for 6 full-time semesters. A "full-time semester" means the student is attempting at least 12 credits. However, if a student has credits from a prior summer school session they may reduce their regular semester course load. Students can take up to 7 credits in any single summer program, but can only reduce a semester load by up to 4 credits. For example, a student can take 4 credits in the summer and apply all credits to the

upcoming Fall or Spring semester and therefore attempt fewer than 12 credits in that upcoming semester (although students will pay full-time tuition as if they had attempted 12 or more credits).

- ◆ **A Five semester and summers option is available** for students who comply with all requirements and file a petition with the Office for Law Student Affairs. These students must attempt at least 12 credits each of the five semesters and must take 12 units of summer school. All 12 of the summer school units must be USD summer school units if the student wants to avoid paying for the sixth semester. That is, students obtaining credits for summer school through another law school would still be eligible to graduate in five semesters, but would have to pay for six semesters (financially this could be detrimental). Choosing the five semester and summers option may have adverse effects on employment so consult with Career & Professional Development before pursuing this option.
- ◆ **Part-time students** must attempt and pay for 8 part-time semesters. A “part-time semester” means a student must take at least 8 credits. Students who transfer into the full-time division after their first year should contact Law Student Affairs for further information about residency requirements. Part-time students may graduate in 7 semesters by completing at least 11 units of summer school. All 11 summer school credits must be earned at USD in order for the student to avoid paying for the eighth semester.
- ◆ **Transfer students** who have entered USD after having spent their first year at another law school must complete at least four full-time semesters (full-time) or six part-time semesters (part-time) in order to obtain the requisite 86 units.

Confused about what to take?

**FREE Advice!**

**OFFICE FOR LAW STUDENT AFFAIRS**

Come visit us in Room 218 of Warren Hall

619-260-4651 or [lawstudentaffairs@sandiego.edu](mailto:lawstudentaffairs@sandiego.edu)

Expiration Date: NEVER!

### 3. You must take and receive credit for all required courses.

<u>Course</u>	<u>Credits</u>
Civil Procedure I*	3
Civil Procedure II*	3
Constitutional Law I*	4
Contracts	4
Criminal Law	4
Property	4
Torts	4
Legal Writing and Research	3
Professional Responsibility**	3
<u>Tax I**</u>	<u>3</u>
Total Required Credits	35***

\*First-year Part-Time students take these courses in the second year

\*\*Courses Required beyond the First Year

\*\*\* Students who complete their first year with a GPA of 2.60 or below are required to take an additional 1 credit legal analysis/writing class in the fall of their second year. This class is graded H/P/L/F.

### 4. You must satisfy the “written work” requirement.

The written work requirement may be satisfied in any one of the following ways:

- 1) Completion of a substantial, in-depth research paper of no fewer than 20 pages in length in a course of limited enrollment centered on the preparation of such in-depth research paper. Look for courses with a “W” designation on the class schedule. OR
- 2) Scholarly written work submitted to the Law Review, San Diego International Law Journal or Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues for publication upon certification of the approving faculty member.

Please be aware that successful completion of a writing course is not determined by the student’s grade in the course, but is separately indicated by professors in the manner specified by the Law School’s administration.

### 5. You must satisfy the “professional skills” requirement.

The professional skills requirement may be satisfied by passing a Professional Skills elective from a list of such courses designated by the Dean. A course will be included on this list if it provides substantial instruction in the professional skills encompassed by ABA Standard of Approval for Law Schools 302(a)(4). Look for courses with an “S” designation on the class schedule.

### 6. You must graduate with a minimum GPA of 2.00.

#### GRADES

**√QUICK CHECK**

- A minimum GPA of 2.00 at the end of each year maintains good academic standing.
- A GPA of 2.60 or lower at the end of any academic year results in Academic Supervision.

Grading Policy

The Law School uses the following grading system:

<u>Grade</u>	<u>Value</u>
A+	4.33
A	4.00
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.00
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.00
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.20
F	1.00
H (Honors)	N/A
P (Pass)	N/A
L (Low Pass)	1.67

First-year Course Grading “Curve”

Grades for all first-year courses can range in grade from A+ to F on a mandatory curve. The average of the grades for each course must be between 2.95 and 3.05. The grade distribution must be as follows.

- ◆ 20-25% of all grades for the class must be above B+. Within this group of grades, the mean must not exceed 3.85; AND
- ◆ 20-25% of all grades for the class must be below B-. Within this group of grades, 8-12% of all grades for the class must be below C.

Legal Writing and Research is graded pursuant to the upper-class grading curve (see below).

### Upper-class Course Grading “Curve”

Grades for upper-class courses not on the H/P/LP/F system, can range from A+ to F on a mandatory curve. The average grades for each course must be between 3.1 and 3.2, i.e., a target of 3.15. The grade distribution must be as follows.

- ◆ 20-25% of all grades for the class must average a 3.67 GPA. Within this group of grades, the mean must not exceed 3.85; AND
- ◆ 25-30% of all grades for the class must be below B. Within this group of grades, not more than 8% of all grades for the class can be below C.

EXCEPTION: The curve is only recommended, rather than mandatory, for upper-class courses with an enrollment of fewer than 20 students and for graduate tax courses (except Tax I and Tax II). The mean for such courses cannot exceed 3.4.

### Ranking

Many students and employers like to understand where a certain cumulative GPA ranks against other GPA's for the same class year. At USD, first-year full-time JD students are not ranked after the fall semester, but only after the first year. First-year part-time students are not ranked until their third semester (however they can obtain a letter from the Registrar's office indicating their approximate rank had they been ranked with the first-year, full-time students). In addition, only the top 20% of each group of JD students receive an ordinal rank on their transcript. Below is an example using the spring 2013 GPA Cut-Off Rankings for 1L Students:

Rank	1L Full-Time (217)
Top 10%	3.57
Top 20%	3.46
Top Quarter	3.37
Top Third	3.24
Top Half	3.05

Students ranked in the bottom half of the class are encouraged to talk with Career & Professional Development about how best to address “rankings” questions from employers.

### Good Academic Standing

Students must maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.00 to remain in good academic standing. First-year students who do not maintain a cumulative grade point average of 2.0 or better at the end of spring semester will be disqualified.

Disqualified students who: (1) have a cumulative grade point average of 1.9 or

higher; or (2) do not rank in the bottom 3 percent of their respective division (day or evening) may petition for readmission. Students who do not fall within these exceptions are not eligible to return to USD.

### Academic Supervision

The Academic Supervision program provides a select group of students with additional support and coursework to help improve their academic performance. Students who complete their first year of law study with a cumulative GPA of 2.6 or below are subject to a program of Second Year Academic Supervision. Students who are placed into the program must meet all program requirements:

- A. Meet with the Assistant Dean for Law Student Affairs as directed to discuss their academic plan for the remainder of their law school enrollment;
- B. In the fall semester of the second year of law study, enroll in and complete with a grade of P or above an intensive course in legal analysis and writing.
- C. Prior to graduation, enroll in and complete with a grade of C or above at least four courses from the following list: Constitutional Law II, Corporations, Criminal Procedure I, Evidence, Remedies, Wills & Trusts. At least two of these courses must be completed with a grade of C or above prior to the end of the second year of law study;
- D. Submit their second year course schedule to the Dean's designee for review and approval; and
- E. Submit their proposed third year schedule to the Dean's designee for review and approval.

During the fall and spring semesters of the second year of law study, students subject to Second Year Academic Supervision are ineligible to serve as an officer or representative of any student organization, and are ineligible to receive academic credit for courses not offered by the law school. During the fall semester of the second year of law study, these students are ineligible to receive academic credit for field placements, judicial internships, and clinics. A student who does not comply with the terms of Second Year Academic Supervision shall be dismissed.

NOTE: Students who complete their second year of law study with a cumulative GPA of 2.6 or below are subject to a program of Third Year Academic Supervision. Students who are placed into the program must meet all program requirements (similar to those listed above), including taking and passing a bar preparation course.

## REGISTRATION

**Students should visit the [law.sandiego.edu](http://law.sandiego.edu) website before the day of registration and view the course descriptions and the exam schedules for classes.** Students are able to register for summer school and for fall classes during the spring (usually in March or April of each year). For Fall 2014, registration for all continuing law students has been scheduled as follows:

- ◆ Monday, March 31st at 7 a.m.
  - ◆ All JD students who will be in the part-time program
  - ◆ All LLM and MSLS students
- ◆ Tuesday, April 3rd at 7 a.m.
  - ◆ All rising 3L JD students who will be in the full-time program
- ◆ **Monday, April 7th at 7 a.m.**
  - ◆ **All rising 2L JD students who will be in the full-time program**

Students should log into MySanDiego no later than 6:45 a.m. Registration begins promptly at 7 a.m. Each year online registration for fall courses is unavailable during reading week and the final exam period.

### Registration Procedures – Using the BANNER system on MySanDiego

Below is a quick set of instructions to make the process of web registration easier using the BANNER student system. **Registration TIP: The steps that are bolded below should be done well in advance of your 6:45 a.m. start time.** Be ready to input the four-digit CRN's (course numbers) of your first choice of courses as soon as you are able to register.

1. Log into the MySanDiego portal with your normal USD username and password.
- 2. Click on the Law Student tab. Use MySanDiego to view the course schedule (click "Look Up Classes" in the registration tools area).**
3. Scroll down to the Registration Tools area. Click Add or Drop Classes, choose the proper term and click Submit.
4. If you **know the CRN(s)** you want to register for, just put them in and hit "Submit Changes".
5. This will take you back to the Add or Drop Classes screen. This screen will show either the classes you added or any errors that you may have encountered. You will need to scroll down the screen to see any error messages.
  - a. If you receive a message that the course you select is "Reserve Restricted" it is due to the fact that a number of seats have been reserved for special categories of students. This message indicates that the class is currently closed to additional students at this time. If these reserved seats are not utilized they will become available to additional students near the start of the semester.

- b. If you receive a message that the "section is closed" but the "waitlist is open" then you may add yourself to the waitlist. To be added to the waitlist use the Action status code of Waitlist. If you do not wish to be waitlisted then select a different course or section.
6. Check to make sure the classes you successfully registered for are listed as **\*\*Web Registered\*\*** on the Add or Drop Classes screen and, if so, you're done! If you do not see your courses near the top of the screen scroll down to check for error messages.
7. To Drop a class, or remove yourself from a waitlist, navigate to the Add or Drop Classes screen. Click on the drop down menu of the class you want to drop in the Action column. Change the action from "None" to "DROP," and click on submit changes. Use extra caution when dropping classes with waitlists. The moment you drop, a space opens for another student and everyone else moves up on the waitlist. If you drop in error, your only option is to add yourself to the end of the waitlist, if the waitlist is still open. Please note, BANNER will prevent you from ever dropping your last class. If you wish to drop your last class it will have to be done in the Registrar's Office. If you experience technical difficulties please contact the HELP desk: help@sandiego.edu or 619-260-7900.

### Waitlists

The waitlist system is university-wide, meaning that the law school does not have the ability to modify the waitlist procedures or students on the waitlist.

**Registration TIP: If you cannot enroll in a course you want, put yourself on the waitlist for it.** Registration is never a one day process! The registration period remains open throughout the semester and the summer, closing temporarily during the study and final exam periods. You may still get that class you want, it just might be later in the process than you hoped.

Placing yourself on an automated waitlist allows you to reserve a place in line for the next available seat in the section. When a student drops a class, the first student on the waitlist will be eligible to register in the section.

Some important things to know about the automated waitlist process:

- ◆ Placing yourself on a waitlist does NOT guarantee that you will eventually be able to enroll in the section.
- ◆ Open seats are offered based on your position on the waitlist. The first person who signs up for the waitlist is the first person offered an opening.
- ◆ Notifications of an open seat are sent by e-mail to your @sandiego.edu account only. Please be sure to check that account frequently if you are on a waitlist.

- ◆ You have 24 hours from the time of notification to register for the section. If you do not register in that time period, you are dropped from the waitlist and the next person on the waitlist is offered the open seat.
- ◆ THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THE 24-HOUR RULE.
- ◆ In order to be added to a waitlist, you must meet the same pre-requisite restrictions as if registering for the course.
- ◆ You may add yourself to the waitlist for a different section of a course in which you are already enrolled. Be aware that in this case if you are offered an open seat, you will need to drop the existing section and resolve any time conflicts with other registrations. You must drop yourself from the other section before moving from waitlisted to registered status in your designated class.
- ◆ You may waitlist for more than one section of the same course.
- ◆ Once you drop that class, if it has a waitlist, you will not be allowed to add it again. You will have to add yourself to the waitlist. Be sure you want to make the change because you cannot reverse the drop after the 'Submit Changes' button is clicked, as a result of changing your mind or making a mistake.

## CHOOSING CLASSES

After your first year, you have the opportunity to choose from a wide range of elective courses to fulfill the 86 credits. As a reminder, the two classes you must take after your first year (or after your second year for part-time students) are **Tax I and Professional Responsibility**. You may only take up to 16 credits per semester and no more than 7 credits during a single summer. You must take at least 8 units per semester (and at least 19 units total per year including summers). [Financial Aid policy]

### Bar Courses

In order to be licensed to practice law in a particular state you must pass that state's licensing or "bar" exam. Most of the courses you took in your first year are covered on bar exams across the country. However there are additional subjects that are covered on the Bar Exam which are not required, but students are strongly encouraged to take as electives. For the California Bar these courses include:

- \* Community Property (2 or 3 credits)
- \* Constitutional Law II (3 or 4 credits)
- \* Corporations (4 credits)
- \* Criminal Procedure (3 credits)
- \* Evidence (4 credits)
- \* Remedies (3 or 4 credits)

- \* UCC Sales (3 credits)
- \* Wills and Trusts (3 or 4 credits)

Additional California Bar courses:

- \* California Civil Procedure (3 credits)
- \* California Evidence – not regularly offered

### Concentrations

Many students come to law school with a particular practice area in mind for their future career or quickly develop a special interest. For students ready to focus their study after the first year, USD offers concentration programs in eight key practice areas. These concentrations highlight curricular strengths, offering a rich selection of courses taught by leading scholars and expert practitioners.

Concentrations are offered in:

- ◆ Business and Corporate Law
- ◆ Children's Rights
- ◆ Civil Litigation
- ◆ Criminal Litigation
- ◆ Environmental and Energy Law
- ◆ Intellectual Property
- ◆ International Law
- ◆ Public Interest Law

Students may consult the concentration curriculum as an informal guide for shaping their education or enhance career preparation by meeting the specific requirements for earning a Certificate of Concentration and transcript notation. For assistance in planning your schedule to meet the requirements of a concentration, contact Ms. Irene Condella, Director for Law Student Affairs.

### Electives

Students need to only take 35 credits of required courses, leaving at least 51 credits in elective courses (you can always take more than 86 credits). We've already discussed the suggested bar courses and the path to a concentration, but there are still other elective options to consider. The question becomes: What interests you? USD offers a variety of courses in many areas of the law and society. From Animal Law to Trademark Law, Art Law to Sports Law, International Human Rights to International Business Transactions, just to name a few! Use elective credits to explore these areas and get to know the professors teaching these great courses.



- ◆ Clinics: USD has over twelve legal clinics which provide excellent practical legal training early in your law school career. Clinics include a classroom component as well as interactions with clients. Clinic applications are available online, in the Registrar's office and at the Legal Clinics offices at Barcelona (BA), Room 305. Prerequisites vary, so please read the descriptions carefully. All courses require an interview with the professor and signed approval to enroll. Enrollment is limited, and many clinics fill quickly. For more information contact: USD Legal Clinics at 619-260-7470; Children's Advocacy Institute and Center for Public Interest Law at 619-260-4806; Energy Policy Initiatives Center (EPIC) at 619-260-4589 or Professor Jean Ramirez for Criminal Clinics.
- ◆ Judicial Internships: In the Judicial Internship Program students receive academic credit (typically between four and six credits) for their work with judges in state or federal trial or appellate courts. The primary purpose of these placements is to translate academic legal education into practical adjudicative decision making, thus helping students understand how the courts work and how attorneys, judges and litigants succeed and fail in the process. By virtue of the variety of work in their placements, judicial interns also improve their skills in research, writing, observation and oral communication. For more information please contact Professor Paul Horton or Assistant Dean Cara Mitnick in the CPD Office.
- ◆ Internships/Externships: There are several opportunities for students to receive academic credit for their work in a law related internship. These opportunities consist of a work component and a class component and students work a minimum of 60 hours per unit of credit to receive 1-3 credits for the experience.
  - ◆ In the Agency Internship Program, students typically intern with a government agency or a nonprofit organization. Within the Corporate Counsel and Entertainment, Sports and IP internship programs, students are typically placed within corporate counsel offices or private companies. Outside of these programs, students are not permitted to work in a law firm for credit. For more information please contact Ms. Lizzette Herrera, Assistant Director of Career & Professional Development.
  - In the D.C. Externship Program, students take courses and work within a government agency in Washington D.C. for a semester. In addition to coursework, students gain valuable experience, meet with USD Alums working in D.C., cement new professional contacts and enhance their professional profile. For more information please contact Assistant Dean Cara Mitnick.
- ◆ Moot Court: Each spring the Moot Court Board selects 2L's and evening 3L's to serve on the following year's executive board and national team. The executive board is responsible for all tasks related to hosting tournaments and promoting

appellate advocacy at USD. National Team members, in addition to serving on the executive board, travel and compete in nationwide tournaments. Students can receive up to one credit for their participation in moot court. For more information, please contact Haley Shumaker, Assistant Director for Advocacy Programs at 619-260-4255 or Warren Hall Room 218.

- ◆ Mock Trial: The USD trial team competes in five major trial tournaments every year including the National Tournament of Champions, an invitation-only tournament that selects the best of the top sixteen trial teams in the country. Members of the team are selected through intra-school competitions. All students selected compete in at least one national competition and can receive up to two credits for the experience. For more information please contact Haley Shumaker, Assistant Director for Advocacy Programs at 619-260-4255 or Warren Hall Room 218.
- ◆ Law Review and Journals: In order to get significant experience with research, writing and editing of articles, many students decide to apply to work on a law review or journal. The *San Diego Law Review* is a student-run periodical that publishes articles of topical legal interest four times a year. Students are either invited to join due to their academic achievement, or they have successfully participated in a write-on competition offered in the spring. In addition to Law Review, USD hosts several other journals including the San Diego International Law Journal, San Diego Journal of Climate & Energy Law and the Journal of Contemporary Legal Issues (faculty-run). Students should check with each individual journal and the academic rules for number of credits one can achieve.
- ◆ Independent Research/Study: After your first year of law school, you may earn between zero and two credits during any semester or summer for supervised independent research and writing. Forms are available in the Registrar's office; for more information on selecting a topic and faculty advisor, please contact the Office for Law Student Affairs.
- ◆ Study Abroad: USD's study abroad programs provide intensive training in international law, while introducing USD students to the legal institutions of another country. Students may earn up to 7 units of credit in one of four summer abroad programs in Barcelona, London, Paris or Florence. For students interested in studying abroad for a full semester, USD offers eight exchange programs in various countries throughout the world (see website for full details). Selected students pay registration fees to USD and are only responsible to the host universities for board, lodging and any obligatory

membership fees to campus organizations. The credit for coursework (the majority of which is taught in English) undertaken has to be approved by USD in the same manner as any coursework submitted for transfer under our academic rules. For more information on the summer abroad program, please contact the Office for Graduate and International Programs at 619-260-4596.

### Rules to Remember When Choosing Courses

There are several academic rules in place to ensure students take a variety of types of courses prior to graduation. Keep in mind these rules as you plan your semesters:

- ◆ No more than 16 total pass/fail (PF/HPLF) credits (15 beyond the first year) earned over all combined semesters may count towards your degree. A list of these classes is available in the Registrar's office and on their section of the law school website.
- ◆ No more than 2 Independent Supervised Research credits earned over all combined semesters may count toward your degree.
- ◆ No more than 6 total Journal, Moot Court, and Independent Supervised Research credits earned over all combined semesters may count towards your degree.
- ◆ No more than 6 total non-law credits earned over all combined semesters may count towards your degree.

## **BEYOND THE CLASSROOM**

After your first year, you will find that there are many co-curricular and off-campus activities that can enhance your time at USD. However, be careful not to over-schedule or commit yourself to too many of these activities as the academic component of law school should remain your primary focus.

### Student Activities and Leadership Opportunities

The Student Bar Association (SBA) is the umbrella organization for all student clubs at the University of San Diego. The SBA also serves as the student voice before the faculty and administration. The executive board is composed of the President, Vice President, Vice President for Organizations, Treasurer, and Secretary. These positions are filled through a general election process held each spring. Class representatives, ABA representatives and Honor Code Hearing Committee members also comprise the main student leadership positions here at USD. You don't have to be an elected officer to participate in SBA. A great way to get involved with the SBA is to attend SBA meetings which occur every other Monday at noon. Committees are formed, parties are planned and regulations adopted – all of which you can be a part of. For more information, check out SBA's TWEN page.

In addition, USD offers ample opportunities to enrich your legal education and leadership skills through participation in more than 40 student organizations. Many of these clubs conduct orientation programs, provide study assistance, represent group concerns, sponsor speaker programs, participate in and sponsor competitions, host social activities and promote community relations. Look for flyers posted around campus and the weekly *SIDEBAR* email for information on meetings and events. The Office for Law Student Affairs offers leadership and development training to new SBA and club officers to enhance the management, communication and effectiveness of clubs and organizations on campus. In addition, all clubs and organizations are required to register with the Office for Law Student Affairs as an official club at USD School of Law. Among other things, this allows clubs to receive SBA and supplemental funding (SBA provides major funding to clubs), obtain assistance with event planning, make room reservations, and announce upcoming events and meetings to a school-wide audience.

#### Pro Bono/Volunteer Activities

*Pro bono* is short for *pro bono publico*, which means “for the good of the public.” At graduation USD recognizes those students who have completed a minimum of 100 hours of pro bono legal service. These students receive a certificate and the right to wear a white cord signifying this accomplishment at graduation. The Pro Bono Legal Advocates (PBLA) student organization at USD is one way for you to volunteer your time to give legal assistance to the local community. Through each of its five programs, PBLA helps bring legal help to those who would otherwise be lost in the legal system or who might not be able to afford competent counsel. In addition, PBLA provides programs that are not specifically law-oriented for those who want to help out in the local community. For more information, contact the Chair of PBLA at [chair.pbla@gmail.com](mailto:chair.pbla@gmail.com).

#### Academic Success Program

Our wonderful Director of Academic Success, Professor Kiyana Kiel, hires and trains academic success fellows each year for all first year courses. An ASP Fellow is an upper division law student who, whenever possible, has taken the class previously from the same professor, did very well in the class and will attend the class again with first year students to be a resource for that class. Professor Kiel also conducts one-on-one academic strategy meetings and presents skills workshops available to all law students. If you are interested in participating in any Academic Success programming or serving as an ASP Fellow next year please contact Professor Kiel at [kiyanakiel@sandiego.edu](mailto:kiyanakiel@sandiego.edu) or drop by her office in Warren Hall 206.

### Scholarships and Writing Competitions

After the first year, scholarships for varying amounts are offered to top students in each year of the full and part time divisions. These awards are based on the previous year's academic performance and rank in class, as well as need and contributions to the diversity of the class. Graduating law students are also eligible for monetary prizes for academic excellence.

**Scholarship TIP: Look for announcements about USD Private Scholarships in early September of each year.** USD has a number of scholarships you can apply for and many are based on criteria other than grades. Some scholarships are given for participation in intramurals sports, commitment to diversity, student leadership activities, work in public interest or pro bono activities, etc.

Outside Scholarships: Throughout the year, the Financial Aid Office receives announcements from the legal community about outside scholarship opportunities which are posted online under "outside scholarships" on the Financial Aid website.

**Scholarship TIP: Visit the website on a regular basis as it is updated frequently with additional scholarship opportunities.** In fact, the last we checked there were scholarships for soon-to-be criminal defense lawyers, students with Berk and Kern county connections, students interested in civil rights just to name a few!

Writing competition information is listed under "Writing Competitions" on the Current Students webpage and posted on the bulletin board outside the Academic Success Resource Center. Winning a writing competitions may earn you some prize money and an opportunity to be published.

## **THE BAR EXAM**

As discussed earlier, in order to be licensed to practice law in a particular state you must pass that state's licensing or "bar" exam. Other than taking bar subject courses, most of the preparation for this exam will come in your final year of law study. However, there are other things you must do in preparation for legal practice as well. The two things you should do during your second year if possible are:

- ◆ **Register with the State Bar of California (if you plan on practicing law in California) as a law student.**
  - ◆ *How do I do that?* Go to <http://www.calbarxap.com> and click on "Register with the State Bar."

- ◆ *Should I have done that a long time ago?* Yes, it should be done during your first year, but it's okay – no penalty for waiting – but you should do it now if you haven't done so already.
- ◆ *How much does it cost?* \$108.00
- ◆ **Register for and pass the Multistate Professional Responsibility Exam (MPRE).**
  - ◆ *How do I do that?* Go to <http://www.ncbex.org> and click on "Register for the MPRE"
  - ◆ **STUDY FOR IT!** We have resources to help you. Generally you should be enrolled in or have completed PR before taking the exam.
  - ◆ *When can I take the exam?* August 9, 2014 or November 1, 2014 and additional dates in April, August and November of 2015 once announced.
  - ◆ *How much does it cost?* \$80 for regular registration. \$160 for late deadline registration.

### Bar Exam Prep—Beyond Your Second Year

In your third year you should begin to work on your Moral Character application and prepare yourself for a significant summer of bar study after you have graduated. The following three things should really be done in the fall of your third year (fourth year for part-time students).

- ◆ File application with the State Bar and receive a determination of Good Moral Character.
  - NOTE: Criminal history is part of the moral character determination, as is your record while at USD. If you failed to disclose a misdemeanor or felony or any type of academic discipline at a prior school during the admission process to USD, contact Dean Scivoletto immediately at 619-260-6851 to set up an appointment to discuss your options.
- ◆ Apply to Graduate (and graduate) from law school (Go Toreros!).
- ◆ Register for the bar exam (usually in March of your last year).

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **May I visit away at another law school?**

Yes. We would love for you to stay here, but students may visit for a semester away during their second year, or for their entire third year for "good cause". Good cause will normally include when a spouse or domestic partner has had to relocate, a close family member is ill requiring the student to move home to care for the family member, or a part-time student's employer has transferred the

student from San Diego to another city. Good cause does not include that the student intends to practice law in the other city, a desire to save expenses by attending a state school or living at home, or that a boyfriend/girlfriend has relocated to another city. While students must take letter-graded units at the host school, credits earned as a visiting student come back as transfer credit and will not affect the student's GPA.

**May I graduate in five semesters (seven semesters for part time)?**

Yes, upon petition. You may graduate in five full-time semesters provided that you earn at least 12 credits of USD summer school. The total tuition is the same as if you spent six full-time semesters in residence because of the summer school tuition paid to USD. Because this option may impact job prospects, students are strongly encouraged to seek career and academic advising counseling before committing to this course of study. Part-time students are eligible to graduate in seven part-time semesters provided they have completed at least 11 credits of USD summer school.

**May I take summer school classes and reduce my tuition during a regular (fall or spring) semester?**

No. For students entering law school in the fall of 2012 or after, payment for summer school courses is in addition to the semester tuition owed by each student. As indicated above, if a student takes at least 12 credits of USD summer school, that will count as one of the six (or eight if part-time) semesters for tuition purposes only.

**May I take summer school classes and reduce my credit load during a regular semester?**

Yes. Full-time students may take summer school classes (at USD or another school) and then in subsequent regular semesters reduce their credit load below the required 12 credits (but not below 8 credits). Typically, full-time students must take a minimum of 12 units each semester. However, students may essentially "borrow" credits from a previous summer session in order to take less than 12 credits during a regular semester. Students are limited to "borrowing" 4 credits per semester (cannot go below 8 credits). NOTE: Please be aware that even though your credit load is below 12 units does not mean you will pay a reduced tuition rate. You will still be billed for a full-time semester.

**May I take courses at the USD Business School or some other institution?**

Yes. You are allowed to take up to 6 credits of coursework outside of the law school. The courses must be rigorous law or graduate courses and approved by the Assistant Dean for Law Student Affairs on a case-by-case basis. Some students choose to use

their 6 credits taking classes at the USD Business School in furtherance of a JD/MBA. Others choose graduate courses in the USD SOLES (education and leadership) program, at the Institute for Peace and Justice or through a USD intersession program. You may also use your 6 credits to take a course at another law school, however you must take courses we do not offer at USD. All courses must be taken for a grade and students must receive a grade of B or above in all non-law courses and a grade of C or above in all law courses.

**May I switch from the full-time division to the part-time division or vice versa?**

Yes. Students interested in transferring from the full-time division to the part-time division, or from the part-time division to the full-time division must submit a request in writing to the Assistant Dean for Law Student Affairs. Students may only transfer between divisions once and it must be before the beginning of a student's fourth semester. Students subject to the Academic Supervision rules may not be eligible to switch divisions and should seek individualized academic counseling from the Assistant Dean for Law Student Affairs.

**Do I really only have 16 pass/fail credits after my first year?**

Yes and no. :) Instead of thinking of how many pass/fail credits you CAN have, remember that you must have 70 letter-graded credits out of a total of 86 credits to graduate. This means that you can actually take as many pass/fail credits as you would like (students can take as many as 93 credits) as long as you have 70 letter-graded credits when you graduate. But typically students have 16 total that can be applied toward the 86 credits to graduate.

In addition, if you complete a judicial externship or the USD Washington D.C. Externship program (or if you visit or transferred from another law school), you can submit a petition to the Office for Law Student Affairs and request a modification of the "70 graded credits rule." Students should articulate within the petition how they have used their pass/fail credit allotment and why an adjustment is requested. It is rare for a student to be granted more than 3 additional pass/fail credits. Students who have had their petitions granted are typically allowed to take 67 letter-graded credits instead of 70.

**NOTE: *This Academic Advising Guide is for the convenience of USD School of Law students and is not a substitute for one-on-one academic advising with the Office for Law Student Affairs or the Academic Rules as adopted by the faculty. Students are encouraged to consult both before making final academic planning decisions.***

## NOTES



This Academic Advising Guide is provided for USD Law Students by the Office for Law Student Affairs. This information is accurate as of March 2014. Students should continue to consult with the official Academic Rules and Administrative Policies and Procedures of the University of San Diego, and make frequent appointments for academic advising assistance through the Office for Law Student Affairs.

