

School of Law

Advocating for Justice

Leading
Change™

THE CAMPAIGN FOR USD

Scholarship and Loan Repayment Assistance Program: \$5 million

Background

The School of Law is seeking \$5 million establish a new **scholarship and loan repayment assistance program**. Since 2010, applications to law schools throughout the country, including USD, have declined precipitously. Although the job prospects for law graduates have started to improve, applications and enrollment appear likely to continue declining because many prospective law students are not convinced of the value proposition of obtaining a law degree, are unable to pay law school tuition, or are unwilling to incur the substantial debt necessary to finance their legal education. Attracting a highly qualified and diverse student body has never been more competitive, and the need for increased scholarship support to recruit and retain students has never been greater.

Objectives

The School of Law is rising to the challenge with an increased focus on providing multi-year scholarships to ensure that qualified students from all backgrounds have the opportunity to come here and graduate without excessive debt burdens that limit their opportunities to pursue the legal careers that they desire. The focus is on the following funding priorities:

Dean's Scholarship Initiative: This three-year initiative, which begun in 2012, seeks to raise \$500,000 annually to fund scholarships for the recruitment of top 1L students, and to students demonstrating leadership. In addition, this initiative provides financial support to students to take non-paying summer legal jobs that will increase chances of successful job placement after graduation.

Endowed Scholarships: The creation of an endowed scholarship gives a donor the ability to make a permanent impact on the law school and its students. Donors can name the scholarships to honor themselves, other members of their family, former professors or professional colleagues, and can designate the

backgrounds, achievements, qualities or career ambitions for which their scholarships will be awarded.

Multi-Year Named Scholarships: With a multi-year gift of at least \$5,000 per year, a donor can establish an annual scholarship. Donors can similarly name these non-endowed scholarships to honor themselves, other members of their family, former professors or professional colleagues and can designate the backgrounds, achievements, qualities or career ambitions for which their scholarships will be awarded during the years that they are funded.

Diversity Scholarships: The School of Law is committed to attracting a student body reflects the diversity of the communities that we serve. Diversity scholarships are essential in helping us recruit and retain qualified students for all socio-economic backgrounds, especially from minorities that are underrepresented in law schools and in the legal profession. Scholarships designated to support our diversity recruitment and retention efforts can be funded on an annual, multi-year or endowed basis at a variety of levels.

Loan Repayment Assistance Program (LRAP): This program provides grants to reduce student loan payments for law graduates who pursue careers in government or public interest law. The law school has a great tradition of sending many of its best graduates into public service or public interest law. Increasing tuition costs and higher debt burdens have become serious impediments to students who want to pursue these careers. The assistance available from the LRAP is significantly smaller than what many of our competitors can offer their graduates. This adversely impacts our recruitment and retention of students interested in public interest law. Increased funding for the Law Repayment Assistance Program in the form of annual, multi-year or endowed gifts is critical to sustain the School of Law's commitment to training students for public service.

Impact

Last year more than 58 percent of students received scholarship support and nearly 80 percent of them required loans to cover their educational expenses. Ensuring we have the financial resources available to attract a highly-qualified and diverse student body, and to assist those students in managing their debt burden, is essential to the mission of the School of Law, and USD, to make legal education accessible and affordable.

As we have seen with the funding raised in the first year of the Dean's Scholarship Initiative, this program will

have a measureable impact on our recruitment and retention efforts.

For More Information

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