Donald Bren School of Law

The Donald Bren School of Law, established by the University of California Board of Regents in November 2006, is the first public law school to open in California in more than 40 years.

Combining legal education with the advantages of a major research university, the school will leverage UCI’s existing strengths in emerging technology, social policy, international business and health care and produce 21st-century leaders in law, government and business. UCI law graduates will be encouraged to pursue careers in public-interest law and other forms of public service, including non-governmental organizations and philanthropic agencies.

The school is expected to open its doors to the first class of students in fall 2009. Over the next few years, UCI will recruit its founding faculty and students—an effort greatly facilitated by generous support from the community, including a major gift from business leader and philanthropist Donald Bren that created 11 endowed faculty chairs and a dean’s chair for the law school.

See below for general information about requirements and the prospective curriculum. We offer a quick and easy on-line application. See the Applying to the Donald Bren School of Law page for more information about our application process.

Welcome from Founding Dean Erwin Chemerinsky

October 3, 2007

I am tremendously honored and enormously excited to be the founding dean of the Donald Bren School of Law at the University of California, Irvine. The school will open to its first students in August 2009, but already we are beginning the process of recruiting outstanding faculty and administrators. I believe that we have the opportunity to create an outstanding school to meet the needs of Southern California and the nation.

This is the first new law school at a public university in California in almost half a century. A public university has a special role and mission in a state. It is significantly supported by the tax resources of the state and should serve the state.
In part, this is done by educating the students of the state, many of whom will remain and be the region's next generation of great lawyers, judges, and academics. As a public university, teaching a commitment to public service will be a core aspect of the law school's mission. This is not liberal or conservative; individuals of every political persuasion should feel a duty to use their talents and skills to make society better. My hope is that leadership training will be a part of the new law school's mission and program.

The University of California, Irvine is an especially desirable place for a new law school. It already has some of the top faculty in the country in law related fields, such as law and humanities, law and society, criminology, law and psychology, law and economics, and other disciplines. Thus, part of what will make the new law school distinctive will be its use of these outstanding faculty members in creating a truly interdisciplinary law school.

My hope, too, is that the school will be an innovator in legal education. I would like to see every law student have a significant "experiential learning" component in law school and ideally in each year of law school. For example, the goal will be that every student must have a clinical experience, or something comparable to it, before graduating. I always have been astounded that medical students treat patients, often from early in their training, but many law students never see a client until they graduate.

The law school likely will emphasize areas that are particularly important in Orange County, such as intellectual property, law and technology, environmental law, law and medicine, and public interest law. My hope is to begin immediately to create fellowships for students in these areas.

The goal is to hire faculty as quickly as possible while maintaining the highest standards of scholarship and teaching, with a faculty of about 35 when the school is fully operational. Although it will start smaller, ultimately there will be 200 students in a class. It will be a faculty and student body that is diverse in every possible way, where all viewpoints are reflected and debated.

I do not underestimate how daunting the task will be to create a new institution. The existence of this school is the result of enormous hard work by many people at UCI and in Orange County over the last 15 years. Chancellor Michael Drake has been tireless in his efforts to make this dream a reality.

Please do not hesitate to contact me or others at UCI if we can provide any information about the new school or be of assistance in any way.

Sincerely,

Erwin Chemerinsky, Dean
Donald Bren School of Law

About the University of California at Irvine

As a law student at the University of California Irvine, you will be part of the outstanding achievements and potential that define our campus. In only four short decades, Irvine has achieved national and international recognition. Our reputation reflects the cutting-edge contributions of our faculty, the high caliber of our student body, the dynamics of our progressive curriculum, our technological orientation, and
our exceptional commitment to quality progressive education and research; all in the ideal location.

The beautiful UCI campus is built upon 1,500 acres of coastal foothills in Irvine, California, just 5 miles from the Pacific Ocean. A walk across the campus reveals some 24,000 students from every state in the nation and more than 100 countries. As a UCI student scholar, you will become a member of this diverse multicultural, international, and intellectual community.

Visitors to UCI are struck by its natural park-like beauty as well as the cutting-edge research and scholarly work quietly going on in its surrounding buildings. UCI’s circular design successfully integrates the natural open space with the modern architecture of the academic, research and administrative structures. Ring Road, a mile in circumference walkway, is the pedestrian thoroughfare that connects the Student Center with campus classrooms, eateries, libraries, laboratories, housing and faculty offices. The Ring also serves as the outdoor staging area for a full calendar of cultural and social activities. Life at UCI is as dynamic as it is intellectually challenging and rewarding; everyone is always welcome.
Curriculum

J.D. REQUIREMENTS & GRADUATION

The majority of students at the UCI School of Law earn a Juris doctor (J.D.) degree. Requirements for the three-year J.D. Program are:

- 85 semester units of credit (including the required first-year courses);
- completion of moot court; completion of a professional responsibility (ethics) course in the second year;
- completion of the Constitutional Law course; fulfillment of the writing requirement (first year and additional course during second or third year);
- six semesters of residence credit; one residence credit is earned for each semester a student enrolls in and successfully completes a minimum of 10 units.

During their second and third years, students are allowed to take a minimum of 10 units and a maximum of 15 units each semester.

The J.D. degree requirements must be completed in six semesters. It is not possible to enroll in high course loads and graduate early. Any request for a variation in the normal three-year program must be discussed with, and approved in advance by, the Dean of Students.

FIRST YEAR CURRICULUM (illustration only; individual schedules will vary)

- Short course - Introduction to Ethics & Legal Practice
- Civil Procedure
- Contracts
- Criminal Law
- Introduction to Constitutional Law I (Evidence)
- Property
- Torts
- Legal Research and Writing

UPPER DIVISION CURRICULUM

In the second and third years, students will be able to fill out courses required or highly recommended for Bar preparation, such as Wills and Trusts. In order to meet the demands of the Bar and to realize the broader objectives of modern legal education, many of the following courses will also be regularly offered: Antitrust, Bankruptcy, Secured Transactions and Venture Capital (under the general rubric of Business and Corporate Law); Evidence, Federal Litigation (under Civil Procedure and
Litigation); Alternative Dispute Resolution and its various forms; Criminal Procedure, White Collar Crime (under Criminal Law); Environmental Law, Land Use, Natural Resources Law, Toxic Torts, Water Law and Policy (under Environmental Law); Biomedical Research, Intellectual Property Law, Telecommunication Law (under High Technology and Intellectual Property Law); Critical Theory, Comparative Legal Institutions, International Human Rights, International Trade Law, Transnational Law (under International and Comparative Law). Other clusters of courses will be designed under the following rubrics: Public Law and Policy; Medicine and Mental Health Law; Family Law; Human Rights and Civil Liberties Law; and Labor and Employment Law.

In addition to these courses, a capstone experience will be required of all students that includes substantial clinical experience under faculty supervision, with the aim of developing complex legal problem-solving skills necessary for effective practice in the students’ areas of specialization.

Whenever possible, the cases and legal issues on which these courses are based will reflect the general emphases of the School on emerging technologies and the globalization of our economy and culture, and on the practice of law in the public interest. Choosing among these courses will also allow the student to develop an area of informal concentration, such as environmental law, intellectual property law, humanities and the law, or international law. Course-work in each of these topical areas will develop highly analytical approaches to practice and critical thinking about the law and its institutions. In addition to studying with the full-time faculty in the School of Law, students will also have opportunities to work with the leading figures among the present faculty at UCI in Law and Humanities, Law and Society and Criminology, Social Sciences and the Law, and other fields.

Admissions

Online Admissions
At the Donald Bren School of Law Website (www.law.uci.edu), follow instructions at the Admissions link to submit an online application and a nonrefundable application fee.

Personal Statement
Applicants are required to submit a personal statement that will elaborate upon the credentials and experience that support the candidate’s admission to law school. The applicant is invited to explain any exceptional skills, life circumstances, or unique qualifications that might enhance their academic profile. Please limit the statement to 3-5 typed pages, double spaced.

Letters of Recommendation
Applicants must provide two letters of reference. Referees should be unrelated to the applicant, and at least one reference should be from a faculty member under which the applicant has studied.

Law School Admissions Test
An applicant should take the Law School Admissions Test by December of the year proceeding the fall semester for which admission is sought.

Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS)
Applicants are requested to register with the Law School Data Assembly Service (LSDAS) by December of the year preceding admission.

**Accreditation Status**

The Donald Bren School of Law will seek accreditation from the American Bar Association as soon as possible, a process that takes place over a 3-5 year period. In compliance with ABA Standards, application will be made for provisional approval in the fall after the first full year of the law school’s operation. Provisional approval is dependent upon demonstration of substantial compliance with all ABA Standards. Full accreditation requires full compliance with all ABA Standards after having been provisionally approved for at least two years. A student at a provisionally approved law school and an individual who graduates while the school is provisionally approved are entitled to the same recognition given to students and graduates of fully-approved law schools.

The Dean is fully informed as to the Standards and Rules of Procedure for the Approval of Law Schools by the American Bar Association. The Administration and the Dean are determined to devote all necessary resources and in other respects to take all necessary steps to present a program of legal education that will qualify for approval by the American Bar Association. The Law School makes no representation to any applicant, however, that it will be approved by the American Bar Association prior to the graduation of any matriculating student.