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Western Association of Prelaw Advisors

Fall 2014 WAPLA Newsletter

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President's Page

Marilyn Hoffman, University of Utah

Dear WAPLA Colleagues:

I hope this finds you well and off to a good start with your fall semester. I enjoyed seeing a number of you at our conference and 35th anniversary celebration in Denver last March. The conference theme was *The New Normal and the Future of Law* and there were 63 attendees, including prelaw advisors, law school admissions reps, and exhibitors. We are pleased to report that all prelaw advisors who requested Professional Development Grants received this award which covered most or all of their travel expenses. WAPLA continues to be committed to supporting prelaw advisors to attend WAPLA and national prelaw advisor conferences.

The conference opened with a welcome reception and exhibit tables Thursday evening – this was a first and very well attended. Friday sessions were at the hotel

followed by a visit to University of Colorado Law School for a tour and special 35th anniversary dinner. Past Presidents and WAPLA milestones were celebrated, and our special guest was WAPLA founder Jim Riley who was honored and presented with the PLANC Gerald Wilson Award for Excellence in Prelaw Advising. Past Presidents Frank Guliuzza, Eileen Crane, and Tim Garrison were also present and acknowledged for their many contributions.

Informative sessions included a keynote address by distinguished Federal Judge John L. Kane, LSAC update, mock admissions, panel of JD's in nontraditional legal careers, joint session with SALT, career services panel on what employers look for and how students can best prepare themselves for the market, and an advisor best practices and exchange. Saturday morning sessions were for advisors only held at the U Denver Sturm College of Law, ending with lunch and WAPLA business meeting, and a tour of the law school. Advisors enjoyed the



opportunity to meet and “talk amongst themselves”. This was the first time we tried this in my memory, and we will consider doing this again in future.

In these changing times - in admissions, legal education, and legal employment – it is so important to be current and provide our students with accurate information and the best advice. Many thanks to our sponsors, presenters, and participants for making this valuable conference opportunity possible.

WAPLA/SWAPLA Joint Conference – October 1-3, 2015

WAPLA is excited to partner with SWAPLA for a joint conference next year in Las Vegas, Oct 1-3, just before the national NACADA conference which starts Oct 4 in Vegas. This will be a great opportunity to meet with advisors from a neighboring region for a larger advisor attendance and some new exchanges. Our UNLV prelaw advisors are looking forward to welcoming you to their hospitality city and UNLV William S. Boyd School of Law is committed to host a reception and possibly meeting space. A planning



meeting with representatives from both APLA’s will be held in late February to plan details. Please put this on your calendar-we hope to see you there!

SAVE THE DATE – 2016 PLANC Quadrennial National Conference

The Prelaw Advisors National Council (PLANC) will hold the 7th prelaw advisors national conference, June 7-11, 2016, at the Palmer House Hilton in downtown Chicago. Conference Chair is RJ Holmes-Leopold from Cornell College and the Program Chair is Rodia Vance from Emory University. For national conferences, WAPLA usually offers a larger travel grant to help as many region prelaw advisors as possible experience this national event which happens only every four years.

It’s WAPLA Law Fair season! Our nine WAPLA Law Fair Site Supervisors are busy getting ready for our annual law fairs where we collectively attract 150 law schools from all over the U.S. and hundreds of students each year. Please see law fair dates elsewhere in the newsletter and consider attending and/or sending students to a nearby fair. And please join us in welcoming our newest law fair supervisor and WAPLA Board member, John McGuire, Boise State University. WAPLA law fairs are lauded by law school admissions reps as among the best fairs in the country. Thanks to all our site supervisors for their hard work in making WAPLA fairs a huge success!

PLANC Listserv

If you are not already on the PLANC listserv, I encourage you to do so. This is a great way to communicate with prelaw advisors on a national level, learn a lot and get questions answered from experienced prelaw advisors.

To learn more about PLANC, go to www.plan.org Listserv request can be found under Resources.

WAPLA Membership, I strongly encourage you to become a part of the only western organization whose sole purpose is to support prelaw advising and provide professional development opportunities for

prelaw advisors. And, if you are seeking involvement and leadership development, there are many opportunities such as regional conference planning and presentations or writing articles for the WAPLA Newsletter.

Please note: Membership dues are for the calendar year and are included in the annual conference registration fee. Since the 2015 conference is in the fall, you can wait for the 2015 conference registration and automatically be a paid member for 2015, back-dated. For those not attending the conference and wishing only membership, please contact our Secretary Kris Tina Carlston kris_tina_carlston@byu.edu directly to pay dues separately.

Please feel free to contact me any time with questions, suggestions, or concerns you might have. If you are a new prelaw advisor, please feel free to contact me or any of our Board members for information and resources you might be seeking. We are happy to help!

Best regards,

Marilyn Hoffman
President, WAPLA
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WAPLA 2014 Law School Fair Dates

Monday, 10/27/14—University of Colorado, Boulder, CO

Tuesday, 10/28/14—University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT

Wednesday, 10/29/14—Brigham Young University, Provo, UT

Thursday, 10/30/14—University of Arizona, Tucson, AZ

Friday, 10/31/14—Arizona State University, Tempe, AZ

Friday, 11/4/14—University of Nevada-Las Vegas, Las Vegas, NV

Friday, 11/6/14, Boise State University, Boise, ID

Saturday, 11/8/14, Portland State University, Portland, OR

Monday, 11/10/14, University of Oregon, Eugene, OR

WAPLA 2014 Law School Fairs – You Are Invited!

Every October and November WAPLA organizes a series of Law School Fairs in our Region. The Caravan starts in October in Colorado, continues through Utah and Arizona, and wraps up at Nevada. In November there are Fairs in Portland and Eugene Oregon, and Boise, Idaho.

We encourage you to have your students to attend on if at all possible. Whether you advise at a four year or a two year school, your students can benefit from attending a WAPLA Law School Fair. There they can speak with representatives from law schools all across the country for free! Encourage students to attend early in their undergraduate education to gain valuable information to help them become competitive applicants when the time comes.

If you are an hour or two away from a law fair, consider borrowing a campus van and driving students to the event. If that is not possible, organize carpooling. Your students may feel more comfortable on an unfamiliar campus if they come in a group. It is even better if you, as their advisor, can join them. Ask the Prelaw Advisor at the host school about any special events that go along with their fair. Some

schools host events all week. Ask if these other events are open to students from other schools.



Before your students attend a law fair, provide some guidance on gathering information. The prelaw advisor from the host school will have a list of registered schools. At most law school fairs, the tables are generally manned either by a law school's admissions representative, or a local student or alumnus of the law school. The type of information each can provide may be different. An admissions representative can usually give a detailed description of the law school and its various programs. Alumni and current students may not have the same level of detailed information, but what they can provide, that the admissions representatives can't, is an insider's view of the school—what it is really like to attend that school, the general "personality" of the school, perceived strengths and weaknesses, etc .

Below are some of the tips for students, compiled from the law fair guides provided by the WAPLA Site Supervisors who run law fairs. Feel free to adapt this information to your needs.

Tips For Attending a Law School Fair

It can seem overwhelming at first to see all those tables, but relax. The representatives are accustomed to talking about their schools and are anxious to speak with you. They are here to promote their schools and to answer your questions.

Don't be nervous! You are not here to be interviewed by the schools. There are no "dumb" questions, and as long as you are polite, and show interest, you will come across just fine. These law school representatives are attending five fairs in five days so they are unlikely to remember you.

On the other hand, do mind your manners. They will remember you if you are rude, and that won't work in your favor. You do not need to dress in business attire, but do look respectable.

Take advantage of this opportunity to explore! Don't only visit the tables of schools you know. Wander through the room. If you see a representative who is not talking to anyone, stop and ask about the school, even if you have never heard of it. You might find a hidden "gem" that you would not have known about otherwise.

Ask the same questions of representatives at a number of different schools. You will find many areas of agreement, but you may also find some areas where schools differ a bit, and learn some good "insider tips".

DO NOT BRING A RESUME, WRITING SAMPLE, OR OTHER DOCUMENTS TO THE LAW EXPO. These representatives are traveling for days, or even weeks, at a time, so they cannot carry around more than is absolutely necessary.

As you ask questions, make sure you keep track of each school's answers. You don't want to get home to find you have a wealth of good information but no idea where it all came from!

SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO ASK AT THE LAW FAIR



The law school representatives at the fair will be either an Admissions officers, or alumni or current students. The kinds of questions you ask will depend on who you are speaking with so students should find out who is representing the school. They can change their questions depending on who it is

- **Alumni or Current Students**— While students and alumni may not be able to provide the same level of detail on the law schools programs, faculty, etc., the more informal information they can provide can be just as valuable.

Ask them to give you "the scoop" on what it is really like to attend that school. What did they like? What didn't they like? Do they have any tips on what to do to be successful there? What is the living situation? How do you enjoy your classes? Have you been able to make friends with other classmen? How challenging is it? etc...

- **Admissions Directors, Deans, Recruiters**—You can ask them the detailed questions about the school. These people should be knowledgeable about their schools, its programs, and the admissions process. Below is a long list of questions to help you gather information.

1) ADMISSIONS

- a. How does your school review applications?
- b. Is there an advantage in applying early? Do you have “early action” or “early decision”?
- c. State school – what bearing does state residency have on the admissions process? How does one attain residency in this state?
- d. How does the school interpret multiple LSAT scores?
- e. How can you bring special circumstances (working 40 hours a week while in school full time) to the admissions committee’s attention?
- f. What kinds of recommendations are the most helpful?
- g. What does the admission committee look for in the personal statement?
- h. What skills/abilities qualities does the school look for in a candidate? How can you best communicate these qualities in your application?
- i. How important is it for students to have a law-related internship or job before law?
- j. What can the school tell you about the evaluation process?
- k. Are students active and voting members of the Admissions Committee?
- l. What percentage of entering students have taken time off after college?

2) CURRICULUM

- a. How are the first-year classes organized and taught?
- b. Is there more of an emphasis on the theory of law or practical application?
- c. Do most professors teach law using the Socratic method? Even after the first year?
- d. What clinical programs are available?
Who is eligible? Is there an excess of demand for certain programs, and, if so, how are the participants chosen?
- e. How is legal writing/research taught? By whom? Adjunct personnel? Full-time faculty?
- f. Does the law school recognize classes taken outside the law school (other law schools or abroad?)
- g. How accessible are professors and instructors?
- h. How would you describe faculty-student relationships?
- i. How are students chosen for law reviews/moot court/trial teams? How many participate?
- j. How are classes graded (i.e. at what level is a curve set)?
- k. Does your school offer a pre-entry or conditional summer program for applicants whose GPA/LSAT credentials are below the norm? If so, what admission criteria are used?
- l. Do you offer law school study abroad programs? If so, where?



3) CAREER SERVICES

- a. What career services are offered to students and graduates?
- b. Where do the students find employment? (locally, regionally, nationally?)

- c. Do students go to large, small, medium firms? Government? Corporations?
 - d. What kinds of jobs do your graduates take after law school?
 - e. How much does class rank determine the job search success of your graduates?
 - f. What are the bar passage rates in the state(s) in which most of your graduates take the bar exam?
 - g. Is the school committed to those students who are interested in public interest careers? How does it serve those students? Is there any loan forbearance for such careers?
 - h. How many firms interview at the school and from what parts of the country? Do firms have different requirements or is it a lottery system?
 - i. Do students participate in any job fairs?
 - j. Is there a network of contact which could help you obtain jobs in a particular geographical area or in an area of law in which you are interested?
 - k. Is there a support network for students seeking judicial clerkships? What percentage of students seek and get clerkships? Where? (state or federal?)
 - l. What percentage of 3rd year students have jobs lined up by winter break of their 3rd year?
 - m. What percentage of jobs does the career placement office secure for students
- 4) CHARACTER/AMBIANCE
- a. What is special about the character and ambiance of your school?
 - b. Describe the physical location of the school.
 - c. Describe the on and off campus housing opportunities for students. What do students like most about your school? Least?
- 5) COSTS/FINANCIAL AID
- a. Do you offer merit or need-based scholarships or grants? If so, what criteria do you use?
 - b. Is continuation of a merit scholarship contingent upon academic performance in law school?
 - c. How do most of your students pay for law school?
 - d. What is the cost of attendance at your school? Do you anticipate a tuition increase?
 - e. Do you have a loan repayment assistance program for graduates who go into public interest law?
 - f. What are the criteria and procedures for obtaining state residency status while in law school (state supported schools)?

Any other information that is important to YOU!



UPDATES FROM PLANC

Marilyn Hoffman and Mary Nadarski, representing WAPLA, attended the semi-annual meeting of PLANC (Prelaw Advisors National Council) in September. PLANC is the national coordinating body bringing together leadership from the six regional pre-law advisor associations (APLA's) and select partner organizations to advance the pre-law advising profession and to enhance the delivery of pre-law services to students. PLANC sponsors a national quadrennial conference during U.S. Presidential election years.

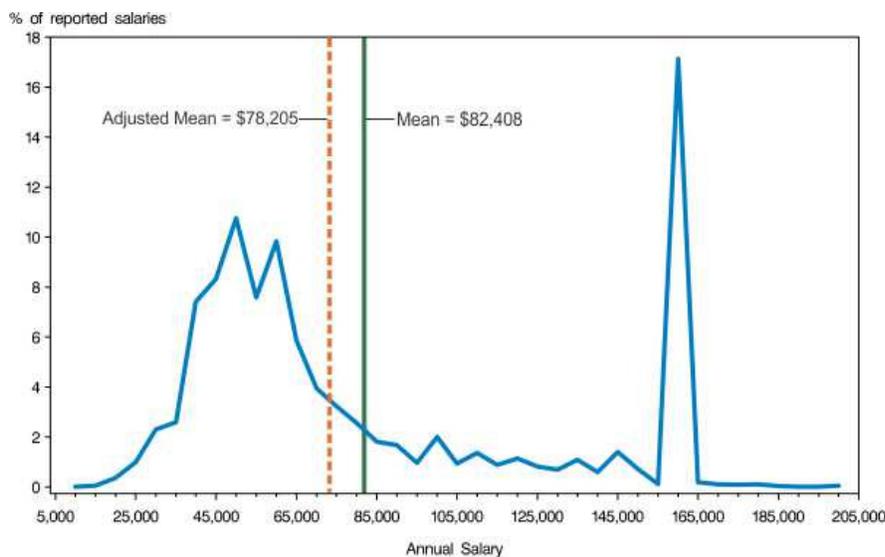
Here are some highlights of the updates received at this meeting:

Legal Employment Updates from NALP

The National Association for Law Placement (NALP) reported that for the second year in a row new grads found more jobs and starting salaries rose, but the overall unemployment rate climbed higher due to the historically large graduating class of 2013. Despite two years of growth in the number of jobs obtained by law grads, the overall employment rate for new law grads fell for the sixth year in a row, to 84.5%. Even though the total number of jobs obtained by this class was somewhat higher than the number of jobs obtained by the previous class, and the number of employment opportunities funded by law schools increased, the Class of 2013 was also larger. Read the full text of the Class of 2013 employment findings, and selected highlights at www.nalp.org/classof2013.

The NALP salary distribution curve for the Class of 2013

(http://www.nalp.org/class_of_2013_bimodal_salary_curve)



The salary distribution is now available and, once again, it shows that comparatively few members of the class earned salaries at the median. Instead the distribution curve shows a narrow peak representing salaries around the \$160,000 mark, and much broader left-hand peaks representing salaries of \$40,000 to \$65,000.

NALP publications to be aware of:

- *The Emergence of Nontraditional-Track Lawyer Career Paths: A Resource Guide for Law Firms and Law Schools.* This 95-page guide is now available as a free, downloadable PDF at <http://www.nalp.org/uploads/2014NCMTFResourceGuide.pdf>.
- *2014-15 Federal Legal Employment Opportunities Guide.* A broad-based review of different career opportunities and paths to employment for law students and graduates who are interested in federal legal careers. The guide is available as a [free download](https://www.psjd.org/2014_2015_Federal_Legal_Employment_Opportunities_Guide) on the PSJD website (https://www.psjd.org/2014_2015_Federal_Legal_Employment_Opportunities_Guide).
- The 2014 [NALP Directory of Legal Employers](http://www.nalpdirectory.com) (NDLE) (www.nalpdirectory.com) provides a comprehensive and free solution for students and graduates researching legal employers by providing specific information on law firms, government agencies, public interest organizations, and corporations. Organizational listings include information on lawyer demographics, practice areas, compensation and benefits, diversity and inclusion practices, and other valuable information about legal employers.
- The [NALP Directory of Law Schools](http://www.nalplawsonline.org) (www.nalplawsonline.org) is now available with 2014 data.

NALP has recently revised their web site. There is quite a bit of information that can be accessed by and helpful for prelaw advisors through the prelaw portal at http://www.nalp.org/prelaw_portal

Access Group Initiatives

New Access Group Website Launched; Includes Tools and Support for Borrowers

<https://www.accessgroup.org/> Access Group has expanded its resources, news and provided enhanced tools, including an easy-to-use loan repayment calculator.

For students, the website now organizes information based on life-stage segments, whether

a student is thinking about law school, is currently in school, or has finished school and will

soon begin repayment. One aspect of the calculator pre-law advisors might find particularly useful is the ability for prospective students to enter the cost of attendance and financial aid awards from multiple schools and determine the amount of debt necessary to attend law school. Students can compare up to three law schools at a time.



Member Services programs have expanded and regional representatives will work to touch base with financial aid, admissions and pre-law advisors on campuses throughout the country informing them of the services Access Group can provide for them and their students, including Access AssistSM, AccessGroup.org, and the Access Group Conference and in-person presentations. One way the Member

Service role will directly impact pre-law advisors is increased presence and availability, including attendance at prelaw advisor conferences. Our western representative is:

Ricky Porter

Member Services Representative

rporter@accessgroup.org

Covering: Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Northern California, Oregon, South Dakota, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

LSAC Updates



Law Suit Settlement: LSAC has entered into a Consent Decree with the California Department of Fair Employment and Housing and the United States regarding testing accommodations for individuals with disabilities nationwide. LSAC will permanently discontinue all forms of the practice of annotating score reports of candidates who receive the testing accommodation of extended test time due to disability. It appears that LSAC, according to a forthcoming panel recommendation, will also start accepting documentation of certain previous standardized testing accommodations as documentation for eligibility for LSAT accommodations. The decree includes a compensation fund for eligible individuals who requested testing accommodations for the LSAT between January 1, 2009 And May 20, 2014. For further information and to read the text of the Decree, please visit

www.ada.gov/lisac_consentdecree.htm. [Notice of Nationwide Settlement \(PDF\)](#)

Applicant Volume: Preliminary end-of year figures measured through 8/8/14 for 2013-14 indicate that applicant numbers continued to decline by 6.7% from 2012-13 with a prelim total of 54,500 for 2013-14. Preliminary figure for Admitted Applicants was 45,700, down 9/8% from the previous year. ABA First Year Enrollment 39,700, down 10.8% from previous year.

LSAC Forum Dates

LSAC Forums 2014

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Washington, DC | June 1 |
| Chicago | September 13 |
| Los Angeles | September 20 |
| Miami | October 11 |
| Houston | October 20 |
| New York | October 17-18 |
| Canada | October 22 |
| Bay Area | November 7 |
| Atlanta | November 14 |
| Boston | November 11 |



LSAC FORUMS 2015

| | |
|----------------|------------------------|
| Miami | Sat, September 26 |
| Los Angeles | Sat, October 10 |
| New York | Fri-Sat, October 16-17 |
| Houston | Mon, October 19 |
| Boston | Thurs, October 29 |
| Bay Area | Thurs Nov 12 |
| Chicago | TBA |
| Washington, DC | TBA |
| Atlanta | TBA |



The NAU College of Social and Behavioral Sciences Continues a Tradition of Innovation with the Initiation two new Pre-Law Minors

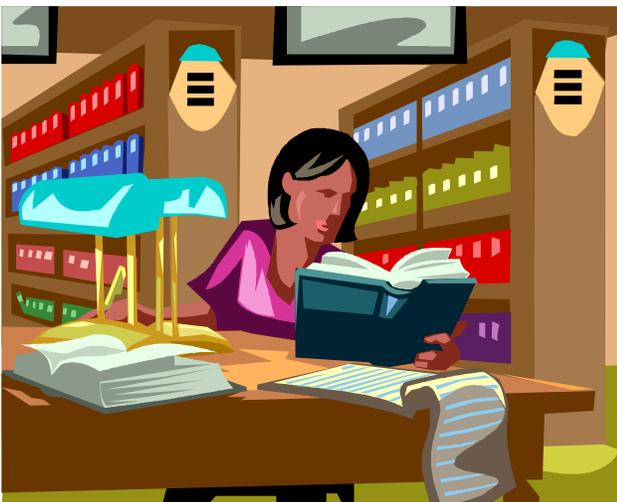
By Martin D. Sommerness
Senior Professor of Journalism
Northern Arizona University

The Northern Arizona University College of Social and Behavioral Sciences—now the largest college on the Flagstaff Mountain Campus—has introduced two new pre-law minors: the Law and Society Minor and the Law, Rights and Justice Minor. The materials describing and detailing the two minors, as approved by the NAU University Curriculum Committee following a two-year-long faculty study, are summarized below in this article.

Each of these minor programs of study is interdisciplinary and offers students the opportunity to examine law-related issues from the perspective of a broad range of disciplines. The minors were developed for use in conjunction with the new Bachelor of University Studies degree, but can be used to complement other programs of study because, as the influence of legal institutions in society grows, an

informed understanding of how law works and how it affects social relations becomes increasingly important in a wide variety of contexts.

The Law and Society Minor, administered by the Department of Politics and International Affairs, is a minor that explores the complexity and interrelationships of legal, social and ethical issues in their historical context. It focuses on the relation of the law to political, economic and social conflicts as well as examines how the law can both reflect and define basic social values. The minor can be of use to students focusing on pre-law studies, but also to

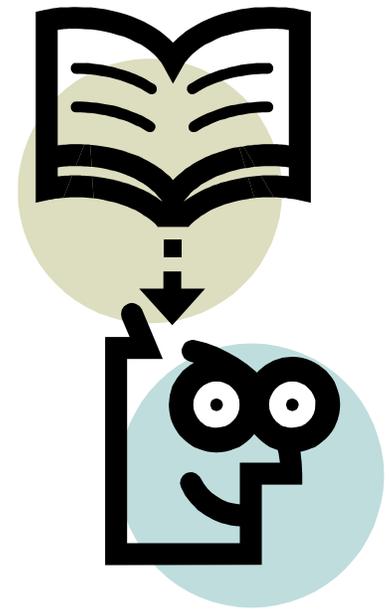


those interested in how society shapes law and how law shapes society. In addition to supporting pre-law studies, this minor is also of value for those considering careers in public service, non-profit organizations and social advocacy groups.

The Law, Rights and Justice Minor, administered by the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice, prepares students for advanced analytical and writing dexterity and introduces them to the social and governmental structures that underlie the law. This minor may also be of interest to students for reasons beyond pursuing a law degree. The specific substantive information that is related in the program is intended to prepare students to “think like a lawyer” in that students will be encouraged to develop their logical, analytical and critical thinking skills in order to identify problems and propose solutions. Students will be exposed to constitutional, environmental and criminal law and procedure, as well as the primary institutions that constitute the administration of justice in the United States.

The Law and Society Minor requires the completion of 21 semester hours of coursework. Every student must complete the following three courses with a minimum grade point average of 2.75: POS 110, American Politics; ACC 205, Legal, Ethical, Global and Regulatory Environment of Business; and CCJ 380, Law In America. Each student must also take four courses from the following list (no more than two courses can be taken from the same academic prefix):

- AIS 202, Roots of Federal American Indian Policy,
- CCJ 210, Courts and Justice,
- CCJ 215 Crime, Justice and the Media,
- CCJ 301 Critical Perspectives on Justice Policy,
- CCJ 315, Comparative Justice Systems,
- CCJ 360, Women, Crime, and Justice,
- CCJ 395, Borders, Immigration, and Human Rights,
- CCJ 415, Crime, Justice and Native Americans,
- COM 400, Mass Communication Regulation and Responsibility,
- ECO 285, Introduction to Economics,
- ES 375, African Americans and the Law,
- PHI 105, Introduction to Ethics,
- PHI 347, Law and Philosophy,
- POS 317, Judicial Politics,
- POS 355, Women, Power, and Politics,
- POS 358, Critical Race Theory,
- POS 445, Constitutional Law: Separation of Powers and Federalism,
- POS 446, Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties and Rights,
- POS 480, International Organizations, and
- SOC 339, Crime, Law and Society.



Students, upon completing the Law and Society Minor, will:

- Demonstrate an ability to demonstrate fundamental acquisition and comprehension of major concepts, theoretical perspectives, historical trends, and empirical findings in law based on social science research;
- Develop scientific reasoning and problem-solving skills with broad approaches from the social sciences;
- Develop an appreciation of social problems and ethical responsibility in the approach to presenting alternative solutions;
- Be able to demonstrate competence in written, oral, and interpersonal communication skills that are appropriate for a larger public; and
- Emerge from the minor with abilities that sharpen their professional readiness for law school with an understanding of the expectations of working effectively within the American legal culture.

The Law, Rights and Justice Minor requires the successful completion of 24 semester hours of coursework. Every student must take the following courses: ENG 211, Principles of Written Argumentation; PHI 223, Argument Analysis; CCJ 210, Courts and Justice; and CST 111, Fundamentals of Public Speaking. Students must also complete four courses selected from among the following:

- AIS 290, Fundamentals of Indigenous Environmental Justice, Law, Policy and Movements,
- AIS 320, American Indian Politics and Policy,
- CCJ 270, Criminal Law,
- CCJ 275, Criminal Procedure and Constitutional Rights,
- CCJ 380, Law in America,
- CCJ 390, Criminal Investigation,
- CCJ 495, Wrongful Conviction,
- CST 217, Argumentation and Debate,
- CST 318, Oral Argument in Law,
- DIS 417, Disability Law and Education,
- DIS 418, Law of Disability Discrimination,
- POS 345, Environmental Law,
- POS 445, Constitutional Law: Separation of Powers and Federalism, and
- POS 446, Constitutional Law: Civil Liberties and Rights.



Students, upon completing the Law, Rights and Justice Minor, will:

- Learn how legal systems function and the roles legal professionals play within them;
- Learn how to analyze legal documents, make legal arguments and engage in legal debates; and
- Appreciate the habits and beliefs that define legal cultures and constitute common legal practices.

WAPLA Executive Board

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Western Association of Prelaw Advisors

The purpose of WAPLA is:

1. To enhance the skills of pre-law advisors
2. To advocate the interests of undergraduate students and institutions in the counseling and admissions processes leading to law related careers
3. To promote communication between pre-law advisors, individual law school admissions officers, and Law School Admissions Council, the Educational Testing Service, and other law-related organizations. These purposes will be accomplished through periodic meetings, through training of new pre-law advisors, and through such other means as the organization may devise.

Advantages for members

- A network of prelaw advisors that you can rely on for support, guidance, and collaboration
- A voice on national issues concerning prelaw advising through WAPLA representation on the Prelaw Advising National Council (PLANC)
- A yearly conference, *for which we provide generous travel grants that cover most of your costs*

Please consider joining us. Dues are only \$25.00 per year!

To join, visit us online at <http://www.wapla.org>

