THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA SCHOOL OF LAW

414 E. Clark
Vermillion, SD 57069-2390
Phone: 605.677.5443; Fax: 605.677.5417
E-mail: law@usd.edu; Website: www.usd.edu/law

Introduction

The University of South Dakota School of Law (USD Law), located on the University of South Dakota campus in Vermillion, is noted for its contributions in training distinguished leaders for the bench, the bar, and the lawmaking bodies of the state and region. Established in 1901, USD Law is approved by the ABA and is a member of the AALS. The law school offers a strong American Indian Law Program, and the Legal Writing Program is becoming among the best in the nation. The city of Vermillion, with a population of about 11,000 and located in the southeastern corner of South Dakota along the Missouri National Recreational River, provides a small-town atmosphere. The professional community setting at USD Law provides students with opportunities for individual attention by professors. USD Law offers an extraordinary experience in legal education at a remarkably reasonable tuition rate for both residents and nonresidents. More than 75 percent of upper-level courses have 25 or fewer students enrolled.

Library and Physical Facilities

The three-level McKusick Law Library is equipped to meet the research needs of students, faculty, and members of the bar. Students, staff, and faculty have access to the law school facility seven days a week, 24 hours a day through swipe-card access. It is South Dakota’s largest and most complete law library, providing essential research services to the courts, legislature, government agencies, lawyers, private citizens, and students conducting interdisciplinary research. The book and microform collections include court reports, statutes, and case law. The library has 227 study seats, including 166 carrels assigned to student organizations. The law school building is equipped for both wired and wireless network connectivity. The student organization suites contain study carrels for member use. The law library has 227 study seats, including 166 carrels assigned to members of the student body.

Curriculum

Ninety semester credits are required for the JD degree. The first-year curriculum is required of all students. In the second and third years, electives are available in addition to required courses. During the summer, an externship program is offered for six credit hours. Externs learn by doing under the close supervision of an attorney and the externship director. Skills training is also provided to second- and third-year students in the trial techniques course, negotiations, and other courses, each of which utilizes to the fullest extent the technological capabilities of the law school.

Special Programs

Joint-Degree Programs—There are nine programs with other graduate departments, with master’s degrees available in professional accountancy, business administration, history, English, psychology, education administration, political science, public administration, and administrative studies. Students may transfer nine hours of approved interdisciplinary coursework for JD credit and can complete both programs in three years and receive maximum credit.

Interdisciplinary Study—For upper-division students not in a joint-degree program, up to six graduate credits in other university divisions may be taken and applied toward the hours required for the JD degree. This allows a law student to broaden the educational experience by the pursuit of new disciplines.

Areas of Curricular Emphases—The American Indian Law Program provides students with the knowledge, skills, and experiences necessary to meet the challenges and opportunities in working with sovereign tribes and native people. Nationally recognized professors direct a unique and extensive curriculum with a concentration in the study of American Indian law. Nine American Indian reservations are located within the borders of South Dakota. The law school hosts the longest running biennial Indian Law Symposium in the United States, supports the Native American Law Student Association (twice named national chapter of the year), and works closely on the USD campus with the American Indian Studies Department and the Institute of American Indian Studies, directed by a law professor.

The USD School of Law and Vermont Law School offer a dual degree in environmental law. Students earn a JD from USD and a Master of Science in Environmental Law (MSEL) from Vermont Law School.

Admission Options

Flex-Time Program—This program permits certain well-qualified students to take less than the normal load of credits each semester and obtain a JD in five years instead of three. The program admits a limited number of students who could not attend law school on a full-time basis. The law school does not offer evening or weekend courses.

Accelerated Admission—An applicant may apply for accelerated admission, and be admitted to and enroll in law school without final completion of the requirements for the applicant’s undergraduate degree. The undergraduate degree must be attained by the applicant prior to graduation from law school.

Law Honors Scholars Program—High school seniors who are accepted as USD undergraduate Honors Scholars may apply for and receive provisional (automatic) admission to the law school upon successful completion of their undergraduate degree in four years with a 3.5 GPA, fulfillment of the University Honors Program requirements, and completion of the LSAT for statistical purposes only. Law Screening Program—Applicants who are not regularly admitted may be invited to participate in the Law Screening Program. The summer program consists of two
courses offered in five weeks of lectures and finals during the sixth week. Participants are admitted or denied admission on the basis of their performance on final exams, which are graded anonymously.

**Student Activities**

The *South Dakota Law Review* publishes articles by legal scholars, lawyers, jurists, and students three times a year. The *Sustainable Development Law Journal* publishes articles on a variety of law topics, including environmental law and natural resources. Other cocurricular activities include a Moot Court Board, Alternative Dispute Resolution Board, and Trial Advocacy teams. Boards successfully compete at the intramural, regional, and national levels. The school is active in the Law Student Division of the ABA. Other organizations include Student Bar Association, Women in Law, Black Law Students Association, Christian Legal Society, Environmental Law Society, Law School Democrats, Federalist Society, American Constitution Society, Delta Theta Phi, Phi Alpha Delta, Phi Delta Phi, Trial Advocacy Group, Legal Assistance Group, and Corporate and Business Law Association. The Native American Law Student Association (NALSA) USD chapter is represented nationally and hosted the national NALSA Moot Court Tournament in spring 2010.

**SD Supreme Court**—Each spring, USD Law hosts the three-day March term of the Supreme Court of South Dakota, which provides an extraordinary opportunity for law and undergraduate students, faculty, and the public to observe oral arguments before the state’s highest appeals court. The law school also works closely with Access to Justice, the pro bono office of the State Bar of South Dakota.

**Pro bono Opportunities**—The Law School provides substantial pro bono experiences for students assisting people with their legal needs by working closely with Access to Justice and AmeriCorps, the South Dakota Bar’s pro bono office, as well as an Elder Law Program, R.D. Hurd Volunteer Society, area legal services offices, South Dakota Innocence Project, Equal Justice Works, Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program, and the Domestic Violence Legal Program, among others.

**Career Services**

The placement opportunities for third-year law students are excellent in South Dakota, the surrounding areas, and throughout the United States. Approximately 23 percent of the graduates are placed in judicial clerkships, and one-third are employed outside South Dakota. The law school has an active program to place first- and second-year students in summer internship programs with law firms.
### Applicant Profile Grid

The University of South Dakota School of Law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LSAT Score</th>
<th>3.75+</th>
<th>3.50–3.74</th>
<th>3.25–3.49</th>
<th>3.00–3.24</th>
<th>2.75–2.99</th>
<th>2.50–2.74</th>
<th>2.25–2.49</th>
<th>2.00–2.24</th>
<th>Below 2.00</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>165+</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>160–164</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>155–159</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>150–154</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>145–149</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>140–144</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below 140</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

USD School of Law considers many factors beyond LSAT score and GPA. This chart should be used only as a general rule.

### Statistics for Fall 2010

- Applicants: 449
- Completed applications: 449
- Standard full-time admits: 210
- Accepted from Law Screening or PLSI: 10
- Total admitted: 220
- Matriculated full-time: 75

### Statistics for the 210 Standard Admits

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>LSAT</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75th</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>153</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25th</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>