“CUNY School of Law holds a position unique in legal education. It is a public institution of incomparable worth.”

— JUSTICE RUTH BADER GINSBURG, Supreme Court of the United States
Welcome to CUNY School of Law

Students come to study at CUNY Law because they want to change the world. Inspiring faculty members show students legal solutions to real world problems. Students also work closely with the legal community advancing social justice outside the school. Working for others allows students to practice our motto, “Law in the Service of Human Needs,” throughout their graduate studies. In the end, we send more students directly into public interest and public service practice than any other law school in the nation.

Students come to study at CUNY Law because they value diversity. We have an extraordinarily diverse faculty, staff, and student body. We provide a welcoming community for people from all backgrounds. It is our goal to provide access to the legal profession for communities that have been historically excluded, and to help the practicing bar better reflect the remarkable diversity and vibrancy of New York City.

Students also come to study at CUNY Law because we have one of the best clinical programs in the country, consistently ranked in the top ten nationwide. The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching has praised our innovative, integrated pedagogy that blends clinical skills with doctrinal education throughout the three years of study.

We aim to transform the profession and the world through a profound commitment to justice. Come study with us at CUNY School of Law.

MICHELLE J. ANDERSON
Dean and Professor of Law

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CUNY School of Law is a Leader in Public Interest Law

Our Mission
Everything we do at CUNY School of Law is motivated by our distinctive mission: to graduate outstanding public interest and public service attorneys and to provide access to the legal profession for underserved groups. From the beginning, we have formed an academic community centered on this mission.

Our Innovative Curriculum
It is not simply our mission that makes us distinctive in the legal academy; our pedagogy is also unique. In 1983, the founders of CUNY School of Law designed a curriculum richer than the traditional model in which doctrinal rules and legal analysis are divorced from social context and practice. CUNY Law thoroughly infuses the conventional curriculum with instruction in practical skills, professional identity and values, social context, and critical perspectives.

In 2007, the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching issued a national assessment of legal education, “Educating Lawyers: Preparation for the Profession of Law,” in which it praised CUNY School of Law for its “integrative approach.” Our curriculum integrates traditional doctrinal instruction with hands-on clinical practice. Students study client counseling, oral and written advocacy, negotiation, alternative dispute resolution, and legal ethics, as well as torts, criminal law, courtroom practice, and more. At CUNY, the Carnegie Foundation wrote, it is “the school as a whole that educates, making teaching and learning more a shared concern than is typically the case in many other law schools.”

Our Strong Lawyering Program
Central to CUNY Law’s cross-curricular lawyering program is our Writing Center, which teaches students excellent legal writing. All three years of the CUNY Law program are infused with lawyering skills instruction. In the first two years, students participate in simulations in lawyering seminars to master the skills necessary to represent clients. In the third year, students work in clinics litigating live cases under the supervision of outstanding professors. CUNY Law students thereby serve thousands of New Yorkers who otherwise would not have access to legal representation.

The Carnegie Foundation and Stanford Law School have invited CUNY Law to join a prestigious 10-school panel to study the future of law school education.

For more information visit www.law.cuny.edu
Our Clinical Programs

The clinical program at CUNY Law is nationally recognized as among the very best in legal education, ranked for more than a decade in the top ten in the nation. In keeping with our mission to train students for excellence in public service and public interest practice, our clinics and concentrations constitute the capstone experience in our lawyering curriculum and the critical step in the transition from theory to practice.

CUNY Law clinics collaborate with local, national, and international organizations to strengthen communities and empower individuals to seek justice. Every third-year student at CUNY Law participates in one of eight clinics (live-client representation or mediation) and two concentrations (closely supervised external placements).

While the programs are focused in particular areas of law, every clinic and concentration prepares our graduates to be outstanding attorneys in a variety of practice areas. We teach core lawyering skills through essential and innovative legal work on behalf of individual and group clients.

CUNY School of Law is one of the few law schools in the country that requires all students to engage in intensive clinical practice before graduation.

CUNY Law’s Clinical Programs

- Battered Women’s Rights Clinic
- Community Economic Development Clinic
- Criminal Defender Clinic
- Economic Justice Project
- Elder Law Clinic
- Equality Concentration (Civil Rights)
- Health Law Concentration
- Immigrant & Refugee Rights Clinic (includes Immigrant Labor)
- International Women’s Human Rights Clinic
- Mediation Clinic
“I love CUNY Law. I am deeply inspired by the experiences and commitments to social justice of everyone in the community.”

—STUDENT MEGAN STUART
“The Clinic gave me a chance to apply what I was learning and discussing in the classroom in a real-world setting. As a result, I was ready to be a real lawyer my first day on the job.”

—DAVID PALMER
Class of 2006, New York Lawyers for the Public Interest

Programs in Moot Court and Trial Practice enable students to perfect skills critical to effective lawyering.
Sample Clinical Cases

Fighting for the Voiceless
After a 93-year-old client with dementia had his home stolen and sold by a person who had gained his trust, CUNY Law students successfully enabled his daughter, appointed as his guardian, to recover the home.

Stopping the Criminalization of Poor People
A CUNY Law student successfully sought the dismissal of charges against a young client in a Board of Education school suspension hearing and misdemeanor criminal case. Other CUNY Law students won a rare grant of discretionary relief from deportation for an immigrant who was convicted of a crime more than 10 years ago and had lived in the United States for 30 years.

Resisting Economic Pressures on Indigent Workers and Students
CUNY Law students represented numerous CUNY undergraduate students and challenged public benefits policies that prevented them from completing their educations.

Student teams, working with immigrant labor organizers, litigated in federal court against exploitative employers, won significant damage awards, and improved the conditions of their clients’ work.

Defending Women through an International Human Rights Framework
CUNY Law students submitted briefs in the U.S. Supreme Court on domestic violence issues in *Brzonkala v. Morrison* and *City of Castle Rock v. Gonzales*. Other CUNY Law students submitted briefs in the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia that resulted in the recognition of rape as torture and genocide.

Achieving Justice Outside of the Courthouse
CUNY Law students helped mediate settlements of employment and disability discrimination cases. Other CUNY Law students strengthened community organizations through the provision of transactional legal services.

Students, faculty, staff, and clients—both individual and organizational—share a commitment to social justice. We teach and learn from each other every day that we work together.

For more information visit www.law.cuny.edu
CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW students are among the most racially diverse in the nation. More than half of our students are women. The average age of our first-year students is 26, and more than half of our entering class starts law school as the debut to a second career. Our students come from 27 states and territories and 22 countries. Many have lived and studied abroad; a significant number are first- or second-generation Americans. The Princeton Review has ranked CUNY Law as the most welcoming in the country for older students.

Our Multi-Faceted Students

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Student Profile: Lesley Berson

BORN IN: New York City

COLLEGE: Duke University, North Carolina

PAST JOBS: I worked for 11 years and had two careers before coming to law school. For nine years, I worked as a fundraiser for arts organizations. And for two years, I ran my own business as a booking agent and artist manager, primarily for world music bands.

WHY YOU WANTED TO COME TO CUNY LAW: I was ready for a new career. I realized that to switch gears, I would need to get an advanced degree. Once I chose to study law, CUNY Law was my top choice because of its affordability and because of its immigration clinic.

WHAT YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT CUNY LAW: The professors. Hands down. They really mean it when they say, “Come by my office any time.” I can bump into a professor in the hall and wind up chatting with him in his office for 45 minutes. Professor Jeff Kirchmeier, the adviser for the Moot Court team, participated in every one of my 10 practice sessions. Several professors who weren’t my official advisers spent time talking with me about career options and strategies for shaping my legal career. I can’t praise the CUNY professors enough for making themselves available, receptive, and attentive to their students.

WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO WITH YOUR DEGREE FROM CUNY LAW: I have accepted an offer to work with the New York City Law Department.

WHAT YOU’VE LEARNED THAT YOU’LL NEVER FORGET FROM CUNY LAW: The levels of scrutiny and the corresponding tests for alleged violations of the 14th Amendment Equal Protection Clause.
“I can’t praise the CUNY professors enough for making themselves available, receptive, and attentive to their students.”

—Lesley Berson
“We believe that we are making a positive intervention in the legal and political system through our clinical work and through the work of our graduates.”

— SAMEER ASHAR
Professor and Director of Clinical Programs

Our Outstanding Faculty

OUR DIVERSE FACULTY is comprised of outstanding public interest and public service practitioners dedicated to teaching. They produce engaged scholarship to advance social justice, and they help students develop their own scholarship. They are quoted widely in the media, and they present their work at conferences. One faculty member oversees the student-run New York City Law Review, a scholarly journal. Another runs our critically acclaimed writing center. A third can be seen at all hours coaching students for Moot Court competitions. Nowhere will you find faculty more engaged with students than at CUNY Law.

Faculty Profile: Sameer Ashar

Professor Sameer Ashar, a graduate of Swarthmore College and Harvard Law School, focuses on the relationship between law school clinics, public interest practice, and social justice movements. As the director of CUNY Law’s clinical programs, and formerly the director of its Immigrant and Refugee Rights Clinic (IRRC), Professor Ashar has focused on cases referred to CUNY Law by grassroots political organizations and nested in ongoing social justice campaigns.

“We work with our students on cases and projects that develop our understanding of the relationship between law and social justice,” Professor Ashar says. “The work is generative—and sometimes transformative—for faculty, students, and clients. We believe that we are making a positive intervention in the legal and political system through our clinical work and through the work of our graduates.”

With students, Professor Ashar has broadened the IRRC docket to include wage and hour, employment discrimination, and criminal deportation cases. The clinic has won large settlements and advanced campaigns for domestic workers, runners and bussers in restaurants, and day laborers.

What does CUNY Law offer students? Says Professor Ashar: “This is a community in which you can locate and strengthen your voice against injustice. Our collective commitments distinguish CUNY within legal education.”

CUNY Law has an outstanding student-faculty ratio of 12:1.
Professor Victor Goode, a member of the CUNY Law faculty since the school’s founding in 1983, has testified before Congress on racially motivated violence and has filed amicus briefs before the U.S. Supreme Court in three landmark affirmative action cases.
PROFESSOR DONNA HAE KYUN LEE is a graduate of Brown University and New York University School of Law, where she was an articles editor for the *N.Y.U. Law Review*. Professor Lee teaches in the Battered Women’s Rights Clinic (BWRC), an interdisciplinary clinic that addresses domestic violence issues from legal and social work perspectives. She also teaches Criminal Law and a prisoners’ rights seminar.

“Students in BWRC have the opportunity to be the lawyers on their cases. They take primary responsibility for everything from interviewing clients, to negotiating with opposing counsel, to representing their clients in court,” says Professor Lee.

“Unfortunately, there is a dearth of lawyers for battered women in family court. Many women seeking safety through orders of protection, economic security through child and spousal support, and custody of their children cannot find legal representation.”

In 2007, BWRC diversified its traditional legal services practice by placing students in law offices that approached the problem of domestic violence through a variety of legal lenses. Students focus on issues such as housing and employment discrimination against domestic violence survivors, criminal prosecution of domestic crimes, and keeping the children of violence survivors out of the foster care system.

Following law school, Professor Lee clerked on the U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey and on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. She then worked at the Civil Appeals and Law Reform Unit of the Legal Aid Society in New York City, and at the National Prison Project of the ACLU Foundation in Washington, D.C. She currently serves as the Board Chair of the New York Asian Women’s Center, an organization that advocates for and serves Asian women and children affected by domestic violence.

“Educating public interest lawyers and diversifying the legal profession explains who we are.”

—DONNA LEE, Professor
“CUNY Law gave me the legal tools I need to practice law in a responsible way. More importantly, CUNY Law taught me to not hold the law in contempt, but to mold it to suit my own purposes.”

—MICHAEL WANG, founder of Common Law, a lawyers’ collective that supports low-income New York City communities

Our Public Service Graduates

CUNY Law has a 94% job placement rate nine months after graduation. And we place more graduates in public interest and public service jobs, roughly 60%, than any other law school in the country (examples include: the Legal Aid Society of New York, the Center for Constitutional Rights, the Urban Justice Center, Gay Men’s Health Crisis, Human Rights Watch and Lawyers for Children). Our students are involved in vital projects in environmental law, public benefits, family and children’s rights law, and criminal law.

Many of our students obtain excellent state, federal, and international clerkships upon graduation. A recent graduate is clerking for Judge Jack Weinstein of the U.S. District Court in the Eastern District of New York and another will be clerking for a U.S. Court of Appeals Judge on the Second Circuit.

ROSA LB A NOV OA DA VIS (Class of 2007) is completing a one-year clerkship in the chambers of the Honorable Rolando T. Acosta, Associate Justice of the New York State Supreme Court, Appellate Division, First Department. After her clerkship, she plans to pursue a career as an immigration lawyer. “CUNY Law professors teach with a focus on the client that is unparalleled in legal education. As a result of my studies, I will always strive to be more than a competent lawyer but also an advocate with compassion for the people I represent.”

DA VID PALME R (Class of 2006) works at New York Lawyers for the Public Interest, representing organizations in environmentally strained communities and working to clean up New York City public school sites on toxic land. He has also built a 40-organization coalition that works to change environmental land policies around the City’s schools. CUNY Law, he says, inspired the passion that drives his work. “Hints of CUNY Law’s public interest mission were infused in every legal lesson taught,” says Palmer. “It is an utterly important facet of CUNY’s pedagogy, and it kept me mindful of the real meaning behind learning the law—social justice.”

With two other CUNY Law graduates, MICHAEL WANG (Class of 2007) founded Common Law, a lawyer’s collective devoted to supporting low-income New York City communities by providing legal skills and resources to activists, grass-roots organizers and community-based organizations. “My focus on public interest led me straight to CUNY Law,” he said. “The school gave me the legal tools that are allowing me to do work today that I consider of critical importance.”

From top: CUNY Law graduates Rosalba Davis, David Palmer and Michael Wang in or outside their Manhattan offices.
CUNY Law places more graduates in public interest and public service jobs than any other law school in the nation.
Our Special Programs

CUNY Law School prides itself on providing innovative programs for current students, alumni, and the broader community. Some examples:

**THE COMMUNITY LEGAL RESOURCE NETWORK (CLRN)** connects CUNY Law alumni who are in solo or small-firm practice serving underserved communities in family law, immigration, labor and employment, and general practice. CLRN helps its 300 alumni members utilize technology to create a virtual law firm in which they are networked together to support one another’s social justice work. CLRN stands as a nationally recognized model for supportive practice for communities in need.

CUNY Law provides a second opportunity at admission for some students through its novel PIPELINE TO JUSTICE program. Excellent, public interest-focused students whose LSAT scores seem incompatible with their achievements may be selected to participate in this intensive, evening program focused on analytic thinking and writing skills, designed to improve LSAT scores and law school grades.

**THE WRITING CENTER** is a multi-purpose resource for the CUNY Law community that aims to help students develop and excel in the skills necessary to produce high-quality legal writing. The Center offers workshops and tutoring, strategies and techniques, and Web-based exercises focusing on the structure, terminology, and conventions of legal writing. The Center also sponsors workshops and online features such as the Writer’s Forum, an opportunity for members of the CUNY Law community to share ideas about lawyers and writing, and to showcase the creativity that enhances the power and reach of legal language.

**THE CENTER FOR DIVERSITY IN THE LEGAL PROFESSION** works to assess and improve access to the legal profession for students from underserved communities. It hosts an annual conference on diversity initiatives in the legal academy, supports students from a range of backgrounds, and works to make sure that the practicing Bar better reflects the great diversity of the City and State of New York.

**CUNY IMMIGRANT INITIATIVES** provides legal services to immigrant communities, offering invaluable training for students who aspire to careers in immigration law. Project work in which students engage has included courses to teach groups to prepare their own immigration applications, organizing campaigns, legal research, and complaint drafting.

CUNY School of Law students graduate with an excellent legal education and manageable debt so they can pursue their social justice goals.
CUNY School of Law student organizations cover many areas of interest, and students are encouraged to form and register new organizations if a specific interest or mission is not reflected among existing organizations. Here is a sampling of on-campus groups, some of which are tied to national organizations:

- AGAPE Christian Fellowship
- American Bar Association Law Student Division
- American Constitution Society
- Asian Pacific American Law Students Association
- Black Law Students Association
- Criminal Law Society
- CUNY American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)
- CUNY Contemplative Urban Law Program
- CUNY Labor Coalition for Workers’ Rights and Economic Justice
- CUNY Law Justice (basketball team)
- Domestic Violence Coalition
- Indigenous Peoples Law Students Association
- Inter-American Comparative Law Association—Cuba Delegation
- International Law Organization
- Irish Law Students Association
- Italian Law Students Association
- Jewish Law Students Association
- Latin American Law Students Association
- Law Labor Coalition
- LEAP (Law Equality and Policy)
- Mississippi Project
- Moot Court
- Muslim Law Students Association
- National Lawyers Guild
- New York City Law Review
- OUTLaws
- Phi Alpha Delta
- Public Interest Law Association
- Reproductive Justice
- South Asian Law Student Association
- Sports and Entertainment Law Society
- Student Government

Our Student Organizations
“With all due respect to my legal institution and others, in my view CUNY Law School is the premier legal institution in the country and the world for training lawyers who are committed and dedicated to the public interest.”

— CHARLES J. OGLETREE, JR., Jesse Climenko Professor of Law
Harvard Law School