## CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW

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### **CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW IS WHERE LAW IS A TOOL FOR SOCIAL GOOD, WHERE DIVERSITY DRIVES INNOVATION, AND WHERE** ACCESS TO JUSTICE IS MORE THAN JUST A CONCEPT — **IT'S OUR REASON FOR BEING.**

As New York City's public law school, we're uniquely positioned to recruit and train outstanding public interest lawyers, diversify the legal profession, and work towards a more just society.

Our strategic plan maps our path to lead in legal education innovation by centering the student experience, expanding our reach, amplifying our impact, and investing in mission-driven students, faculty, and staff.

**#1 most racially** diverse law school faculty in the nation

2024 Princeton Review

A top 3 program for clinical education nationally 2024 U.S. News

**#2 program** nationally for racial justice

2024 preLaw Magazine

**#1 law school for** placing graduates in **public interest careers** 

2023 Reuters







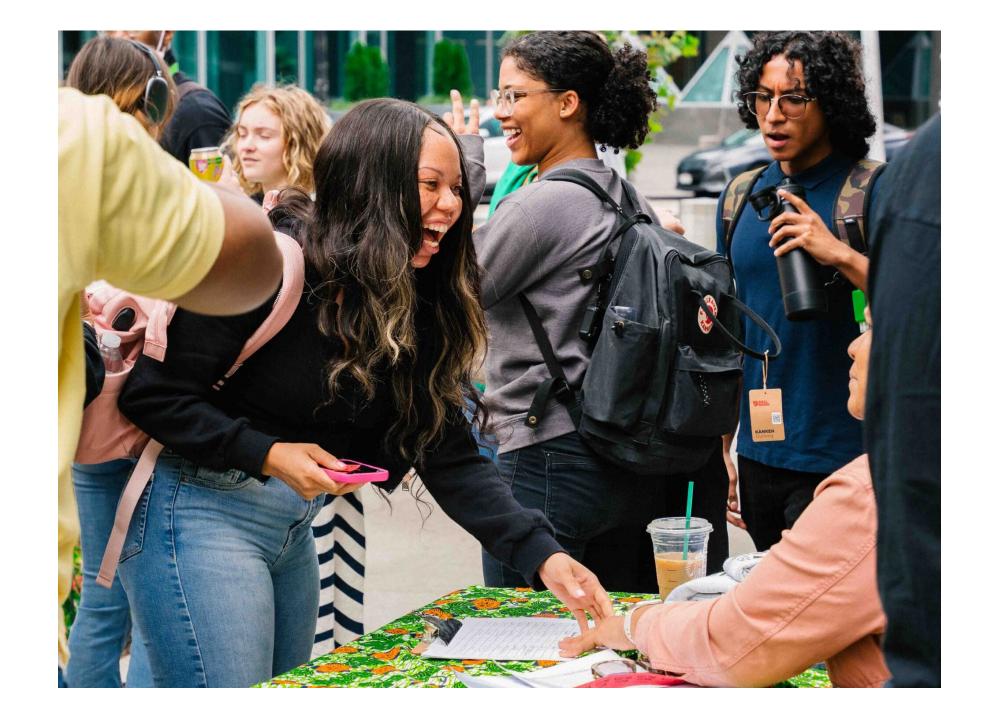


## **ABOUT THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK SCHOOL OF LAW**

The City University of New York (CUNY) School of Law opened its doors to its first class of students in September 1983, built on a foundation of radical lawyering and innovation in legal education.

Our goals were and are making legal education accessible to more people and training outstanding public interest lawyers to use the law as a tool for social good. We are proud to be on the vanguard of progressive legal education, to be the only public law school in New York City, and to serve as the law school for the CUNY system — the nation's leading educational engine for social and economic mobility.

Since our founding, our leadership in cutting-edge clinical education and our practice-based curriculum have helped to build our global reputation as a leader in public interest, social justice, and public service lawyering. We are proud of having the most diverse student body in the nation and of sending — by a huge margin the largest percentage of students into public interest work nationwide.



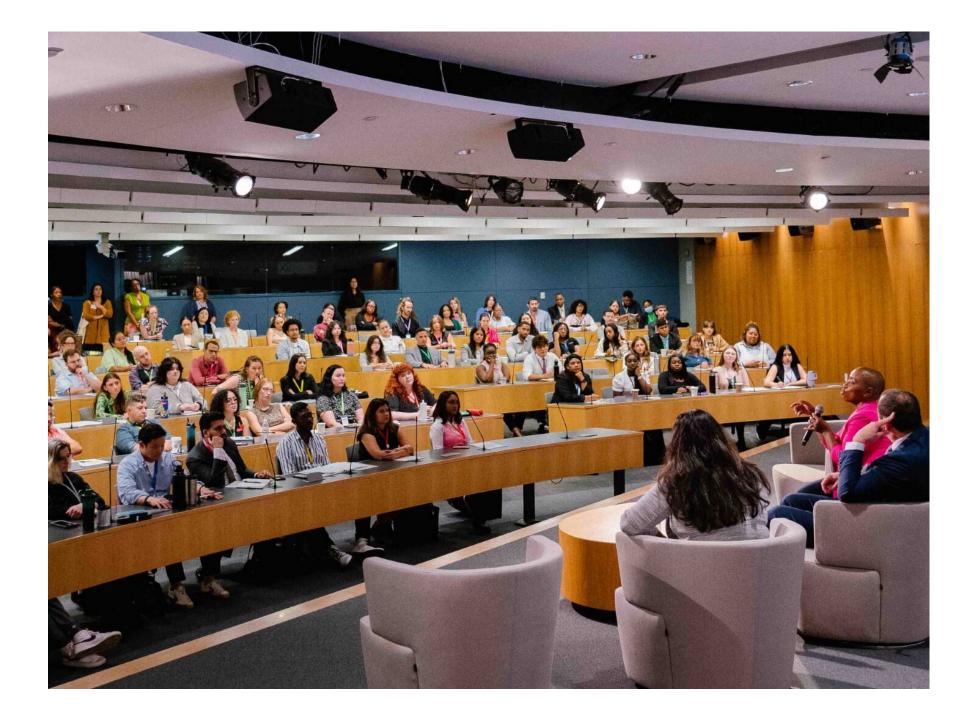


## **OUR MISSION**

## We continue to infuse our motto, "Law in the Service of Human Needs," in all that we do.

We are committed to our dual mission. We improve legal education and the legal profession through admitting, teaching, and supporting a diverse group of students who become lawyers and leaders, many of whom hail from communities historically excluded from the legal profession. With an innovative, student-centered curriculum that focuses on public interest and social justice, we prepare students to practice law today and to anticipate the practice of law tomorrow.

We stand firm in our commitment to antiracism, antidiscrimination, diversity, and inclusion, and to combat discrimination in all of its forms in the work that we do and within our Law School community. We are stronger in achieving social justice goals by building coalitions across different approaches toward a united goal of a more just society.





## **OUR VISION AND GOALS**

### Our vision of driving the legal profession, legal education, and the law toward justice is entirely in furtherance of our mission and comes at a time when the work of our Law School, students, and alumni is essential.

The work done by members of the CUNY School of Law community is vital to local and global communities, to legal education, and to the legal profession.

Since CUNY School of Law's prior strategic plan in 2014, the world has changed drastically and we face multiple challenges that directly impact legal education, including a global pandemic, a polarized societal and political environment, and the emergence of generative artificial intelligence as a transformative factor in legal education and the legal profession. Reflecting on this moment, we seek to sustain, build, and expand our work over the next five years, embracing the following goals:

- Enhancing access and resources for all students to thrive and succeed in their legal education and careers
- Fostering an inclusive, equitable, supportive, and respectful learning and working community that recognizes these values as essential to our shared purpose
- Attracting, retaining, and advancing talented, diverse, and engaged faculty and staff committed to our social justice and public interest mission
- Our innovative and thoughtful approach to legal education supports students to become excellent social justice and **public interest lawyers**
- Extending the reach of our work by engaging with alumni, supporters, and the CUNY community to identify opportunities for collaboration and outreach
- Streamlining and systematizing our operations to better serve our entire community and advance our mission











## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

In spring 2023, the CUNY School of Law began a strategic planning process with a day-long retreat for over 50 faculty and senior administrators. A strategic planning committee was formed soon thereafter.

Committee members, facilitators, and an administrative team devoted hundreds of hours to the process: Camille DeJorna (outside facilitator), Ryan Dooley (project and administrative support), Jennifer Fernandez (committee member (faculty)), Raquel Gabriel (committee member (faculty)), Will Jawde (committee member) (staff)), Kanika Jeffries (committee member (student)), Donna Lee (committee member (faculty)), Therese McNulty (committee member (staff)), Sudha Setty (committee member (Dean, committee chair)), Richard Storrow (committee member (faculty)), and Donald Tobin (outside facilitator).

The strategic planning process continued through the 2023-2024 academic year:

- September and October 2023: over 30 stakeholder meetings and information-gathering sessions with faculty, staff, students, alumni, public interest firms and other organizations, law school boards, and other CUNY stakeholders, with over **400** people participating in these meetings
- October 2023: Surveys included input from dozens of additional faculty, staff, students, and alumni
- November and December 2023: the committee distilled input from meetings, considered how Law School priorities meld with the University's 2023 strategic plan, and developed a rough draft
- January through March 2024: Drafts shared and feedback from community
- April 2024: Plan presented to the faculty, staff, and students





## THE STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS

The strategic planning process is one important way in which we have collectively reflected on the strengths of the Law School, the challenges that it is facing, and the opportunities that we see for the future. The CUNY School of Law has been a leader in legal education for decades and, more specifically, in training excellent public interest lawyers. Our reflective approach to strategic planning is part of our commitment to continued leadership in legal education in a rapidly changing society and legal profession.

We are proud to have invested hundreds of hours of listening and in discussions to identify priorities, goals, benchmarks, and a plan of work for the next five years. We teach, learn, and work in an environment that is innovative and dynamic, and in which there are as many good ideas on how to push forward in fulfilling our institutional mission as there are people in this community.

What follows are categories the strategic planning committee identified as opportunities for growth over the next five years, along with specific goals in each area, which will help us align our resources and efforts appropriately.





# REMAGNINGTHE STUDENT EXPERIENCE

## Enhancing access and resources for all students to thrive and succeed in their legal education and careers

## **REIMAGINING THE STUDENT EXPERIENCE**

Our dedication to the student experience starts with outreach to young people in our communities and the pipelines we create to bring students into the Law School, continues with their time as students, and culminates in supporting them toward bar and career success.

### **A.** Recruit, enroll, and retain dynamic and diverse students

- Maintain current enrollment of a student body that embodies our commitment to access, public interest, and social justice
- Assess, expand, and strengthen CUNY Law's Pipeline to Justice Program
- Build and assess the First Impressions Youth Justice Collaborative as a potential model for engagement with young people in communities across New York City

### **B.** Prioritize student success, support, collaboration, and respect

- Promote respect for diverse viewpoints, sharing of ideas, and collaboration
- Ensure support for all students in the process of navigating law school
- Ensure clarity in all policies governing student conduct, including those surrounding free speech, engagement with other members of the community, and the use of generative artificial intelligence

### **C.** Ensure students are prepared for the bar exam

- Revamp the bar support program to provide holistic support
- Expand resources available to faculty and staff for bar support, with availability beginning in a student's first semester
- Leverage expertise of academic support team to increase focus on academic success and bar readiness

### **D.** Prepare students for success in the practice of law

- Enhance placement opportunities, career advising services and offerings
- Continue to diversify employment opportunities in both public and private sectors

### E. Enhance affordability

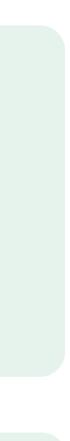
- Continue to seek resources to address the financial needs of our students
- Increase programming around financial planning and literacy for students, including planning tools for while they are students and continuing after they graduate

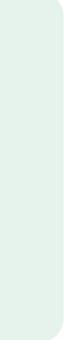


of the 2024 incoming class are the first in their families to pursue college degrees

18%

of the 2024 incoming class are students with primary languages other than English





# STRENGTHENING OUR COMMUNITY

Fostering an inclusive, equitable, supportive, and respectful learning and working community that recognizes these values as essential to our shared purpose

## **STRENGTHENING OUR** COMMUNITY

In view of our goals of serving our students well, fulfilling our institutional mission, and ensuring that we are continuing to lead in legal education, we aim to create a work and learning environment that is collegial, supportive, and respectful. To that end, we commit to strengthen our sense of community, wellness, shared bonds, and shared purpose.

We seek to engage with the challenges of participating in a diverse, passionate social justice community with grace and generosity, while recognizing the potential impact on those with comparatively less power and privilege. We seek to celebrate our core mission and values, and to be open to the possibility of different, strongly held viewpoints.

### A. Reaffirm CUNY Law's common ground and shared vision

- Embrace our shared mission of "Law in the Service of Human Needs," while recognizing that our community members embrace various approaches to carry out that mission
- Consider how to hold space for respectful disagreement that includes free speech, academic freedom, and empathy and understanding of

different perspectives

### **B.** Prioritize professional identity formation and cultural competency

- Community members, including the Chief Diversity Officer, will continue to organize and lead programming regarding inclusion, antidiscrimination, cultural competency, and empathy
- Explore required programming that focuses on professional identity formation, cultural competency, dialogue across differences, and viewpoint diversity as part of the essential skill-building for new lawyers

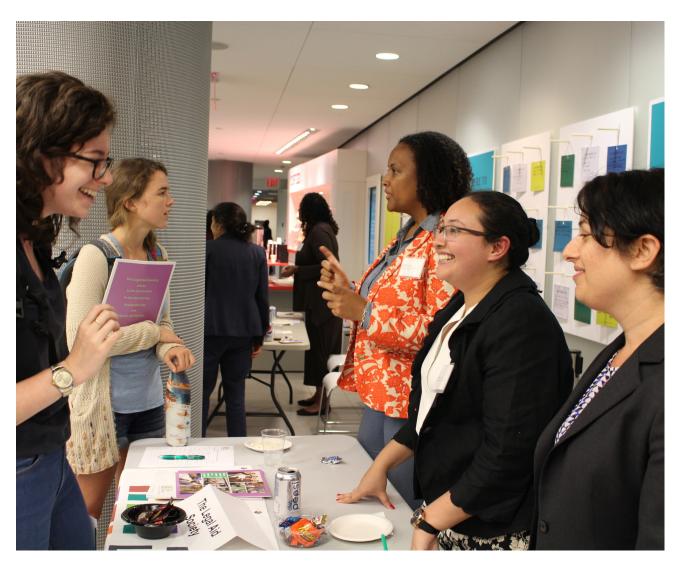
### C. Increase opportunities for community and communication

- programming and community-building efforts

• Welcome and support faculty and/or staff-led initiatives to promote community, improve communication, and promote wellness

• Ensure inclusion of evening students in planning of co-curricular







# INVESTING IN FACULTY AND STAFF

# Attracting, retaining, and advancing talented, diverse, and engaged faculty and staff committed to our social justice and public interest mission

## **INVESTING IN FACULTY AND STAFF**

Attracting, retaining, and advancing talented, diverse, and committed faculty and staff are foundational to CUNY Law's success. Our faculty and staff are passionate about their work and deeply devoted to our students. We will continue efforts to recruit and retain diverse, thoughtful, and engaged faculty and staff committed to CUNY's social justice, public interest, and public service missions.

### **A.** Mentor and support new colleagues

- New faculty and staff colleagues will be assigned mentors who can help them navigate their first year, mid-career, and beyond
- New faculty and staff colleagues will receive information on support, wellness, and other resources available to them and be provided with a means for questions that may later arise

### **B.** Ensure clarity on process and policies

- Create and maintain an operational handbook for the Law School that refers to the general policies and procedures that govern it, including links to University policies and procedures, organizational charts, and job descriptions of each individual at the Law School, as well as information about committees and the Staff Council
- Create and maintain a faculty handbook that summarizes pertinent policies, principles, and administrative procedures

### **C.** Promote additional professional development

• Aligned with the University-wide strategic plan, we commit to supporting all employees with world-class professional development and leadership training to advance in their careers

- demonstrate excellence in our community

### **D.** Advance teaching and scholarly research

We pride ourselves on our faculty's strong teaching expertise and the diverse critical perspectives put forth through their scholarship and research. Our aim is to increase support for faculty to conduct and disseminate research.

- School
- Increase support for faculty research and scholarship

 Human Resources, Academic Affairs, and Alumni Engagement will provide information about training and professional development opportunities available to faculty and staff on a regular, ongoing basis

• Develop methods to solicit and integrate input from faculty and staff on professional development and leadership training opportunities

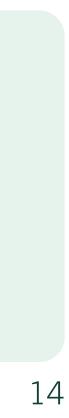
• Identify new ways to celebrate and reward faculty and staff who

• Create a role within Academic Affairs to coordinate faculty scholarship, publications, and research to enhance the intellectual life of the Law

• Ensure ongoing support for intellectual life and innovation



racially diverse faculty law school faculty in the nation 2024 Princeton Review



# OUR CURRICULUM

Our innovative and thoughtful approach to legal education supports students to become excellent social justice and public interest lawyers

## OUR CURRICULUM

Since our founding in 1983, the CUNY School of Law has been a leader in prioritizing experiential and clinical legal education. The launch of its part-time evening law school program in 2015, and the challenges and opportunities presented by the **Covid-19 pandemic and adoption of virtual learning** platforms, call for ongoing change and innovation.

### A. Reinforce the fundamentals

- Curriculum should continue to focus on developing effective legal writing, legal research, and advocacy skills essential to the successful practice of law
- Empower faculty with resources to support bar preparation throughout the curriculum with an eye to fostering consistency in how bar-tested material is taught
- Strengthen connections between doctrinal and clinical courses and support better integration of skills development
- Consider grade normalization for large, required courses to ensure equity among students and professor

### **B.** Ensure reasonably comparable opportunities for the full-time and part-time programs

• Curriculum committee will reassess the curriculum for consistency in teaching resources and credit allocations for the same courses, regardless of whether they are taught in the day or evening

- courses online each week for evening students
- Law School services, and journeys as students

### C. Re-examine curriculum to meet current needs and align resources

- Curriculum committee should examine potential changes to establish greater flexibility, including scheduling of courses, and assess number of required courses and credits allocated to them
- Encourage faculty to develop broader teaching portfolios to enhance curricular offerings and ensure course coverage
- Increase synergy among the approaches and curricula for the Pipeline to Justice, Summer Law Institute (SLI), Skills offerings, bar-tested courses, and Core Doctrine courses to strengthen students' skills and readiness for the bar exam
- Revisit learning outcomes to assess utility and ensure compliance with ABA standards

### **D.** Embrace current and future social justice lawyering

- Ensure curriculum recognizes varied iterations of public interest work
- Support students in the wellness aspects of social justice lawyering
- Ensure curriculum delves into fostering viewpoint diversity, enhancing cultural competency, contemplative lawyering, compassion, and instilling professional responsibility across the program
- Ensure curriculum includes flexibility to include new courses that reflect current and future issues needing public interest lawyers
- Consider whether to refine and/or expand clinical and doctrinal offerings and electives for day and evening students based on the evolving legal profession and substantive student interests
- Courses should include elements addressing how technology impacts the practice of law

• Academic Affairs will explore the possibility of moving one evening of

• Ensure support for part-time students in navigating their coursework,

### **E.** Ensure a curriculum that empowers students to become social justice leaders

- Establish relationships to enable training to lead social justice/public interest organizations, including administration and management who model leading from the middle
- Connect with alumni in leadership roles to help shape students' vision of a justice-oriented, authoritative model
- Explore collaborations with the other CUNY campuses and continue conversations with the Colin Powell School for Civic and Global Leadership at City College

### A top 3 legal program for clinical education nationally

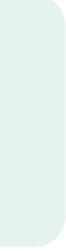
2024 U.S. News

**Every student takes Critical Race** Theory, and every course is taught with a critical social justice lens

**Every student in both the full-time and** evening study programs has an immersive clinical experience









# BUILDING AND EXPANDING OUR IMPACT

## Extending the reach of our work by engaging with alumni, supporters, and the CUNY community to identify opportunities for collaboration and outreach

## **BUILDING AND EXPANDING OUR IMPACT**

In view of our goals of serving our students well, fulfilling our institutional mission, and advancing our unique position in legal education, we aim to expand our reach in numerous ways.

### A. Engage and re-engage alumni

- Grow infrastructure to engage a wider swath of alumni in networking, professional development, mentoring, giving, and social opportunities with CUNY Law and each other
- With external support, continue to expand the Community Legal **Resource Network**
- Improve communications with alumni to encourage their engagement with the Law School

### **B.** Support our programs that enable special opportunities for students

- Provide support for expanding globalized opportunities with the Centers and Institutes that focus on such work
- Provide additional guidance to students about existing dual-degree programs
- Consider expanding dual-degree programs to encompass additional areas, such as social justice leadership

### **C. Explore new programs for revenue and expanded** reach

- Assess market for an LL.M. program in social justice lawyering

### **D.** Create a strong fundraising infrastructure

- mission and work of the Law School

### E. Celebrate and promote thought leadership

We are proud of the thought leadership stemming from various parts of our community, and seek to highlight that leadership and its service to improving law and policy, the legal profession, legal academia, and beyond; to that end, we will:

- Promote faculty work that impacts public policy
- Support public thought leadership by faculty and staff

• Assess market for certificate and other micro credentialing programs

• Set goals for endowed scholarship funding to support students

• Coordinate fundraising across different parts of the Law School

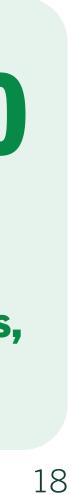
• Rebuild and seek out new relationships with funders aligned to the

• Promote and support alumni who are leaders in their fields



## More than 5000

alumni bring our public interest mission to life in government, clerkships, private firms, nonprofits, elected office, and more



# ADMINISTRATION

## Streamlining and systematizing our operations to better serve our entire community and advance our mission

## MODERNIZING Administration

### **A.** Promote administrative efficiency and better workflow

- Reorganize senior leadership to align with institutional needs
- Streamline and modernize operations

## **B.** Design and implement systems to create more connections, collaboration, communication, and transparency

- Promote and institutionalize reliable communications policies and practices
- Promote transparency
- Promote understanding of and compliance with policy, guidelines, and procedures
- Optimize data integration and access





## CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW

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