

MAKING AN IMPACT

ANNUAL REPORT | 2025-2026

CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW



A MESSAGE FROM INTERIM DEAN NATALIE GOMEZ-VELEZ

Dear CUNY Law Community,

As we begin a new academic year, I am pleased to look back on the remarkable accomplishments of 2025–2026 and share this annual report with you.

This past year reflected the best of CUNY Law. Together, we strengthened our academic programs, expanded opportunities for students, advanced groundbreaking scholarship, deepened our partnerships with communities across New York, and continued to demonstrate why CUNY Law remains a national leader in public interest legal education.

We celebrated remarkable high points—from earning our Middle States accreditation to welcoming Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor to our campus, launching new initiatives, raising record support for students, and graduating another extraordinary class of advocates committed to justice.

These accomplishments would not have been possible without our dedicated and caring faculty, staff, students, alumni, and supporters. Every achievement in these pages represents hours of collaboration and a shared commitment to our mission: law in the service of human needs.

Moving forward into the 2026–2027 academic year, I hope you will take pride in all that we accomplished. The progress of the past year gives us much to celebrate—and an even stronger foundation from which to build.

Thank you for your continued dedication to CUNY Law and to the communities we serve. I look forward to all that we will achieve together in the year ahead.

Best regards,

Natalie Gomez-Velez
Interim Dean

The 2025–2026 academic year was a year of purpose and progress at CUNY Law. We came together to advance our shared commitment to justice and the public good—and the accomplishments that follow reflect some of what we achieved together and the communities we serve.



Expanded Our Mission and Impact

CUNY Law’s mission came to life throughout the 2025–2026 academic year through the work of our faculty, students, staff, and community partners. Faculty advanced the school’s mission through teaching, clinical work, scholarship, public service, and engagement with communities near and far. The law school also deepened relationships with alumni, donors, elected officials, and other partners whose support helps expand CUNY Law’s impact.

Achieved Middle States Accreditation

The CUNY Law community came together to prepare for and successfully achieve accreditation from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) which will enhance our degree options. The law school also welcomed a successful MSCHE guidance visit—an important milestone that reflects the dedication of our faculty, staff, and administration and our shared commitment to institutional excellence.

RECOGNIZED FOR DIVERSITY, ACCESS, AND INCLUSION

CUNY Law earned top national recognition in The Princeton Review's "Best Law Schools for 2025" rankings, placing #2 Most Chosen by Older Students, #2 Most Liberal Students, #3 Most Diverse Faculty, and #5 Greatest Resources for Women.

The rankings support CUNY Law's commitment to access, inclusion, and public interest legal education. They recognize the diverse perspectives of our faculty, the breadth of experience students bring to the classroom, and the law school's supportive environment for women, transgender, and gender-expansive students. Together, these distinctions underscore CUNY Law's mission to expand access to legal education and prepare lawyers committed to advancing justice.

WE'VE GOT SOMETHING TO CELEBRATE!

#2 Most Liberal
Students

#2 Most Chosen by
Older Students

#3 Most Diverse
Faculty

#5 Greatest Resources
for Women

Best Law Schools for 2025, The Princeton Review

CUNY SCHOOL OF LAW



Welcomed a New Class of Future Advocates

CUNY Law welcomed a fully enrolled class of 220 day and evening students whose varied backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives enrich our community. The new class arrived with a shared commitment to using the law in service of the common good and began their CUNY Law journey with a substantive and engaging Orientation Program.



INCREASED OUR FACULTY AND CELEBRATED MILESTONES

Five new full-time faculty members—Ally Coll, Naz Ahmad, Marie Mark, Zal Shroff, and Kia Vernon—joined CUNY Law in fall 2025. Four current faculty members—Natalie Chin, Talia Peleg, Lynn Lu, and Julia Hernandez—earned tenure during the 2025–2026 academic year. We also celebrated the retirements

of Rick Rossein, Steve Loffredo, Janet Calvo, and Joe Rosenberg after their many years of dedicated service to CUNY Law. Together, these transitions and milestones celebrated our legacy, strengthened our faculty, and advanced the law school’s commitment to excellence in teaching, scholarship, and public interest law.

BROUGHT BIG IDEAS AND INSPIRING VOICES TO CUNY LAW



From nationally prominent leaders to thought-provoking scholars and advocates, CUNY Law hosted a remarkable range of conversations and gatherings this year. A special highlight came in March, when Interim Dean Natalie Gomez-Velez welcomed U.S. Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor for a full day of events with members of the CUNY Law community.

The year also featured the Institute for Gender, Law, and Transformative Peace's global convening, Everyday Authoritarianism and Human Rights: Comparative and Transnational Lessons; the Second Look Project Symposium; Protecting Privacy in New York: The Case for a State Constitutional Privacy Amendment Summit; the return of the Slatkin-Belsky Distinguished Lecture on Law, Social Justice & Gender Equality, Immigrant Women's Legal Rights Under Threat; and the Immigration and Non-Citizen Rights Clinic's report launch and panel, Shut it Down!: The 2021 Grassroots Movement to Abolish ICE Detention in New Jersey. Professional development programs explored topics including the First Amendment and Critical Race Theory, such as a session with Professor Cheryl Harris of UCLA Law. These were among many opportunities throughout the year for learning, dialogue, and connection.



Strengthened Faculty and Staff Leadership

Faculty committees and staff teams took on important work across the law school this year. Their efforts included a successful faculty appointments' process that brought four new tenure-track faculty members to CUNY Law, faculty tenure and reappointment reviews, curricular development, creation of a teaching assistant policy, compliance updates, clinic planning, and review of a record number of admissions applications.

Together, these efforts reflect governance in action and the behind-the-scenes work that keeps CUNY Law moving forward and supports the school's academic mission and goals.



EXPANDED OUR ALUMNI COMMUNITY

CUNY Law continued to strengthen its relationship with the alumni who carry the school's mission into communities and careers across New York City, State, and around the world. The new CUNY Law Alumni Connections Series engaged 285 alumni, while another alumni gathering brought together more than 120 graduates. More than 500 alumni also participated in Continuing Legal Education (CLE) programs throughout the year.

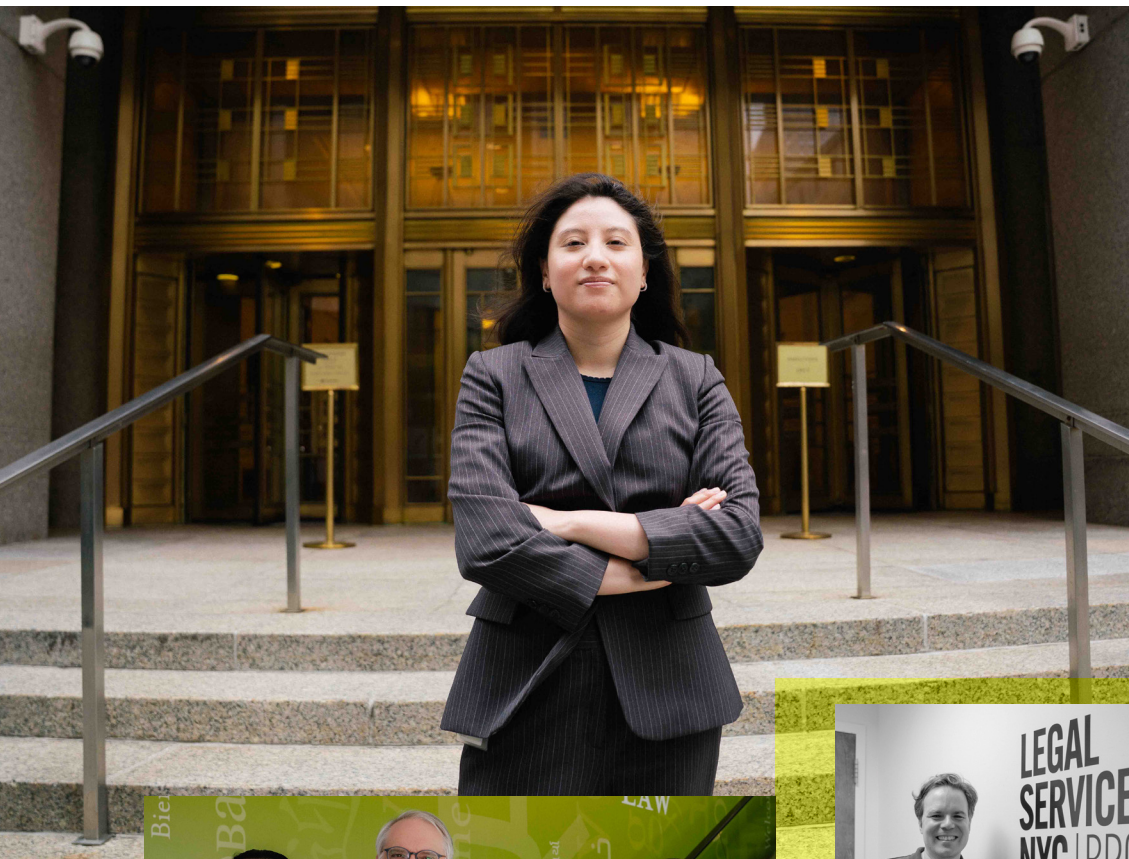
Through the Community Legal Resource Network (CLRN), CUNY Law expanded its reach even further. CLRN raised a record \$569,550 in FY26 and partnered with 15 New York City Council districts and five community-based organizations, helping provide services to more than 1,350 New Yorkers.



DEEPENED GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

CUNY Law continued to build relationships across New York City and New York State, participating in legislative events in Albany and locally, welcoming elected officials and community partners to campus, and connecting with bar associations and other organizations. These relationships help strengthen the law school's role as a partner in advancing access to justice and serving communities.

The law school also secured new and renewed grants supporting access to justice, experiential learning, facilities improvements, and community-building initiatives.



INVESTED IN STUDENT SUCCESS

CUNY School of Law provided \$740,000+ in direct student support, helping reduce financial barriers, support students' transition to legal practice, expand access to public interest opportunities, and provide assistance during unexpected hardships. This investment advances the law school's mission of preparing lawyers who use the law as a tool for social justice and public service.

STRENGTHENED SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS



The law school coordinated a successful Orientation week designed to welcome incoming CUNY Law students, prepare them for academic success, support professional identity development, and equip them to navigate law school.

CUNY Law continued to improve the systems and services that support students throughout school, including implementing the Brightspace learning management system, providing new tools for course management, assessment, training, and support.

Academic support and skills programs were aligned more closely with bar preparation, and a search for a new Bar Director was completed with a focus on preparing students for the NextGen bar exam.

Earlier application launches for both Admissions and Pipeline to Justice contributed to stronger application outcomes, including a 46 percent increase in Admissions applications for 2026 compared with the previous year.

The second annual Pre-Law Conference, Advocacy in Action: Law in the Service of Human Needs, brought together aspiring lawyers, admissions professionals, and legal practitioners to explore pathways into public interest law.

New hires in Student Support & Wellness and Career Planning further strengthened the law school's capacity to support students' well-being and expand access to career counseling and placement services.

All of these initiatives supported students' academic and professional growth, culminating in many successful internship, fellowship, and job placements.



ADVANCED FACULTY SCHOLARSHIP AND THOUGHT LEADERSHIP

CUNY Law faculty made their mark well beyond the classroom this year through scholarship, presentations, conferences, and advocacy. Faculty members shared their expertise at national gatherings, including the Association of American Law Schools (AALS) Conference, the AALS Clinical Conference, and the Law and Society Association Annual Meeting, among many others. Faculty scholarship and engagement continue to advance conversations about law, justice, and the communities we serve.





WELCOMED W. HAYWOOD BURNS CHAIR KRISTEN CLARKE

CUNY Law was honored to welcome Kristen Clarke as the 2025–2026 W. Haywood Burns Chair in Human & Civil Rights. Throughout her year at the law school, Clarke brought students and the broader community into important conversations about law, protest, resistance, and justice. She engaged in conversations with Joy Reid, host of *The Joy Reid Show*; Elie Mystal, justice correspondent at *The Nation*; and Tennessee Assemblymember Justin J. Pearson. She also taught Law, Protest, and Resistance; met with CUNY Law students and New York City high school students; and joined Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor for a conversation at the law school.

We are grateful to Clarke for sharing her experience and perspective with our community and congratulate her on her appointment as the General Counsel of the NAACP.



ADVANCED ADMINISTRATION, FINANCE, AND CAMPUS IMPROVEMENTS

The law school successfully navigated a transition in leadership within Administration and Finance, welcoming Interim Associate Dean Dan Mandell, while maintaining momentum on the CUNY Work project and key campus improvements in partnership with Facilities.

Projects included upgrades to audiovisual systems, security cameras, and Wi-Fi; renovations to the Community Room; improvements to entrance accessibility; and plans to strengthen security in the law school's clinics. Together, these investments are helping create a more connected, accessible, and supportive campus environment.

Deepened Our Commitment to Equity and Inclusion

CUNY Law strengthened its diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts by implementing CUNY's new reporting system, completing reviews and determinations of several pending matters, and creating opportunities for members of the community to participate in CUNY's Constructive Dialogue Initiative (CDI). Interim Chief Diversity Officer Justine Billups led this work, helping advance these initiatives and strengthen engagement across the law school community.



CELEBRATED THE CLASS OF 2026

What better way to close the academic year than by celebrating the newest members of the CUNY Law alumni family?

The law school celebrated the Class of 2026 with a series of joyful events, including the Pipeline to Justice graduation ceremony and an enthusiastic Student Night, featuring student speakers, faculty and staff awardees, and plenty of good food.

Then, on May 21, 2026, 188 graduates crossed the stage at the historic United Palace Theater to receive their diplomas and graduation hoods amid the cheers and applause of family, friends, supporters, faculty, staff, and the entire CUNY Law community.

It was a fitting celebration of all that our graduates had accomplished—and of the people who helped them get there. We are incredibly proud of the Class of 2026 and grateful to everyone whose hard work, dedication, and support made the 2025–26 academic year such a meaningful one.

Together, our graduates carry CUNY Law's mission forward, expanding access to justice and making a positive impact on the communities we serve.