



Pre-Law Studies

smu.edu/prelaw

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SMU pre-law students are in virtually all academic programs throughout the University. In a typical year, our 100 pre-law seniors include roughly 60% Dedman College majors, 25% from the School of Business, 10% from Meadows School of the Arts, and 5% from Engineering.

HIGHLIGHTS

- SMU's pre-law program consists of people, programs, and services designed to help students prepare for and make choices about law as a career. By the junior year, students seek advice concerning the LSAT, law school applications, and selection of target law schools.
- Whatever their majors, pre-law students share some traits: a desire to analyze and solve real problems and disputes, strength in both written and oral expression, a logical approach to problem-solving, and fascination with the complexities of societal structures. While there is no "best" major, academic planning should include extensive writing of research papers and essay exams, breadth of coursework across disciplines, and exposure to developing critical thinking in analyzing texts.
- Major in the area that interests you most. In course planning, emphasize writing-intensive courses that will strengthen your skills in textual analysis, critical thinking and writing. Virtually any English Department offerings help develop these skills, especially the survey sequence required of English majors, Poetry (for close analysis of word choice), Fiction, or Advanced Expository Writing. To strengthen skills in logical analysis, take Elementary and Intermediate Logic, and Introduction to Practical Reasoning (Philosophy). To develop familiarity with concepts and methods of analysis you will encounter in law school, take offerings in the judicial area of Political Science such as Judicial Process, Constitutional Law, Civil Liberties, and Civil Rights; also Introductory Economics (for fundamentals of economic analysis); Philosophy of Law, Business Law, and Introduction to the Legal Environment.
- SMU pre-law students have several advantages: current advice, a law fair which brings 80+ law school admission representatives to campus every other year, opportunities to develop leadership skills and experience through extracurricular involvements, and opportunities to work closely with informed and supportive professors.
- Recent SMU campus speakers and visitors of interest to pre-law students: President George H.W. Bush, Marian Wright Edelman, Alan Dershowitz, John Grisham, Ambassador Robert Strauss, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, President Mikhail Gorbachev, Justice Antonin Scalia, King Juan Carlos of Spain, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, David Gergen, Sarah Weddington of *Roe v. Wade*, Sam Nunn, George Stephanopoulos, Elizabeth and Robert Dole.

CAREERS OF SMU PRE-LAW STUDENTS

In recent years, 70-85% of our pre-law seniors have been accepted at law schools nationwide. Our students have attended schools such as Chicago, Columbia, Cornell, Duke, Penn, Stanford, Tulane, University of Texas, Yale, and of course, SMU.

Our graduates have prominent roles in law as well as in other careers. Texas Supreme Court Justice **Craig Enoch** is an SMU graduate. **Harriet Miers**, first woman President of the Texas Bar, is an SMU alumna, as are Federal District Judge **Terry Means** and Federal District Judge **Ewing Werlein, Jr.** **Robert Cordell** (Spanish '91; J.D. Columbia) was articles editor for the *Human Rights Law Review*. He practices with Thacher Proffitt & Wood in New York. **Robert Best** (History '90) is an attorney with the U.S. Army Judge Advocate General's Corps. **Shelley White** (Psychology '95; Yale J.D. '98) is with Davis Polk in New York City. **Tracey George** (Economics '89; Stanford J.D. '92) was editor-in-chief of Stanford's Environmental Law Journal and is now a professor of law at the University of Missouri.

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